

HEALTH & WELLNESS

BENEFITS WELLNESS WORKLIFE
www.gvsu.edu/healthwellness



Success Story: Esther Ricco

Esther Ricco, Executive Assistant to the Vice President of Finance and Administration, will celebrate her 18 year anniversary working for GVSU this month. By the time she accepted her current position in 2009, she was going through big changes and had started making some big changes herself.

Esther grew up in an unhealthy environment: her parents were heavy smokers, they ate unhealthy foods, and were not physically active. These childhood habits led her to become overweight, and over the course of 20 years, Esther had tried to lose weight. She had an on and off relationship with Weight Watchers and was constantly searching for quick fixes. Being raised in a culture of poor health combined with years of unsuccessful weight loss, Esther felt doomed to a life of unhealthiness.

Her parents' poor health choices led them to develop serious illnesses, and both passed away in 2007. While Esther never became a smoker, many other bad habits had been deeply engrained. She had foot surgery later that year, and it would've been easy to make excuses and quit the Weight Watchers program. But this was her wake up call. She thought, "If I don't start changing what I'm doing right now, I'm going to end up like them."

"It has to start with you...you have to make that decision to become healthier."

She joined Weight Watchers for the last time in 2007 and hasn't looked back. While today she has an understanding of health and nutrition, she still attends meetings regularly to help keep her in check. She takes advantage of the [faculty and staff SPINNING classes](#),

runs and lifts weights three times a week, and recently started cycling with her husband on the weekends. Esther also gets a share from the [Sustainable Agriculture Project](#) to get exposed to different healthy foods.

However, it wasn't easy getting to where she is now. It took Esther three and a half years to lose 70 pounds and reach her goal weight. The key was finally realizing that those quick fixes she kept trying weren't ever going to work, and advises those who want to become healthier to accept that it's going to be a lifestyle change. She also emphasizes to make sure those changes are things that will be sustainable day in and day out. "You have to start slow and keep building these things into your life."

And Esther has done just that. She's been so consistent with making her health a priority that she even skipped lunch with her coworkers on a past birthday to go to SPIN class instead. "[You have to] set a goal and get it done. Set aside that time for you. Make that appointment with yourself, [it's] the most important appointment."

Interested in joining the GVSU Weight Watchers group? Visit [our website](#) for more information.

Life Event Change?

Remember to Contact the Benefits Office

- [Qualified Events Chart](#) (Notify HR within 30 days of Qualified Events)
 - [Change in Marital Status](#)
 - [Addition of a Household Member](#)
 - [Birth, adoption, or placement for adoption](#)
 - [Loss of a spouse, household member, or dependent](#)
 - [Loss of actively employed GVSU faculty/staff member](#)
 - [Termination or commencement of employment by employee's spouse or household member](#)
 - [Change in age or school status of a dependent](#)
 - [Retirement](#)
 - [Termination of Employment](#)
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The Lifestyle and Financial Impact of

Caring for Older Loved Ones

You are invited to participate in a free Fidelity webcast, Role Reversal: Taking Care of Older Loved Ones, on August 15 and 16. This webcast explores the lifestyle and financial impact of caring for loved ones as they get older – without losing sight of your own goals. Some of the valuable things you'll learn include:

- Finding life balance while caring for loved ones
- Protecting your own financial picture
- 4 key actions to take, and when to take them

Two sessions are available: August 15 at 1 pm and August 16 at 3 pm.

[Register Now](#)

Can't attend but still want help? Advice from Fidelity is always available as a free employee benefit. Call 888-766-6813 today.

Thinking About Retirement?

It's never too early or too late to develop your plan. Whether 20 years, 5 years or two months out. Review all of the benefits, plans, and resources available for GVSU faculty and staff on our [Retiree Benefits](#) page.

1 Campus Drive 1090 James H. Zumberge Hall Allendale, MI 49401

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