

Village On A Diet

Media Coverage

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THE PROVINCE

<http://www.theprovince.com/health/Tubbies+tiny+Taylor+shed+pounds+reality+show/3669639/story.html>

Tubbies in tiny Taylor, B.C., shed pounds for CBC-TV reality show

BY ETHAN BARON, THE PROVINCE OCTOBER 14, 2010 7:01

Province columnist Ethan Baron
Photograph by: File photo, The Province

I'm going to tell you a secret: This winter, CBC-TV plans to run a 10-part reality show filmed in a small northern B.C. town with a big weight problem.

Earlier this year, Vancouver film company Force Four Entertainment put Taylor (population 1,384) on a diet.

"When we first visited Taylor, B.C., we knew we found a community with people committed to making big changes when it comes to living healthier lives," says an email to villagers from Force Four.

Let me translate: "We searched all over Canada for a town full of fat, unhealthy people, and Taylor won hands-down."

CBC-TV did not respond to a request for an interview but is expected to announce the *Village on a Diet* series next month.

Force Four hired two personal trainers — including Vancouver fitness god Garfield Wilson — plus a doctor, a dietitian, a psychologist and a chef to transform the eating and exercise habits of the town.

Before the project, many in Taylor showed the physical effects of poor diets and lack of exercise, says participant Tiana Folk, 19.

The film production brought profound change, says Folk, who dropped 10 pounds.

"Not only did it help each person individually to lose weight and eat better, it brought the whole community together, really close," Folk says.

"Before, you wouldn't see that many people outside walking, where now you see people outside all the time."

Throughout the 90-day filming, participants took part in "endurance tests" including pushups and hula-hoop rotations, and took part in healthy-cooking seminars, fitness and dietary workshops, walks, hikes and hill-climbs.

A number of factors conspire to pad the flesh in northern B.C., say health experts involved in the project.

Maria Thomas, a Vancouver dietitian brought to Taylor by Force Four, notes that long winters with heavy snowfall and short days deter outdoor activity.

Northern Health Authority dietitian Nita Abbi, who gave workshops to participants, says fresh fruits and vegetables are harder to come by in the north, and truckers and workers in oil-industry camps tend to eat unhealthy foods.

Taylor, which prides itself as "The Industrial Capital of the North" and sits 14 kilometres south of Fort St. John, lacks some amenities to entice people outside, Abbi says.

"You don't really look out your window and decide, 'I'm going to go for a walk,' because it's not the most esthetically pleasing town," Abbi says.

Some in Taylor looked askance at the born-again fitness folks.

"Them kind of people, they didn't really patronize our place," says Brian Burtch, owner of the Mile 36 Cafe, where bacon and eggs, burgers and cinnamon buns fill burgeoning bellies.

"We have working-class people coming in here. They just want to eat and go back to work."

Down at Coyote's Pub, bartender Sharon Parsons has noted a few more salad orders than usual, and some women choosing low-calorie coolers. But the men have kept to habit, Parsons says.

"They're stuck in their ways with their beer, and that's all there is to it. There's no changing them."

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THE DRUMHELLER MAIL

http://www.drumhellermail.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9273:cbcs-village-on-a-diet-considers-drumheller&catid=13:headline-news&Itemid=228

CBC's Village on a Diet considers Drumheller

THURSDAY, 09 DECEMBER 2010 00:00 KYLE SMYLIE



The CBC's newest flagship show Village on a Diet, a 10 hour series which challenges a Canadian town to lose weight, is considering Drumheller as a possible focus of its entire second season.

The show, which airs its first season set in Taylor, B.C. on January 3, brings a professional weight loss team to a town to encourage all its residents to try and change their unhealthy lifestyle in a three month journey. The show hopes to begin filming its second season in April of next year.

In order to make the pitch for Drumheller to CBC, producer Laurie Case says residents must express their interest in partaking.

"We're looking for a community that has great character, beauty and spirit; one which can be an example to the rest of the country by showing that it's possible for a community to band together to change their lives," said Case of Force Four Entertainment.

"Drumheller is doing well with the amount of support I've received, I think it could make it into the shortlist," said Case.

"It would be wonderful for Drumheller to get that kind of exposure in a program that runs for an entire season," said Paul Salvatore, Director of Community Services. "We're very supportive of this opportunity."

This is not just a weight-loss program, says Case. Through three months of filming, they provide the town with a support team of six health experts – a doctor, psychologist, dietitian, two physical trainers, and a chef. The goal for the town is to lose a target amount of weight collectively, 2,000 lbs. This is accomplished through education, lifestyle changes, and physical activity, says Case.

"We're looking for any interested participants or groups, as well as a 'town crier' to champion this," says Case. "The town crier is someone who would be passionate about the project, and passionate about building community spirit and health."

Those interested in taking part, voicing interest or support of filming in Drumheller, and those who want to, or know someone to lead the town can e-mail producer Laurie Case at laurie@forcefour.com.

The central health region of Alberta, where Drumheller lies, is above average for overweight or obesity, at 58.5 per cent. The Canadian average is 51.6 per cent.

American networks have been producing weigh-loss shows for years now, and finally Canadians will see that America is not alone in the fight against obesity.

Case says the approach of Village on a Diet is different than similar weight-loss shows.

"I think it's a better concept to have experts come into your environment instead of going off to a fat camp," said Case. "I wouldn't call it a weight-loss show, even though that's the final goal. I think it's the longterm success of what's happening to individuals and communities is the goal of this show."

"Drumheller is a great looking town, the demographic is right, but really the thing that will work in Drumheller's favour will be the support I receive."



<http://www.whatsoninvancover.ca/a-town-slims-down-village-on-a-diet/>

A TOWN SLIMS DOWN: 'VILLAGE ON A DIET'

Ali Zentner doesn't like the F word ("fat"), but she has to say that we are a country in need of a diet and exercise plan. A weight-loss doctor from Vancouver, Zentner is one of several experts enlisted to help the town of Taylor, B.C., work off a ton of weight. The result of that experiment is the series "Village on a Diet," debuting Monday, Jan. 3, on CBUT.

The show is the centerpiece of the CBC healthy living initiative "Live Right Now." "It's over a period of 10 weeks," Zentner says. "And it's an indicator of weight loss in general. There are people who do really well and lose 5 to 10 percent of their body weight. And there are those who make small changes."

Taylor is a town of roughly 1,400 people in the Peace River country. It's remote, it's 14 kilometers from the nearest city, Fort St. John, and it has very long winters. In other words, it's an ideal place to gain weight if you don't watch yourself. Yet, Zentner says, it's also something of a model of the Canadian condition. "About 60 percent of Taylor is obese," she says.

"Our statistics are from 2006, and they show that 27 percent of Canadians are obese, but almost 50 percent of Canadians are overweight. And in Taylor, the numbers are more than twice the national average. But that's not extreme in terms of what we're seeing in Canada." Taylor was the winner of an online call for communities volunteering to lose a ton of weight in three months. But don't even think of calling it the fattest town in Canada. "Several towns were vying to be the town to get healthy," Zentner says. "The reason I'm not a fan of the F word is that it denotes all the negative social connotations of this disease. This is a town that should be proud of itself, because this town asked for help."

THE PROVINCE

“Taylor, B.C., put on a diet in new CBC reality show”

<http://www.theprovince.com/health/Taylor+diet+reality+show/4046044/story.html>

BY GLEN SCHAEFER, THE PROVINCE

DECEMBER 31, 2010



Chef Jonathan giving away healthy groceries on CBC's *Village on a Diet*.
Photograph by: Submitted photo, CBC

When a Vancouver-based TV documentary crew and a team of health professionals descended on the small northern B.C. town of Taylor for three months to film the CBC series *Village on a Diet*, there was no chance they'd blend in with the townsfolk.

“When we first showed up, it wasn't just the experts but all the crew . . . for the most part, those [out of town] people are not as large,” says series executive producer John Ritchie.

The contrast between slim outsiders and big townsfolk is the most jarring visual in the show's pilot episode. Ritchie and his crew were looking for a village that wanted to address their obesity problem, and picked Taylor, just south of Fort St. John, after talking with the town council about the community's own hopes for addressing their health issues.

“We were looking for a part of the country where obesity is a huge problem, and obesity rates in northern B.C. are far higher than they are in the city,” says Ritchie.

The producers brought in experts in various fields — trainers Mike Vienot and Garfield Wilson, obesity specialist Dr. Ali Zentner, dietician Maria Thomas, chef Jonathan Chovancek and psychologist Adele Fox — to help the 1,400 Taylor residents through the exercise, diet and lifestyle changes needed to lose a cumulative tonne of weight.

“Mostly it’s lifestyle choices,” says Ritchie, who recalls walking the small town in the early days of filming last April and seeing a golf cart parked at a house near the town golf course. Ritchie knocked on the door and talked to the cart’s owner.

“He called it the Green Hornet,” says Ritchie. “Seriously, the golf course was two blocks away. He said ‘This way I don’t have to walk to the golf course.’ He would drive to the golf course and then just drive around, playing golf. Most people had never walked around that golf course, ever.”

As well, the long northern winters kept people inside, watching TV and eating. The town’s elementary school bought sports jerseys in adult sizes, to fit the big students.

The show — 10 hour-long episodes and another hour in which the crew returned to the town months later for a follow-up — focuses on the stories of 14 townspeople, including a woman in her 20s who postponed her wedding because she wasn’t happy with how she looked in a wedding dress, a teenaged boy being home-schooled because he was bullied about his weight, and a pizza-shop owner who has to change her menu for her family

Ritchie says he had to address people’s concerns that the show wouldn’t simply be voyeurism.

“That was a genuine concern, something we talked about with everybody. We constantly said that we were making a documentary series, we’re not making a reality show.”

He says other shows about weight loss put their subjects in artificial settings, but he wanted the show’s subjects to be living their normal lives.

“As far as the intrusion into their personal lives, well, anybody who’s ever appeared in any documentary has that, just the fact that a TV camera is there,” Ritchie says. So people’s diet and workout plans “automatically became a much bigger deal.”

The pilot episode hints at testy moments to come, particularly a bleeped exchange between the out-of-town chef and the pizza-shop owner.

“We found out early on that the chef’s tofu was never going to fly,” says Ritchie. “They were never going to eat tofu, so we said ‘OK Jonathan, let’s find a different way to give them healthy food.’ Even if they cut their steaks in half, from 12-ounce to six-ounce steaks.”

On the activity front, the first episode catches the young bride-to-be throwing up in the middle of her first vigorous workout. Of the show’s main participants, one didn’t make it into much of the final cut.

The show invited all the townfolk to big group fitness events, and as many as 300 people came out at first.

“Those numbers dropped drastically over the course of the series, which is part of the story; how the enthusiasm waned and how the experts reacted,” Ritchie says.

“Along the way people stumble, people fail, but the vast majority of these people had some real successes. It’s not easy to do what these people are being asked to do — working out with Mike Vienot scares me.”

NORTH SHORE NEWS

<http://www.nsnews.com/health/Heavy+stuff/4045374/story.html>

Heavy stuff

BY ERIN MCPHEE, NORTH SHORE NEWS
DECEMBER 31, 2010



With the help of a team of weight loss and nutrition experts, the residents of Taylor, B.C. were challenged to shed as many pounds as possible during a three month period on CBC's Village on a Diet. More than 60 per cent of Taylor residents are overweight or obese.

Photograph by: submitted, for the News

- Village on a Diet premieres Monday, Jan. 3 at 9 p.m., on CBC Television. Info: www.cbc.ca/village.

It wouldn't be easy, but that didn't prevent the residents of Taylor, B.C. from teaming up to lose a ton of collective weight in a mere three-month period.

Their incredible journey, seeing them come together as a community and put their health first -- learning how to eat well and exercise -- was captured by Vancouver television production company Force Four Entertainment

and the resulting 10-part series, Village on a Diet, will premiere Monday, Jan. 3 at 9 p.m. on CBC Television.

"This is a big project for us," says North Vancouver resident John Ritchie, executive producer and partner of Force Four Entertainment. The company produces many types of shows --examples include the Gemini Award-winning W Network series The Cupcake Girls, The Shopping Bags and Murder She Solved: True Crime for the Oprah Winfrey Network.

Village on a Diet marks the biggest factual series Force Four has ever taken on.

"We got the idea that it would be neat to do a series about a town that all goes on a diet," says Ritchie.

Having heard of a community that had already taken on a challenge of this sort, they looked for another that might be interested and approached the District of Taylor, an oil and gas town located approximately 20 kilometres south of Fort St. John. According to production company materials, Taylor is home to 1,400 people and it's estimated that more than 60 per cent are overweight or obese.

Filming for the show occurred from mid-April to mid-July. There were four crews on location, shooting six days a week.

"I say the series has kind of a documentary heart to it because it was really following their lives," says Ritchie.

He hopes the individual stories of residents -- for example, 27-year-old bride Jamie who dreams of feeling beautiful on her wedding day and couple Brent and Sheena who are having trouble conceiving -- resonate with audiences.

"There's some really just incredibly compelling stories of these different people and what they want out of life and hopefully people will find it pretty inspiring," he says.

The show also has a lighter side, displaying a sense of humour at times, something the producers felt was also important.

Helping the residents achieve their goals -- both collective and personal -- were a team of experts, including a dietician, chef, psychologist, two trainers and Dr. Ali Zentner, a specialist in cardiac risk management and obesity. A Vancouver resident, Zentner practices internal medicine in West Vancouver at Continuum Medical Care.

"We know problems all too well in the world," she says. "It's time we had a show that highlighted the problems but made us feel really good about the solutions."

Zentner hopes people looking to make a positive life change opt to tune in.

"Almost more importantly I would hope that the community at large watches and sees that this is a patient population that deserves a voice, that does have a disease, and that needs as much understanding as any other disease," she says.

As well, Zentner hopes the show gets the attention of government officials, encouraging them to address the problem of obesity and take action to improve the health of citizens across the country today.

Timed with the series, in January 2011, CBC, in partnership with a number of health and wellness organizations, is launching a movement called Live Right Now (www.cbc.ca/liverightnow), a six-month program focused on educating, inspiring and supporting Canadians to take steps to live healthier lives.

Based on the success of Village on a Diet, it could be renewed for a second season, seeing film crews descend on a different Canadian municipality.

"I know we've had an effect on a lot of the people of Taylor, those people have told our production crews and our experts that we've changed their lives. . . ," says Ritchie. "Our aim is to entertain but it's pretty neat when you also get to do something that has some value so it's really rewarding. . . We call it socially transformative television and I'd like us to be known for doing this kind of thing."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

<http://ca.news.yahoo.com/tiny-town-taylor-b-c-battles-big-weight-20101230-080755-852.html>

Tiny town of Taylor, B.C., battles big weight problem on 'Village on a Diet'

By Cassandra Szklarski, The Canadian Press | The Canadian Press – Thu, 30 Dec, 2010



Garfield Wilson, personal trainer from CBC's new 10-part series Village on a Diet, ...
TORONTO - When Dr. Ali Zentner arrived in the small town of Taylor, B.C., she found a big problem.

A big fat problem.

More than 60 per cent of the oil-and-gas town's roughly 1,300 residents were considered obese — twice the national average. The community's grocery store was a gas station. Kids were so overweight, Zentner says, that the school had to order adult-sized T-shirts — large and extra-large — for its students.

So Zentner, a specialist in internal medicine and obesity, put the entire town on a diet. The challenge: lose one tonne of weight in 90 days.

Their massive journey is traced in the new 10-part CBC series "Village on a Diet," an intimate look at an entire community committed to making a big change. "It's about vicious circles," Zentner says of the health woes facing Taylor, which mirror big and small communities across the country.

"The average Canadian who struggles with their weight wakes up every morning and wonders how they got here. They're like, 'How did I get here? I'll start my diet tomorrow.' And all of a sudden it's a year later and they're 10 pounds heavier and it's another year and they're maybe another five pounds heavier and it comes on slowly."

Residents battle the bulge with the help of a team of experts including a nutritionist, a chef, two personal trainers and a psychologist, who converged on Taylor last May to July. What the town learns is disturbing — a rigorous "body age" test reveals many participants have health risks indicating their bodies are actually far older than their chronological years.

A young stay-at-home mom is told her body has already reached middle age, while a middle-aged truck driver learns his body is akin to a nearly diabetic senior citizen. Zentner said a big factor was a lack of healthy food options, noting there was no real grocery store in Taylor, located on the Alaska highway just outside Fort St. John. "The only access to a formal grocery store they have is kind of like a convenience store, a gas station if you will," Zentner said.

"There's a pizza place that's sort of a family run pizza place in the town and that's it." Dietitian Maria Thomas said her challenge was to teach basic healthy eating strategies and keep people motivated through tough new diets and weekly fitness challenges. The intense regime pushes some to the brink — the budding confidence of a bride-to-be may change her relationship with her fiancé, and a young couple's stress over weight issues are compounded by problems conceiving.

"I think what distinguishes this series from other series of its kind is that this was real life," said Zentner, setting it apart from TV shows like "Biggest Loser," where contestants live together to focus on dropping pounds.

"They were more on a lifestyle change to be quite frank, but they still went to work and they still picked their kids up from school and they weren't separated from their real lives. So it was a real life interaction and trying to get people to make changes within their own environments."

Psychologist Adele Fox said a key part of the transformation was helping residents understand how they may be using food in harmful ways.

