

2012 Volunteer of the Year

Marci Crozier

By Charlee Beasor

“I haven’t met you yet, but I know you. I just joined. You are an inspiration to me.” Marci Crozier often hears those words or similar ones when walking through the hallways of Omni 41 Health & Fitness Connection in Schererville, where she is the regional director of marketing and sales.

That is only the beginning. Her desk drawers are filled with notes, e-mails, letters and cards. Her Facebook wall is full of well-wishes and thank yous.

“They inspire me,” she confesses. “I say to them, ‘You don’t know how much energy you give me back.’”

Crozier is well known at Omni 41. It seems like virtually everyone connects with her on a personal level. Talk with her for a few minutes and you learn why: Being “mom” is second nature to her, and not only because of daughters Courtney and Casey.

She was also affectionately referred to as “mom” while a contestant two years ago on season 11 of NBC’s *The Biggest Loser*, with Courtney. Neither won the competition, but both lost weight on television – Crozier hit her goal weight on the show, losing 78 pounds; her daughter lost 110 pounds (and had lost 120 pounds previously).

But don’t call Crozier a celebrity simply because she was on television. It’s by sharing her story and encouraging those around her to be well that she has made the biggest impact. Her ability to inspire leads to those heartfelt exchanges in hallways and conference rooms around the state.

Conveying the message

Crozier works to spread the word about wellness and health at speaking engagements and businesses, and on behalf of the Wellness Council of Indiana.

“I believe there is a social accountability for companies to give (health and wellness) information and those resources to the employees. My job is to go in and teach employees that it’s self-responsibility,” Crozier notes. “They can give you all the resources but if you don’t do anything with them, it really doesn’t matter.”

She has an extensive background in the fitness industry. Crozier oversees marketing and sales for the Franciscan Alliance through Omni 41 locations in Schererville and Chesterton. Between the clubs, there is more than 25,000 square feet of workout space and the Schererville location alone has 9,000 members. She’s been with Omni since 1983, after graduating from Lake Superior State University in Michigan.

It starts with No. 1

Crozier has been involved with the Wellness Council of Indiana since it was created in the late 1980s. She was on the board of directors for 15 years and has volunteered for the organization in a variety of ways, from lugging around equipment during the early days to now headlining conferences and seminars.

Around the time she joined *The Biggest Loser*, however, she took a step back. She felt like a hypocrite, she says, for being stressed out, overweight and exhausted.

“I quit because I was tired,” she offers. “You can’t give of your time if you’re exhausted, and that’s where I was. I just couldn’t do it anymore. Even if you volunteer, if you don’t feel good yourself, it makes you too tired and you get more resentful. The bottom line – it’s all excuses. If you’re not doing something because you’re helping too many people, it’s an excuse.”

It was during the reality show that she realized it was okay – necessary, actually – to put herself and her health first. Previously, she’d believed that the order was “God first, family second and then everything else.”

“(*The Biggest Loser*) helped me put a lot of things into perspective, to make me realize that the thing I didn’t get was I have to take care of myself first. And when I say God first, see, God is here (gesturing to her stomach). If God’s inside

Continued on page 52

Marci Crozier travels the state spreading the message of health, wellness and self-accountability to companies and individuals on different ends of the wellness spectrum.



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Continued from page 50

me, then I get to be No. 1,” she explains.

“That’s what I share with everybody else. Doing and doing and volunteering is not okay and won’t make you feel great at the end of the day if you don’t put yourself first in the equation.”

Once she came back home, Crozier was rejuvenated to work with the Wellness Council and is an active member of the advisory board. She also speaks at Wellness Council events and helps grow the council’s membership.

For the greater good

Chuck Gillespie, program director for the Wellness Council of Indiana at the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, points to Crozier’s involvement with the council as instrumental to its success.

“There are only a few folks now that I can go to that have been around from the beginning and she’s my first phone call,” Gillespie offers. “I can’t say it enough: She is somebody that truly gets it and she was definitely brought onto this planet to help others.”

Crozier’s sense of volunteerism was ingrained by her parents, the Sisters of the Franciscan Alliance and other influences in her life.

“My parents were full-blooded Italian; they’d give you the shirt off their back. My dad made his garden; it made me crazy. It was a quarter-of-an-acre garden so he could just give peppers and tomatoes to everybody. Because that’s what made him feel good,” she recalls.

Helping others and helping yourself go hand-in-hand.

“The part that Zig Ziglar says the best is that you can get everything in life that you want if you help other people get what they want,” Crozier underlines. “The part people forget or they don’t learn is that you’ve got to take care of yourself first.”

When Gillespie informed Crozier that she’d been named an Indiana Chamber Volunteer of the Year, she admits she was quite emotional.

“I don’t want to brag about volunteerism, because you’re not supposed to. When you give of your time and money it should be private; that’s a hard thing about this award. Really? I have to talk about it?” she confides.

“I have to talk about it because of the second part of the (Ziglar) equation. That’s my passion. When you volunteer for something, it’s got to be the fire in your belly. It’s giving of your time and money in some way that means something to you that can help rejuvenate you to do more good work.”



As regional director of marketing and sales for Franciscan Omni 41 Health & Fitness Connection, Crozier works with industry professionals to teach acceptance of people at all levels of physical fitness.