

## **Face of Wellness Credits His Success to the Buddy System**

Six years ago, Jan Frandsen, a nurse practitioner at Hillcrest Hospital, went in for a regular physical exam and received startling news. Although he knew he was overweight, he was distressed to learn he also had high blood pressure, high cholesterol and was borderline diabetic. Frandsen realized it was time to get active; but it took his wife, Catherine Henry, MD, who works in the Head and Neck Institute on main campus, to jumpstart his exercise program. She got their bikes out of the garage and partnered with him on a joint wellness campaign.

### **IP: Was it hard incorporating exercise back into your life?**

**Frandsen:** When Cathy and I first started working out, we learned a few lessons the hard way. For example, to mark one of Cathy's birthdays, we decided to participate in a bike event, the Hancock Horizontal Hundred in Findley. It was a miserable experience – we barely completed the challenge of riding 100 kilometers (62 miles). We hadn't trained enough, and on top of it, we didn't drink or eat enough. The next time we learned how to do it right. We joined the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Team in Training program, and nine months later we successfully completed a 100-mile bike ride around Lake Tahoe.

### **IP: How has regular exercise changed your life?**

**Frandsen:** I'm doing things I never thought possible before. At age 54, I ran my first marathon in Cleveland, rode my bike around Lake Tahoe for the fifth year in a row and completed my first triathlon in Chicago – I raised money for blood cancer research in all three events. I also rode my bike 300 miles from Cleveland to Cincinnati in the Pan Ohio Hope Ride for the American Cancer Society. It feels terrific to have fun and know I'm supporting great causes at the same time.

### **IP: What was your greatest influence in your transformation to a more physically active lifestyle?**

**Frandsen:** I could not have done this without the encouragement and support of my wife. The "buddy system" has been vital for me. We've done this together, and we'll keep on going as a team. I also have many teammates in the Team in Training program who serve as buddies to train with and provide encouragement.

### **IP: How are you motivated to stay a Face of Wellness?**

**Frandsen:** Because exercise now is part of my daily routine, my blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol are down, my body mass index (a measure of body fat based on height and weight) continues to improve – and most importantly, I feel great.

*"Faces of Wellness," a monthly feature brought to you by Employee Communications and Employee Wellness, aims to recognize Cleveland Clinic employees who have made an improvement to their health or who lead a healthy lifestyle. Think you might be a Face of Wellness? [Visit www.cchs.net/wellness](http://www.cchs.net/wellness).*