"Do they use food to manage their emotions? Do they use food to help cope with personal difficulties in their life? What prevents them from doing the activity that they need to do?" said Fox, noting that depression and troubled relationships were among the personal issues making it hard for some to get on the right path.

Zentner fought her own battle with obesity, noting she grew up as a "fat kid" and ballooned to 327 pounds in residency.

"People joke that my career is purely self-interest now. And I myself made small changes," she said, noting her transformation started with five minutes a day on an elliptical trainer. Through small but steady changes, Zentner said she has shed 170 pounds over the years. She now competes in triathlons and marathons.

"It's quite ironic that when I became a doctor I was my first patient.... I spent probably about three years really educating myself about nutrition and then created a practice around it. I thought, 'If I could do it, then there's no way these patients can't,' and it sort of built from there. I established a clinic in Alberta where we treated 500 patients at any given time for obesity medicine and now I have a practice in Vancouver where I treat patients on a daily basis."

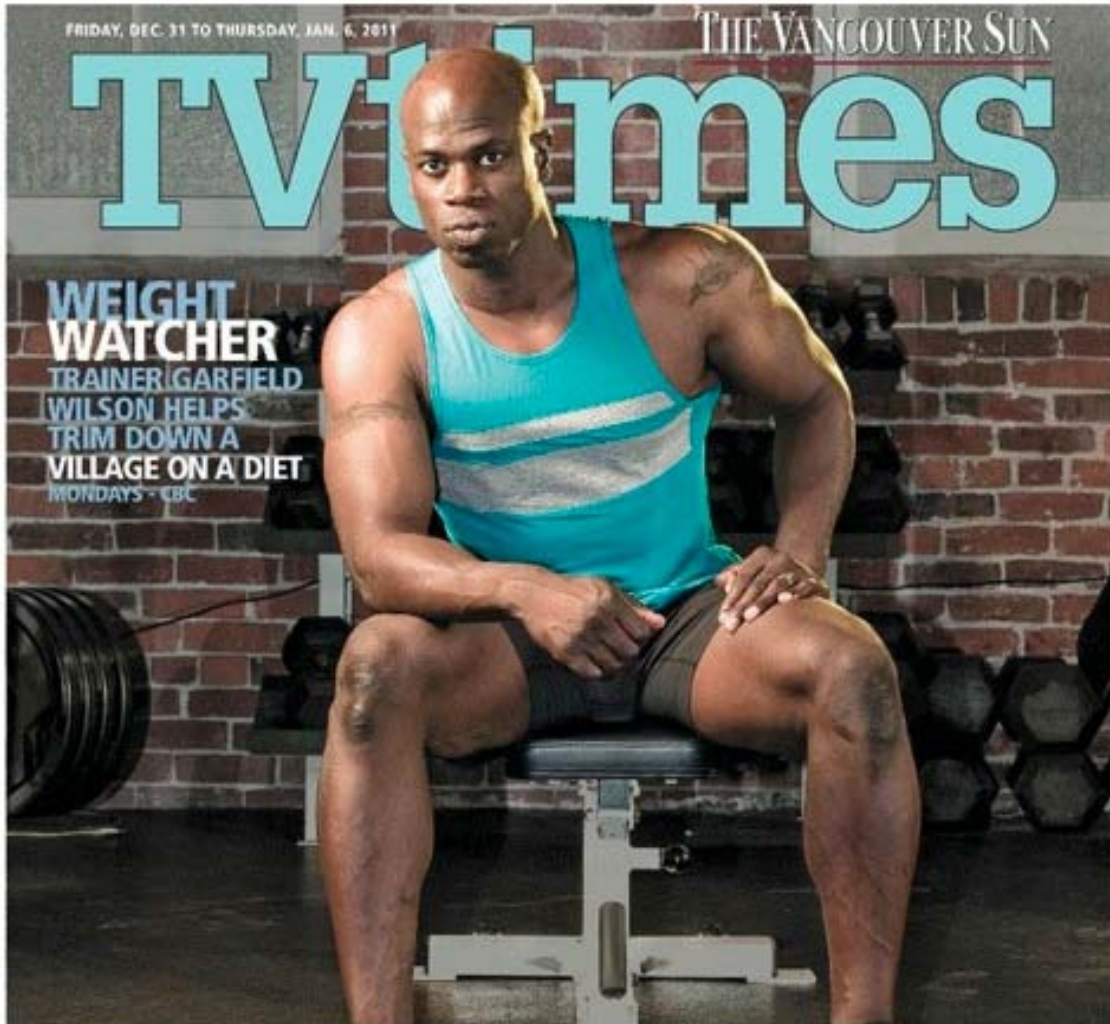
"Village on a Diet" is part of the CBC's multi-platform "live right now" campaign to encourage Canadians to lead healthier lives. Zentner says she hopes it will inspire viewers to take concrete steps towards a fitter future.

"It's the kind of show that teaches you. It's quite inspiring what people did and how they supported each other as a community and how they got behind this. And the message of the show was very clear, that small changes make a big difference."

"Village on a Diet" premieres Jan. 3.

TV TIMES

December 31, 2010



http://www.torontosun.com/entertainment/columnists/bill_harris/2010/12/31/16718976.html

Entertainment Columnists / Bill Harris

Village on a Diet aims to stop gravy boat

By **BILL HARRIS**, QMI AGENCY

Last Updated: January 1, 2011 12:00am



Here's our theory on how Canadians watch all those weight-loss TV shows that come out of the U.S.:

We follow programs such as The Biggest Loser with a certain amount of smugness. We might be a tad tubby, but we aren't as bad as those obese Americans, right?

"But if you look at the stats, we're the same," Dr. Ali Zentner said. "Finally, it's what we've always wanted. Our dollar is equal and our waists are as well.

"We wanted equality. We did it! It's awesome! But now we need to do something about it."

Dr. Zentner is an obesity expert who is part of the new CBC reality series Village on a Diet, which debuts Monday, Jan. 3.

While the series focuses on the isolated northern community of Taylor, B.C. -- the citizens of

which have vowed to lose one ton of collective weight in three months -- Dr. Zentner insists the rest of the country has no business gazing at Taylor with any sense of smugness.

"Sure, Taylor has a 60% rate of obesity, whereas in Canada overall we're at 30 or 35%," Dr. Zentner said.

"But what fascinates me is why people don't focus on, 'Oh my God, why does downtown Toronto have an obesity rate of 30%, where there are no excuses, so to speak?' "

No one can argue with the intent of a TV show that tries to inspire Canadians to be healthier.

But from an entertainment perspective, do-gooder TV can be a tough sell.

Nonetheless, if anyone can bolster the hearts -- literally and figuratively -- of Canadians, it's Dr. Zentner, who we're convinced could talk anyone into anything.

And she knows of what she speaks on a personal level, as she used to be 170 pounds heavier than she is today.

"Our government spends 5% of healthcare dollars on prevention, and one in three Canadians is a prevention nightmare waiting to happen," Dr. Zentner said.

"So if the government is not going to do it, then I'll take whatever health promotion I can get, to get the word out."

Dr. Zentner chuckled when talking about the reaction she has received from journalists thus far.

"I'm learning there are some cynics in (journalism)," she said with comedic sarcasm.

"Maybe it's because you report the news. Everything is not the truth. Everyone is bad. I got asked by one reporter, 'Are you for real?' And I was like, 'There are good people in the world, you just need a hug!'

"When it comes to this show, the cynics aren't going to know how to take it. They're going to fall in love with this town, despite their better judgment."

One of the most striking scenes in the first episode of Village on a Diet is a "lovely family," as Dr. Zentner described them, passing around a massive jug of gravy at the dinner table.

"If anything, you'll never look at gravy the same way again," Dr. Zentner said.

"Village on a Diet won't change your life, but it will change your gravy boat. There you go, there's your quote."

<http://www.thestar.com/entertainment/television/article/914777--new-cbc-show-aims-to-inspire-a-nation-to-lose-weight>

New CBC show aims to inspire a nation to lose weight

Published On Sun Jan 02 2011



*Chef Jonathan Chovancek gives away healthy groceries on CBC's *Village on a Diet*.*

Bill Brioux

Special to the Star

First a confession: as I sit to write about the new CBC series *Village on a Diet*, it is all I can do not to get up and make myself a big, fat sandwich.

That urge alone might make this 10-part reality series, which begins Monday night at 9 p.m., required viewing for this craving critic.

The fact is that obesity in Canada is out of control, with statistics showing that childhood obesity rates in particular have tripled in the past 25 years.

With a new year upon us, bringing new resolutions, a group of six health and nutrition experts swoop down upon the small northern British Columbia town of Taylor — where more than 60 per cent of the population have been declared overweight or obese — with the goal of helping the community shed one ton of collective weight in just three months. The bigger goal is to provide a you-can-do-it-too example for the rest of the ever-expanding nation.

It's all part of CBC's new "Live Right Now" initiative, an ambitious plan to shake viewers out of bad eating habits and to create a movement toward healthier lifestyles. For the next few weeks, CBC personalities like George Stroumboulopoulos and Peter Mansbridge will be weighing in, sharing their own personal tips on avoiding the winter snack trap.

To a reporter always hungry for a scoop, and not just of news, it sounds a bit precious. What will CBC choose to campaign for next winter: "End War Now"? How about "Make Shows I Want to Watch Now"?

The idea of shedding weight through TV viewing also seems counterproductive. Don't most networks covet couch potatoes? If we're up, out and exercising, aren't we likely to be far away from any TV set?

These were questions I took to the panel of experts CBC had assembled in Toronto a few weeks ago to help promote the launch of *Village on a Diet*. They include a doctor, a dietician, a chef, a psychologist and two no-nonsense physical trainers. They are superheroes of svelte, and they're out to turn Taylorites from tubbies to trim and fit citizens.

This Heroic Health Squad knew they had their work cut out for them. Taylor was chosen from a list of communities where obesity outpaced the already alarming national average. This meat-loving, truck-driving oil and gas town needed an intervention, something the town council recognized when it invited the producers to use its community for this experiment.

"Going there and doing this was a no-brainer," says Garfield Wilson, a U.K.-born, Edmonton-

raised personal trainer. “When you get the opportunity as experts in health promotion to go to a town and do a show like this across a national platform, it’s like winning the lottery.”

Dr. Ali Zentner felt the same way. A cardiac risk management and obesity specialist, Zentner can relate to patients who come to her for help losing weight. Back when she was a stressed-out med student, bad eating habits led to her own weight ballooning out of control to the point she tipped the scales at 322 pounds.

Through diet, exercise and determination, she has been able to cut her weight in half.

All of the experts agree that dieting doesn’t work alone. A healthy lifestyle is just that: a lifestyle. “We’re trying to make profound changes in people’s lives,” says Zentner.

The suggestion that remote Taylor may lack the range of nutritious foods available to Canadians in larger urban centres to make this lifestyle switch a reality is quickly shot down. “How often do you eat fast food?” asks registered dietician Maria Thomas. Point taken, I concede, falling back on the excuse that I live in Brampton, where cars are built and fast food restaurants flourish. Doing anything as odd as walking in a city filled with drive-through banks and doughnut shops seems like a form of civil disobedience.

Nonsense, says personal trainer Mike Veinot. Start by walking to the grocery store.

When you get there, suggests Jonathan Chovancek, an award-winning, Vancouver-based chef, buy whole foods that are high in nutrition. Chovancek says that, as a nation, we’re eating too many frozen and processed foods with long lists of ingredients few of us can even pronounce. Go for the fruits and vegetables and legumes and cook them ourselves, he says. “Start taking control of what we put into our bodies by taking control of what we bring into our homes.”

If a busy, commuter lifestyle leaves little time for cooking, grab a roasted chicken from the supermarket and a salad, says registered psychologist Adele Fox. It is as fast, and as cheap, as

getting barbecued chicken at a fast-food restaurant, only healthier.

“Except watch the salad dressing,” cautions Wilson.

The team concedes that not every town or individual has a personal fitness team to guide them through this booty-shrinking boot camp. “Coaches are going to push people farther than they push themselves,” says Wilson, who feels he can help mentor and support others through this TV show. “Our goal is to make everyone feel yes, you can do this.”

The bottom line, in more ways than one, is everyone can do one thing to start moving toward a healthier lifestyle, and *Village on a Diet* will provide plenty of ideas and inspiration along the way.

Message received. Story over, now I can go make that sandwich — right after I get back from walking to the grocery store.

January 2, 2011

Television

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Village on a Diet (CBC)

Dr. Ali Zentner hosts the CBC reality show *Village on a Diet*, in which a B.C. village works to lose a collective ton of body weight in three months.



Stop the gravy boat

It takes a Village on a Diet to highlight Canada's weight issue

Here's our theory on how Canadians watch all those weight-loss TV shows that come out of the U.S.:

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No one can argue with the intent of a TV show that tries to inspire Canadians to be healthier.

But from an entertainment perspective, do-gooder TV can be a tough sell.

Nonetheless, if anyone can bolster the hearts — literally and figuratively — of Canadians, it's Dr. Zentner, who we're convinced could talk anyone into anything.

And she knows of what she speaks on a personal level, as she used to be 170 pounds heavier than she is today.

"Our government spends 5% of healthcare dollars on prevention, and one in three Canadians is a prevention nightmare waiting to happen," Dr. Zentner said.

"So if the government is not going to do it, then I'll take

whatever health promotion I can get, to get the word out."

Dr. Zentner chuckled when talking about the reaction she has received from journalists thus far.

"I'm learning there are some cynics in (journalism)," she said with comedic sarcasm. "Maybe it's because you report the news. Everything is not the truth. Everyone is bad. I got asked by one reporter, 'Are you for real?' And I was like, 'There are good people in the world, you just need a hug!'"

"When it comes to this show, the cynics aren't going to know how to take it. They're going to fall in love with this town, despite their better judgment."

One of the most striking scenes in the first episode of *Village on a Diet* is a "lovely family," as Dr. Zentner described them, passing around a massive jug of gravy at the dinner table.

"If anything, you'll never look at gravy the same way again," Dr. Zentner said.

"*Village on a Diet* won't change your life, but it will change your gravy boat. There you go, there's your quote."

billharris@sun.ca

Montreal Gazette

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/health/Fine+Tuning+Village+Diet+Bachelor+Castle/4051213/story.html>

Fine Tuning: Village on a Diet

BY SHERI LEVINE, POSTMEDIA NEWS JANUARY 3, 2011



Taylorites learn how to eat healthy, eat less and exercise -- concepts that don't come easily to them, in the new CBC series *Village on a Diet*, premiering Jan. 3.

If it takes a village to raise a child, then it may also take one to lose weight -a ton of weight, to be precise. The proof is in the new CBC series, *Village on a Diet* (CBC, 9 p.m.).

It's Day 3 of the new year, which means many people have already broken at least one new year's resolutions. Losing weight is one of the most common resolutions, so it's no coincidence that *Village on a Diet* bows in the first week of 2011.

"From perogies to poutine, pot roast to pies, Canadians love to pile up their plates with high-calorie pleasures. Not surprisingly, we're packing on the pounds." We are told this right off the top of tonight's debut episode, while being treated to visions of those edible "pleasures."

But CBC's 10-part series isn't just about shedding pounds. It's about Canada's obesity problem reaching epidemic proportions. Nowhere is this more evident than in Taylor, B.C., where 60 per cent of the population is either overweight or obese. In an effort to change, this village went on a diet. Its residents committed to collectively lose one ton over three months.

Village on a Diet follows Taylor's residents on their journey toward a healthy lifestyle. They learn about nutrition and how to cook healthy meals; they receive help from a psychologist and are whipped into shape by two of the country's toughest personal trainers. This town didn't even have a local gym until a sponsor agreed to build one.

It's not always easy to watch, but Village on a Diet is both heartwarming and inspiring.

Read more:

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/health/Fine+Tuning+Village+Diet+Bachelor+Castle/4051213/story.html#ixzz1GZJQO2jx>

Winnipeg Free Press

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/arts-and-life/entertainment/TV/fat-chance-112793569.html>

Fat chance: CBC reality show serves up big helpings of weight-loss motivation for corpulent B.C. town

By: **Brad Oswald**
Posted: **01/3/2011 1:00 AM**

Canada is fat. And it needs to get fit. Fast.

That's the message of CBC's new multi-platform motivational strategy, Live Right Now, which the public broadcaster is launching this week.

And the tiny British Columbia town of Taylor might just be the fattest of all Canadian communities, which is why the village of 1,400 -- an oil-and-gas-dependent cluster of homes located on Mile 27 of the Alaska Highway -- is the focus of the new docu-reality series *Village on a Diet*, which premieres tonight at 9 on CBC.

"Canadians love to pile up their plates with high-calorie pleasures," the Brit-accented narrator says in the series premiere's opening, "and not surprisingly, we're packing on the pounds because of it. And nobody's packed on more pounds than the people of Taylor, B.C. -- for decades, they've eaten their way to disaster."

At first glance, they do seem to be a hefty bunch, so it's not surprising to hear that the town's council passed a unanimous resolution calling for residents to adopt a healthier lifestyle. Enter the *Village on a Diet* crew, and the challenge begins -- according to the show's breathless declaration, an entire town making a commitment to fitness and healthier eating. Except, well... the numbers don't quite add up.

Footage of the Taylorites' initial weigh-in to start their better-health initiative show fewer than 150 townsfolk -- perhaps one-tenth of the population -- crowding onto a truck scale. Their combined weight is 28,754 pounds (if all 1,400 had taken part, that would mean they weighed an average of 20.5 pounds each); they're told they need to literally shed a ton of weight in order to achieve their goal (assuming that about 150 people took part in the challenge, that's an average weight loss of a modest 13.33 pounds per person over three months).

