



**national association
to advance
fat acceptance**

NAAFA Newsletter

January
2016

Dear William,

Please do continue sending your comments, suggestions, praise, and otherwise to us at pr@naafa.org

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Elizabeth Morris Fisher



The world suffered the loss of a beautiful soul on January 5, 2016 with the passing of Elizabeth Morris Fisher. Elizabeth was a longtime friend, NAAFA member and activist who loved and worked hard for the size acceptance community, particularly around educational accommodation, transportation and mobility issues.

Labels

[January Video of the Month](#)

Never allow yourself to be defined by the labels others might attach to you. Listen and take to heart the wise words of this young lady.

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=cMLQ7kx74AM>

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Elizabeth leaves behind a loving husband, Alan, as well as many family members and friends who treasured their relationship and will miss her greatly.

Behind that friendly smile was a true activist. She was not afraid to take on the Louisiana State University because they did not have desks that would accommodate her and other students of size. Read about her experience here: <http://ifisher.com/school/index.htm>

Elizabeth was not afraid to take on the auto industry with her seat belt project:

"I created this website in 1999 because Honda said NO to seat belts for larger passengers. This site tells the story of my odyssey with Honda and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration but more importantly, www.ifisher.com serves as a library of information for those in need of a longer seatbelt.

Seat belts should fit EVERY body."

--Elizabeth Fisher

<http://www.ifisher.com/honda.asp>

She did not have special training that would enable her to take on these projects; she just saw something wrong and tried to fix it. She inspired many with her wit, sense of humor, passion for life and fearless energy for fighting the good fight.

When Elizabeth discovered the TravelScoot, it changed her life. She was happy to champion the cause of telling people of size about this great tool that would give them back their mobility.

A celebration of Elizabeth's life was held in Baton Rouge, LA on Saturday, January 9, 2016. If you care to make a donation to a project that was dear to her heart, family and friends have set up a fund that will help those with mobility issues obtain a TravelScoot: <https://www.gofundme.com/6dj228wk>

Future NAAFA Conferences

We have had a number of inquiries regarding future NAAFA conferences. Unfortunately, NAAFA will not be hosting a conference in 2016. The expenses associated with coordinating and guaranteeing a conference are more than the organization can afford at present.

We are looking at new ways to connect with our membership to offer training and networking opportunities. NAAFA representatives will be attending some of the social events around the country in 2016 to see if we can partner with them in some way and attract new members that might not otherwise be aware of NAAFA and civil rights work.

If you have ideas or suggestions regarding how we can connect to NAAFA members outside of holding a conference, we would love to hear your thoughts! Please contact us at secretary@naafa.org

NAAFA: 2015 in Review

by Darliene Howell

At the beginning of every new year, we are encouraged to look at what we have accomplished and propose what we hope to achieve in the year to come. The year 2015 has been a year of activism for NAAFA.

In 2015:

- NAAFA provided written statements to the Massachusetts legislature on a bill that would add height and weight to the State's anti-discrimination laws.
- We gave feedback to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on their proposed rules regarding employer wellness programs, twice. The first was a comment on implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the latest was on a proposed rule to amend the regulations implementing Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act.
- We opposed a Nevada bill that officially declared obesity a disease.
- NAAFA coordinated a statement with other size-acceptance organizations in standing against the co-opting of people-first language by weight loss surgeons and the diet industry.

- We wrote to the House Ways and Means Committee, Subcommittee on Health, speaking against a bill that would authorize Medicare funding of "intensive behavioral therapy" for obesity and suggested a Health at Every Size approach instead.
- NAAFA petitioned the Food and Drug Administration and the manufacturers of prescription epinephrine auto-injectors to add a new device that increases the needle length and dosage for people of larger body size.
- We opposed the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) in its "Ban the F Word" movement.
- NAAFA's social media conducted a campaign to counter National Obesity Care Week sponsored by the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, the Obesity Action Coalition, the Obesity Society and Strategies to Overcome and Prevent Obesity Alliance.
- We issued a statement in support of a proposed Florida statute protecting public employees from "Lifestyle Discrimination".
- NAAFA created *#NoFatShaming* Holiday memes for social media, with the first specifically directed at Betabrand's "Santa the Hutt" store display in San Francisco.
- Peggy Howell, our PR Director, was invited to be a Health Advocate blogger on U.S. News and World Report online.
- NAAFA was mentioned or quoted in 12 different news articles.
- The University of Maryland is introducing a new "Fat Studies" course that will require students to explore NAAFA's website as part of their syllabus.

