

“I felt like a 35 year old trapped in a 65 year old’s body.”

Last year at this time Heather Vanderlaan, of Lansing, was at her wit’s end. The stay-at-home mom was having a hard time keeping up with her three young children (ages 8, 5 and 3) and keeping herself healthy. Tipping the scales at 252 lbs. her cholesterol skyrocketed, stress was overwhelming, sleep was non-existent and no matter how hard she exercised, she couldn’t lose weight.

“I found myself one night praying to God and asking him to help me make new choices,” she said. “I knew I had to make a lifestyle choice and I had to do it right away.”

Vanderlaan’s first move was to change doctors. Through careful monitoring and counseling, her new doctor, David Pawsat, started to help her to naturally work her way off medications.

She found new ways to eat with the help of Chris Johnson’s *Meal Patterning*, and with the help of a trainer she found ways to exercise her core muscles and begin a new exercise program that concentrated on form instead of frequency and intensity.

She chooses to eat as much natural, organic food as possible, and includes power walking, running and biking during the week, most times with her three-year-old daughter, Olivia.

The results are amazing. Vanderlaan said she lost 58 pounds in 2006, more than 58 inches off her body and has more energy than ever before—not to mention a new outlook on life

“I ran the dunes this summer,” Vanderlaan said. “Our family usually goes on vacation and I would walk the dunes normally, but this year I ran the dunes, up, down and up again. It felt great.”

Her healthier lifestyle resulted in regular sleep every night, she’s down to one medication for a blood disorder and has her setting goals to run 5Ks in 2007 and possibly triathlons later.

“It’s really eye-opening when you realize that you need help to make changes in your life,” she said. “But when you can make those changes, and have a chance to see the results, it just feels great. I want to keep eating healthy. I want to exercise. And I now have the energy and passion to do it.

Most of all though, she’s teaching her children about the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

“Teaching my children that this is a part of our world and that it is good for you really motivates me,” she said.



AFTER: Heather Vanderlaan has a much brighter smile and a lot more energy for Olivia, 3, and her other children.

Have you, or someone you know, made a lifestyle change to lose weight? Let us know about it! E-mail us at info@healthyandfitmagazine.com.