Celebrating Men’s Health
Juan’s Fight Against Diabetes

Juan grew up in one-bedroom apartment in South Central Los Angeles surrounded by lots of family. Economically, it was difficult to feed everyone, therefore, the focus wasn’t on eating healthy. Their meals consisted of rice, beans, fried potatoes and tortillas.

As a young boy, Juan was very active and enjoyed playing outdoors. In high school, Juan was an athlete playing high school football, baseball, volleyball and ran on the cross-country team.

Later, Juan became a family man with a wife and three children and in 2000, they moved to Bakersfield to be close to his wife’s family. As with most young fathers, his top priority became providing for his family. So, Juan decided to put his college courses on hold and landed a full-time job. With time constraints of family responsibilities, Juan’s path to poor eating habits and not taking care of himself began. At his heaviest weight of 245 lbs., he battled with acid reflux, and his A1c levels reached an all time high of 11.5. Juan recalled his doctors wondered how he was even able to walk!

Fast forward to July 2019, Juan began working at Waste Management, Inc. and happily became a Kaiser Permanente member. By this time, Juan was diabetic, taking five medications, overweight, and his A1c levels were out of control.

Two months later, Juan attended the Diabetes classes at the Center for Health Living at the Kaiser Permanente Ming Medical Offices. Juan heard about the “Plant Based-Diet” and watched the documentary film, “Forks Over Knives”. The class and the film made such an impact on him, that he decided to try the “Plant Based-Diet”. Juan knew he needed to do something, as his father began dialysis in 2018 and he could see how “debilitating” diabetes can be. This has inspired him. Juan knew Kaiser Permanente could help him get healthier, “The Kaiser Permanente app is so easy to use! You can find so many resources and your health record is online! I love Kaiser Permanente!”

Juan hasn’t looked back and is “determined to continue this way of life.” He is off two of his five medications, his A1c levels have dropped to 6.7, and his weight is down to 215. He stated, “I feel so much better! For the first time in my life, I’m hopeful to reverse this diabetes diagnosis!”

Juan and his wife enjoy their weekends hiking at Hart Park, Wind Wolves Preserve and Shaver Lake and know there are more happy and healthy times to come.

For more information about “Living Well with Diabetes” classes go to: kp.org/centerforhealthyliving