NAAFA's Board of Directors conducted a membership survey, received feedback on updating all of our brochures, toolkits and fact sheets from our Advisory Board, reviewed and updated our policies, and looked at ways we can save money on administrative costs.

Projects that will be moving forward in 2016 are: the update of the brochures, toolkits and fact sheets; creating a new toolkit, *Size Diversity in Higher Education*; and continued recruitment of new Board of Directors members. We will continue to address issues that arise in the media and that are brought to our attention by our members throughout the year.

NAAFA's Board of Directors would like to thank every one of you for your continued moral and financial support. You are the reason we keep looking forward.

Final Words



by Tony Harrell

As announced by the invitation in last month's newsletter, I am concluding my term as Board Treasurer on January 31, 2016.

I am proud of my contributions to the NAAFA Board of Directors, including:

- Modernizing the accounting system and reducing our related expenses;
- Securing a venue for the 2014 NAAFA Conference that, combined with valiant fundraising efforts by fellow Board Members, turned what was expected to be a programming expense into a modest profit;
- Creating ideas to expand our demographic reach that will be implemented in the months to come, and;
- Providing a perspective as a "typical-size" supporter of fat people.

Thank you to all Board Members past and present that I have had the pleasure to work with. Your guidance and support have been appreciated.

To all NAAFA members and supporters, I encourage you to continue to support the only organization that exists to fight for your rights.

Could Wellness Programs Invade Privacy?

NAAFA has filed a public comment on possible changes to wellness programs which could potentially invade the privacy of employees' family members.

NAAFA, a civil rights organization working for Equality at Every Size, has accepted the invitation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to comment regarding proposed changes to the implementation of Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) as they relate to employer wellness programs. The proposed changes included the possibility of collecting genetic information on spouses and families of employees that participate in employer wellness programs.

In an effort for our voices to be considered in the finalizing of these rule changes, NAAFA's comment spoke to several areas including:

- Genes and their influence on body size
- The expansion of employer control
- Balancing work and family responsibilities
- An alternative to disclosing health information
- Whether it should be required by all wellness programs
- Health promotion or cost shifting?
- Best practices should include Health At Every Size

The full text of NAAFA's comment may be viewed at: <http://tinyurl.com/jsgm5nk>

Make it Easy



by Cinder Ernst

This is resolution time . . . but don't worry: it will be over soon!

When I became a Medical Exercise Specialist in 1998, the director of the program joked about how the folks who hit the ground running in January are usually sidelined and injured by Martin Luther King Day. That doesn't have to be you!

Avoid the "all or nothing" idea that resolutions promote. Do you know what I mean? It's when you decide you're really gonna do it this year . . . you're gonna start exercising. Most people start out gang-busters and get hurt or just can't sustain the pace and so they drop out. It's "all or nothing". Some folks are so overwhelmed by the "all" of it that they never get started. The "all or nothing" scenario ends in nothing except feeling worse.

Instead, tune yourself for happy fitness success by centering yourself, taking a small action, and then appreciating yourself for taking that

action. To center yourself, simply think a thought that feels good and then take your action. A sweet and easy way to find that thought is to bring to mind someone who is easy to love. I usually use my dog here.

Center yourself first, then a small step. Try our favorite small step: the *Tush Tilt*.

I offer this exercise because it is so easy to do and incredibly powerful for pain reduction and improving mobility. This combo exercise reduces back and knee pain. The *Tush Tilt* also strengthens your core which helps walking, standing and activities of daily living. And it strengthens your butt muscles which makes everything involving your knees easier. Here's a video tutorial:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDQBv-rYhL8>

For the month of January I'm offering FREE HELP to you, my NAAFA friends. Just sign up here for a complimentary Happy Fitness Consultation

<http://callwithcinder.com>

Media and Research Roundup

by Bill and Terri Weitze

[Check <http://naafa.org> and

<http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/naafanews/conversations/topics> for the latest news.]

July 22, 2015: A study of the mental health of WLS (weight loss surgery) patients finds that at 10 years, although the surgery group achieved "successful" weight loss (27% reduction of pre-operative weight), they showed significant deterioration in general mental health, neuroticism, sense of control, and fear of intimacy scores.

