

BALTIMORE TIMES ONLINE

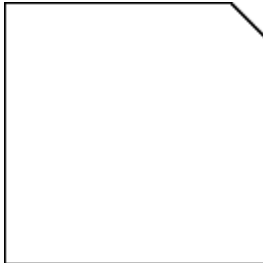
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LOCAL NEWS



Totally You Uplifts the Mind, Body and Soul of Obese Children

by Patreka White
Baltimore Times
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Imagine a 12-year-old-160-pound family member asking you, "What happens when you have too much fat around your heart?"

Louvenia Anderson's cousin asked her that question as she stood in her kitchen.

So what was Anderson's answer? Devise a program for obese children. It would take 15 years of preparation, but on Sunday, May 23 at noon, Anderson's dream will become a reality...when she opens *Totally You*, in the Miracle Temple Worship Center and Ministry Complex at 100 South Rock Glen Road.

Louvenia Anderson, founder/president of *Totally You* a program, inspired by her 12-year-old obese cousin, to nurture youth participant's psychological, spiritual, social, educational, and physical well-being.
 Credit: Courtesy Photo

Anderson made it her goal to help obese youth after she realized her cousin was asking for help. "My heart is with the children. I went back to school to become a personal trainer for children. I am a certified personal trainer through the American Aerobic Association International & International Sports Medicine Association (AAAI/ISMA), geared toward obese children, as well as an Aquatic Aerobic instructor," said Anderson.

Totally You is a seven-week mentoring and counseling program that focuses on the participants' social, educational, psychological, spiritual and physical well-being. It was designed to show children and their families how to make decisions regarding healthy eating habits and exercise.

"*Totally You* is to make sure I cover everything about a child. You can't touch one area without going into another. I wanted to deal with the total person. When we say 'totally you,' we mean mind, body and soul. We have a full staff that comprises a registered nurse, a social worker, a nutritionist, a personal trainer and an exercise instructor. The nutritionist will do grocery tours and also come to your home and do an inventory of your cabinets and refrigerator upon your request."

Anderson knows that obese children go through bouts of depression, emotional pain, loneliness, low-self esteem and feelings of isolation. "We have social workers on staff to do either group or individual assessments to combat those issues," she continues.

During the first week of the program, there are mandatory weight management and nutritional classes, which parents or guardians can participate in before the participants start the exercise classes. The classes are held three times a week.

"We hope to engage the entire family and keep everybody active. We want this to be a family affair; we don't want the family to think that this is just the child's problem. We take them on grocery tours to show them how to make healthier selections for the whole family," Anderson said.

She explains how everything does not have to be low-fat. However, the program

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offers low-fat menus, meal-planning, and dining-out tips.

The sessions offered in the program were chosen to benefit the children and what they can gain from them, including hip -op aerobics, Karate and etiquette classes. A week-long boot camp will be held closer to the end of the session. These classes build stamina, discipline, self-esteem and confidence.

According to the American Obesity Association, about 15.5 percent of adolescents ages 12 to 19 and 15.3 percent of children age six to eleven are obese. The increase in obesity has skyrocketed over the last 20 years. Obesity can be attributed to genetics, environment, and lack of exercise.

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To encourage the participants, the program focuses on girth-measurement, not weight.

"We only do inches, girth measurements. By showing a child how much they have lost by inches, it makes them excited because they can see a physical change," assured Anderson, "This gives the child a sense of accomplishment, something to be proud of."

Once the seven weeks are over, participants return to the center to do their weekly exercises and meet with their social worker.

The goal of the proposed phrogram is to improve the health of obese children and their families. Obesity is a growing concern for American families, especially African Americans. Totally You wants to help prevent the end result of obesity.

"The goal of Totally You is to have 'NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND,' by establishing a program for children and helping that child reach their goal," concluded Anderson

The grand opening of Totally You will be held May 23, noon to 4 p.m. at 100 South Rock Glen Road, Baltimore, MD 21229. For more information on the program, call 410 254-1555 or visit www.totallyyou.com.

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