

Live well and thrive

What are the moments, large and small, that make your life feel worthwhile? A few of our members tell how good health and Kaiser Permanente care help them do what they love and live life to the fullest.

A spunky 3-year-old is just one reason A.J. wants to be in good shape. "I love golfing, working out, and spending time with my energetic young family," he says. "The great health care I've gotten over the years makes all of that possible." A.J. had surgery for a genetic heart defect 10 years ago. "The recovery time was short and I immediately felt better afterward. I had more stamina and energy." A few years later, he needed surgery for a severely torn meniscus in his left knee. "My pain was minimal after the surgery and I was astounded that I was walking, driving, and back to work in just a few days – and back on the golf course within 3 weeks. I haven't had an issue with that knee since. Thanks to those surgeries, I can keep up with my kids and do everything I enjoy."



A.J. TAYLOR AND DAUGHTER | REDMOND

Finding acceptance and support

may seem like a small thing to many people, but it's a very big thing to Shannon. He was raised in a place where being transgender was not accepted and he had to be very careful about how he lived until moving to Seattle. "I joined Kaiser Permanente two years ago and was surprised to learn that they had a Transgender Services Program," he says. "My doctor was knowledgeable about trans issues, and suddenly the surgery I had dreamed about could finally become a reality. At Kaiser Permanente, I've found an accepting medical community that's above and beyond anything I ever hoped to find. I finally feel free to be me all the time, every day."



SHANNON HARTLEY AND TOKYO | SEATTLE



KATHY MIDDLETON | MERCER ISLAND

All her life, Kathy has been athletic.

Walking, hiking, and cross-country skiing were some of her favorite activities – until she started experiencing foot pain and sciatica. "I couldn't walk much and it was so frustrating to have to limit my physical activity," she says. But she didn't give up. She went to a Kaiser Permanente Living Well with Chronic Conditions workshop and discovered tools that really helped. "I learned to self-manage my condition and pain, and how to modify my activities, like snowshoeing with my dog instead of cross-country skiing. I still have setbacks, but the strategies I learned give me power to improve my chronic conditions. That feels incredible! I'm back to walking, and even took an 11-mile hike in Glacier National Park in August."



CARL COOK | LAKE FOREST PARK

Saying that exercise is a huge part of Carl's life is putting it mildly.

He's always been physically active, and at 71 he still runs marathons, is a passionate paddler, and works out daily. But in 2008 he tore a shoulder tendon while swimming. "My doctor recommended physical therapy, which worked well. But last year the pain returned. My doctor and I decided surgery was the best option." Carl didn't want to spend his summer doing rehab, so his doctor helped him come up with a physical therapy plan to prepare for surgery in the fall. "Much of my success was due to strengthening my shoulder before the operation," Carl says. "Three months after surgery, I began paddling again. My shoulder feels great now."



WANDA CURRENT | SEATTLE

"I love my workouts, and spending time with family and friends. I also enjoy traveling, and singing at my church on Sundays," says Wanda, who retired in 2013 after a 34-year career. "My mother passed away the year I retired, and that really made me aware that I'm getting older and need to focus more on staying healthy myself." Wanda likes to use the exercise equipment at the gym and attend SilverSneakers classes. "My knees have always been a problem and exercising really helps them. My Kaiser Permanente doctor is great about making sure I get all the preventive care I need, and we have good conversations about ways I can fit more motion into my day and eat healthier. I want to stay as healthy as possible. I've got a lot of things I want to do in life."

9 simple ways to thrive

- 1. Act like a kid.** Hula hoops, frisbees, and jump ropes are fun, and great for fitness.
- 2. Try new recipes.** We've got lots of healthy and delicious choices on our health blog at kp.org/wa/health.
- 3. Tell a joke.** Laughter relieves stress, improves mood, and may boost the immune system.
- 4. Find an exercise buddy.** You're less likely to hit the snooze button if you know someone's waiting for you, and chatting helps the time fly by.
- 5. Switch to water.** Soda pop and sports drinks are often packed with sugar.
- 6. Learn a foreign language.** It challenges the brain, and may come in handy the next time you travel.
- 7. Take short walks often.** Even three 10-minute walks a day give your health a boost.
- 8. Get personalized advice.** Sign on at kp.org/wa and take the Health Profile. You'll get tips for improving your health and lowering your risk of certain diseases and conditions.
- 9. Count your blessings.** Focusing on the positive reduces stress and increases overall happiness.

"Total chaos" and "a traveling circus" are what life is like with infant twins, says new mom Katie. But she and her husband, Cory, wouldn't have it any other way. "The quote 'You think our hands are full, you should see our hearts' explains how we feel about having twins," she says. Katie and Cory attended Kaiser Permanente's Centering Pregnancy prenatal program while she was pregnant. "We got checkups and learned how to take care of ourselves and our babies in a supportive group setting. The friendships we formed with the midwife, medical assistant, and other couples were invaluable." At 20 weeks, they discovered they were having twins. "The doctors and staff coordinated what was now my high-risk pregnancy as a team, and the support I got from them, especially during my 60 hours of labor, was incredible. We feel like we have another family now, and we visit the staff regularly with our son Colton and our daughter Peyton."



KATIE FINNIE WITH COLTON, PEYTON, CORY, AND CASH (THE DOG) CRANSTON | RENTON