

WELLNESS Champion

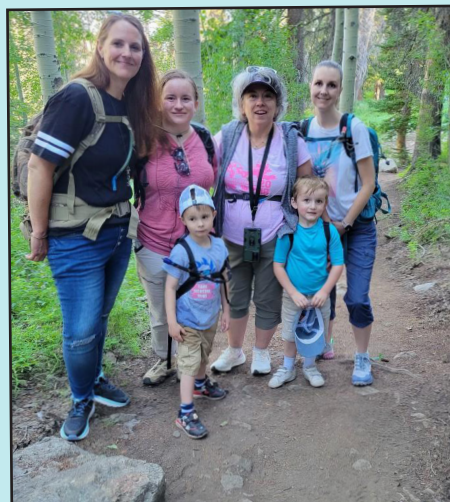


This month's Wellness Champion is Toni Brunson! Toni has been with ARUP for 12 years—she began her career at ARUP in the Huntsman lab, then moved to the Core lab, and is now working in Specimen Processing. She plans to stay with ARUP until she retires, but she would also love to work as a campground manager and live in a small motor home for a bit. She enjoys spending time with her wonderful husband, her three beautiful daughters, and her handsome 5-year-old grandson.

Several factors helped motivate Toni to make and maintain significant lifestyle changes. First, she witnessed her dad suffering from a variety of illnesses,

Toni Brunson Specimen Processing QA

including diabetes, heart disease, and stage 4 kidney disease, and he eventually needed a walker and supplemental oxygen. Toni knew she wanted to live a different kind of life for both herself and her family. She wanted the energy to manage her responsibilities and do whatever she desired—including caring for her father, keeping up with her grandson, and leading the children's organization in her church congregation.



Toni's journey began with an initial evaluation in the Family Health Clinic. Her initial instructions included taking blood pressure medication and trying to walk a mile every day. She then started meeting with Natalie in the Wellness Center, which helped Toni become more active and encouraged her to start taking small steps towards eating better. She learned about the principles of portion control and the benefits of making simple substitutions, such as a side salad instead of fries. Toni always felt encouraged by her wellness coach, even if she felt she had a "bad" week. She never felt judged on any front.

The Wellness Center has become Toni's home away from home as she has improved her habits. On her shift days, she wakes up early to get to the Wellness Center, do her walking, shower, and then get to work.



The amount of movement Toni gets in a workday varies, so it's nice to make sure it's done first thing. On her days off, she enjoys going to her local gym with her daughter and a friend.

Toni works hard to make intentional choices with her food: she chooses fresh over fried foods, and she makes dinner plans to help her stay on track. She loves trying new recipes and being creative. Using an Instant Pot has been another helpful resource to easily make healthy meals.

Toni has three pieces of advice that have helped her make progress in her wellness journey:

1. Make sure your mind is set to change your health. You have to want it. You can't do it for someone else.
2. Start small, such as by walking a mile on the treadmill. It's a good way to measure your progress and know when you are done.
3. Stick with it. Once you can accomplish your first goal, add to it, and challenge yourself. Just do it!

Keep it up, Toni!