One of the experts brought in to help Taylor get trimmer is Dr. Ali Zentner, a Winnipeg-born, Vancouver-based physician specializing in obesity and cardiac risk management.

"For a town to say, 'Help me get healthy' is like a dream come true for a physician," she says in the series opener.

In a recent telephone interview, Zentner insisted that the percentage of Taylor's population taking part in the challenge isn't nearly as important as the fact that those who did made some very positive changes in their lives.

"I look at it from the perspective of 'How do you affect change in a community?', she said.

"You always have people who are spearheading, and then you have a trickle-down effect. It's hard to say how many people came on board, or didn't, or were supporting each other; all I know is that the town council was behind it and the initiative of the town was there.

"As far as the actual numbers go, I guess that will be something that people might sit at home and count, but I'm hopeful that won't be the legacy that this show leaves behind. The

initiative is this: here's what happens when a town -- albeit not a whole town -- makes a decision to make some healthy changes, and here's how the ripples start."

Zentner knows first-hand how beneficial a sensible diet and exercise regime can be. A decade ago, she tipped the scales at almost 300 pounds, and it wasn't until she won an elliptical trainer in a raffle that she made the decision to slowly and sensibly get healthier.

"I'm no exception to the norm," she explained, "and like most people, I never had an 'A-ha!' moment... 10 years ago, I was 170 pounds heavier, and it was a series of small things that became bigger and bigger and bigger -- it started with winning an elliptical trainer in one of these hospital lotteries, and I remember thinking, 'I'll go on it for five minutes a day.' All of a sudden, five minutes became 20, and I started eating a little bit healthier, and before I knew it, it was a year later, I was on the elliptical trainer for an hour a day and I'd lost 60 pounds."

Armed with her commitment to healthy living, Zentner joined the team of diet and fitness experts who travelled to Taylor and oversaw the *Village on a Diet* group's often-difficult journey toward the one-ton weight-loss goal.

The trainers' boot-camp mentality wasn't popular at first, but it did produce results.

"You're going to love it," she said of the show's final outcome. "It's a warm-fuzzy -- a gift for every cynic."

But the road isn't easy -- the Taylorites, like too many Canadians, find all kinds of excuses and rationalizations for not meeting the healthy-living challenge head on ("My knees have always been weak," says one, presumably more literally than figuratively), and there are moments -- including a showdown with a local pizzeria owner who's also the mother of three obese children -- when lofty ambitions and practical fiscal realities clash.

And Zentner is very realistic in considering the impact *Village on a Diet* might have on Canadians' lifestyles. It's a TV show, after all, but it's also a step in the right direction.

"It's no easy task, and that's why we'll likely still be talking about (obesity) in a decade or two," she said. "One TV show isn't going to make this problem go away. I'm not that naïve.

But I'll take the support anywhere I can get it; anything that's going to make my job as a physician easier in the next decade, I'm on board with it."



http://tvguide.ca/TVNews/Articles/110103_village_on_a_diet_AD



CBC puts a 'Village on a Diet'

By Amber Dowling

2011-01-03

Six-month national campaign kicks off today

It's a new year, and what's the No. 1 resolution on everyone's mind? To lose weight and live better.

In other words, it's perfect timing for CBC's new campaign, Live Right Now, to kick off. Beginning today, the public broadcaster is launching a six-month initiative to help change the health of Canada, with an [interactive website](#), cross-platform discussions and a brand new show, *Village on a Diet*.

The 10-part reality series also bows tonight, and is a Canadian mash-up of *The Biggest Loser* and *The Week the Women Went*.

Village on a Diet takes place in Taylor, B.C., a small northern community with a giant weight problem. Collectively, the entire town commits to shedding one ton of poundage — in only three months.

To help, they call on a team of experts, including obesity physician, Dr. Ali Zentner; dietician Maria Thomas; chef Jonathan Chovancek; psychologist Adele Fox; and personal trainers Garfield Wilson and Mike Veinot.

"There's no grocery store in Taylor," Chovancek tells TVGuide.ca. "They would have to buy their produce from the gas station."

While Taylor is attempting to shed an inspiring ton, CBC is calling on Canadians to shed a collective million pounds. Participants can sign up online to help track their progress, get their fill of nutritional tips, blog about their progress, and chat with experts and each other on messaging boards.

The initiative kicks off Jan. 3, and runs for six months.

Village on a Diet debuts Monday, 9 p.m. ET, CBC.

<http://www.straight.com/article-366767/vancouver/village-diet-puts-canadas-obesity-epidemic-cbc-tv>



Village on a Diet puts Canada's obesity epidemic on CBC TV

By Michelle da Silva

Publish Date: January 3, 2011



The first week of January usually sees a spike in gym membership enrollments, but how many people actually stick to their resolution of exercising more and losing weight throughout the year? The CBC is launching an in-depth multiplatform focus on the health of Canadians called *Canada Weighs In*, which airs on CBC TV, CBC News Network, CBC Radio, and CBCNews.ca from January 2 to January 6.

Tonight sees the premiere of *Village on a Diet*, a 10-episode documentary series airing Mondays at 9 p.m. The series follows the northern B.C. town of Taylor, where over 60 percent of its population is either overweight or obese. However, the town has decided to attempt to lose one collective ton in the next three months and have their struggles and successes documented on camera.

In tonight's episode, viewers get to know the mining and forestry-driven town, which has a population of 1,400. Interviewees admit to eating a diet of mainly meat and potatoes and not getting much exercise during the cold winter months. A team of experts, including obesity specialist Dr. Ali Zentner, personal trainers Garfield Wilson and Mike Veinot, registered dietitian Maria Thomas, chef Jonathan Chovancek, and registered psychologist Adele Fox will help to try and turn this town around.

To coincide with this series premiere, Zentner will be talking about Canada's obesity epidemic as well as the results of a health poll that was conducted exclusively for the CBC on CBC News Network.

On Tuesday (January 4), the topic of sleep deprivation will be tackled on *World Report* and *The National*, followed by the rise in the number of Canadians who head to the Internet for diagnoses on Wednesday (January 5) on CBC News Network, *World Report*, *World at Six*, and *The National*. Then, on Thursday (January 6), *Canada Weighs In* will wrap up with an

investigation on World Report, CBC News Network, and The National about whether sugar is the one to blame for the country's poor health.

You can follow Michelle da Silva on Twitter at twitter.com/michdas.

Source URL: <http://www.straight.com/article-366767/vancouver/village-diet-puts-canadas-obesity-epidemic-cbc-tv>

Health Habits

Village on a Diet

healthhabits | January 3, 2011

Share <http://www.healthhabits.ca/2011/01/03/village-diet/>



Canada is fat.

Maybe not *Biggest Loser* fat...but we have definitely reached the *we can't stand to look at our flabby bodies in the bathroom mirror* level of of fatness.

Luckily for us, the residents of Taylor B.C. have stepped up and volunteered to serve as our collective weight loss role model.

As the stars of the new CBC reality show, [Village on a Diet](#), 150 Taylorites are going to exercise and eat their way from fat to fit over the next 10 weeks.

Airing on Monday nights, [Village on a Diet](#) is just one part of CBC's social initiative – [Live Right Now](#).

Inspired by Canada's growing [obesity](#) epidemic, Live Right Now is the CBC's attempt at creating a national healthy living movement.

In addition to the "reality" show Village on a Diet, the Mother Corp has plans to leverage the celebrity credibility of numerous CBC personalities (Peter Mansbridge, George Stroumboulopoulos, et al) along with a full-on social media blitz (tv, website, [blog](#), print, online challenges, facebook, twitter, corporate, medical & NGO partnerships, etc), to overwhelm our lazy lifestyles and re-create our national physique.

BALANCE OF FOOD

http://balanceoffood.typepad.com/balance_of_food/2011/01/village-on-a-diet-takes-reality-show-weight-loss-to-new-heights-and-girths.html

JANUARY 04, 2011

'Village on a Diet' takes reality show weight loss to new heights -- and girths

The "Biggest Loser" has had individual contestants, couples, and even teams. Well, the newest reality show is spreading the concept -- to a whole city.

Well, Taylor, British Columbia isn't quite a city, more of a village or town, hence the name of the CBC reality show, "[Village on a Diet](#)."

Taylor has only 1,384 residents, according to 2006 numbers. Yet the quest is for the village to lose a ton of weight in the 10-part reality show, which made its debut last night.

The small BC town has more than 60% of its population either overweight or obese.

If you are looking for a comparison, the logical pick is Oklahoma City. You might remember [Mayor Mick Cornett's quest for his 1.1 million residents to lose a million pounds](#) in a year. That number broke down to an average of less than 1 pound over 12 months.

Taylor's quest averages out to 1.45 pounds per person in 10 weeks -- with cameras rolling.

The residents of Taylor will get some help, though. As you can see (screen grab from the show's promotional material), trained experts will help the residents.

Taylor is located near Fort St. John, so there is a commuting element for the residents. According to [Wikipedia](#), Taylor has no grocery store. So there aren't any walks to get food in the town.

The perception of British Columbia weather is usually rainy Vancouver, but Taylor is far enough north and away from the ocean, so snow dominates the winter landscape. And given its latitude of 56° north, those winter days have to be really, really short.

Though this is a reality show, there is less pressure to make this a circus, thanks to the Canadian and CBC sensibilities. Keeping track of the results will be difficult since the CBC usually limits access to episodes to Canadian ISPs (if you remember the [saga in the fall with "Men with Brooms](#)," you know how difficult that was to monitor).

The first season of any reality show often gets the highest level of sincerity, since subsequent seasons have people being more aware of the camera's impact.

In the spirit of New Year's, we wish the residents of Taylor, BC *bonne chance* and good luck.

While the program airs in Canada, those along the U.S. border with access to CBC stations, either through over-the-air or cable, can watch Monday nights at 9 pm Eastern.

SLIM FIT MAMA

<http://slimfitmama.com/2011/01/village-on-a-diet-cbc-canada/>

Village On A Diet CBC Canada

In a recent poll, CBC ask Canadian citizens if they were stressed out due to being overworked or overweight, 44% said yes while 7% admitted to being obese.

Dr. Arya Sharma of Edmonton, Alberta University stated that actually the obesity problem is far worse than 7%. The actual number of obese people in Canada is closer to 2/3 of the population.

The doctor based his finding on a report carried out by the Statistics of Canada last year, which compared participants' heights to their weight.

Obesity is the number one health issue in Canada, as with most other countries around the world today.

When someone is obese there are a number of health issues they will have to worry about as well, such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and some types of cancers. All of these health issues are causing a great deal of problems for governments around the world.

With obesity at an epidemic level CBC decided to do a 10-part series about a whole village tackling their weight problems together.

The village of Taylor, B. C., had 60% or more of their population fighting their weight or obesity, therefore CBC decided; this was the village to start their series with.

The village was under the watchful eye of Dr. Ali Zentner a weight-loss expert, while they were collectively losing 1 ton of weight over a period of 3 months.

Village on a Diet follows Taylor's residents on their journey toward a healthy lifestyle. They learn about proper nutrition and how to cook healthy meals; they receive help from a psychologist and are whipped into shape by two of the country's toughest personal trainers. This town didn't even have a local gym until a sponsor agreed to build one.

The Village on a Diet starts on CBC Network tonight 3 Jan.2011 at 9 pm EST. Please share your opinion of the series with us.

To see a clip of the series click here-<http://www.cbc.ca/liverightnow/village/>



<http://www.selfshift.com/article.asp?articleid=109963&Village-on-a-Diet-puts-Canadas-obesity-epidemic-on-CBC-TV>

Village on a Diet puts Canada's obesity epidemic on CBC TV



The first week of January usually sees a spike in gym membership enrollments, but how many people actually stick to their resolution of exercising more and losing weight throughout the year? The CBC is launching an in-depth multiplatform focus on the health of Canadians called Canada Weighs In, which airs on CBC TV, CBC News Network, CBC Radio, and CBCNews.ca from January 2 to January 6.

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has a population of 1,400. Interviewees admit to eating a diet of mainly meat and potatoes and not getting much exercise during the cold winter months. A team of experts, including obesity specialist Dr. Ali Zentner, personal trainers Garfield Wilson and Mike Veinot, registered dietitian Maria Thomas, chef Jonathan Chovancek, and registered psychologist Adele Fox will help to try and turn this town around. To coincide with this series premiere, Zentner will be talking about Canada's obesity epidemic as well as the results of a health poll that was conducted exclusively for the CBC on CBC News Network. On Tuesday (January 4), the topic of sleep deprivation will be tackled on World Report and The National, followed by the rise in the number of Canadians who head to the Internet for diagnoses on Wednesday (January 5) on CBC News Network, World Report, World at Six, and The National. Then, on Thursday (January 6), Canada Weighs In will wrap up with an investigation on World Report, CBC News Network, and The National about whether sugar is the one to blame for the country's poor health.



<http://www.weightymatters.ca/2011/01/cbcs-village-on-diet-episode-1-recap.html>

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 05, 2011

CBC's Village on a Diet episode 1 recap: Never mind about the diet part.

For a show called, "Village on a Diet", they sure do a lot of exercise.

The show's premise is pretty straight forward. There's a town in British Columbia called Taylor and it's not a particularly healthy town. Overweight and obesity run rampant, there's no grocery store, and residents rely on junk food and take out to eat. The town council, in a dramatized staged for TV scene vote to fix the health of their town and fly in 2 fitness trainers, a dietitian, a psychologist and a physician to help the town lose 2,000lbs in 3 months time.

And how are they going to do it? Why with, "a team of butt kicking experts" of course, because clearly the town must just be lazy. Gosh, weight management is so easy, just like Village on a Diet trainer Mike Veinot says, "If they stick to it, it works. It's a simple solution to a huge problem".

Yup, easy peasy.

The first episode provides the cookie-cutter, boot camp style exercising, replete with yelling, overexertion to the point of vomiting (there's a great way to get someone to love exercising), and teasers of folks running with hay bales, pulling cars and doing whole piles of exercises that people have come to expect from weight-loss television.

But hey, what about diet? Isn't what goes into our bodies responsible for 70-80% of what we weigh?

Yes, but the show doesn't let that bother them. In total they spent less than 20% of the show on food, a total of 8.5 minutes where basically all they taught viewers was that take out pizza's bad, junk food's bad, and that to succeed you've got to give up all your favourite foods and resist the temptation to ever eat them again. And even while talking about food, they focused on fitness, with one young boy whose eating habits they were exploring stating uncontested to the camera,

"The reason I'm probably overweight is because I don't get out that much, I just sit and play video games."

Yeah, never mind what you're father's feeding your little body.

They also try to scare the townsfolk into action by having them take something they're calling, "The Body Age Test". You can take it too online at the Live Right Now website. But don't put too much stock in it. It told me my body age was 17.

Basically they've dumbed down the incredible challenge of successfully managing weight in an environment exceedingly hostile to weight management to be a MOVE MORE, eat less, it's so simple solution, and while I suspect the television cameras and the fact they'll have a national audience will indeed inspire Taylor to lose weight in the short run through classic under-eating and over-exercising, if the first episode portends the town's 3 month approach, sadly I suspect their losses will be short lived.

Bottom line? This is a Village being put on a classic "diet" - nothing new here, and classic dieting has been shown in studies to fail in the long run over 95% of the time.

The one shining star of the show is Dr. Ali Zentner. While I can't understand why she'd lend her name to what so far seems like opportunistic and exploitative television, at least so far she strikes me as real, came off as warm, is a natural on camera, and I'd be willing to wager, unlike the show's trainers, behind the scenes with the townsfolk she'll be focusing on helping them to make more realistic changes. Time will tell.

Here's hoping the show gets better. Stay tuned for weekly recaps each Wednesday.

If you missed the show, you can catch it online here.

Did you see it? What did you think?



http://www.dietsinreview.com/diet_column/01/village-on-a-diet-documents-a-canadian-town-planning-to-collectively-lose-one-ton/

January 5th, 2011

Village on a Diet Documents a Canadian Town Planning to Collectively Lose One Ton

With losing weight being the most common New Year's resolution, it's no surprise that the weight-loss show, "Village on a Diet," airs at a time of increased gym membership and diet supplement sales.

Broadcast by CBC, this 10-part series documents the residents of Taylor, a British Columbia town, and the trials and tribulations that come with learning how to live a healthy lifestyle. Over 60 percent of the residents of Taylor are either overweight or obese, but the town plans to change this statistic by losing a collective ton.

The small town, with a population of 1,400, admits to eating a diet of mostly meat and potatoes and forgoing exercise during the cold winter months. This series plans to change the citizens' lifestyles by teaching them how to cook healthily while being whipped into shape by two of Canada's best personal trainers: Garfield Wilson and Mike Veinot.

Other weight-loss experts include obesity specialist Dr. Ali Zentner, registered dietitian Maria Thomas, chef Jonathan Chovancek and registered psychologist Adele Fox. Along with the help of these experts, a local gym was built to set the town on a straight and narrow path.

I hope the show, which premiered on Jan. 3 and airs on Mondays at 9 p.m., will become a catalyst for other small towns to try such weight loss programs. I think the key to transitioning to a healthy lifestyle is doing it along the side of others with similar weight issues. It seems to me that citizens are more likely to stay healthy with the encouragement of a whole town.



