

On a Healthy Path with Diabetes Behind Him

Diabetes Awareness Month – Men’s Health

Karl Domondon grew up in the Philippines and recalls, “I was always a chubby kid”. It was in 2015, that his family relocated to California and Karl found himself dealing with many new changes.

Karl was a teenager and had many friends in the Philippines. They enjoyed being active and played basketball and volleyball. “I was really fit! I weighed 160 pounds,” says Karl. He was looking forward to graduating with his friends, as children in the Philippines attend school from kindergarten through 10th grade. However, upon Karl’s arrival to the United States, his new high school placed him as a freshman. Placement tests later showed he should be a junior. All the pressures of starting over and “fitting in” at a new school was a struggle for him.

At 18, Karl started his first job at McDonald’s. He weighed 185 pounds and found comfort in fast-food, and the convenience fit into his busy schedule. Karl says, “My “go to” order was 20-piece chicken nuggets with French fries. Sometimes, I would take home a Big Mac to eat for my midnight snack.”

Karl was diagnosed with diabetes at age 22. He reached his heaviest weight of 256 pounds and his A1-c levels reached an all-time high of 9.1. “I was scared. I always knew that I would be Diabetic sooner or later. This runs in my family with my parents and my grandparents.”

Karl realized the importance of getting his diabetes under control. He noticed that his weight was hindering him from the activities he loved to do. “I like to explore, go hiking, but I couldn’t because I would get tired real fast. The fact that I was super unhealthy, was an eye-opener for me. I’m sure I would’ve become depressed if I didn’t try to grow and change. It was time for a change.”

His family and friends encouraged him, “If you want to live longer, you need to eat better.” Karl began his new healthy journey and hasn’t looked back. He started taking long walks, lifting light arm weights and began seeing results. Karl consulted with Dr. Benjamin Ha and continues to seek his guidance via the kp.org app.

Now, Karl no longer must take his diabetes medication, his A1-c levels have dropped to 5.7, and his weight is down to 190 pounds. “I have a true appreciation for my good health. It’s forming a new routine, behaviors, and mindset. It’s the discipline you gain to start something to better yourself. Balance what you eat and take time to exercise.”

During Karl’s time off, as a prison guard, he, his girlfriend, and his new friends enjoy hiking and being outdoors.

