

## Marlene and Hal Make One Change ... Again

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Last January the Fauquier Health Wellness Center introduced the Make One Change Challenge to the community. The philosophy: While unrealistic health goals can be overwhelming and lead to failure, focusing on one change at a time can put success within reach. Make One Change encourages participants to focus on one of five improvements in their health: weight loss, stress management, smoking cessation, healthy eating or physical activity for 12 weeks. The program worked and success rates skyrocketed. After the program, many stayed on the path they established and continue to see progress.



Marlene and Hal now have the tools to deal with their stress.

Maintaining a healthy weight, eating correctly, exercising and not smoking are the well established pillars of good health; their benefits are a given. The value of stress management, though, is often overlooked or underestimated.

Hal McCarty and Marlene Hahn were an upbeat, healthy-looking couple. It came as a surprise when they learned that there was a problem with his heart. When Marlene suggested that stress might be a contributing factor, he was reluctant to accept it at first, but then realized she was right.

Just as they were about to plunk down a large amount of cash to attend a famous stress management program in California, they learned about the Make One Change program right here in Warrenton. It was life-changing for them both. Hal says, “I am in a better place. I am able to deal with things that catch me off guard. I am more grounded.” Hal has learned that, “No matter how much or how little stress you think you have, the toll it takes on you is always worse than you think, and the effects can be devastating.”

Marlene agrees. “Stress hits us all in different ways, at different times, so we all need different tools. Hal and I both benefit from regular meditation, which we learned during the Make One Change sessions. I love yoga for stress relief, while Hal focuses on identifying the stress factors – he takes a mindful approach. And when Hal recognizes that he’s stressed, he uses physical exercise to lessen its effects.”

Hal and Marlene are now also watching what they eat and exercising, but they plan to do the stress management program again this year. “There was so much to learn that it is hard to take it all in the first time, and the program lead, Dottie Williams, RN, does a fantastic job.”