

# BRANDY SALINAS

Wellness Champion of the Month



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Brandy Salinas first heard about the Hidalgo County Wellness Program during a presentation about two years ago at the department she works for. It was at that time she says she gained the motivation to make a change in her health.

She said she had a membership at a gym for more than 10 years but was never really pushed to improve.

“There wasn’t really anybody there to coach us, you know unless you had a personal trainer. So, I would go to the gym and do my own thing, watch people. I kind of lived an active lifestyle, but I wasn’t dedicated to it,” Salinas said.

Salinas started going to the Hidalgo County Precinct 2 Indoor Sports Complex in Pharr, where she felt more inclined to keep going.

“Going to the sports complex — I really, really enjoy it. We have our trainers there that push us. We keep in contact — whether it is through social media,” she explained. “So it’s exciting to be part of, even if it’s a small group. We try to get people to go and attend.”

The access to the sports complex and the trainers for county employees was something that stood out the most with the Hidalgo County Wellness Program for her. Salinas says the trainers became a great support system.

“They care about our wellbeing and our health,” said Salinas. “We have that employee wellness [Facebook] page, so throughout the day or once in a while, we’ll send out a message.”

She mentioned what had her hesitate to make a change for a healthier lifestyle in the past was that— in her opinion — she always felt bored working out.

“I had gone to the doctor, and the first thing she says, ‘You’re overweight, you need to lose some weight, even if it’s walking.’ I find just walking kind of gets boring, even if it’s 30 minutes. After 10 minutes, I’m already like — it’s boring!” she said.

Salinas described that boring feeling changed at the Precinct 2 Indoor Sports Complex. "You have somebody there telling you how to stretch. They're coaching you through it, telling you what's next. Time goes by fast and you're done in 30-40 minutes, and you had a great workout. I really enjoy doing that."

She is always informing other coworkers about the wellness program and invites them to join a workout session at the sports complex.

"[My coworkers] see me walk in and I'm sore or I'm hurting. They say, 'What's wrong?' 'I worked out this morning!' This is what we did," Salinas described. "I'm throwing it in there, 'Hey, you should come join.' We had somebody recently come on board, so that was the first thing I told her. I said, 'Hey, the county has a fitness class. You should join.' Then we start talking about eating healthy. I'm constantly telling people."

She says she stays in contact with other colleagues from other departments who "faithfully" go to the sports complex. They usually ask each other if they will be making it to the gym.

Salinas says she has incorporated more healthy foods into her diet, even with the temptations she runs into.

"It's hard coming to work and the first thing, it's like, 'Hey, do you want tacos?' But I try to say no. I do drink more water throughout the day. I try to eat healthier meals and to incorporate vegetables into my meals. I do have more energy throughout the day. Then when I get home, I still have a little more energy to do things around the house versus just going to lay down or take a nap."

Salinas told us she and her husband enjoy going for a bike ride around their neighborhood and will sometimes meet up with her sister and her children for a ride at a park.

She's grateful to have access to the services offered through the Wellness Program. Salinas has seen an improvement in her health and wishes others working for the county to take the first step towards a healthier lifestyle.

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