

Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple A Day, Lake Region Healthcare's health and wellness show, where we feature news and information you can use to live a healthier life. I am Katie Johnson, your host, and my guest today are Natalie Knutson and Karoline Gustafson, no strangers to our show and no strangers to topics of wellness. Thank you both for joining me.

Natalie Knutson: Thank you.

Karoline Gustaf...: Thanks, Katie.

Katie Johnson: We have some exciting things to talk about. Obviously, the new year is upon us and people are thinking about their health, a common time to make New Year's resolutions, to change our habits, to try and live healthier lives, so we thought it would be a great time to talk about that topic and also about the exciting changes that are happening in the wellness department at Lake Region Healthcare. So let's just dive right in and talk about the name change. You're going by Unity Wellness now, tell us a little more about how that came about and why and what that means.

Natalie Knutson: So we're super excited to kind of bring that format to the programming over the last five to seven years. What we do has really evolved and there's a lot of different things happening and we just decided we need one overarching brand that encompasses everything that we do. And we just felt like the term unity really pulled it all together on so many different levels.

Karoline Gustaf...: The unity piece itself is uniting your mind and your body, but also we have such an awesome community with within those walls, and as part of the wellness department, we are out in the community doing a lot of different events too. So the term unity just kept coming to the forefront, and so we decided on Unity Wellness.

Katie Johnson: It's really nice to have, like you said, that umbrella of a name for all of the various services that you offer. Let's talk about what is under that umbrella, and also what location you're at now.

Natalie Knutson: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, so when you talk about the services, it truly is mind and body. I think, again, as things have evolved, we realize how much impact physical activity and good nutrition has on your mind, and so really taking a deeper dive into what that looks like. So we are continuing to offer our group fitness and you talked about a location change, so Phatty Nattie's now has relocated from the lower level, the Cancer Center over to the Mehl Center, putting all of our services under one roof, which has really been a great benefit.

Karoline Gustaf...: It's been really fun!

Natalie Knutson: Really just pulled the community together and really strengthen that. So we continue to do the Phatty Nattie group fitness classes, CrossFit Fergus Falls is

still there with a variety of different groups from the teens to the Diamond Ladies and Barbell Club. So some fun things happening. Foss swimming lessons is still just going strong. Those one on one lessons with Tom are certainly a fun experience for your children if you haven't. Rock Steady Boxing for Parkinson's just continues to thrive. We continue to do personal training. We have a certified nutrition coach on our staff now that's really starting to pump out some fun things. And then we are doing wellness coaching again, that's back on our service lines. So yeah, just continuing to grow and provide opportunities for the people coming through the door.

Katie Johnson: It's so fun to see those flags on the outside of the building with all of the seven components of wellness and to think about all of the things that happen inside that building to contribute to those various aspects of wellness in our community. Let's just unpack some of those services a little bit more and talk about what is offered within those. I think maybe some people hear group fitness and they don't really know what kind of classes is that, or the same for some of the other services offered there.

Karoline Gustaf...: The group fitness classes can be anything from a core class to a pump up class, to drums alive, that's a pretty popular class where, where you basically use a big ball and drumsticks and work out to the beat of the music, and that's really fun. The CrossFit ... Or there's also spinning too.

Karoline Gustaf...: And spinning is a bike centered class, and it's just a lot of energy. All the coaches do a really great job, so it's super fun. The different types of CrossFit classes are your regular WOD, your workout of the day. But we also have Diamond Ladies, which is a class for women about 55 and older. They still do the same workout that everyone else does, but it's geared more to the 55 plus age group, and they just have a great time in there. Barbell Club is more just lifting. It can be anything from Olympic lifting to power lifting and honing in on those skills. And all those classes are open for everyone.

One of the things that we do that we did just start though is if you're going to participate in any of the group fitness classes is to take five personal training sessions from us to start. That will help us coaches get used to you as one of our clients, and if you have a shoulder issue or a knee issue or something that we need to modify for, that's something we can talk to you about in those personal training sessions. And it just gets you acclimated to the gym, where the towels are at, the different apps we use to get signed into classes, and those types of things. And it just helps us connect to you before we get you into a class, so that's one of our new things that we've started that's been really helpful for a lot of people that are just starting group fitness classes.

