



Northeast District Department of Health  
69 South Main Street, Unit 4, Brooklyn, CT 06234  
860-774-7350 /860-774-1308 (fax) / [www.followthefifty.org](http://www.followthefifty.org)

## Frequently Asked Questions

As of February 9, 2012

**Please Note – The deadline for Model Recruitment Applications is Friday, February 24, 2012.**

### **What is *Follow the Fifty* about?**

*Follow the Fifty*: Models of Heart Health is an energetic and empowering women’s heart health initiative that was funded through *The Heart Truth*® Community Action Program, a women’s heart health awareness and action campaign that warns women about heart disease and provides tools to help them take action against its risk factors. Fifty women from northeastern Connecticut will serve as models of heart health and work to lower their risk factors for heart disease, which is the number one killer of women. The models will also be supported by a network of coaches/mentors, cheerleaders, and community sponsors who are part of a “Heart Truth Team.”

### **Who is funding the *Follow the Fifty*: Models of Heart Health Community Action Program?**

*Follow the Fifty* is sponsored by a generous grant from the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health (FNIH) as part of a public-private partnership with the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute to promote *The Heart Truth*®, a women’s heart health awareness and action campaign. Funding is provided by individuals and corporations including *The Heart Truth* partners Belk Department Stores, Diet Coke, and Swarovski.

### **How long is the campaign expected to last?**

Planning for the *Follow the Fifty* campaign began in January, 2012 and will draw to a close on December 31, 2012.

### **How much was the grant and who is responsible for implementing *Follow the Fifty*?**

The Northeast District Department of Health (NDDH) was one of six communities nationwide to receive the grant award from the FNIH and the only one to receive full funding of \$100,000. NDDH is fortunate to work with the HealthQuest Northeast Connecticut coalition to implement the many components of the grant.

### **What is HealthQuest Northeast Connecticut?**

HealthQuest Northeast CT is regional health and wellness partnership that works to improve the health of residents through policy change, with a focus on reducing chronic illness by increasing physical activity and improving access to better nutrition in northeastern Connecticut schools, worksites, communities and homes. HealthQuest received a grant from the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors in 2009 and was designated as a national Action Community for Health, Innovation and Environmental Change (ACHIEVE) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

### **Who are the HealthQuest partners?**

The HealthQuest NECT Leadership Team is made up of representatives from: The Northeast District Department of Health, Day Kimball Healthcare, Generations Family Health Center, Northeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce, Plainfield Public Schools, Plainfield Recreation Department, Quinebaug Valley Community College, Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group, Town of Putnam Community Development and WINY Radio. The HQ team also includes Representative Mae Flexer, Senator Donald Williams, businessman Steven Townsend, and Coalition Coordinator Linda J. Colangelo. HealthQuest has many sectors/settings (Food Policy, Educational, Worksites, Providers, Community, Government, Media, Arts/Culture) which continue to attract a growing list of active volunteers interested in improving the health infrastructure of their communities

### **How will the Follow the Fifty models be selected?**

Interested women will be self-referred or recruited through personal/professional referrals and through an extensive publicity campaign for the month of February. Spaces are limited and the campaign seeks to reach those who meet the criteria for risk factors and campaign commitment. Interested applicants will be required to complete a questionnaire to determine their eligibility for the campaign. Models will be announced in early March, 2012. For more information or to apply for the campaign, visit [www.followthefifty.org](http://www.followthefifty.org); contact NDDH at 860-774-7350 or email [contactus@followthefifty.org](mailto:contactus@followthefifty.org).

### **Are there specific populations that must be included in the campaign?**

*Follow the Fifty* welcomes a diverse group of women so we have representation from all racial, social, ethnic, age, and income levels included in this initiative. The grant application was written to specifically include women who live in rural areas and low-income women.

### **What are the criteria to serve as a *Follow the Fifty* model?**

- Ages 25-60
- Reside or work in northeastern Connecticut
- Access to email and Internet
- Must be willing to make certain heart health conditions known
- Must commit to an entire year of heart-healthy behavior
- Must be willing to be photographed and participate in a highly publicized campaign
- Must attend at least **six** campaign events *in addition* to mandatory participation in the campaign kick-off in March, 2012 (Date- TBD) and the finale on Saturday, December 1, 2012.
  
