

WELL SAID! Jeff Kirk

Jeff Kirk, a campus painter, was the grand prize winner of this spring's health improvement challenge -- **Game On! Spring Training for Prediabetes Prevention**. Not only did he win the Oakland A's package, Jeff won big in improving his health. Read his inspirational story on the simple change he made to improve his health and safety at work.

Q: Prior to the *Game On Challenge*, you participated in the Know Your Numbers health screening and found your cholesterol and blood pressure were high. You were also a little bit worried about doing your job while juggling family issues. You joined the *Game On Challenge* to help you make some lifestyle changes. Tell us about what changes have happened since then?

J: I've noticed that before the screening and program, I was going out and getting breakfast sandwiches, breakfast burritos, Nations, and eating big breakfasts. I realized that I was feeling sluggish every day because I was eating too much in the morning. Then I made one small change – I switched to steel cut oatmeal in the morning. I have my oatmeal and a cup of coffee and I'm ready to go. Now I'm more focused and aware of my surroundings. I'm much less stressed. I seem more calm.

Q: And then you participated in the *Game On Challenge*. Did your numbers change?

J: While my blood sugar was normal, my cholesterol was high and the Health Educator suggested making one small change. Now my cholesterol has come down significantly - like 50 points and I have lost a few pounds. Just by changing my morning routine to steel cut oatmeal. I feel so much better and now I'm drinking more water and watching my portions.

Q: Your previous job was at the Lab, where there is a strong emphasis on safety. Can you tell us about how your lifestyle changes have helped you be safer on the job?

J: Because my diet is better, my whole approach to my work and day has a more positive spin to it. I think proper nutrition has been a key factor in me being safe at work because I'm more focused and aware of what's going on around me. I'm also a social person and I am communicating more. And communications is the key to safety at work.



Jeff accepting the Oakland A's grand prize package from Lindy West, Be Well at Work -- Wellness Program Specialist.