

LIVE WELL - BE WELL

NJOROGE FAMILY STORY

STORY BY: JONELLE FAUST



As we all know, 2012 starts off with good intentions, new members, and our favorite equipment not always being readily available. Our University Fitness Center has received a lot of new, smiling and friendly faces in January. Just a week or two into the New Year, I was scheduled to conduct a youth orientation with Kiguru. When I first met Kiguru I was greeted with the biggest smile that I have ever seen from a young man. I have never met a youth that expressed such an interest in fitness, wanting to learn, making sure he is in correct form, and wanting to do a good job. It honestly made my night and was such a joy to meet a young teenager that was happy, friendly, and eager to learn and to become physically healthy and fit.

The apples don't fall too far from the tree in this family. I met Kiguru's Dad, Michael, and I can see where the permanent smile comes from and the upbeat personality. I complimented him on how polite and hard working Kiguru had been with me during his orientation. A few visits had passed and Michael pointed his wife out to me in the cardio room. The smile and politeness radiates throughout the family. I highly suggest to any member here, to take five minutes and please greet and meet this family. I am willing to bet that you will walk away with a smile on your face, your mood will be happier and you will have a more positive outlook towards your day.

The Njoroge family was nominated for Live Well - Be Well due to their commitment to working out as a family and their dedication to the gym since joining in the New Year. I cannot count the number of times I have seen Mom or Dad lead the family into the fitness center, all grinning from ear to ear and ready to tackle the cardio and weight lifting equipment. They never fail to greet all staff with a smile and a "Hello". They are so appreciative of the staff and facility here. As a fellow employee, it is nice to hear the compliments of our "team" and nice facility.

Following the interview with the family, there was one response that tugged at my heart and is such a great outlook on life. It is a lesson that each and every one of us need to keep in mind and take a mental note. I posed the question to the family about how they are very positive and friendly, what keeps their family so positive? Their response was, "We believe relationships are an essential part of a wholesome life. Every new acquaintance is a great opportunity to create a lasting relationship and a valuable friendship. Being positive requires no effort and almost always wins". I cannot think of a better outlook. Maybe we should learn from the Njoroge family, to start looking at people in the eye, give a smile, say "hello", or ask a stranger how their day is going.

The Njoroge family have always encouraged and supported their kids to participate in community and school sports. When the weather allows, they have always used the outdoor trails to walk at least three miles three times a week wherever they have resided. They make it an intention to take every opportunity to exercise and thereby have built a family tradition that has caught on and become a habit. There hasn't been any particular reason or major event in the family to initiate or catalyze the practice. They have always taken advantage of the walk-trail as long as Michael can remember. During the winter it would impede the gains of the more favorable seasons. This winter, as a family they decided to beat it, they enrolled at the UFC and in doing so, they diffused the weather affect. I remember talking to Kiguru about this, and I was amazed with his answer, "I am so appreciative of my getting a gym membership as a Christmas gift". The little things in life we take for granted.

Who in the family inspires the Njoroge family to be physically fit and healthy? The credit goes to Jane, “the lady of the house”, she acts as the driving force and as stated by Michael, “does not look her age, looking pretty, young and fit”. Although Jane’s job schedule beats her desire to attend the gym every day, she keeps the family motivated to make it to the gym. Kiguru is motivated but requires occasional encouragement and direction, there are too many youth tasks pulling him in different directions. He loves coming to the gym with his Mom and Dad. You may have seen Kiguru shooting baskets in the gym (he is pretty good at making 3-pointers), or in the cardio room on an elliptical or bike. The family currently has the goal of at least one hour every day seven days a week. They work on cardiovascular fitness and strength training. Michael and Kiguru are keen to lose weight as well as strength training; whereas Jane is more focused on cardiovascular fitness.

When asked how they get through the plateaus of fitness, the response was, “Throw the balance (scale) under the bed! Appreciate the science behind this experience. Remembering there is more than one reason to exercising - make it a fun activity beyond losing weight”. Another life lesson to be learned and adopted by all of us, I would be willing to bet, if we adopted this concept, we may be a little happier. The benefits of being physically active have been seen by all family members, good health youngest to oldest, clothes fit well, no history of lifestyle related diseases, no one needs medications for health concerns, and overall there is an appreciation of life and relationships.

The Njoroge family has this advice to families who are interested in becoming active as a family. “Do not craft it into a resolution - JUST WAKE UP AND GO! Take your gear and be on the ready while you ask a family member the simple question, “Are you joining me to the gym?” You alone are the major factor to building a culture of exercising - not any other members of your family (although you may be in the gym the same time). Stand and go, even if you do not feel like it - stoke your own interest for exercising, even if it is minimal. You will find that others in the family want to join you and be counted.” I couldn’t have said it better myself, Be Your Own Role Model and Motivator, Inspire Your Children When They Are Young To Be Active, Physically Fit, and Healthy.