- Recruits must also have at least one risk factor for heart disease. Risk factors include:
  - Smoking
  - Being overweight/obese
  - Body Mass Index over 25
  - High Blood Pressure
  - High Cholesterol
  - Diabetes
  - Over age 55 (Age is an actual risk factor. Models can be ages 25-60)
  - A diagnosis of angina or previous heart attack
  - Women who are physically inactive
  - Women who have a family history of heart attack/heart disease

### **What are the model's responsibilities?**

- Attend monthly activities and events to help you learn how to lower your risk of heart disease
- Participate in two health screening events to measure blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar (pre and post campaign)
- Attend programs that feature a variety of guest speakers on topics such as heart health, physical activity, nutrition, tobacco cessation, stress management and more
- Receive training and certification in CPR and the use of Automated External Defibrillators (AED)
- Prepare for active community events like walks, jogs, road races, and/or triathlons
- Explore opportunities to connect socially through email, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube
- Serve as heart healthy ambassadors at community events
- Participate in a highly publicized campaign that will include print, radio, television, videos, brochures, calendars and billboards
- Utilize campaign t-shirts, pins, & educational materials
- Appear in the Red Dress Divas in December Holiday Spectacular & Community Celebration, a festive concert, comedy and fashion show produced by Broadway Live Productions that will be used to celebrate the model's success, raise awareness for attendees, and raise funds to support a local heart healthy initiative. The show is scheduled for Saturday, December 1, 2012 at Hyde Cultural Center in Woodstock
- Lower risk factors for heart disease through course of campaign
- Have fun!

### **Are you looking for a certain “look?”**

Only from the inside! The focus of *Follow the Fifty* is not on visual outcomes, it's more about the importance of lowering the risk factors that are impacting your health on the inside. The emphasis here is on being a successful 'role' model rather than a 'runway' model!"

### **Can I “nominate” a model?**

Anyone can refer a model to the Follow the Fifty initiative, but it will be up to the individual model to meet program eligibility requirements and commit to participation in the campaign.

### **Is there a schedule of events that models will be required to attend?**

HealthQuest partners will each sponsor monthly events. Schedules are still being determined and will be posted on [www.followthefifty.org](http://www.followthefifty.org) as details develop. The first event will be the campaign kick-off for all models in late March. ***Due to work schedules, it is expected that most events will take place in the evening or on weekends.*** Models will also be encouraged to serve as *Follow the Fifty* ambassadors at other annual events such as the DKH/Deary Memorial Race, Walk & Bike; Jog with Judy; First Fridays, Holiday Dazzle Light Parade; etc.

### **How can I participate if I don't know the dates of scheduled events?**

There is an enormous amount of planning required in the *Follow the Fifty* campaign. As events, dates, times, and locations are confirmed they will be publicized. Models will receive emails containing all necessary information for their participation. We realize that coordinating schedules for 50 women will be a large feat, but we are ready for the challenge!

### **What if I can't fulfill my role as a model?**

Once you commit, you must stay legit! We're all in this together! Failure is not an option! "Can't, Don't, Won't" ...prepare to remove those words from your language!

### **Do I have to know how to use a computer to participate?**

Email will be the primary means of contact during the campaign, which will also include a large social media component (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) While computer skills are not required, it is helpful if you have a coach, mentor or cheerleader who can help you to stay connected and informed.

### **What about the coach and cheerleader component of the *Follow the Fifty* campaign?**

#### **Do models have to recruit their own coaches and teams?**

We want our models to be supported throughout their heart-healthy journey, so we've designed the campaign to include coaches and cheerleaders who will form "Heart Truth Teams." These teams can be comprised of family members, friends, co-workers, clients...anyone willing to support a model. Models are not required to have a team of cheerleaders, but must at least have one person serve as their coach. In an effort to create a successful support system that can be sustained beyond the campaign timeline, we encourage the models to recruit their own coach and cheerleaders for their Heart Truth Teams.

#### **What if I can't find a coach?**

The campaign is partnering with individuals who would like to serve as coaches, so there is a good chance that we will be able to partner you with someone. (However, don't blame us if you are partnered with a drill sergeant!)

#### **What will the coaches and cheerleaders do? Can other women and even men participate?**

There are plenty of supporting roles for women and men! Coaches and cheerleaders will be responsible for providing the model with general support and encouragement – perhaps joining the model for a regular walk or other physical activity; placing a mid-day call with a reminder to hit the gym or fitness center; encouraging healthy food choices and perhaps wresting a chocolate bar away when needed; help to plant a garden; share heart healthy recipes and plan to grocery shop and/or dine together at least once a month; provide healthy distractions for someone trying to quit smoking; help to research family health history; be a lifeline during challenging times; post videos and pictures to celebrate successes. Attend events and participate or lend your support from the sidelines. Write an article, share your own stories, and spread the message about heart health. Get creative, establish a team theme. Be present and be part of the transformative journey!

**Will the *Follow the Fifty* campaign have a website?**

Yes! [www.followthefifty.org](http://www.followthefifty.org) is command central for the campaign and will grow to feature news, events, calendars, model bios, blogs, photo galleries, and helpful links! You'll also find us on Facebook and Twitter!