<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/opinion/the-voyeurism-of-village-on-a-diet/article1859215/>

The voyeurism of Village on a Diet

MARGARET WENTE |

From Thursday's Globe and Mail

Published Thursday, Jan. 06, 2011 5:00AM EST

When I woke up on New Year's Day (only slightly the worse for wear), the first thing I did was to break all my New Year's resolutions right away. I heated up a delicious chocolate croissant and devoured it. The weather was miserable, so instead of venturing outside for a brisk walk, I lay around in my pyjamas and wasted quite a bit of time playing computer games. Then I cooked a big juicy steak for supper and washed it down with a nice big glass of wine.

What a relief! It was good to give in to sloth and gluttony. It was also, as I know from years of bitter experience, inevitable. Why spend weeks (or even months) suffering needless deprivation, when you can backslide right away? By now I know that my slothful, gluttonous nature is basically beyond reform. But so is everybody else's. Personally, I'm happy to just hold the line.

That's not to say that all New Year's resolutions are completely unproductive. You just have to make the right ones. If only I'd resolved to take all the money that I wasted on fitness-club memberships and stash it into RRSPs, I'd be rich. If only I hadn't wasted my time on all those stupid diets, I wouldn't have felt like such a miserable failure. My current approach to diet and nutrition is to eat as sensibly as I can, exercise only for fun and ignore all diet, nutrition and fitness advice, especially from so-called experts.

Needless to say, this is not the message of *Village on a Diet*, the much-hyped new CBC series that premiered on Monday night. It is a Canadian version of the fat shows that now infest cable TV. It pretends that all you need to lose weight is a lot more exercise, a healthier diet and a dose of good old-fashioned will power.

The 10-part series focuses on Taylor, B.C., a small town with a bunch of typically large citizens. They are determined to turn around their desperately unhealthy lives. "The whole town is going to wage war on their weight," declares the British-accented narrator, even though only a few dozen people in the town took part. Their goal: to lose one ton of weight in three months. "If this town is going to succeed, there's only one way to do it," says the voiceover. "And that ... is together!" Right away you know that you are about to witness the triumph of the human spirit.

The first episode is mostly about boot camp. It shows overweight people jogging, sweating, vomiting and doing pushups while being harassed by "a team of butt-kicking experts." The essential appeal of fat shows is voyeuristic. It's reassuring to watch people in even worse shape than you are. It's creepily pathetic to see fat young women with low self-esteem cry on camera. "I want to feel beautiful, and right now I don't feel beautiful," says one woman, who has just squished herself into a size-24 wedding dress. "I was too lazy to get off my butt." (Interestingly, fat men don't say stuff like that. They just talk about how they want to play hockey again.)

Village on a Diet has been promoted as a major contribution to public health. But its essential message is deceptive. To start with, exercise is at best marginally related to weight loss. Go ahead and exercise until you puke, but cutting calories is what makes you lose weight. (Unfortunately, showing people eating less does not make for very compelling TV.)

On top of that, the classic calorie-deprived diet has a failure rate of about 95 per cent. If any other medication had that kind of track record, it would be yanked off the market.

I confidently predict (spoiler alert!) that the plucky citizens of Taylor will meet their one-ton challenge. But then the cameras and the kick-ass experts will depart, and then what? The fat girls will gain the weight back, and they'll feel even worse about themselves than before. How cruel is that?

"It's a simple solution to a huge problem," promises the script. No, it's not. It's a phony solution that reduces an extremely complex social challenge to a question of attitude. It's junk-food TV, and if I were you, I wouldn't touch it.



<http://www.weightymatters.ca/2011/01/village-on-diet-episode-2-recap-elmm-st.html>

TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2011

Village on a Diet Episode 2 recap: ELMM St. revisited



So has the Nightmare on ELMM street continued (Dr. Sharma's moniker - ELMM = eat less, more more)? Sigh. Notable this week?

Personal trainer Mike Veinot walks into a gym class of kids stating for the camera he wants to teach kids that exercise can be fun and then proceeds to work them out so hard that one asks if she can "*die now*" while other seems to be collapsing in piles of sweat. Super fun.

Dietitian Maria Thomas is almost given the opportunity to teach Canadians that when you serve yourself from large jars you'll serve yourself far more than if the jar were simply smaller, but instead that wound up on the cutting room floor (no doubt that's where she went with the actual family), only to return to the scene with this piece of sage advice from British voice-over guy, "*the couple can start by eating less*".

Maria then tells a couple and viewers that a "serving" of steak is 2.5 ounces (75grams). Really? While I realize our Food Guide states a "serving" of meat is 75grams there's not a person out there, let alone a person who is accustomed to steaks at least 4x that size, who's going to be satisfied eating such a small amount and to suggest that they should be just fits Dr. Sharma's Nightmare on ELMM street - *"eat less, move more" weight loss is simple, stupid.* Psychologist Adele Fox, on air for all of a minute or so, has the thrust of whatever it is she actually told Taylor boiled down to her telling residents to put their forks down and take sips of water between bites.

British accented voice-over guy states, *"everyone's in such bad shape they're going to have to ramp up their exercise if they're going to reach their weight loss goals in three months"*. There was also some good.

Mike Veinot gave a great workout to young Jonathan who's been bullied because of his weight (whether it helps his weight or not, I'm keeping my fingers crossed his work with Mike improves his confidence)

The townsfolk helped to motivate Jamie to complete a difficult physical challenge. Now I recognize that there's no doubt that small-stepped sustainable lifestyle change doesn't always make for good television. As commentators on both my and Arya's blogs have noted, yelling at people to exercise and deriding them for their weights and perpetuating the stereotype of obesity being a disease of willpower makes for far more entertaining television than talking about food, and this episode with a focus on further *"butt kicking"* and folks who are filmed being repulsed by vegetables doesn't do much to bust those stereotypes. But how much should ratings and "entertainment" matter to the CBC? Shouldn't the CBC be held up to a different standard than NBC (the home of The Biggest Loser)? After all, the CBC is funded by us, the taxpayers, and consequently entertainment value need not be their foremost consideration. There's also no doubt the CBC could make this program great. It's clear that the producers of Village on a Diet are quite talented and were they to set their minds to it, I'm certain they could make thoughtful lifestyle change and environmental overhaul great TV. By means of example, you don't even need to leave the network. Not sure who out there saw it, but Jay Wortman's and the CBC's *My Big Fat Diet* which followed Jay and his work with Alert Bay, BC where he put that community on a low-carb diet that saw them losing weight and improving their biochemistries, was wonderful and didn't rely on ridiculous and inconsequential in the long run physical challenges. Dr. Brian Goldman of White Coat, Black Art fame and a man whose public health advocacy efforts I greatly admire, *suggests that I and others* are missing an important point,

"As a nation, we have let the obesity crisis creep up on us like those unwanted kilos. Sometimes, you need shock therapy to grab peoples' attention. Shows like Village on a Diet do just that."

And while I don't disagree with the notion of shock being useful, suggesting that Village on a Diet thus far has been a wise and laudable shock treatment is more than a stretch. Shocking people by perpetuating disparaging stereotypes about obesity isn't a great plan for the nation. Nor do I think that the celebration and publication of one of the primary things that needs to change - the notion that weight is an individual problem that's caused by laziness and cured primarily through exercise - as the means to solve the problem is a good one either. I know that the CBC reads my blog, and I hope that the ongoing discussion, both here and in the comments, will help to shape the next season of Village on a Diet, because I don't think the CBC set out to perpetuate harmful stereotypes, I think they truly set out to do what they thought was best and were they able to turn this around, I think they'd be doing Canadians a tremendous service. Looking forward to next week's apparently food focused episode.

NORTHEAST NEWS

http://www.northeastnews.ca/index.php/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=775:cbcs-village-on-a-diet-premiered-at-taylor-community-hall-&catid=10:news&Itemid=12

CBC's Village on a Diet premiered at Taylor Community Hall

January 12, 2011

By Jennifer Fernandes



Taylorites enjoyed a few good-natured laughs while viewing the CBC TV series 'Village on a Diet' Jan. 3 at the Taylor Community hall.

Coming from a village of 1,384 people you would think some of the residents of Taylor, BC would start to get a little dizzy from reaching the heights of national fame. After-all it wasn't all that long ago that they had their own personal team of fitness trainers, a private physician, dietician, psychologist and chef. Only Oprah ever had it so good.

But instead the 100 or so residents who turned out to the town's community hall Jan. 3 to premiere its very own 10-part CBC television produced series were masters in the art of practiced humility—one might even say, they were downright bashful hunkered down politely at tables drinking coffee and grazing quietly off the salad, fruit and deli meat plates that were set up for refreshments.

As the big projection screen at the front of the hall flickered over from the hockey game to start the episode of 'Village on a Diet', a hush descended upon the room, a nasally British-accented narrator was voiced over the images of Taylorites huffing, puffing and generally cursing the existence of the town's two kilometre walking path that suddenly proved a formidable foe. The path's end seemed further and further away as they struggled to finish the course realizing with horror just how out of shape they had become.

"It was shocking," Sara Hotte (née Fraser) said, "To be told that your body age is actually 43 when you're only 25 is disturbing."

Hotte is from one of the focus families in the documentary chosen to open up their lives and lifestyles for the scrutiny of health and wellness experts brought to Taylor over a three-month period last year. The goal of the series was to engage Taylorites in a challenge not only to lose weight but also to adopt healthier eating habits by learning good nutritional choices go far beyond pizza, wings and beer.

From moments in the documentary where some of the town's residents find themselves 'weighed-in' on a massive truck scale to getting the news that they weight a combined 28,754 pounds and need to lose an astonishing 2,000 pounds in just three-months, it is apparent that Taylorites are not that different than many other Canadians living in smaller communities across the country.

A 2004 Statistics Canada 'Canadian Community Health Survey' listed 23.1% of Canadians aged 18 or older—an estimated 5.5 million adults—had a body mass index of 30 or more indicating they were obese.

A lot of the problems result from a lack of informed dietary choices said Calgary-based psychologist, Adele Fox who was one of the experts flown in to Taylor for the series by CBC Television to work on "the hardest part of weight loss—changing your mindset to achieve and maintain weight loss."

"I could be called something like a 'brain coach,'" said Fox via telephone. "I met with people featured in the documentary and the focus families to narrow in on how we can train the brain to develop mind-based strategies to make our lives better."

Fox listed the key obstacles to weight loss as inharmonious interpersonal relationships, body image issues, lack of assertiveness, and underlying issues that contribute to conditions such as depression or anxiety and emotional eating.

"We all need to learn how to access the 'control panel' of our lives," she said, "otherwise it's like driving a car without a steering wheel."

"It's not about willpower, it's about skill power."

Fox said the overall experience participating in the documentary led her to realize that not everyone has access to the same resources and that people living in smaller centres often have to learn how to be more creative about their food choices because the abundance of variety just isn't available locally, as noted in the documentary when the newly enlightened Taylorites make a trip to Fort St. John to grocery shop.

"That was another A-HA moment," she said. "I realized it's not about blaming or shaming people about their choices, but about teaching."

"I know Taylorites learned a lot about quinoa as a substitute for white rice, whether they wanted to or not," she laughed. "And that tofu is something you can and should put in your mouth."

“People say, ‘I have a food addiction,’” continued Fox, “but the difference is food is something your body requires to function properly, it’s not a drug.”

Throughout the documentary, Taylorites were educated on nutritious food options, how to cook using a diverse range of spices and better utilize their time management skills so they aren’t tempted to eat unhealthy, but convenient, fast food on a frequent basis.

“It’s really like putting on your eyeglasses for the brain and seeing the different options available,” Fox said.

To learn more about Calgary-based psychologist, Adele Fox, visit www.myndcare.com or Facebook.

For Sarah Hotte and many other Taylor residents, gathering together to watch the documentary, as a community was as special as participating in the documentary itself.

“It was a really good experience,” she said, “sharing a laugh here tonight was very enjoyable.”

As for the lessons learned, Hotte said it’s not just her who has benefitted from participating in the documentary.

“My kids eat fruit and veggies now without complaining so that’s new,” she laughed, “and they’ve learned to love push-ups and jumping jacks too.”



Read more: <http://www.delta-optimist.com/health/Personal+trainer+gets+Taylor+move/4096972/story.html#ixzz1Ar01UboT>

<http://www.delta-optimist.com/health/Personal+trainer+gets+Taylor+move/4096972/story.html>

Personal trainer gets Taylor on the move Ladner's Garfield Wilson part of new CBC show

BY DAVE WILLIS, THE DELTA OPTIMIST JANUARY 12, 2011

Ladner's Garfield Wilson might be getting recognized a little more around town these days. He is on a new national TV show after all.

The personal trainer is a part of Village On A Diet, a 10-part series that debuted last week on CBC.

"Over the 10-part series you'll see real life happening right before your eyes. It's really inspirational. One of the things I really love about the show is that it's a human story. You'll see what happens when people try to change their lifestyles. It's real," said Wilson.

The show is about residents of Taylor, a small town in northern B.C. where 60 per cent of the population is overweight or obese, trying to lose one ton of collective weight in three months. A team of experts, including a physician, a dietician, a chef, a psychologist, along with Wilson and another trainer, are brought in to help.

"In Taylor we were coming into their community, into their backyard, into their living rooms and saying, 'Look, we know you're interested in changing your lifestyle, here's how you do it.'"

Wilson, who typically has clients coming to him with goals in mind, said it was easy in some cases and quite challenging in others to get the townspeople to buy into the program.

"You'll see some people that you're rooting for kind of fall off the wagon and then find their way again. Other people ... really bought into it and they made some dramatic transformations. You'll be surprised to see who they are."

Wilson, who has a background in acting and singing, wasn't bothered by being in front of cameras during filming.

"Doing this project, after the first day you kind of forget the cameras are there."

Wilson runs his own personal training business, Forward Fitness, in Vancouver.

Tsawwassen's Gillian Lowrey, one of Village On A Diet's executive producers, said the show doesn't focus exclusively on weight loss.

"We sent up a psychologist, sent up a doctor, a chef, a nutritionist. [We took] more of a holistic approach to it [by] helping people not just focus on, 'Let's get skinny.' But also how do I eat properly, how do I exercise properly -- changing that whole way of thinking."

Lowrey said Wilson showed a lot of enthusiasm and a passion towards fitness on the show, which was shot between April and July.

"Every week he was out there doing an endurance test with people being that cheerleader for them, being tough when he needed to," she said.

Village On A Diet airs Mondays at 9 p.m. on CBC.

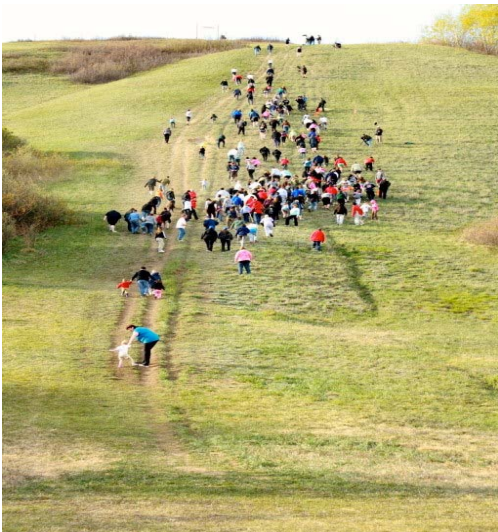
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<http://communities.canada.com/vancouver.sun/blogs/medicinematters/archive/2011/01/31/taylor-b-c-a-scenic-village-on-a-diet-but-it-s-not-a-pretty-picture.aspx>

Taylor, B.C: a scenic Village on a Diet. But it's not a pretty picture.

By [Pamela Fayerman](#) 30 Jan 2011 [Medicine Matters](#)

Filed under: [B.C.](#), [obesity](#), [Taylor](#), [Village on a Diet](#), [exercise](#), [CBC](#), [private trainers](#), [Mike Veinot](#), [dietician](#), [Jonathan Chovancek](#), [Garfield Wilson](#), [Maria Thomas](#), [Dr. Ali Zentner](#), [Force Four Entertainment](#), [psychologist Adele Fox](#)



I'll watch the fifth episode of [CBC's Village on a Diet](#) reality series tonight WHILE exercising because it is highly motivational. Ie: I don't want to look or live like that.

I'll be joining about half a million other Canadians who are tuning into the show each Monday night at 9 pm to watch two kick-ass trainers from Vancouver - Mike Veinot and Garfield Wilson - try and whip into shape many of the Taylor, B.C. (population 1,400) residents who are either overweight or obese. And 60 per cent of them ARE hefty, including many of the children because their parents feed them meals consisting of processed food bought from the gas station.

In tonight's episode, the trainers introduce a military bootcamp to the residents who have even made their pets fat.
It's not a pretty picture.

Executive producer John Ritchie told me that the idea for the show was first pitched to CBC a few years ago. "When we started, we had to look for a town that fit the bill of having a majority of its population overweight or obese," he said. There was a town in Sakatchewan that showed some interest, another on Vancouver Island (which would have made for even more spectacular scenery) but Taylor was chosen because of its community spirit and cohesion. "And they were really excited about doing it," Ritchie said.

Well it's one thing to say you want to be in a reality show and quite another to live the experience once a film crew of 30 invades your town and captures everything said or seen six days a week. "They chose to open their lives to us and I think with our documentary-style approach, we were more respectful than a pure reality show. Lives were changed and it was an amazing experience for everyone," Ritchie said.

