



# Plenty to **GAIN** While You **LOSE**

By Patricia Kutza

**A**re you committed to losing weight? Chances are you are finding it a daunting challenge. Not only does it often involve abstaining from eating your favorite foods. It's still also a pretty lonely process, even if you understand all the benefits of losing those extra pounds--- Especially if you feel that you alone are making the sacrifice, while your family and friends continue to indulge.

## **In Good Company**

This summer, the Solano County Million Pound Challenge (MPC) is offering Solano County residents the opportunity to reduce their weight in a supportive environment where they can feel a part of a larger movement. The MPC is a healthy eating/active living program geared towards reducing rates of obesity, cancer, diabetes and hypertension in Solano County, especially among African Americans.

It's an initiative of the Solano Coalition for Better Health and comes at a critical time in Solano's African American community where seven out of ten African American adults are overweight. MPC is challenging Solano County residents to lose a combined one million pounds over three years. To make this a viable goal, the MPC is collaborating with key partners including faith-based organizations, local business owners, city officials, healthcare providers, grocery stores, health clubs, and celebrity supporters.

## **Full-throttle Approach**

MPC's robust lineup of programs reflects their belief that, to reduce obesity, you must address all circumstances or issues that prevent Solano County residents from obtaining optimal health. Residents wanting to lose weight can join their e-Challenge (online challenge community), participate in Community Movement Days, Quarterly/Monthly Health Education Forums, and Community Cook-offs as well as become involved with the Critical Mass Health Conductors Project and Body & Soul Project (in collaboration with the American Cancer Society). Residents who do not have access to the Internet will also have the opportunity to participate by visiting Community Challenge Centers located throughout Solano County.

Solano County residents fortunate to attend the MCP's June 21<sup>st</sup> 2008 kickoff, held in conjunction with the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Vallejo Juneteenth Celebration, heard keynote speaker Dr. Ian Smith, VH1's Celebrity Fit Club medical/diet expert and founder of the nationwide 50 Million Pound Challenge. Dr. Smith hosts his own nationally syndicated radio show, Health Watch, on American Urban Radio Networks. He also has authored five books. Two of his books, *Extreme Fat Crash Diet* and *The Fat Smash Diet*, have reached the top of the New York Times Bestseller List.

MPC's program activities will continue from summer 2008 through the summer of 2011 throughout the cities of Vallejo, Fairfield and Vacaville. For more information, visit: <http://www.solanomillionpounds.org/challenge.php> ■