**Can you tell me about the other heart healthy initiatives that are contained in the *Follow the Fifty* campaign?**

Models will also be trained in the Connecticut Department of Public Health *HeartSafe* Initiative, a community program to foster community environments that improve the survival odds for people suffering sudden cardiac events. Translation: If you suffer a heart attack, you have a better chance to survive if the people around you are trained in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and the use of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). Those participating in the *Follow the Fifty* campaign will also learn about the Centers for Disease Control's Million Hearts™ Campaign, which aims to prevent one million heart attacks and strokes in the next five years.

**Is there any cost involved to participate in *Follow the Fifty*?**

Models will not be charged to participate in the campaign. Most campaign events will be open to the public and will be free of charge. The only anticipated cost will be ticket sales associated with the Red Dress Divas in December Holiday Spectacular on December 1, 2012. Proceeds from this event will benefit a local heart healthy initiative. Based on the amount of the grant and in-kind donations of time and materials pledged by HealthQuest partners, approximately \$3,200 is being invested in each model to adopt a heart-healthy lifestyle. Considering the cost associated with heart disease and suffering a stroke or heart attack, it is a small price to pay to potentially save lives and educate a community in the process.

**Are there other ways to be involved in *Follow the Fifty*?**

*Follow the Fifty* was conceived with two purposes in mind:

1. To warn women that heart disease is their number one killer and teach them how to reduce their risk;
2. To build an entire community of support around the concept of women's heart health.

With that said, as the year-long program develops, there will be ample volunteer opportunities for event support – set-up, break-down and other staffing associated with event logistics, financial support beyond planned grant costs through event sponsorship; businesses and organizations can “sponsor” a model and publicize their progress and successes in employee newsletters and use the initiative as a springboard for implementing a worksite wellness program; families, businesses and organizations can be inspired to adopt heart healthy lifestyles and share their stories on the *Follow the Fifty* Facebook page, YouTube channel, or by emailing our website. The possibilities are endless!

**What is the difference between “sponsoring” and model and being a “cheerleader” for one?**

None, really. We are using the term interchangeably...using “sponsor” as a way to engage our business communities and organizations; and using “cheerleaders” to describe friends and family members. Both terms apply to anyone who wants to support and encourage a model through her heart healthy journey.

**What is a Heart Truth Team?**

A model's “Heart Truth Team” is comprised of anyone who is encouraging, guiding, empowering and otherwise supporting the model in her quest for improved health...that includes coaches, cheerleaders, and sponsors. As an example, a dad, sister or best friend can be a coach; an entire circle of friends, family members, co-workers and even pets can be cheerleaders; and an employer may be so inspired by the model's quest for wellness, he/she may want to show their support as a worksite/club/school “sponsor.”

**Can you explain “sponsorships” as they relate to local businesses, groups, and organizations?**

Sponsorship is seen as any way an employer, organization, school, group, or club would support the model's journey...perhaps by featuring her story and progress in an employee newsletter, and using it to launch a new worksite wellness initiative. Maybe it's holding an event and raising money that will be donated at the end of the year to the *Follow the Fifty* fundraiser for a local heart healthy initiative; or organizing a friendly pick-up game of basketball/softball/soccer between two departments or competing businesses; declaring a company-wide “*Follow the Fifty*” day where everyone wears red and sends an encouraging email to the model to keep up her commitment. Many people think that “sponsorship” means some sort of financial support for materials, time, advertising, etc. That may be so if an employer allows a model or volunteers on a Heart Truth Team to attend or

organize a *Follow the Fifty* event while on company time, or if the employer/group decided to sponsor a planned *Follow the Fifty* event. All business sponsorships are voluntary. We believe that the most important aspect of a sponsorship is to promote the individual's journey and show support of her efforts. There's a human capital value to each person who is touched by the campaign and decides to carry that message into their daily lives. If the model has a co-worker who goes to the events, or makes a change in her/his own life, or gets a family member to see a doctor, etc. – that's priceless. When one woman decides to make her heart healthier, the ripple effect can lead to making an entire community healthier. Support and encouragement for *Follow the Fifty* – whether as a cheerleader or sponsor - is without boundaries. You can personalize it to your business/group/club/organization or family! (Anyone who has ever formed a team to support a cancer survivor in the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life event knows the concept!)