The producers are in talks with CBC to create a second season, in a different place. So if you know of any towns that need a population makeover, give them a shout!

Back to Taylor. There are individuals in the beautiful Peace River valley town in northeast BC (18 km south of Fort St. John) who never ate, held or bought fruits and vegetables until the show's dietician, Maria Thomas, introduced them to the concept of fresh and healthful foods. In their defence, going to a real grocery store means driving to Fort St. John which is unfortunate. In one episode, a bewildered participant makes her first foray into the produce aisle where she looks at the fruits like they're rocks from Mars. There are many Taylor residents (including women) who weighed nearly 300 pounds before they started dieting and exercising. Body image issues abound in this series and the participants are completely candid about their personal challenges and vulnerabilities. By the second or third episode, I was feeling a great deal of empathy for them.

It is tempting to be disdainful and condescending towards the Taylor residents but in a nutshell, they didn't know any better. Fat and inactive parents begat children who repeated the mistakes of their parents. It takes tremendous willpower to undo bad patterns. This is a show about what it takes to transform.

Town residents used to look at the small hill in their community as if it was Mt. Kilimanjaro. Then Mike and Garfield got them to climb it and once they all conquered it, they felt better about themselves. The town has a plethora of great amenities like a golf course, four curling sheets, an indoor summer pool, a 4 km hiking trail, and cross country ski trails. But not many used them until last summer when the production started filming over a three month period.

This town is not atypical and that's why it's being used. You could substitute many rural or northern communities across the country and see a similar situation. This is an instructive show that allows viewers to peer into the minds and lives of people who just needed a major intervention. There's a lot of practical advice and compelling, inspiring messages for all of us. In the last episode (mid-March) we'll learn how many succeeded in sticking to the plan to stay healthy.

Turn on your tube to watch tonight's episode. If you're like me, you'll want to be doing something physical at the same time.



<http://ezinearticles.com/?Village-On-A-Diet-Review&id=5838492>

Village On A Diet Review

By Sara Reynolds

My Village on a Diet review will explain what this new television show is all about, and reveal why the producers of this show claim that the series was created to help fight Canada's obesity epidemic.

This TV show is set in a small little town called Taylor in the northern part of British Columbia, Canada. It has a very small population of 1,400 and most with some pretty serious health issues related to obesity and poor diet. Hence, this entire town has decided that is it time to hit the scales. With sixty percent of the residents either overweight or obese, Taylor has made the goal to collectively lose one ton within 3 months. They have also agreed to have their successes and failures filmed and aired on British television's new show called Village on a Diet.

The show will focus on the 150 participants who have agreed to stick with this program to lose weight. Some of the participants include "characters" who we can all relate to:

- a stay-at-home mom who struggles with being overweight and agoraphobia
 - a set of sisters determined to lose their baby weight
 - a man who works in a pizza shop and is constantly tempted by the foods he cooks and a fourteen year old boy, who is being homeschooled because he was teased too much in school
- and more challenging personal stories...

All of them have joined the ranks with hopes of finally losing their unwanted pounds but only a complete Village on a Diet Review will show if this will work for them.

The show has pulled together an entire team to help these participants work through the program from all aspects. Dr. Ali Zenter, an obesity specialist, leads the team to help create a plan for weight loss success. A Village on a Diet review will show if this team has what it takes to make change. Most of the participants admit that their exercise program has been lacking or in some cases nonexistent. To help residents get up and exercise, a local gym was built in the town of Taylor. Professional personal trainers, Garfield Wilson and Mike Veinot, are the two members of the team that are responsible for setting up exercise programs for the participants to get help get them fit.

This small mining and forest town's most loved favorites are meat and potatoes and is the staple food that most of them live off of. Unfortunately for them, meat and potatoes are

not on the list of healthy foods that they can eat regularly. So to help them learn how to make better food choices and show them better ways to prepare these foods, registered Dietician Maria Thomas and Chef Jonathan Chovancek were added to the team.

In addition to exercise and diet, this program also understands that some of the participants are dealing with emotional problems that often times act to manifest their weight loss problems. To help them overcome this problem register psychologist, Adele Fox was added to the team, to help the participants work through these problems.

This program seems to have all of the necessary parts of a good weight loss plan; an exercise program, a better nutrition plan and an emotional support system. This Village on a Diet review shows that the premise is good, and airing these people's personal struggles to lose weight might inspire those who choose to watch.

FYI: This program is only on for a total of 10 weeks, and after that they will leave them on their own. To complete this Village on a Diet review, it is essential to recognize that long-term weight loss needs to be looked at from a balanced perspective that includes diet, fitness, motivation, sustainability and personal and emotional support.

Click Here to Compare My Weight Loss Challenge to the Village on a Diet Review today.

Sara:)

Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Sara_Reynolds

the Vegan Project

<http://theveganproject.ca/2011/01/village-on-a-diets-chef-jonathan-chovancek-is-helping-canadians-get-creative-and-healthy-in-the-kitchen/>

VILLAGE ON A DIET'S CHEF JONATHAN CHOVANCEK IS HELPING CANADIANS GET CREATIVE (AND HEALTHY) IN THE KITCHEN

January 17th, 2011



The new CBC reality show *Village on a Diet*, part of the *Live Right Now* initiative, focuses on the residents of Taylor, BC, one of the unhealthiest towns in the country, as they struggle to get healthy and collectively lose one ton of weight over a three month period. They aren't doing it alone. Several experts have been brought in to help them improve their lives including a psychologist, nutritionist, trainers and Vancouver's own Chef Jonathan Chovancek, who makes his debut on tonight's show, which airs at 9pm on CBC (and on the website shortly after).

Watching the first two episodes has been an eye-opening experience. Some of the townspeople have never even purchased produce before, let alone exercised. It will be interesting to see how they respond to Chef Jonathan who will be tackling the challenge of teaching them how to make better food choices and healthier recipes at home.

The Vegan Project was delighted to get a chance to talk to Chef Jonathan about his experience with *Live Right Now* and *Village on a Diet*:

VP: How do you feel about being part of this new initiative by CBC? Why is it important to you?

JC: I am very proud of the *Live Right Now* project and of the work we did in Taylor, BC. *Live Right Now* is a way to help Canadians make healthy changes in their lives by taking little steps towards big change. Eating two vegetarian meals a week, going for a walk on

your lunch break, quitting smoking, joining a gym, learning a new recipe a week and eating as a family – these are challenges that Canadians have given themselves. The coolest part is that you are not doing it alone – you are doing it with the WHOLE COUNTRY! This is an incredible opportunity for Canada to show the world real social change.

VP: What are you personally doing to ‘Live Right Now’?

JC: My first challenge was something that I do every week; filling my refrigerator with fresh fruits and veggies. Red and green kale, radishes, broccoli, turnips, brussel sprouts, apples and mangos. This may seem normal to many people who read this but to a great majority of Canadians this is a novel thing. We live in a society which has been programed and literally brainwashed from the time we were young children to eat food from a drive though, freezer or box. My mission is to get Canadians shopping for whole, healthy foods and then show Canada how to cook them. I literally want Canada to get ‘creative in the kitchen’ every day!

VP: How do you think a making more plant-based food choices fits with the ‘Live Right Now’ concept?

JC: As a society we eat too much meat, and the quality of meat is generally from animals who have not led happy lives and have been pumped full of growth hormones and antibiotics. The meat travels long distances from were it lived to be slaughtered, processed an distributed. Looking for local sources of healthy meat is very important to our health. That said, we do not need to eat animal protein everyday! Getting creative in the kitchen and cooking recipes which use combinations of vegetables, nuts and legumes is just as delicious as eating meat and will lead to overall better health.

As consumers we need to seek out the best products whether it is beef, pork and chicken or soybeans, quinoa and almonds. If the food has been raised or grown in an environment full of poisons then you do not want to put it into your body. It is important for Canadians to support your local farmers and farmer’s markets. Buy food that is in season when you can, and when you can’t, make informed decisions about what you are feeding yourself and your family.

VP: What can you tell us about your experience on Village on a Diet? What did you take away from it? What can we look forward to?

JC: Working on Village on a Diet gave me the opportunity to do what I love most – cook and share the love of cooking and food. The opportunity to open up peoples minds to the concept of healthy cooking as a path to a long, healthy life. I will continue to work on creating recipes which are unique and delicious, but most importantly healthy! This is a dream job for me. The most amazing thing is that Taylor, BC inspired me to come up with the concept of getting Canadians creative in the kitchen and I hope to continue to spread that message.

THE VANCOUVER SUN

<http://communities.canada.com/vancouver/sun/blogs/medicinematters/archive/2011/01/31/taylor-b-c-a-picturesque-village-on-a-diet-but-it-s-not-a-pretty-picture.aspx>

Taylor, B.C: a scenic Village on a Diet. But it's not a pretty picture.

By **PAMELA FAYERMAN** 31 JAN 2011 MEDICINE MATTERS

I'll watch the fifth episode of [CBC's Village on a Diet](#) reality series tonight WHILE exercising because it is highly motivational. Ie: I don't want to look or live like that. I'll join about half a million other Canadians who are tuning into the show each Monday night at 9 pm to watch two kick-ass trainers from Vancouver - Mike Veinot and Garfield Wilson - try and whip into shape many of the Taylor, B.C. (population 1,400) residents who are either overweight or obese. And 60 per cent of them ARE hefty, including many of the children because their parents feed them meals consisting of processed food bought from the gas station. In tonight's episode, the trainers introduce a military bootcamp to the residents who have even made their pets fat. It's not a pretty picture. There are individuals in this beautiful Peace River valley town in northeast BC (18 km south of Fort St. John) who never ate, held or bought fruits and vegetables until the show's dietician, Maria Thomas, introduced them to the concept of fresh and healthful foods. In their defence, going to a real grocery store means driving to Fort St. John which is unfortunate. In one episode, a bewildered participant makes her first foray into the produce aisle where she looks at the fruits like they're rocks from Mars. There are many Taylor residents (including women) who weighed nearly 300 pounds before they started dieting and exercising. Body image issues abound in this series and the participants are completely candid about their personal challenges and

vulnerabilities. By the second or third episode, I was feeling a great deal of empathy for them.

It is tempting to be disdainful and condescending towards the Taylor residents but in a nutshell, they didn't know any better. Fat and inactive parents begat children who repeated the mistakes of their parents. It takes tremendous willpower to undo bad patterns.

Town residents used to look at the small hill in their community as if it was Mt. Kilimanjaro. Then Mike and Garfield got them to climb it and once they all conquered it, they felt better about themselves. The town has a plethora of great amenities like a golf course, four curling sheets, an indoor summer pool, a 4 km hiking trail, and cross country ski trails. But not many used them until last summer when the production started filming over a three month period.

This town is not atypical and that's why it's being used. You could substitute any rural or northern community and see a similar situation. This is an instructive show that allows viewers to peer into the minds and lives of people who just needed a major intervention. There's a lot of practical advice and compelling, inspiring messages for all of us in this reality show. In the last episode (mid-March) we'll learn how many succeed in sticking to the plan to stay healthy.

Turn on your tube to watch tonight's episode. If you're like me, you'll want to be doing something physical at the same time.

http://www.canadianliving.com/health/health_and_wellness_club/all_about_village_on_a_diet.php

All about Village on a Diet

Learn how folks of Taylor, B.C. decided to embrace a healthier life - and how you can too!

By Jennifer Power Scott

This story was originally titled "Village on a Diet" in the February 2011 issue. Subscribe to Canadian Living today and never miss an issue!

In the darkness of the night, when the last thing she wanted was to be alone, Jamie Kinzett survived the solitude the only way she knew how: by hitting the kitchen. She would cook up a pot of mac and cheese, or layer gooey butter through popcorn and coat the top with flavoured sprinkles. Then came the cheese, the handfuls of fish-shaped crackers, the potato chips and anything else she could find in her cupboards. It was a flood of food to feed a sad soul.

"I didn't want to spend time alone," says Jamie, a 27-year-old mother who moved to the tiny community of Taylor, B.C., just over two years ago. "I didn't like myself a whole lot, so I would just binge. And then I would go to bed, and I would feel sick. It got to the point where I'd feel like puking in the middle of the night."

With a loving fiancé, George, and a toddler named Kayla, Jamie had her share of joy. But when her weight reached more than 250 pounds, obesity was her prison. She postponed her

wedding because she didn't like the way she looked in a size 20 gown. And she lived like a hermit, staying in her house with her daughter, the TV and the computer. "I had just kind of accepted that I was going to be obese for the rest of my life," she says.

Finding the right community for the show

But by fate or by fluke, a very 21st-century kind of salvation was about to sweep into town. Force Four Entertainment, a Vancouver television production company, was searching the country for a community to feature in a new, big-budget CBC documentary series called "Village on a Diet." The show's goal: To help a town shed weight, get into shape and pump up its passion for healthy living.

At first, some locals weren't so sure they wanted the rest of the country getting the skinny on their weight woes. "We're trying to do what's right," says Glen Cross, the superintendent of the local golf course. "We don't want to come off as the silly hicks from northeast B.C. who don't know any better than to not eat the triple cheeseburger. [The producers] came up, and they were very reassuring that that's not what this show was about."

In the end, Force Four Entertainment picked Taylor, a community of around 1,400 people at Mile 36 on the Alaska Highway 97. Not just because of the picturesque Peace River, the walking trail and the serene green hills. Not just because the people of Taylor have a predilection for pepperoni pizza and 60 per cent of the population is overweight or obese. And not just because there's a 24-hour McDonald's nearby but no grocery store.

Taylor stood out because so many people there wanted to get healthy, and they were ready to work hard for it, even if it meant baring their souls – and a few of their bad habits – to the nation. "I really needed help," Jamie says. "So if I had to be on TV to get the help, I was going to do it."

More than a weight-loss story

The series, which CBC Television will air coast-to-coast in 10 one-hour episodes (plus a follow-up 11th episode) starting Jan. 3, gets grippingly personal with about a dozen Taylor residents. It is storytelling that goes way beyond the numbers on bathroom scales and the inches around bellies. "Village on a Diet" probes the pain behind the weight gain. "[There are] some really amazing people that pull on your heart strings," says John Ritchie, one of the show's executive producers. "Jamie was the person whom we first kind of fell in love with and we thought the whole country would do the same. She just desperately wanted to change the way she lived her life."

Last spring, Force Four Entertainment deployed an army of 30 producers, directors and staff to Taylor on a three-month mission to battle the bulge – and make TV good enough to inspire a nation. To whip the community's collective derriere into shape, the company also flew in a dream team made up of a physician, a psychologist, two personal trainers, a dietitian and a world-class chef. With cameras in their faces and experts at their disposal, the people of Taylor were fierce and ready.

Jonathan and Steve: A father-son duo gets motivated to get healthy

Once Jonathan Arsenault got over the shock that a big TV show was coming to his town, he had a feeling it was going to save his life. The 15-year-old had been bullied because of his weight since the first grade. In Grade 8, things were so bad his parents decided to homeschool him for a few months. "I was always called fat," says Jonathan, a gentle boy who likes helping students with disabilities. "I was really big and all these kids at school were just superthin, and they made fun of the kids that were the biggest. Of course, I was the biggest."

Jonathan's father, Steve, spent years as king of the one-handed meal. A tough-guy trucker

who sometimes works seven days a week, he liked to lunch at the wheel of his big blue rig, eating McDonald's burgers and deep-fried ribs from a local greasy spoon. On long hauls, sugar-loaded coffee and sinful snacks were his fuel. "I'd grab big bags of tacos, pepperoni, you name it," says Steve, who is five foot eight and whose weight peaked at 240 pounds. "I was borderline diabetic, [had] high blood pressure and all the goodies."

Father and son decided to be a part of "Village on a Diet" together. They were there from the beginning, when the townspeople stood on a gigantic truck scale. "OK, Taylor, are we ready to find out how much we weigh?" bellowed Glen Cross, the "town crier" for the show. Everyone watched as the number on the scale topped out at more than 28,000 pounds. "Are we happy about that? No! And are we gonna do something about that? Yeah! Follow me, and let's get started!"

But as everyone in Taylor came to see, fighting obesity can mean a lot of pain – and a few tears. In one scene, a woman whose family members struggle with their weight is overcome with emotion and pats her eyes with a tissue. Dr. Ali Zentner, a specialist in internal medicine and obesity (she'll also be a regular contributor to CBC News throughout the "Live Right Now" campaign, starting Jan. 3), delivers the perfect premetamorphosis pep talk. "You're going to do what every girl does," said Zentner, who has herself lost 160 pounds in the last 10 years. "You're going to have a good cry. And then you're going to get pissed off. And then you're going to get 'er done."

But "getting 'er done" takes more than garden salads, jumping jacks and willpower. It also takes a little retraining of the brain. Adele Fox, a Calgary-based psychologist who specializes in obesity, helped people in Taylor recognize when their emotions, not their bodies, were pushing them toward the chips and chocolate. "When you reach for food," Fox explains, "ask yourself if you're mind-hungry or body-hungry. Do you want the food because you're bored, happy, the food smells good, someone's pressuring you to eat it? Or are you

body-hungry? People that have weight issues usually eat from a place of mind-hunger."

Taylor residents get hungry for fitness

While the residents were dealing with their emotions and self-image, they were also lacing up their sneakers and working up buckets of sweat. The weekly fitness challenges were no walk in the park. Jamie, the Arsenault men and everyone else huffed, puffed, groaned and grunted their way through grueling tests of stamina and strength. There were tugs-of-war, hill climbs, sit-ups, pushups, bike rides – anything the trainers could throw at them. "Come on, let's go!" trainer Mike Veinot would holler. "It's not time for a break!"

