

## Meet the Watkins Chiropractic Team



From Left: Sandy Cape, 16 years; Linda Hall, 16 years; Jeanne Hanlin, 4 years; Regina Watkins, 21 years; Dr. Mary Watkins, owner; Angela Campbell, 10 years; Dr. Amanda Watson, 2 years; Lucy Reed, 3 months; Michelle Garvey, 17 years; and Trisha Leo, 8 months

### **I am alive, alert, well, and enthusiastic**

This is the mantra of the Watkins Chiropractic Team and they recite it at every staff meeting. But, more importantly they live it every day. This is apparent from the moment you walk into their office. Recently, Dr. Watkins started a new wellness plan for the staff. Needless to say, it has been a huge success and perhaps it is best told by them. Following is their story.

Written By: Jeanne Hanlin

We have only one body and it has to last our entire life. Well, now that is an interesting statement and it really never stuck in my head until my last annual physical with my primary care physician. I was looking for a compliment and mentioned that all my medical tests results were good. My doctor looked at me and said, “Jeanne, your tests are good but don’t you realize I am ‘chemically’ keeping you alive?” I left my appointment that day and that is when I had my *‘ah ha’* moment.

I work for Dr. Mary Watkins, Watkins Chiropractic, in Gainesville, GA. I stopped in her office to tell her what my doctor said to me. I shared how those comments were making me feel. At that moment Dr. Watkins said, “I have been thinking about this for some time, we provide and promote healthcare every single day and many of us here in this practice are overweight. We need to practice what we preach. We need to do something here at Watkins Chiropractic to get us all healthier and I need to take the lead to make it happen.”

That’s how it all began. Dr. Watkins decided to start the ***Watkins Chiropractic - Health in Motion Program***. As a group we acknowledged that ten of us would benefit from adopting a healthier lifestyle of better nutrition and more regular exercise. We also decided very quickly we needed some help to do it.

Dr. Watkins invited Kelly Leo, owner of Lanier Body Solutions (LBS), a certified Nutrition Counselor/Personal Trainer to design a plan and to come in and talk with us. Dr. Watkins offered to pay the fee for any staff person who wanted to sign on. Kelly met with each of us, asking lots of questions about our eating and exercise habits, favorite foods, and the times of day we had trouble controlling our eating habits.

He returned a few days later with an individualized Wellness Plan for each of us that would kick off our road to wellness. Now every Wednesday at 11:30 a.m., Kelly comes to our office to meet with us individually and review our food journal, make recommendations, and, oh yes, weigh in.

The Watkins Chiropractic *Health in Motion Program* continues to have an even bigger impact on us. Our employer has taken interest in us, cared about our health and wellness, and even more important she helped make it all happen. She not only cared about our physical health, but also how she could make it happen.

It has become one of the most successful teambuilding activities we ever did. Five days a week we are there to support each other. All of the *goodies* have disappeared from the break room. Every so often our group even indulges in *healthy* potluck luncheons. We all often eat lunch together and have found we are building rapport with each other. We have also learned diplomacy and tact – well, maybe not so much tact – especially if someone tries to vary from the healthy nutrition path and eat something not on their approved ‘Kelly list’! Humor has its place and we all have found we can laugh together.

Exercise and good nutrition are not easy to achieve. It takes work. Quite honestly, it is hard to eat and shop healthy. Most of us no longer visit the middle isles of our grocery stores. Exercise for some comes more easily, but we are working on it. Some are exercising at home, some are going to the gym and some have hired Kelly as a personal trainer. Changing clothes sizes can be expensive too, but leave it to a group of women to figure it out. We now trade clothes. As we go down in size we bring those clothes to work, put them on a clothes rack and the opportunity is there to save some money as our weight changes.

**The end result to date is something to smile about. We have lost 175 lbs and 102 inches!**

Here are quotes from some of the staff and how Dr. Watkins and the *Watkins Health in Motion Plan* have created a solution that is changing our lives.

