

LOCAL CHAMPIONS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Changing mindsets & changing lives

“You’ve got to create an active lifestyle that’s going to benefit you in as many ways as you can.” You’ve probably heard it all before, “You should be more active. You need to be engaging in physical activity to be healthy. You have to get your butt moving!” That might still all hold true, but let’s be honest: for a lot of Canadians, getting active can feel like a burden instead of an amazing opportunity to enjoy friends, family and the outdoors.

And that’s OK, we could all use a little inspiration now and then.

Meet Kevin Garnier, a 69-year-old retired teacher from Pasadena, Newfoundland and Labrador, who’s been inspiring others to get active for over 50 years.

“I’ve seen the benefit it’s had on my life, so I try to inspire others to live a better life,” Kevin explained to ParticipACTION. “With physical activity you can be happier, you can have more fun, and you can enjoy more time with your family.”

“Being healthy comes in all different shapes and sizes, it doesn’t have to be about lifting dumbbells or bench-pressing weights, there’s so many different avenues you can explore to live an active lifestyle.”

Aside from being an inspiration to others, Kevin is also spot on when it comes to the message he is spreading. It’s true – Everything gets better when you get active. From the ability to Happy Better to being able to Unwind Better and Heal Better, engaging in physical activity is an excellent way to ensure you are living your best life possible. A fact that Kevin learned firsthand through a traumatic health scare.

“When I was 22 years old, I was stricken with Hodgkin’s lymphoma and I swore to myself that if I ever got through it, I would be as healthy as humanly possible,” said Kevin. “Fortunately, I am a survivor and nearly 47 years cancer free.”

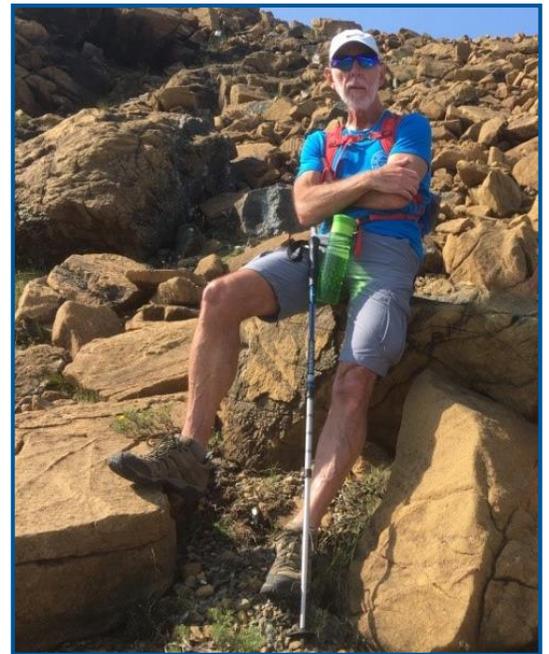


Photo credit: Kevin Garnier

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“As far as I’m concerned, being active and healthy in as many ways as possible is the key to my health. I always try to be as active as possible. It’s my mantra, my mindset. You’ve got to create a lifestyle that’s going to benefit you in as many ways as you can.”

In those 47 years of being cancer free, Kevin has led by example, using his positive message to not only get himself healthy, but those around him, too. Being active isn't just a fad or a passing trend for Kevin, it's a way of life that's weaved into his daily routine.

“Everyday I’m involved in some type of physical activity, whether it’s strength training at the gym or group fitness, I actually lead two group fitness groups and I do that three days a week and I also teach a seniors group fitness class, as well,” Kevin said.

“It’s all about the mindset, we have to keep ourselves healthy and active. It’s a lifestyle. It’s not just a three-month or six-month thing. It’s got to be for life.”

From running fitness classes during the week to leading hiking groups on the weekend, to raising money for charity in his spare time, Kevin is the definition of what it means to be a champion of physical activity in his community.

“It’s a real honour,” Kevin said of being named a local champion of physical activity. “I was elated and taken back by the whole thing. But championing fitness is something I think everyone should do as a part of their life, that’s how I’ve always been. I’m completely flattered and honoured that some people see me as an inspiration to get out there and be active.”