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FACES OF FEARLESS

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JEFFREY BEBEE

Jamie Haith, senior recruiter at RTG Medical, was on a path of self-destruction. She knew she had to make a change and found her focus through fitness.

ROCK SOLID

Job, relationships on the line, woman trades unhealthy habits for fitness highs

By Dan McCann // Special for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska

Jamie Haith is in a good place, a destination reached after a humbling and hard-fought trek from rock bottom to rock solid.

"I'd gone through a string of unhealthy events during the summer of 2016, and alcohol kind of took over," she says. "I was using it as a numbing tool." And it was taking a toll – a job in jeopardy, an adored boyfriend threatening to leave...

By September 2016, the senior recruiter at RTG Medical knew she had to make a change, and she found her focus through fitness. But simply working out wasn't enough. Jamie set an ambitious, long-range goal – competing in the Bluffs Classic Natural Bodybuilding Championship.

"I went through the steps to be the best I could be," she says. "I met with coaches and focused on healthy eating and lifting."

Described by co-workers as "one of the most driven and focused people you'll ever meet," Jamie not only won the Bluffs Classic last August, she also won a 2017 Health Transformation Award from WELLCOM. The nonprofit partners with companies throughout the region to support employee wellness. Its membership includes some of the region's most iconic companies: Union Pacific, First National Bank, Mutual of Omaha and longtime member Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, which helps to fund the initiative with an annual sponsorship.

Jamie says the support she receives from her employer, RTG Medical, another steady WELLCOM member, has been crucial. As part of the company wellness program, RTG employees can rack up

points for everything from sleeping and eating well to being active and not smoking. Those points translate into prizes, including extra time off or RTG gear.

"We're a growing company," Jamie says, "and the wellness program has just taken off."

Jamie says her life has been transformed – personally and professionally – since she opted for wellness. Her relationships have improved, and she has amped up her performance at work.

"Once I hit my wellness goals, that started to make me feel confident, which mirrored into my work, and I started to hit all of my all-time highs."

Jamie's diet, which was incredibly strict pre-Bluffs Challenge, has eased a bit, but she still embraces a healthy eating regimen. She does CrossFit at Artis Strength and Fitness three mornings a week and works out at Orange Theory Fitness three or four mornings.

"The coaches at both of those gyms have really meant a lot to me," she says.

Outside the gym, Jamie loves spending time with her 4-year-old son, Justice; her boyfriend, Taylor; and her horses Phoebe, Joey and Bernie.

"Horses have been my love since I was 3 years old," she says.

Jamie plans to take 2018 off from fitness competitions and enjoy some traveling.

Her advice to others who feel pulled to make healthy changes in their lives: don't wait. "You just have to start today and commit."

"Faces of Fearless" is a storytelling series in Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska's "Live Fearless" campaign celebrating people living their very best lives and inspiring others to do the same.