<http://www.nature.com/ejcn/journal/v70/n1/abs/ejcn2015112a.html>

October 11, 2015: A study on the effects of using a Health at Every Size approach on morbidly obese, pre-menopausal women, finds that it is effective for maintaining weight and improved psychological functioning.

[http://www.maturitas.org/article/S0378-5122\(15\)30059-1/abstract](http://www.maturitas.org/article/S0378-5122(15)30059-1/abstract)

November 22, 2015: A study of modifiable risk factors (smoking, diet, physical activity, screening, and BMI) concludes that of these, BMI has the lowest association with higher cancer mortality among people of low socioeconomic status.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26650930>

December 2, 2015: Researchers propose an alternate approach to the "obesity problem", by developing a solution focused on improving health rather than weight loss, as well as developing interventions to reduce weight stigma and discrimination.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/spc3.12223/abstract>

December 15, 2015: A study finds that teaching adolescents to reduce the time between bites while eating may help with weight control. Each "adhering" participant was given a portable 30-second hourglass to time their bites of food as part of a program to develop healthy eating habits. (Sounds a bit like Fletcherism.) The study was small, lasted only a year, and 22 of the original 54 participants dropped out.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26667210>

December 20, 2015: A study of men in Sweden finds that low aerobic fitness in late adolescence is associated with increased risk of early death. Fat and fit men had a higher risk than unfit "normal" weight men. Although the study size is large, there are relatively few deaths; therefore, for the vast majority of these men, their future cause of death is unknown.

<http://ije.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2015/12/20/ije.dyv321.short>

December 21, 2015: Rather than making healthier food affordable, the government of Malta, a tiny island nation located in the Mediterranean, is putting restrictions on sugary drinks and fatty foods in schools and requiring BMI measurement of all children between ages 3 to 16. With 90% of their food being imported, foods such as fish and fresh vegetables are often not affordable.

<http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/12/22/world/europe/on-a-mediterranean-island-but-far-from-a-mediterranean-diet.html>

December 22, 2015: Researchers conclude that weight loss surgery (WLS) results in reduction of hypertension and type 2 diabetes, as well as significant weight loss over a 4-year period. It appears that at the 4-year point, most participants were

seeing weight regain. It's also noteworthy that (a) about 1/3 of participants in the study did not return for follow-up, and (b) WLS had no positive effect on mortality overall (possibly due to risk death during surgery).

<http://conscienhealth.org/2015/12/stunning-reductions-in-health-risks-with-bariatric-surgery>
<http://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1001925>

January 2016: The Fourth Annual Weight Stigma Conference will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia on April 29 and 30, and are now accepting abstracts for oral presentations, posters, and session proposals, with an interest in non-traditional submissions (e.g. media, performance, art).

<http://stigmaconference.com>

January 1, 2016: Researchers, including cardiologists, studying mummified bodies finds that pre-modern humans also suffered from heart disease and arteriosclerosis, leading them to question the accepted idea that these conditions are due to the modern diet and lack of exercise.

<http://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/the-surprising-thing-ancient-mummies-tell-us-about-what-to-eat/ar-BBo7gIW>

January 5, 2016: A study on workplace weight loss incentive programs finds that they are, for the most part, ineffective. The authors suggest that employers use larger or more immediate incentives, although it also seems possible that these programs simply do not work.

http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/news/News_Releases/2016/01/patel
<http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/35/1/71.abstract>

January 5, 2016: The American College of Cardiology provides an update of its list of 10 key points on heart disease and stroke statistics. Interestingly, one point is that treatment of risk factors for fat patients is effective "independent of weight loss".

<http://www.acc.org/latest-in-cardiology/ten-points-to-remember/2016/01/05/13/08/heart-disease-and-stroke-statistics-2016-update>

January 15, 2016: Researchers look at the implications of applying a weight neutral, Health at Every Size paradigm as a means of reducing weight bias in research, education and practice. This article and more can be found in the most recent issue of Fat Studies, an interdisciplinary journal of body weight and society (second link).

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21604851.2016.1116353>
<http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ufts20/current>

Founded in 1969, NAAFA, the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, is a non-profit human rights organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for fat people. NAAFA works to eliminate discrimination based on body size and provide fat people with the tools for self-empowerment through public education, advocacy, and member support.

On the web: <http://www.naafa.org>

NAAFA, Inc. | P.O. Box 4662 | Foster City | CA | 94404-0662