**Can I participate in other events or opportunities outside of the *Follow the Fifty* campaign?**

Absolutely! It is our hope that this heart healthy journey inspires you and others to take up healthy eating and active living lifestyles. We envision groups and clubs forming that will walk our rivertrails, hike our scenic paths, paddle, kayak or canoe our waterways, meet up at a local farmers market, take up a planting bed in a community garden; exercise pets as a way to exercise yourself; get a group together for a pick-up game of anything; sing and dance in our parks; participate in a community beautification project...the list goes on! A community reflects the health of its residents! We want ours to have a strong pulse and a healthy beat!

**If I am selected as a model, will I be charged for the health screenings? Who will conduct the screenings?**

There is no charge for the health screenings, which will be conducted at the kick-off event in March to get baseline data on all the models, and again at a follow-up event in November so we can track our successes in lowering risk factors. We will screen each model for blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood glucose (sugar). Screenings will be performed by trained nurses/healthcare providers and will take approximately 15-20 minutes per model.

**What if I have recently had a complete physical check-up with all required screenings...will I still have to be screened?**

We will consider accepting screenings results if they have been performed in a qualified healthcare setting within 30 days of the *Follow the Fifty* kick-off event.

**When is the *Follow the Fifty* Kick-off event?**

Details are not yet confirmed, but we anticipate late March (possibly March 31<sup>st</sup>).

**Why doesn't the model recruitment form ask if I am a diabetic if that is a risk factor?**

One of the questions in the Health section of the questionnaire is "Is your fasting blood glucose equal to or over 100?" If your number is 100-125 mg/dL, you are considered to be prediabetic. If your number is 126 mg/dL and above, you are considered to be diabetic. We realize that many people don't know their number, but if your doctor has told you that you are diabetic or pre-diabetic, or you take medication for diabetes, then you can answer that question "yes" and provide additional explanation, if needed.

**Is this like a "Biggest Loser" weight loss contest?**

No. This is about lowering your risk factors for heart disease and reducing your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar. It's about quitting smoking, getting physically active, and learning how to grow, buy, prepare and eat nutritious foods. It's about managing your stress and challenges and celebrating your contributions and accomplishments. You will most likely lose some weight as a result of adopting a heart healthy lifestyle, but it is not the primary focus. We aren't looking for the "Biggest Loser," we are supporting "Fifty Winners."

**I'd like to apply as a mother-daughter team, but my mom is older than 60. Can we still apply?**

If you are within the age range and meet the other criteria, you can apply as a model and your mom can be your coach or cheerleader – just decide if she looks more motivational to you with a whistle or pom poms.

**Are *Follow the Fifty* events open to the public?**

With the exception of the March kick-off event, all *Follow the Fifty* events will be open to the public. In this way, those interested in truly *Following the Fifty* will receive the same educational opportunities as the models.

### Can I include more information with my model application?

Many women decided to write down their personal reasons for wanting to participate and included it with their application. Any interested applicant is welcome to send us a note with their questionnaire or an email if they submit their application on-line to let us know why they want to be part of the *Follow the Fifty: Models of Heart Health* campaign. Women who have already submitted their applications without an accompanying narrative can still send one along before February 24<sup>th</sup> and we will add it to your application. *You will still be eligible to be selected as one of the fifty models even if you do not submit a note.*

### If selected, do I have to sing or dance in the Red Dress Divas in December Holiday Spectacular event?

That's *exactly* what will make it *spectacular*! All models will participate by appearing onstage in a red dress/outfit, and will sing a group number. Don't worry if you can't carry a tune, because in the spirit of this campaign, there will be plenty of voices to support yours. There will also be a simple dance element. Don't worry if you are uncoordinated, you will fit right in dancing next to Linda, who boasts two left feet. The show promises outstanding musical entertainment, song, dance, and comedy...and will showcase the transformative journeys of our *Follow the Fifty* models. Another point you don't have to worry about – all models will appear in groups of ten so no one has to fear the solo spotlight...unless, of course, you are a Diva. We are grateful to Broadway Live Productions for their partnership on our campaign finale!

### Where can I get more information?

General Questions: Email [contactus@followthefifty.org](mailto:contactus@followthefifty.org)

Visit the *Follow the Fifty* website at: [www.followthefifty.org](http://www.followthefifty.org).

Check back often for developments and information!

Like us on Facebook at:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Follow-the-Fifty-Models-of-Heart-Health/375655655793904>

Follow us on Twitter: @followthe50

*Follow the Fifty* Campaign Staff:

Linda J. Colangelo, Project Manager – 860-774-7350 x. 14 – [linda@followthefifty.org](mailto:linda@followthefifty.org)

Brittany Otto, Project Assistant – 860-774-7350 x. 28 – [brittany@followthefifty.org](mailto:brittany@followthefifty.org)

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Brooklyn, CT 06234

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As the campaign develops, HealthQuest partners will also have additional information!



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*is a public health partnership of:*



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