**Dr. Mary Watkins** – “The staff are like my extended family. Together we have over 100 years of stories, births, child-raising, marriages, deaths, and yes, even some grandchildren. Their health is important to me, and I wanted to make sure the opportunity was there for them to stay healthy”.

**Angela** – “I am so thankful to Dr. Watkins & Kelly Leo for the opportunity to live a healthier life for myself and my family”.

**Sandy** – “I had to learn that food can be your friend. This will sound funny, because even though I have a weight problem, I don’t like to eat. I have learned that when you get your metabolism down to nothing it is very difficult to lose weight. So, now I eat 5 small meals a day. I am still learning to eat that often, but now I have a reason to eat...I lose weight”!



Kelly Leo, owner of Lanier Body Solutions, and Jeanne Hanlin, discuss a new recipe for her weekly meal plan.

**Dr. Amanda Watson** – “Helping people stay healthy as a Doctor obviously means a lot to me. When Dr. Watkins offered the opportunity for all of us to be a part of this program, I never hesitated to join in. We have a great group at Watkins Chiropractic and this program is just one more reason why being a part of Watkins Chiropractic is so special to me.”

**Michelle** – “I am so thankful for Dr. Watkins generosity and willingness to bring Kelly Leo on site to help us with our nutritional counseling & healthy living life styles. I have lost 30 lbs and feel great! It is even fun to try on new clothes. I am looking forward to staying on this path in the New Year. Thank you Dr. Watkins!”

**Linda** – “I have always been very focused on health, so I have not had to formally enroll in the program. However, I am so proud of everyone. Health is #1 with me, and the benefits this program has given my colleagues is worth all the ‘lack of junk food’ for the rest of us! Just kidding, I am glad we are all riding the health train”.

**Gina** – “I’ve tried to lose weight in the past without success. Working together has made it easier. It’s great to have my fellow co-workers to encourage each other. I have lost 25 lbs. and my cholesterol has dropped 30 points! I have a long way to go, but I know with the support I will make it this time”.

**Jeanne** – “I have diabetes and thanks to Dr. Watkins providing the opportunity to join this nutrition/wellness program, I am now exercising 3 times a week and following my individual nutrition plan. I have lost 30+ lbs., my sugar is averaging 95 with my A1C at 6.4%, and my cholesterol of 121. Dr. Watkins always has been a leader and it isn’t surprising to me that she has chosen one more way to make people’s lives better.”

We just started our 2<sup>nd</sup> 13-week session. It’s working! Our employer, Dr. Mary Watkins, continues to support our efforts both emotionally and financially. We all have learned together, as employer and employees we can conquer anything. Thanks to a boss who listens and cares, a nutrition counselor and personal trainer with patience and the rest of the ‘team’ assiduous enough to do something about it. We’re sure 2009 will be tops for us!

**When asked about advice for others starting their own wellness programs, the group offered the following comments:**

“Have a coach. We all feel that it is best to hire a professional to get you started correctly.”

“Have a support group or support person.”

“Don’t get discouraged.”

“Realize that there is a cost associated with eating healthier.”

**The group identified some obstacles that others need to be aware of that could hinder progress.**

“Changing your eating habits and learning what foods are good for you to eat.”

“Scheduling your meals during the day.”

“Making time to plan, prepare, and eat meals.”

“The extra personal expense of purchasing healthier foods. This can potentially be offset by saving on medicines and doctor bills as you become healthier. ”

“Getting the ‘buy-in’ from family and friends for your new lifestyle.”

“Recording what you eat in your food diary every day.”

“Developing your meal plans and learning what and how much you can eat.”

“Watching what you eat and where you eat if you go to a restaurant.”

**Notes about the program that Watkins Chiropractic is following:**

The diet balances the food groups to ensure that participants get needed nutrients.

The plan measures caloric intake.

The plan requires you to eat up to five small meals per day.

The goal is to lose one to two pounds per week.

The program is designed for the individual.

The program consists of changing to a healthier eating lifestyle.

The program can or cannot be designed with an exercise program.