Instead of craving burgers and ribs, the people of Taylor soon had an appetite for fitness. And it had nothing to do with a cash prize – because there wasn't one. "The prize is that you have a new lease on life," says Garfield Wilson, a Vancouver-based trainer. "What we're trying to do is show people a different way, a different lifestyle, something that will make them feel good in the end."

While Veinot and Wilson worked the bodies of Taylor, Jonathan Chovancek made healthy magic in the kitchens. The Vancouver chef, whose creations have dazzled discriminating palates in award-winning restaurants across Canada, showed up at houses toting olive oil and bags of carrots, beets, leeks, onions, radishes and other fresh foods. He countered Taylor's "fast-food culture" by teaching people to cook, giving them recipes for everything from kamut pancakes to roasted cauliflower with curry. "If you believe in me and believe in what I do," says Chovancek, "I can show you a way to make a positive change in your life. That was my approach."

A year ago, 50-year-old grandfather Rob Fraser was in the hospital, vomiting all night and wincing through the murderous pain of his second gallbladder attack. He was a hard-

bodied, medal-winning athlete as a teenager, but years of rich dinners, prime rib and bacon had caught up with him. He weighed 340 pounds, and his belly was so big he could rest a cup of coffee on it. Lying in the hospital bed, he made a decision. "Holy mackerel, Rob," he said to himself. "You need to do something about the weight."

And if anyone on "Village on a Diet" has a look of seething, single-minded determination in his eyes, it's Rob Fraser. By the time the series started shooting in the spring, he had already lost more than 40 pounds on his own. Even though the fitness challenges left him feeling a "new dimension of pain," the former judo star kept fighting to get his obesity in a stranglehold. "The first and foremost reason I did this was for the family, particularly my grandkids," he says. "They don't have a hope in hell of not being big if we don't change as adults."

After three months of pushups, soul-searching and talking to TV cameras, great things had happened for Rob and many other people in Taylor. And they all agree: If sharing their pains and triumphs helps other Canadians, millions of whom struggle with weight, it was worth every drop of sweat.

Jamie finishes the series on a high note

Jamie Kinzett can see a big hill from her house. She always thought it was "just a hill." But when the trainers told the townspeople their challenge was to climb it, the hill was suddenly steep and intimidating. "You've got to climb that mountain to get to the next level," said Garfield Wilson, holding a starter's pistol.

Jamie started up the hill. Before long, the height started to terrify her. Her legs were hurting; her heart was pounding. She felt like she couldn't breathe. Steve and Jonathan Arsenault had made it to the top, but they came back to walk with her. A woman Jamie had just met started calling, "You can do it!" And Garfield Wilson hurried over to help. "We're with you

the whole way, Jamie," he said.

Kinzett stopped and started, and stopped and started again. She bent over to catch her breath. She grimaced in pain. But in the end, she made it across the finish line and hugged her fiancé, George. The crowd roared. "Everybody was at the end clapping and cheering for me," she says. "It was just such an empowering moment. I get goose bumps thinking about it."

And in that moment, standing at the top of the steep hill in Taylor, the young woman who used to stay home and eat out of desperation had a new light in her eyes. It was something that looked a whole lot like hope.

Getting into the right mindset

Anyone can go on a diet and lose weight. But for a lot of people, the pounds come right back. The key, says Calgary psychologist Adele Fox, is learning how to maintain weight loss. And that means looking not only at your body, but at your brain, too. Here are a few of Fox's tips for losing weight – and keeping it off.

1. Develop a good knowledge base. Take time to learn about fat, calories, exercise and healthy food.
2. Figure out how you're using food. "For example, do you eat when you're bored?" says Fox. "Do you eat when you're happy? Do you eat when you're feeling lonely? You have to separate feelings from food."
3. Don't fear food. If you cut out all treats, you can wind up going back to your old eating habits and sabotaging your weight loss. "Cut yourself some slack," Fox says. "If you love chocolate or popcorn with a bit of butter, use it in a healthy way. Portion the popcorn out as opposed to plunking yourself in front of the TV and slathering the butter on."

4. Eat slowly, taking at least 20 minutes to enjoy your meal. "Put your utensils down between bites a few times or throughout the meal." Taking sips of water between bites can help too.

5. Love your body – even before you lose the weight. Own your sexiness, self-esteem and confidence. "The sexy size of jeans," says Fox, "is the size you're at right now."

Making your meals healthier

If anyone has a passion for healthy, beautiful food, it's Jonathan Chovancek. As chef de cuisine with Culinary Capers Catering in Vancouver, he spends his days creating spectacular dishes fit for kings. Chovancek took time away from the big city to help the people of Taylor, B.C., learn how to make delicious, nutritious meals – and lose weight in the process. Here are a few of his best tips for making mealtime a healthy adventure.

1. Forget takeout food. Instead, take control of the amount of salt and fat in your diet by cooking from scratch at home.

2. Eliminate white and processed foods. Cook brown and red rice, and discover the beauty of quinoa, a little-known grain that's supercharged with nutrients. Ditch the margarine. Use vegetable fats such as olive oil for cooking and organic unsalted butter for baking.

3. Get sweet on fruit, not candy. Apples, pears, pineapples, mangoes, peaches and nectarines are incredibly sweet when eaten at their peak. Fresh fruit is a great dessert.

4. Be creative. Each week, buy one spice, herb, fruit or vegetable you have never tried. You can search the Internet for tips on preparation.

5. Cook together. Cooking is about sharing, and you'll be amazed how much better your food tastes when you enjoy it with the ones you love.

http://www.canadianliving.com/health/health_and_wellness_club/meet_village_on_a_diet's_inspiring_doctor.php

Meet Village on a Diet's inspiring doctor

Check out Dr. Ali Zentner's inspiring weight loss story.

By Jennifer Power Scott

This story was originally titled "She's Walking the Talk" in the March 2011 issue. **Subscribe to Canadian Living today** and never miss an issue!

Getting to know Dr. Ali Zentner, of Village on a Diet

She's a shoe-loving, joke-cracking, bicycle-riding, marathon-running, Olympic torch-bearing dynamo who also happens to be a doctor. But it wasn't always that way for Dr. Ali Zentner. Ten years ago, the vivacious Vancouverite weighed 327 pounds. "I was really out of shape and prediabetic," says Zentner, a specialist in internal medicine and obesity. "I had to get off the dieting wheel."

By sheer serendipity, Zentner won an **elliptical trainer** and started using it five minutes a day. "Before I knew it, I was doing 30 minutes and then 40 minutes," she says. "Now I do half-marathons and triathlons."

Now fit and more than 160 pounds lighter, Zentner carried the Olympic torch in Kamloops last winter.

She's currently the stethoscope-wielding doctor on the CBC-TV series "Village on a Diet," part of the Live Right Now cross-country fitness campaign. And she'll celebrate her 40th birthday in high style – by climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. "At 40, I'm in way **better shape** than I ever was at 20,"

she says. "I think that's huge."

Read more about Village on a Diet and Live Right Now – CBC's initiative that's focused on inspiring you to engage with your family and community to enjoy an active lifestyle and a healthy diet.



<http://www.weightymatters.ca/2011/02/village-on-diet-episode-5-recap-my-last.html>

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 02, 2011

Village on a Diet Episode 5 Recap: My last recap?

This show sure doesn't seem to be changing. 5 hours in and ultimately we're faced with a show that's reinforcing many of the worst stereotypes of obesity and weight loss. That obesity's a disease of laziness. That the obese are ignorant. That treatment involves massive amounts of exercise. That healthy eating must include esoteric health food and always, always, always exclude dietary vices. That weight management is about suffering and that if someone's not successful with weight management, it's because they're weak willed. One of the most telling parts of this week's episode? Trainer Garfield is waxing on about how every week there are less folks involved in his challenges and then concludes that the town is failing him. I guess it didn't occur to him

that perhaps he's failing the town. Another? They had psychologist Adele Fox talk hypnosis for smoking cessation. Never you mind that the [Cochrane meta-analysis](#) of randomized trials shows hypnotherapy for smoking cessation is no better than no treatment on 6 month quit rates - let's tell all of Canada it's a great plan. You want more? How about the completely disrespectful, looking a mile down his nose chef who walked into the 30 year old single mom's restaurant shop and basically told her she was failing Taylor when really all she was doing was putting food on the table for her children? His condescension literally drove her out of town. It's pretty clear by now, this show isn't about best evidence or best practice, it's about best TV. It's too bad too. Sure, the townsfolk are going to lose their ton, but losing a few pounds per person's not particularly difficult and no doubt some folks will have been so strict as to lose whole piles. As the show's taught both viewers and Taylorites, all you need to do to lose weight is suffer. Of course there aren't too many folks out there who are willing, regardless of how much weight they might lose, to suffer forever, which is why folks who lose weight through suffering invariably gain it back when the scale stops whispering sweet nothings in their ears. Ultimately folks who lose weight suffering tend to go back to the lives they lived before they lost, which while not conducive to weight loss, were at least lives they enjoyed. How amazing would it have been to have a show that broke the classic reality TV weight loss mould? Where the obese were treated compassionately. Where weights were explored from individual environmental, medical and psychological perspectives. Where treatment consisted more of education and empowerment about nutrition, energy balance and exercise than punishment. Where realistic goals were set and bolstered. Where the means to satiety were taught and cultivated. Where it was about nurturing realistic but still less than perfect lifestyles because striving for perfection is a recipe for failure. Such a show would truly have the potential to positively impact a nation and a genre, not just a small town. So no more recaps from me. Maybe I'll do a series recap down the road, but unless there's major change to the format, I'm not sure there's much left for me to say.



<http://www.theadvance.ca/News/2011-02-15/article-2243119/No-Village-on-a-Diet-for-Liverpool-this-year/1>

No Village on a Diet for Liverpool this year

Liverpool is in the Top 3 communities in Canada for Village on a Diet, a new TV show from CBC

Published on **February 15, 2011**

Nick Moase

Liverpool got some disappointing news on Feb. 14. "Village on a Diet", the CBC program that follows a town on their challenge to collectively lose weight, won't be coming to Liverpool this year.

It wasn't that another town beat Liverpool. The show's producers have put the decision about renewing the series to a later date. Region of Queens economic officer Phaedra Charlton-Huskins says she got the call late on Feb. 14, with news from the producers. While Liverpool is still where it was before on the short list, the earliest start for filming another series would be in 2012.

"It's still not guaranteed that they'll do it, but they've just deferred the decision for a later date," she says.

The Facebook page has been buzzing with activity since it began, and now has over 1,100

members. While the announcement caused disappointment, there were still many words of encouragement and hope for the future. There was even a post by one of the trainers from the show, Garfield Wilson, encouraging Liverpool to not let this set them back.

While it is disappointing the show won't be coming, Charlton-Huskings says it has already stirred something within the community.

"The momentum that has been created in just bidding to be on the show has just been fantastic. So many people are already making changes just because of that."

Region of Queens physical activity coordinator Meaghan Roberts agrees. While the Region had developed a strategy two years ago on their own, they had struggled to get people to participate. Roberts says just the idea of the show coming has sparked interest that hadn't been there before.

"Village on a Diet kind of made them more interested in getting healthy and living a healthier lifestyle."

The Region has been offering fitness classes among other things, and so far they are mostly filled.

"I don't know if it had to do with Village on a Diet or people are just becoming more health conscious," says Roberts.

Charlton-Huskings says they are hoping to keep the momentum from the show going in the community. They will continue the Facebook page, encouraging healthy living and posting events in the community.

"Even just the social walk taking off like it has is heartwarming."

The social walks have gone from being a one off event in January to a weekly occurrence,

happening every Saturday morning at 10 a.m. Businesses and community groups are getting involved too, offering hot drinks and a place to rest after the walk is over.

She adds people are taking their own initiative as well. Weight loss groups have been springing up, and people are encouraging each other to get fit.

“Even just the idea of the show has given people the boost they have needed,” she says.

She hopes by keeping the healthy living message going, it will convince CBC to have a second season, and more importantly convince them Liverpool is the place to go.

Both Roberts and Charlton-Huskins says they will look at low and no-cost options to help people get healthy. Roberst says they will keep moving forward on the strategy, drawing on elements of the show to get the community involved.

“Yes, it’s nice to have experts come, but we have our own experts in the community,” says Roberts. “Ultimately it’s up to people to decide if they want to change their lifestyle. We’re hoping by offering all these things that will give them the push and support they need.”

THE VANCOUVER SUN

<http://www.vancouversun.com/health/Village+Diet+highly+motivational/4206510/story.html>

CBC's Village on a Diet highly motivational

BY PAMELA FAYERMAN, VANCOUVER SUN

FEBRUARY 16, 2011



Trainer Glen Cross does warmup exercises with the people of Taylor, B.C. in this scene from the CBC's Village on a Diet. Photograph by: Handout, ...

I watched the fifth episode of CBC's Village on a Diet reality series Monday night while exercising, because it is highly motivational.

About half a million other Canadians have been tuning in to the show each Monday at 9 p.m. to watch two kick-ass trainers from Vancouver — Mike Veinot and Garfield Wilson — try to whip into shape many of the Taylor, B.C. (population 1,400) residents who are either

overweight or obese. And 60 per cent of them are hefty, including many of the children because their parents feed them meals consisting of processed food and they don't get enough exercise.

Executive producer John Ritchie said the idea for the show was first pitched to CBC a few years ago. "When we started, we had to look for a town that fit the bill of having a majority of its population overweight or obese," he said. There was a town in Saskatchewan that showed some interest, and another on Vancouver Island, but Taylor was chosen because of its community spirit and cohesion. "And they were really excited about doing it," Ritchie said.

Of course, it's one thing to say you want to be in a reality show and quite another to live the experience once a film crew of 30 invades your town and captures everything said or seen six days a week. "They chose to open their lives to us and I think with our documentary-style approach, we were more respectful than a pure reality show. Lives were changed and it was an amazing experience for everyone," Ritchie said.

Well, maybe not everyone. I got an unsigned email from one of the Taylor residents that suggests some dissatisfaction:

"I just want to take this opportunity to clear something up, we DON'T grocery shop at the Taylor Esso. Yes, I participated in the show and I believe that the show has done great things, however, there have been several things that have been grossly misrepresented.

"My biggest pet peeve is that they have taken one scene from someone purchasing an on-the-road work lunch, and are using it to portray something completely untrue and unrealistic. I understand that it makes our stories more dramatic, but it's really sad that they went so low just to make good television. Most of the key participants work in Fort St. John every day and regularly purchase and eat food from one of our several grocery stores.

"Having participated in many of the challenges and knowing many of the characters and

their stories has given me a new-found perspective on so-called reality television. I agree, we have, or had, a weight problem, but it doesn't mean we are clueless idiots. Most of the stuff that the experts 'taught' us wasn't new, innovative, or shocking, it's just stuff that's sometimes the more difficult option and most of us just needed some motivation to start picking the more difficult option."

The above email aside, there are individuals in the Peace River valley town in northeast B.C. (18 km south of Fort St. John) who admit they had never eaten or purchased fruits and vegetables until the show's dietitian, Maria Thomas, introduced them to the concept of fresh and healthful foods.

In their defence, going to a supermarket with lots of healthful selections means driving to Fort St. John. In one episode, a bewildered participant makes her first foray into the produce aisle where she looks at the fruits like they're rocks from Mars.

There are many Taylor residents (including women) who weighed more than 250 pounds before they started dieting and exercising. Body-image issues abound in this series and the participants are completely candid about their personal challenges and vulnerabilities.

Though it's tempting to be disdainful and condescending toward the Taylor residents, by the second or third episode, I felt a great deal of empathy for them. It takes tremendous willpower to undo a lifetime of bad patterns. This is a show about what it takes to transform.

Town residents used to look at the small hill in their community as if it was Mount Kilimanjaro. Then the trainers got them to climb it. The town has a plethora of great amenities, like a golf course, four curling sheets, an indoor summer pool, a four-kilometre hiking trail and cross-country ski trails. But apparently not many took advantage of the facilities until last summer during the filming.

This town is typical and that's why it's being used. You could substitute many rural or northern communities across the country and see a similar situation. Village on a Diet is an

instructive show that allows viewers to peer into the minds and lives of people who needed a major intervention. In the last episode (mid-March), we'll learn how many succeeded in sticking to the plan to stay healthy.

The producers are in talks with CBC to create a second season, in a different place. So if you know of any towns that need a population makeover, give them a shout!

THE DRUMHELLER MAIL

<http://www.drumhellermail.com/home/local-news/9510-drumhealthier-movement-continues-despite-possible-village-on-a-diet-cancellation.html>

DrumHealthier movement continues despite possible Village on a Diet cancellation

Even though the continuation of the CBC Series Village on a Diet is not set in stone, it won't stop DrumHealthier. Paul Salvatore has been speaking with the production company, Force Four Entertainment, which produces the show, and has learned that Village on a Diet season two was not on a list of shows CBC has renewed for the upcoming television season. Salvatore said it is too early to write off the second season.

"The production company informs me this is an early decision and it is still very possible it will be renewed for a second season, but it will probably be a few weeks until they would know with any certainty at all," said Salvatore.

Laurie Case of Force Four Entertainment said CBC has not decided on the fate of the show on its network.