Katie Johnson: Makes it a little less intimidating to walk through the door too, I think, the first time.

Karoline Gustaf...: Definitely.

Katie Johnson: To just know that you're going to have some one on one and kind of learn the ropes before you have to dive all the way in.

Natalie Knutson: Yeah, that's been fun. So I kind of mentioned the Foss swimming lessons. Those are one on one swim lessons starting typically around age four all the way up to some adults are signing up for that and just we live in Minnesota, we need to be able to swim, just have the basic foundations.

Katie Johnson: And that heated pool is so nice.

Natalie Knutson: It's like a nice bathtub. Yes, it's fantastic. Even once in a while, our clients will just kind of say, "It's cold outside. Can we just go in the pool?" And so that's fun to bring them in there for a good workout. Karoline had kind of mentioned the personal training, which is just a one on one. The nutrition coaching is not necessarily a new concept to us, but it is for our department to have a specific focus on nutrition. It's different than seeing a dietician. A dietician dives much more clinical. A lot of times when you see a dietician, you're at risk for something or have some sort of preexisting condition like diabetes and you're seeing them for a reason. Nutrition counseling is ... Or coaching is just for the general population and just a basic foundation to eating, really focusing on the quality of foods that you're putting in, portion controls.

Karoline Gustaf...: What kind of habits you have.

Natalie Knutson: Yep. Habits and just developing good behaviors. Learning how the grocery shop, trying new recipes, healthy swaps, a sour cream for a Greek yogurt, and an oil for an apple sauce, and just some of those basic things that they're hard concepts if you've never heard of that before, so that's kind of fun. And then our wellness coaching is a new service as well, and that's just taking a look at your overall well being and what does that look like? And what are some things you want to take a deeper dive on? Setting your own personal wellness vision, so taking a look three to five years from now, where do you want to be? What does that look like if you continue down the current path, where you're going to end up? And how can that person, how can that coach come alongside you and guide you to get to that point where you ultimately want to be and feel your best?

So yeah, again, super fun. Just learning about people and a much broader look at the person versus just physical health. When you think about health, you think about exercising and food. There's just so much more to it to really get to the root of why are we here? What are we doing?

Katie Johnson: The total wellness, and I think we skipped over Rock Steady Boxing.

Natalie Knutson: Oh, I'm sorry.

Katie Johnson: Yeah, just want to make sure that we mention that that program is available and serving a really important need in our community too.

Natalie Knutson: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yep, so Rock Steady Boxing is a specific program towards Parkinson's disease, evidence based. The coaches are super amazing and fun. That is a group base, there is a limit just to keep everybody safe. And then they also ... They go through an assessment through physical therapy and then they're placed into the program.

Katie Johnson: Such a great, great program to be able to offer. So all of these things happening in the Mehl Center. What does your schedule look like? I think you start a new schedule again at the start of the new year. What does it look like? How do you manage all that? And where can people find the schedule and get signed up?

Karoline Gustaf...: Yeah, our schedule is pretty full, as you can imagine, but there's always room. There's room for more people. The schedule can be found on our website and on our Facebook pages, and it's wellness.lrhc.org. So you can go to the website, otherwise, you can give us a call at 736-8451, and we can give you a rundown of what the schedule looks like. And if you're looking to get on our schedule for personal training, just give us a call, and we'll see what works with the trainer and works with you, and we work around everyone's schedules. And we're open at five o'clock every day, and a lot of days we're there until around 8:00 PM. So it's a pretty robust schedule and there's something for everyone, for sure.

Katie Johnson: That's so awesome. Like I mentioned at the beginning, New Year's resolutions often bring a spike in gym memberships and people starting to think about what they want to do differently in the new year. So I want to ask you, what do you offer for advice for people who might be at this stage, who are thinking about choosing a trainer or a gym? What are the top things you advise they look for?

