

# WELLNESS CONNECTION

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DECEMBER 2020

## WALKT BER™

### EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT - Interview with UI Stride Walktober Individual & Team Winners

*By Seth Yoder*

This month Seth Yoder sat down with both the 2020 UI Stride Walktober individual (Jody Groff) and team (UIC UPB) winners to find out about the secrets to their success and how they plan to stay active through the winter months. Congratulations Jody and UIC UPB!

#### [UI Stride "Walktober" Individual Award Interview with Jody Groff](#)

**Q. You were obviously very successful in this campaign. What do attribute your success to?**

**A.** When I was young my family had some battles with health issues. Consequently, when I was in my 20s, I made a decision to live a healthy lifestyle in hopes it would prevent future health complications. Some examples of healthy habits that I have incorporated into my life include riding my bike to work every day (except on icy days), eating well-balanced meals as often as possible, and taking long walks with my family and dog. What helps me maintain an awareness of the importance of these healthy habits is that I use these times to connect with myself and family.

Whether it is going for a long bike ride or preparing a healthy meal with my children, I make sure the time is for me and those around me.

**Q. What are some of the physical and non-physical activities you love the most and why?**

**A.** I love to cook, explore new recipes, and share healthy eating habits with my children. I get a real joy out of passing these healthy habits on to my children. I also enjoy biking and the freedom I get out on the road. The wind on my face makes me feel like a little kid again. Maybe what's most important in this experience is that I get a chance to enjoy the journey rather than focusing on getting to and from my destination like I would in a car.

**Q. What advice would you give to other system office employees looking to improve their results in the next UI Stride campaign?**

**A.** Try to make the activities fun and relatable to who you are. Finding the simple pleasure in the activities is often what makes the experience most rewarding. For example, listening to a new podcast when you go for a walk or standing back and admiring the work you've done in the garden can be just as rewarding as running a marathon. You also need a willingness to try something new, maybe even outside of your comfort zone, and don't be discouraged if you don't succeed at first or even if you have to quit and try something different. And if you're struggling to find something new to do, use your network and community to find out about fun activities going on that you may not have been aware of.

**Q. Now that UI Stride is finished, do you plan to keep your regimen the same or do you think you might cut back a little bit?**

I will definitely keep the same regimen. However, when we go back to the office after the pandemic, it may change slightly. I have learned a lot about work-life balance since transitioning to work from home full-time, and my big takeaway is that regardless if we are working from home or in the office, we can be just as productive even if we are not next to our computers the entire workday. I hope that others have recognized this and will carry these lessons with them as we transition back to the office next year.

***UI Stride "Walktober" Team Winner Interview with UIC UPB\****

**Q. How were you able to keep the entire team motivated the entire campaign?**

**A.** For UIC UPB, collective effort amongst the team is how we kept the entire team motivated. Team members would reach out using the Walktober app chat function and motivate one another with messages and pictures. Our team was made up of competitive individuals and that spirit was contagious. Campaign features like receiving badges for various milestones throughout the challenge really revved up the competitive juices. Additionally, family and others provided encouragement and support throughout this challenge.

**Q. Did the team ever do any socially distanced or virtual activities together?**

**A.** Prior to the start of the challenge, UIC UPB held a kickoff meeting to discuss the goal and set expectations. Some team members walked together from time to time if it were geographically feasible, but we largely completed our daily goals on our own.

**Q. What advice would you give to other System Offices teams looking to improve their results in the next UI Stride campaign?**

**A.** The support provided by all team members and family was very effective in motivating one another. Also, it was helpful to understand the effect of each individual participant's points had on the overall team average. Once team members understood this, they were motivated to step up their game, excuse the pun. 😊 Oh, and bonuses from the System Offices for the participants and winners never hurt, ha-ha!!!

**Q. Now that the campaign is over will you stay as active and if so, will you also try to motivate your teammates to stay active as well?**

**A.** Overall, the team desires to stay active. Although some may not be as active as they found they were during the challenge, the program has provided a great kick-off to a healthier, more active lifestyle. Team members feel better and have experienced weight loss. Some have even been motivated to continue with additional workout routines and activities. *Walktober* has raised awareness about how sedentary life has been during this pandemic.

Several team members have looked at setting a new goal within *Walktober*, however there is no way to continue tracking steps using the *Walktober* app now that the campaign has ended. We are curious if the System Offices will offer other healthy challenges. If not, our team will investigate ways to continue to motivate and encourage one another to be active. In the same vein, UPB may seek to identify ways to motivate and encourage all UPB staff to be more active and healthier. We have seen through this campaign being more active can lead to healthy outcomes.

*\*Seth Yoder sat down and conducted this interview with Andrea Lasticly, a representative from the UIC UPB Team. During the interview she shared the team's responses to each of the questions.*