“The official story is that CBC hasn't made a decision about Village on a Diet yet. There is still a very real possibility it will come back for season two, but they haven't confirmed yet,” she said. “CBC has been clear with the producers that it still may come back. We will know in the next couple of weeks.”

Salvatore said despite this, the campaign to make Drumheller a healthier place continues to grow and work towards its goal. Its Facebook page is approaching 1,200 members, and it has completed its sixth fitness challenge, where 65 headed to the ski hill in Drumheller and went tobogganing last Saturday. Other challenges have included walking in the arena and yoga. This Monday night they will be heading to the bowling alley.

“It has been great to see the number of people getting involved, we want to continue the DrumHealthier movement” said Salvatore. “It is great that people continue to look at ways to improve their lifestyle, and we are going to continue with all the activities and challenges.” He has posted a link on the group's Facebook page to a petition to renew the second season of the show, where people can help send a message to CBC to keep the show.

the Vegan Project

<http://theveganproject.ca/2011/02/bring-back-cbcs-village-on-a-diet/>

BRING BACK CBC'S VILLAGE ON A DIET!!

February 24, 2011

We were sad to hear that one of our favourite new shows, **CBC's Village on a Diet**, has not been renewed for another season. This is disappointing because we believe the show is very important for Canada. It's been so inspiring to watch the show and see people in an unhealthy community becoming more conscious about their health and making changes to improve their lives. Sometimes we forget that not everyone is educated on healthy food choices and are unaware that the food they've been raised on is actually leading them to early graves. The show has been an eye opener for us, for the town of Taylor, BC, and for everyone who watches it. Plus, it's great to have access to all the wonderfully healthy and delicious recipes **Chef Jonathan Chovancek** has been sharing with the community.

We'd love to see the Village on a Diet team bringing better health to other parts of Canada in a second season. We've written personal messages to the CBC telling them how much we love the show and that we want it back. If you agree, please take a moment to **complete this simple form on the CBC website** and tell them to bring Village on a Diet back!

Here's to the health of our country!

<http://www.royalcityrecord.com/news/Westminster+visit+from+Village+Diet+trainers/4361849/story.html>

The Record

New Westminster to get visit from Village on a Diet trainers

BY THERESA MCMANUS, BURNABY NOW

FEBRUARY 28, 2011

Some of the celebrity trainers from CBC's Village On A Diet television series will be visiting the Royal City this weekend.

They'll be visiting New Westminister on Sunday, March 6 as part of the Healthy Weight Loss Challenge, which started Feb. 7. The 260 participants have already lost nearly 500 pounds.

"The rally is designed to inspire and motivate participants as they continue on their journey to health and wellness," said Sandy Earle, New Westminister's active communities programmer. "While we'll be celebrating the success of the 260 Healthy Weight Loss Challenge participants, the event is open to anyone who wants to make some healthy changes in their life."

The one-hour rally will get underway on March 6 at 1 p.m. at Queen's Park Arenex. Guests will include: celebrity trainers Mike Veinot and Garfield Wilson and participants from CBC's Village On A Diet; registered dietician Lauren Williams from the Eating for Energy team; Mayor Wayne Wright, who participated in the City of New Westminister's staff weight loss challenge in 2010; and local fitness instructors and physiotherapists, who will answer questions from rally participants.

"Our Healthy Weight Loss Challenge has caught the attention of the producers of CBC's Village On A Diet who were impressed with this local initiative," Earle said. "This is a great

opportunity for our community to show their support for participants and get motivated to tackle their own wellness goals. Everyone is invited."

Having completed a successful corporate challenge for city employees in December 2010, the City of New Westminster launched a community challenge. Over the course of 12 weeks, 82 city employees lost 692 pounds.

In addition to weight check-ins every two weeks, all participants received a package of information about losing weight sensibly, eating properly and increasing activity. Mini-challenges are offered between weigh-ins to help people stay focused and motivated and to allow them to win draw prizes.

The Record

<http://www.royalcityrecord.com/Want+healthy+Rally+Sunday/4387784/story.html>

Want to get healthy? Rally set for Sunday

BY THERESA MCMANUS, THE RECORD MARCH 4, 2011

The City of New Westminster is hoping for a good turnout at this weekend's rally for the Healthy Weight Loss Challenge that's now underway.

Some of the celebrity trainers from CBC's Village On A Diet television series will be attending the Healthy Weight Loss Challenge rally that will take place on Sunday, March 6

at 1 p.m. in the Queen's Park Arenex. The rally is designed to inspire and motivate the 260 people who have signed up for the community weight-loss challenge, but everyone is invited to attend.

"We're really hoping for a great turnout. CBC has just confirmed that they will be attending to promote their Live Right Now campaign, and we'd like to sign as many New West residents up for this as possible," said Sandy Earle, New Westminster's active communities programmer. "They feel we have the potential to be the biggest group in their campaign. This could be another feather in our caps."

Live Right Now is a CBC initiative that hopes to inspire Canadians to join together and improve the health of the country, through small steps that individuals can take to improve their own health.

Guests at the one-hour rally will include: celebrity trainers Mike Veinot and Garfield Wilson and participants from CBC's Village On A Diet; registered dietitian Lauren Williams from the Eating for Energy team; Mayor Wayne Wright, who participated in the City of New Westminster's staff weight loss challenge in 2010; and local fitness instructors and physiotherapists, who will answer questions from rally participants.

Having completed a successful Biggest Loser corporate challenge for city employees in December 2010, the City of New Westminster launched a Biggest Loser community challenge. In addition to weight check-ins every two weeks, all participants in the challenge received a package of information about losing weight sensibly, eating properly and increasing their activity.

Read more:

<http://www.royalcityrecord.com/Want+healthy+Rally+Sunday/4387784/story.html#ixzz1Gbi3K47E>

<http://www.straight.com/article-377475/vancouver/village-diet-poses-2011-firefighters-calendar>



Village on a Diet poses for 2011 firefighters' calendar

By Michelle da Silva
Publish Date: March 2, 2011



Bow-chica-bow-wow. On this week's episode of *Village on a Diet*, which airs Mondays at 9 p.m. on CBC Television, the volunteer Taylor Fire Department posed for a 2011 Firefighters' Calendar.

Village on a Diet spotlights the northern B.C. town of Taylor, where over 60 percent of its inhabitants are either overweight or obese. The 10-episode reality show began in January and the villagers hoped to lose one collective ton over the course of three months.

During episode nine, the villagers continued their grueling workout regimes with personal trainers Garfield Wilson and Mike Veinot. Melissa, the local pizza shop owner, also learned to make her pizza offerings more healthy with chef Jonathan Chovancek.

The photo shoot for the firefighters' calendar had members of the fire department stripped down and greased up to show off their hard-earned bodies. Members of the fire department include husband and wife team Kristine and Jordy Doerksen, as well as jokester Brent Taillefer, who weighed in at nearly 350 pounds at the start of the show.

Village on a Diet fans can now purchase this calendar, which costs \$15 if picked up in person, or \$20 including shipping. Net proceeds from the calendar will go to the Children's Burn Program at B.C.

Children's Hospital.

Visit the *Village on a Diet* [website](#) for more details.

Source URL: <http://www.straight.com/article-377475/vancouver/village-diet-poses-2011-firefighters-calendar>

The Record

Experts help city take it off

Celebrity trainers from CBC's Village on a Diet series will be in the city for a rally this weekend

BY THERESA MCMANUS, THE RECORD

MARCH 2, 2011

Some of the celebrity trainers from CBC's Village On A Diet television series will be visiting the Royal City this weekend.

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In addition to weight check-ins every two weeks, all participants in the challenge received a package of information about losing weight sensibly, eating properly and increasing activity.

Mini-challenges are offered between weigh-ins to help people stay focused and motivated and to allow them to win draw prizes.

"We are very excited about this," Earle said about the rally. "We are hoping to get a really good turnout."

The rally will be "short and sweet" as it starts at 1 p.m. and must wrap by 2 p.m.

"I think it is going to be great. I am going to be looking forward to seeing these trainers in action," Earle said. "They are going to share their two cents worth."

The Healthy Weight Loss Challenge is also known as the Biggest Loser Challenge. Out of respect for the fact that the Biggest Loser and Village on a Diet are shown on different television networks, promotional materials for this rally featuring Village on a Diet trainers have referred to it as the Healthy Weight Loss Challenge.

www.twitter.com/TheresaMcManus

http://www.bclocalnews.com/greater_vancouver/newwestminsternewsleader/news/117340628.html

NEWWESTNEWSLEADER.com

March 3, 2011

New Westminster's Village on a Diet connection



Rob Bromley's production company, Force Four Entertainment, created the reality series Village on a Diet for the CBC.

MARIO BARTEL/NEWSLEADER

By Grant Granger - New Westminister News Leader

Published: March 03, 2011 12:00 PM

After Rob Bromley graduated from New Westminster secondary in 1977 he soon landed in Victoria working construction.

The money was good, but job satisfaction wasn't.

He had a bent for business and a creative side he wanted to explore. So one day he went into the boss's office and said, "I quit. I'm going back to school."

The boss looked at him like he'd just walked off the set of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

"Why would you do that?" asked the boss. "Why would you take two years out of your life and not make money?"

Despite the boss's logic, Bromley headed to BCIT anyway to earn a marketing diploma. He thought he'd get into the advertising business because it blended business with his creative side. His instructor, though, convinced him to do his practicum with a production company.

That's where he met John Ritchie, and after they graduated the duo went to work for Force Four Entertainment in 1990. Now they, along with Gillian Lowery, own the company—Bromley is the president—and deal with the likes of CBC, CTV, W, Lifetime Channel and the Oprah Winfrey Network on a daily basis.

Now his tools of the trade are a pen and a Blackberry rather than a hammer and wrench.

Deep Royal City roots

Bromley's New West roots run deeper than a 100-foot Queen's Park Douglas Fir. He grew up in the West End and his wife is from Sapperton, and they are raising their family in a home near her old 'hood.

At first, Force Four specialized in corporate videos, a profitable enterprise for a time. But when the Internet came along companies began wanting to control the message so they started their own in-house communications departments. Force Four decided television was the way to go.

“The times were changing and we knew how to tell stories, but we didn’t understand the business side of television, how to get funds and putting budgets together,” says Bromley.

They discovered it’s much more of a collaborative business, piecing together contributions from broadcasters, film funds, writers, directors and much more.

“It was a different beast than the corporate world where you had free rein because you knew your business better than the business that hired you,” says Bromley. “All these things were on a massive learning curve for us.”

But learn they did. These days Force Four has scripted shows, reality TV shows, documentaries and biographies popping up all over television channel menus. They also have a development team of three people out there coming up with ideas and then selling them.

When they got to more than 200 episodes of The Shopping Bags television series they realized, “OK now, we can safely leave the corporate business behind. OK, we’re television producers doing business with broadcasters.”

Biggest Loser New West Challenge

*Some stars from Force Four’s show Village On A Diet will participate
in a Biggest Loser New West Challenge rally at the Queen’s Park Arenex
on Sunday from 1 to 2 p.m. Trainers Garfield Wilson and Mike Veinot*

will be there along with participants from the “village,” Taylor, B.C.,

Glen Cross and Jamie Kinzett. The show’s finale will be on

CBC Monday (March 7) at 9 p.m. with a follow-up episode on March 14.

Why not buy in?

About five years ago, Bromley, Ritchie and Lowrey realized they were more or less running the business, so they figured they either should buy it or start one of their own. They took Option No. 1.

“We really felt the weight of responsibility of everybody working there already, so at that point why not have them work for us.”

Part of the perks of his job include traveling regularly to events like an annual television marketing conference in Cannes, France.

“It can be an exciting business, although it has its moments of stress, I won’t lie to you. But it’s been good,” he says.

“We work with talented and good people. That has really paid off. The product you end up getting is far superior.”

Bromley says in the current market fewer and fewer producers are being entrusted to do programming for networks, but their track record has paid off.

They’ve done such shows as CBC’s Village on a Diet, Cupcake Girls, The Shopping Bags and Manhattan Matchmaker for the W network, the movie Playing For Keeps for the CTV and Lifetime networks, and 65 Red Roses for CBC Newsworld’s Passionate Eye.

Cupcake Girls, about two young women entrepreneurs, has been sold for broadcast in 79 countries. “That story has resonated in places like Afghanistan and all over the world,” he says.

And 65 Red Roses, about New Westminster native Eva Markvoort’s battle with cystic fibrosis, has won many awards and has been sold to the Oprah Winfrey Network—which Bromley estimates will mean it will be seen by 70 million people.

When local filmmakers Nimisha Mukerji and Philip Lyall came into Force Four’s Vancouver office it hit home for Bromley because his son had gone to school with Markvoort.

“It always makes me emotional,” says Bromley as he takes off his glasses and reflects on the powerful documentary. “I couldn’t be more proud than to be part of that.

“They were so giving of Eva and that family in entrusting her story to us.”

Bromley says Mukerji sent him an email saying she’d come to the realization it was a story that will be with her forever.

Proof is in the product

Although he’s come a lot farther than he ever imagined in a business he’s passionate about, he and his partners are a long way from declaring they’re satisfied.

“Recently a broadcaster mentioned we were one of the top three production companies in Canada, and that’s pretty high praise,” says Bromley. “But now we turn our attention to the work. The proof is our products are out there and they’re selling. That’s pretty exciting.”

The broadcast industry is worried about “trans-media,” as Bromley calls Internet powers like

Netflix, circumventing traditional methods to acquire programming for distribution. But those ventures, he says, don't reinvest profits to make future quality products to deliver.

"You have to put money back into the system if you want quality put back in the system," says Bromley.

"We as a production company have to be nimble and keep doing good work."

His passion has paid off financially, but more importantly, on a personal level it's meant much more to Bromley than donning a hard hat and tool belt ever would have.

"It's like my dad used to say, 'If you enjoy what you're doing then you're going to be successful.'

"The opportunities that I've had are incredible."

this article at:

http://www.bclocalnews.com/greater_vancouver/newwestminsternewsleader/news/117340628.html



<http://www.throng.ca/village-diet/village-diet-season-finale-monday-march-7-2011-9-pm-cbc>

Village On a Diet season finale on Monday, March 7, 2011 at 9 p.m. on CBC



One town. One big obesity problem. Ninety days later – did they reach their goal of losing a ton of collective weight?

Obesity in Canada is out of [control](#) and nowhere is it more apparent than in Taylor, [British Columbia](#). But this small northern community, with a die-hard team of experts, [committed](#) to losing 2,000 pounds by embracing new eating habits and grueling fitness challenges for three months.

With their relationships pushed to the brink and their lifestyles are dramatically overhauled, did the town achieve their goal? The Season Finale of the ground-breaking series, [Village On A Diet](#), premieres on Monday, March 7, 2011 at 9 p.m. (9:30 NT) on CBC Television.

The follow-up episode of how-are-they-doing-now will immediately follow a week later on Monday, March 14, 2011 at 9 p.m. on CBC.

“We sent a professional team of experts to Taylor to help them break bad habits,” says Force

Four Partner Gillian Lowrey. “But after raiding the fridges, dusting off cookbooks, setting up butt-kicking boot camps, and a whirlwind of activity including a revealing Body Age scare, we all want to know if it made a difference.”

In the Season Finale, we see how the Taylorites have transformed their bodies and their lives in the last three months—and it’s now time for them to experience the fruits of their labours. Jamie and George’s [wedding](#) day finally arrives, and all eyes are on the bride. Brent and Sheena make a hopeful return visit to the [fertility doctor](#) for a [pregnancy test](#). Town Crier Glen Cross anxiously awaits the results of the final [truck scale](#) weigh-in—has Taylor really succeeded in losing a ton of weight?

“We see the townspeople alternate between fierce competition and inspiring cooperation,” adds Rob Bromley, President, Force Four Entertainment. “But, what’s important is how they transcend their personal rivalries and petty disputes, in order to keep their community united in their common goal for better health, happiness, and hope.”

In the long-awaited follow-up episode, the experts return to a winterized Taylor four months after the camera crews left, to see if residents have gone “beyond [the diet](#)” and achieved a lasting [lifestyle](#) change. Temperatures may have dropped dramatically in Taylor this winter, but has the town’s commitment plummeted as well? What they find will surprise everyone, including the townspeople.

“This is more than a mere entertainment series,” says John Ritchie, Executive Producer and Partner of Force Four Entertainment. “As we see Taylor’s true stories unfold, they immediately become more compelling than any fiction, as both human weakness and incredible [stamina](#) are displayed by the residents of the town.”

VILLAGE ON A DIET is a groundbreaking series in its scope, its authenticity and – perhaps most of all – its potential to inspire not only the small town of Taylor, but ultimately the entire nation. It is a ten-part series with a special one-hour update episode produced by Force Four Entertainment. www.cbc.ca/village



<http://www.tv-eh.com/2011/03/06/village-on-a-diet-wraps-up-march-7-14/>

Village on a Diet wraps up March 7 & 14

March 6, 2011

From a media release:

THEY SET OUT TO LOSE A TON OF WEIGHT. DID THEY REACH THEIR GOAL?