Natalie Knutson: I think it's all about what works for you. If you need the accountability, that's where a trainer and those scheduled sessions really come in. We always say consistency is king, so if you're going to kick off your new year and you're going five days a week, and you're going to put in your hour sessions, and you're going to try clean eating and all those things, that's amazing if you can do it and you can stick it. For most people that doesn't work.

Karoline Gustaf...: That's a lot.

Katie Johnson: It's a lot to bite off at once.

Natalie Knutson: And so start slow, bite off some small pieces. Maybe you are going to focus on your water drinking and exercising two days a week. But again, as far as picking a gym or a location, whatever works for you. If you like to do your own thing, think about that. If you want to be with people and be guided and have someone tell you what to do, think about that. It's certainly worth the

investment. Don't buy into something that you end up not using. That's expensive when you're paying for something you don't use.

And then seeking out a trainer, again, it's all about compatibility. So every coach does it a little different. Every trainer does it a little different. So finding somebody that you really mesh with and someone that's really going to get you where you want to be. And also, looking a little bit at their background and their credentials and what kind of experience they have, because you want it to be a safe experience. And work with somebody that knows what they're doing.

Katie Johnson: Yeah, great advice. You talked a little bit about setting up a plan for success. How do we make these resolutions lifestyles rather than a short lived oh, January is gone and so is my New Year's resolution.

Karoline Gustaf...: I think Natalie kind of touched on it a little bit is just making small steps. You can't overhaul your entire diet and your physical activity in a week, you have to make those small incremental steps. And even though 1% change is a change. And looking at those changes in the long run is ... Natalie is wondering where you want to be in three to five years. Can you do that in one week? No. It takes three to five years. So just making those habits small and being consistent is the absolute key to being able to maintain that over your lifespan.

Natalie Knutson: Think about building Legos. I'm just kind of thinking about my child right now, think about building Legos and each week or every two weeks you add one more Lego to your tower, and by the end of the six months or the year, you've got something good going on.

Katie Johnson: You definitely build on it. You talked a little bit about the correlation between diet or nutrition and exercise, and I'd like to talk a little bit more about that. It's one thing to set a resolution to exercise every day of the week or whatever I want to do, but if I'm putting a bunch of junk in my body when I'm doing that, I might be better off to consider something that combines the two.

Natalie Knutson: Again, I think as studies continue to evolve and the health world or the fitness world continues to evolve, we're learning more and more about the importance of food, and sometimes food is the important piece. And I mean, food goes to so many different levels, it can have effects on your mood, it can have effects on your mental health, your ups and downs, your energy levels is huge. The highs and lows of some of the things that you put in your body. Water retention, bloating. I mean, there's just so many things that can come from food. Yeah.

Karoline Gustaf...: And I think it's also important to realize that it's not going to be perfect nor should it be. If you go in and say, "I'm going to cut out all sugar in January." As soon as you have one little craving or you give in one little bit, then you might think that it's done, it's over, and you just go back to old habits, but it's not going to be perfect. It's okay to have a cookie. It's okay to have pizza one night. Is it okay to have pizza every night? Probably not. But just realizing that it's not

going to be perfect, but being consistent at good meals. Consistency again, is king. Just being consistent and trying to do as best as you can is really good enough.

Katie Johnson: Yes! "All things in moderation, and "progress, not perfection" both come to my mind.

Karoline Gustaf...: Exactly.

Natalie Knutson: Yes, exactly. That's on our wall at the Mehl Center – come over & see it's up there!

Katie Johnson: So your team organizes a lot of special events throughout the year too, so I'd like to just take this time to maybe give a sneak peek what's on the calendar for 2022 when we look ahead to events that are an opportunity for our community to participate in?

Natalie Knutson: So 2022 looks really exciting, and I think part of the excitement is I think we can say we're going to be open and we're not going to get shut down and we're going to have just a nice somewhat ... I don't like the term normal. But yeah, a normal year that we can plan to have these things in action. So starting right away in February, well, I should say January, we're doing a clean eating challenge that kicks off right away in January, and that's open to the community. Then we go right into the Corporate Cup, which is in February, and that's taking a look at more of corporate wellness and your teams and who you work with and that team building opportunity. Then we roll into March, April, and we're looking towards the community health challenge, and what's that going to look like this year?