VILLAGE ON A DIET's Season Finale premieres on Monday, March 7, 2011 at 9 p.m. on CBC Television

One town. One big obesity problem. Ninety days later - did they reach their goal of losing a ton of collective weight? Obesity in Canada is out of control and nowhere is it more apparent than in Taylor, British Columbia. But this small northern community, with a die-hard team of experts, committed to losing 2,000 pounds by embracing new eating habits and grueling fitness challenges for three months. With their relationships pushed to the brink and their lifestyles are dramatically overhauled, did the town achieve their goal? The Season Finale of the ground-breaking series, Village On A Diet, premieres on Monday, March 7, 2011 at 9 p.m. (9:30 NT) on CBC Television. The follow-up episode of how-are-they-doing-now will immediately follow a week later on Monday, March 14, 2011 at 9 p.m. on CBC.

In the Season Finale, we see how the Taylorites have transformed their bodies and their lives in the last three months—and it's now time for them to experience the fruits of their labours. Jamie and George's wedding day finally arrives, and all eyes are on the bride. Brent and Sheena make a hopeful return visit to the fertility doctor for a pregnancy test. Town Crier Glen Cross anxiously awaits the results of the final truck scale weigh-in—has Taylor really succeeded in losing a ton of weight?

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has the town's commitment plummeted as well? What they find will surprise everyone, including the townspeople.



<http://www.energeticcity.ca/fortstjohn/news/03/08/11/taylor-residents-reflect-after-village-a-diet-ends>

Taylor residents reflect after 'Village on a Diet' ends

By: Kimberley Molina

Tuesday, March 8, 2011

The final week of 'Village on a Diet' has come to an end and many residents of Taylor gathered Monday night to watch their final results from the 10-week challenge broadcast across the country.

One of the 'villagers' was Melissa Crantz, called the District's 'dealer' on the show referencing how her pizza restaurant was dealing out unhealthy food to the residents and thus contributing to the area's weight problems. Crantz says it took her several weeks to really commit to the show and make true lifestyle changes.

Her pizza restaurant was featured several times in the show and although she says has changed her menu slightly to incorporate some healthier choices, she also says that Chef Jonathan Chovancek's critical review of her meat, meat and more meat pizza actually had an opposite effect, making it her most famous pizza.

Half-way through the show Crantz had a very publicly broadcast breakdown, leaving

Taylor. Crantz says the breakdown was real, but it all really came down to editing. She says what the show did not air about the day she left was how Dr. Ali Zentner had shown her an age enhancement of her daughters, which was devastating to hear.

One pair on the show was father and son Steve and Jonathan Arsenault. Both have seemingly been able to keep off the weight they lost during the show and Steve attributes it to watching what they eat.

Steve says one of the biggest challenges fame has brought him since the show has aired is that other customers at the grocery store often watch what he puts in his cart.

For Jonathan, before the show aired he had to be homeschooled because of bullying due to his weight. During the show, one of his biggest goals was to be able to return to school. However, he says everyone will have to wait until the special “follow-up” episode to find out whether or not he returned.

Despite how either might have been portrayed during the show, they both agree the show has changed them. Jonathan says he’s been able to spend more time with his father than before participating in various activities.

So, how did the Taylor challenge and show get started? The challenge originally began after the Community Services department in Taylor applied for a health and wellness grant through the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, says Bryant Bird, the District’s director of community services. Then, Bird says, they found out a TV crew was hoping to get involved.

He says the challenge has had a number of positive impacts on the community, including healthier eating habits and a push for a full-fledged gym facility to be built in the community. The facility is currently being constructed.

The District is also coming out with a new 'passport' initiative in partnership with Tourism B.C. that has a list of several low-cost activities residents can do throughout the summer and winter seasons. As an incentive, he says once residents complete many of the activities they can be entered in a draw for various prizes.

A final follow-up episode looking at the 'villagers' late last year, months after the show stopped filming, will air on Monday on CBC.

Wednesday, March 9th

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

JOHN DOYLE: TELEVISION

“I enjoy these shows so much I’m giving them up for Lent”

JOHN DOYLE

So what are you giving up for Lent? Really? You’re very brave. I couldn’t. I like the ones with the cream filling too much. Me? I’m giving up watching Village on a Diet, which I’ve enjoyed so much.

Yes, in case you’re ignorant of such vital matters, Lent starts on Wednesday and will continue until Saturday, April 23. It’s the time to do penance. Give up an indulgence. Good for the soul, and all that.

How do I know it’s Lent? The mother told me so. I was talking to her on the phone on Sunday. Often, conversations with the mother open with her saying, “Do you know who’s after dying?” Not this time. Everyone I know beyond in Ireland must be alive and thriving, for a change. First, she informed me in no uncertain terms that Manchester United was “a disgrace” in the loss to Liverpool and then she haughtily told me that I had have been better off watching Wolverhampton play Tottenham because it was a “great match with goals galore.” I countered that I prefer watching Barcelona anyway. She was having none if it. “There’s no Irishmen playing for that crowd.”

Then Lent came up. It’s a mother thing. “What are you giving up?” she asked. This gave me pause. It’s devil the bit of talk about Lent I hear in this neck of the woods. I had no plans to give up anything except being cranky in this space and annoying people just for the hell of it. That had to stop anyway. Too much fun. An alternative might be moseying around asking people what they’re giving up for Lent. Just to be annoying.

Village on a Diet was a true pleasure, though. Who could not fall for Jamie, the young stay-at-home mom whose wedding dreams were dashed when she felt so awful trying to fit into a wedding dress. The other night, the nation must have cheered when she achieved her goal of losing a lot of weight and getting married in fine style. There's one more episode coming this Monday (CBC, 9 p.m.). It's the follow-up show where we find out if the inhabitants of Taylor, B.C., succeeded in keeping off the weight. I'll have to miss it. Lent is here.

Another pleasure I'll decline is watching The National after Village on a Diet and wondering whether Pastor Mansbridge or Amanda Lang is the bigger stuffed shirt. Yes, Lent is the best time to stop a sick obsession.

And if I'm talking punishment and penance for Lent, I'll have to stop watching Glee. The greatest pleasure is waiting for Brittany (Heather Morris) to deliver her deadpan, delicious lines. Mr. Schue: "Who can tell me what a ballad is?" Brittany: "A male duck." Brittany to no one in particular: "Did you know that dolphins are just gay sharks?" It's a genuine pleasure. Cancelled for Lent, I guess.

Also, watching Fox News for a laugh. This is a hard one. Bill O'Reilly is attacking The New York Times again: "The New York Times is about as uber-left as you can get!" I was laughing so hard I had to swallow the Werther's Original I was sucking on. There's another thing to give up – the hard candy for watching the news channels. Werther's for Fox. Purity Peppermint Nobs for CBC News Network. I like the Purity, a Newfoundland specialty. A certain lady actress from Mount Pearl sent me several bags. I need more, but it will wait until after Lent.

I encourage you to join me in Lenten penance. A spot of denial and discipline will do us all a world of good. Mind you, for reasons that shall remain behind a veil of secrecy, I decline to give up beer, wine and spirits. (Having written the previous sentence, I now hear the voice of the mother. Okay, okay, I'll think about it. But a person in my position needs drink to survive the slings and arrows of the column-writing racket. That's all I'm saying.)

Perhaps, instead of depriving myself of the pleasures of beer, wine and spirits, I'll watch Conservative attack ads occasionally. Yep, that's punishment. Even worse, of course, is watching John Baird or Jason Kenney act all self-righteous on TV.

I asked the mother what she was giving up. "Chocolates," she announced. I remarked that this was brave. "There's other sweets," she replied, cunningly. Now you know where I acquired the attitudes and philosophy that emanate from this column. I didn't lick it up off the road, as they say.

Me, I'm not giving up watching Barcelona. No way. I'll stick with avoiding Glee. Punishment is what Lent is about, isn't it? Let me know if Brittany says something particularly brilliant. Thanks. You're a saint.

That's Fit

<http://www.thatsfit.ca/2011/03/11/lose-fat-get-fit-lessons-from-village-on-a-diet/>

Lose Fat, Get Fit: Lessons From 'Village on a Diet'

If there's anyone who knows something about obesity -- and how we, as a country, should go about combatting the disease -- it's Dr. Ali Zentner, Physician Cardiac Risk Management and Obesity Specialist and star of CBC's "[Village on a Diet](#)." Since losing 170 pounds, Zentner has helped over 2,000 people get fit and lose the fat. Here are some of the ways she and her clients battle the bulge.

You're quite fit, but it hasn't always been that way. Tell us a bit about your weight loss

struggles.

Everyone has weight loss struggles and I think mine were no different than the majority of patients I see. **Obesity** is a chronic disease, which, for now, can only be treated through lifestyle modification. I struggle with the "ghosts of obesity" and will for the rest of my life. I think everyone has a different perspective/experience with losing weight -- although my story isn't unique, it's unique to me.

When did you realize you had to change your lifestyle?

There really wasn't a specific "tipping point," but rather a series of small changes that "snowballed" into my current healthy **lifestyle**. Every journey really does begin with one step and, for me, that was the way it began almost 10 years ago.

What are your tips and tricks to staying slim and healthy on a daily basis?

I think there are many. Some key ones are:

1. Keep your eyes open to the pitfalls. We're all vulnerable to the environment around us, so don't be sidelined by potential pitfalls (**cravings**, snacks, etc.). Try to make one or two changes every day that'll have a positive impact on your diet.

2. Attitude. Believing in yourself is a challenge (at the best of times), but is especially important when you're struggling with obesity. Small changes can have a significant impact on health, though, and it's important to be kind to yourself.

I've always stood by the belief, "People respond very well to **kindness**." You have to be kind to yourself, first. Attitude really is everything.

What do you do every week to stay in shape?

I ride my bike to and from work every day. I swim three days a week and run three days a week. Recently, I've been training to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, so I added climbing stairs (100 flights per day) to my **exercise** regimen. I know this sounds extreme, but I'm an avid triathlete so I like to keep in shape for the summer races! It's an achievement to push my body and to see what it can do.

How does nutrition factor into your daily schedule?

Nutrition is everything. Exercise is great for weight maintenance and keeping fit, but [portion](#) size and food choices are 90 per cent of the weight loss puzzle. Sure, I have [treats](#) once in awhile, but they really are *treats I eat once in awhile!*

When you have a few "downtime" moments, what do you love to do?

I love spending time with my husband and my friends. I love taking my dogs for walks in Stanley Park (in Vancouver). I love listening to music and buying shoes. I really am no different than any other 40-year-old woman out there. I'm lucky to have a wonderful [support](#) system and to be surrounded by people who inspire and ground me.

You're currently the go-to doctor on CBC's "Live Right Now." Why get involved with the program?

Because obesity is a disease. This country, this government, needs to start addressing this problem at the level of the health care system and not ignore it as a "social condition" patients need to fix on their own.

I cannot tell you how many emails I've received from "Village on a Diet" viewers asking for help -- or if I knew of a doctor who could help them in their area. The fact is this is a disease affecting 50 per cent of the people in this country -- a majority of these patients have no idea where to go for help.

If obesity numbers were as high as those of [cancer](#), we would be appalled and would demand support from our leaders.

Make no mistake, I know this show is just television -- nothing is perfect -- but, if anything, it's helping people talk about obesity as a nation. It's helping us get to a place where we demand action.

Becoming an obesity specialist, what's the one thing you learned about obesity that surprised you?

I'm not sure I was surprised by anything, but it's helped me become an even stronger champion for this cause. I thought I cared about obesity 10 years ago when I first started my practice... Now, I *really* care. I'm so [passionate](#) about providing treatment for this illness and helping my patients. Everyday I learn more about compassion, tenacity and understanding.

What's the hardest part of waging a war against fat and obesity?

As a doctor, it's a challenge because we don't have the resources to treat this chronic multi-factorial disease. I work alone and can't imagine what reach and impact I would have if I had a team of nutritionists, psychologists, doctors and nurses behind me. [Surgical](#) options for obesity in Canada are pathetic, too.

What's your prescription for living your healthiest, best life?

I don't really have one perfect prescription except to say, "Be true to yourself, believe you deserve a better life and take everything one day at a time." Healthy living is like any challenging journey. You have to take it step by step.

Catch a recap episode of the "Village on a Diet" series on Monday, March 14 at 9PM on CBC.

EDMONTON JOURNAL

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/news/Losing+weight+autocrats+arguments/4434255/story.html>

Losing weight, autocrats and arguments

MARCH 14, 2011

We're fat. And we don't really care, posted Saturday, March 12 by Robert Fulford

The residents of Taylor, B.C., who have appeared for 10 weeks on a CBC television "reality" show, Village On A Diet, are so flushed with victory that it seems cruel to remind them they have played only the first inning of a game that runs at least eight more and certainly will become much harder before it's over.

Village On A Diet (which ends Monday at 9 p.m.) was designed to teach Taylor, and by extension the rest of Canada, better eating and exercise habits. The CBC rolled up with a formidable squad - doctor, dietitian, chef, psychologist and two phys-ed trainers. But soon, they will be gone .

If they are like most people, (the Taylor participants) will begin to regain weight. If even 20 per cent maintain their healthy, active lives and their relatively low weight for even a year, the project will be counted an exceptional success.

That being the case, why not call in the government? This is the reason for the rather pathetic program announced by federal, provincial and territorial health ministers on Monday. They are creating "Our Health Our Future: A National Dialogue on Healthy Weights." The key word is "dialogue": They don't know what to do about obesity, particularly in children, so they have decided to ask the public. And the citizens responding, being Canadian, have begun by demanding government control .

The painful truth is that no one forced us to get fat, and no one forced us to stuff fattening foods into our children .

No matter how strenuous the efforts of governments, they can't substantially change our habits. To reduce obesity we'll need a widespread educated knowledge of diet.

NATIONAL POST

<http://fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2011/03/12/robert-fulford-were-fat-and-we-dont-really-care/>

Robert Fulford: We're fat. And we don't really care

Mar 12, 2011

The residents of Taylor, B.C., who have appeared for 10 weeks on a CBC television “reality” show, Village On A Diet, are so flushed with victory that it seems cruel to remind them they have played only the first inning of a game that runs at least eight more and certainly will become much harder before it's over.

And one more thing: It won't be over till they die.

Taylor, which is near the Peace River on the Alaska Highway, owes its TV fame to an unflattering discovery: Before this experiment began, more than six of every 10 residents were obese or seriously overweight. Collectively, they were a spectacular example of the national obesity epidemic.

Village On A Diet (which ends Monday at 9 p.m.) was designed to teach Taylor, and by extension the rest of Canada, better eating and exercise habits. The CBC rolled up with a formidable squad — doctor, dietitian, chef, psychologist and two phys-ed trainers. But soon, they will be gone.

In one of the later episodes, a Taylor woman spoke a revealing line about the post-TV future of the town's residents: "Like, all this is almost over. What are we going to do?"

If they are like most people, they will begin to regain weight. If even 20% of the Taylor people maintain their healthy, active lives and their relatively low weight for even a year, the project will be counted an exceptional success.

Disappointing results from weight-loss attempts aren't inevitable, but they arrive so often that they begin to seem that way. Losing weight, as every dieter knows, is difficult but not painless. Maintaining a life-long healthy weight is much harder, a major self-management challenge. It requires careful attention and thought. Medical research blames fat for strokes, diabetes, damaged hearts and many other unpleasant problems. Yet no matter how often these consequences are demonstrated, many Canadians keep on getting fatter. (A recent survey suggests we are beginning to catch up with the Americans.)

That being the case, why not call in the government? This is the reason for the rather pathetic program announced by federal, provincial and territorial health ministers on Monday. They are creating "Our Health Our Future: A National Dialogue on Healthy Weights." The key word is "dialogue": They don't know what to do about obesity, particularly in children, so they have decided to ask the public.

And the citizens responding, being Canadian, have begun by demanding government control. The first idea that reached ourhealthourfuture.gc.ca was a ban on advertising: "If the government is serious, it should just ban the marketing of all junk foods. Period." A CBC report attracted similar proposals. "If all refined sugars were to be banned, the world would be a better place." Another viewer proposed a "fat tax" on certain foods. Perhaps we should also hire an army of civil servants to decide which foods will be banned and which not, and an army of lawyers and judges to handle the appeals.

The painful truth is that no one forced us to get fat, and no one forced us to stuff fattening foods into our children. Food engineers invent high-calorie, high-fat, high-sugar products but we are free to choose. Instead of thinking, many of us have made unhealthy eating part of everyday life.

No matter how strenuous the efforts of governments, they can't substantially change our habits. To reduce obesity we'll need a widespread educated knowledge of diet.

Bear in mind that in September, 2009, Prime Minister Stephen Harper spoke at the opening of the Tim Hortons Innovation Centre in Oakville. He praised without reservation the achievements of the corporation and made a point of linking its products to sports: Millions of hockey parents know well, he said, that when it is 20 below and practice time is 6 a.m., "nothing motivates the team more than a box of Timbits, and nothing warms the parents in the stands better than a hot double-double."

Double-double? Timbits?

Harper, who is nothing if not sensitive to the feelings of the voters, knew that he did himself no harm with those references. It could even be seen as one more effort to portray himself as just another down-home average Canadian guy. It's a long, long way from the double-double to a successful campaign against obesity. It seems obvious that neither Harper nor his fellow citizens have any eagerness to make that journey.

<http://www.therecord.com/whatson/artsentertainment/article/499638--tube-talk>



WATERLOO RECORD - TUBE TALK: MONDAY, March 14, 2011

“ It’s judgment day for the residents of Taylor, B.C. The experts of *Village on a Diet* will return to the town to see if the locals have stuck to their diets or relapsed into their calorie-chomping ways. (CBC)”