Karoline Gustaf...: Which we're pretty excited about that.

Natalie Knutson: Yes. That'll look a little bit different this year. And then we roll into the Lake Region Run, and I'm going to let Karoline ...

Karoline Gustaf...: Yep, I'm excited for the Lake Region Run this year. It's been the first weekend in June, except for 2020, when it was in October, but we're going to try to roll it out as it has been in 2019 and earlier where we can run the 10 mile together and the 5K-ers together and the one milers together. We're even looking at something to maybe celebrate the 150 years of Fergus Falls, so look forward to the Lake Region Run. And then July, we have the youth triathlon again. We've run that. We're going to be on seven or eight years of that, I suppose. So that's pretty exciting. And what else do we have going on? We just have little events that pop up.

Natalie Knutson: That brings us to the fall, and I have a feeling maybe this fall, the Living Well education series might be able to be back in action, which was really picking up momentum prior to COVID knocking us down. And, we just continue to build on

the needs and wants of the community. So really continuing to assess what people are asking for, what we see the needs are, and just rebuilding, working together, and lifting each other up.

Katie Johnson: Yeah.

Natalie Knutson: Is just so huge.

Katie Johnson: It is. And this is a community health needs assessment year for the organization, so I'm sure that we'll be hearing from the community, and like you said, building some programs based on what we hear from what the community wants and needs to be healthy. Anything else I'm forgetting before we wrap up here that you guys want to make sure folks know about?

Natalie Knutson: I am going to add one more service that we put into place in October is the Tai Chi [inaudible 00:18:56] for Better Balance classes. That is another evidence based program, and that's a partnership between us and our physical therapy department just to develop better balance. So that's another group class that meets a couple of days a week of the Mehl Center.

Katie Johnson: Very cool. Thank you for mentioning that.

So as we wrap up, we've talked a little bit about how sometimes it's just the little things, right sized baby steps that can make all the difference towards healthier living. So I'm going to ask you to close with what's your one little thing that either you've done or that you recommend to our listeners as a place to start as they think about one little thing they can do in 2022.

Karoline Gustaf...: Oh, that's a good one. I have realized that I've been not drinking enough water, so at my breakfast in the morning, I will fill one of my glasses full of water. Instead of taking a couple sips, I drink the whole thing. So my morning starts off with my breakfast, with a full glass of water, not just a couple sips.

Natalie Knutson: That's a good one. I implemented that probably about a year ago, and that's been solid. When you're not super thirsty, but I just chug that whole thing down and away we go. I know I've got a solid 16 ounces in my body just to get the day started.

Katie Johnson: Great start.

Natalie Knutson: I would say for me, and it's a continuous struggle, but it's social media or just being on my phone in the evening and just continuing to try to change that habit. So I now have a couple books sitting next to my bed on the stand that need to get busted open, but I know when I've done that in the past, it's set me up for a better sleep, but it's also just a better way to end my day.

Katie Johnson: Yeah. Yeah, definitely. Well, for me, 2022 is going to be the year of the stretch.

I am going to start stretching and working on my mobility. I'm all about working out, but I never stop and stretch my muscles and my body, and I'm getting to the age where that's becoming evident, so that's my one little thing.

Karoline Gustaf...: That's awesome.

Katie Johnson: Well, thank you both for all that you do. Congratulations on Unity Wellness and all that you have accomplished and all that you've brought together under one roof at the Mehl Center. Again, wellness.lrhc.org is the website, on Facebook, or give the wellness center a call, 218-736-8451. And like we said, they're there from early morning to late night and really excited to help each individual and our entire community live a healthier life. Karoline Gustafson and Natalie Knutson, thanks for your time today.

Karoline Gustaf...: Thank you.

Natalie Knutson: Thanks, Katie.

Katie Johnson: Katie, Natalie, and Karoline on Apple A Day this morning reminding you there is so much to do here, stay healthy for it and Happy New Year.

Natalie Knutson: Happy New Year.

Karoline Gustaf...: Happy New Year.