



Q&A with Faith Newsome, founding member of organization OCEANS Lifestyles.

1. What is OCEANS Lifestyles? Can you explain some of the work you?

OCEANS Lifestyles Inc. is a support and advocacy group for adolescents on their weight management journey. We offer three different areas of programming for adolescents aged 12-21. We offer monthly socials for adolescents specifically. These are facilitated by me or Emily Robinson, our Vice President. We offer socials for adolescent weight loss surgery patients, as well as ‘general registration’ socials (which are for patients who are either undergoing behavioral modification, medicated weight loss, or no treatment at all). These socials include a group of 4-6 teens. We are currently working on developing an app to host these socials and we also are working with our partners at the Duke Healthy Lifestyles Clinic in Durham to find 4-6 dedicated teens for pilot programming. We also host an annual ‘activity’ day to raise awareness of resources in the community and to raise money for continued obesity research. Finally, we also work on policy-based advocacy projects to inform policies and to contribute to systematic changes.

2. What inspired you to start OCEANS Lifestyles?

I was inspired to start OCEANS based on my own experiences. I, personally, do not know a time in my life where I did not carry excess weight. My mom knew my weight would be an issue from the time that I was a year old. I grew up asking my mom if I could have cake at my peers’ birthday parties and trying every different physical activity in the book to lose weight. When I was 16, I went to the Duke Healthy Lifestyles Clinic and, eventually, underwent gastric bypass (a form of weight loss surgery). After that, I knew I wanted to go into obesity work professionally. I started OCEANS during an internship with the Healthy Lifestyles Clinic in the summer of 2018.

3. How has the CUBE program helped you through the process of building OCEANS Lifestyles?

OCEANS has made tremendous growth during our time with CUBE. First of all, I had not thought much about financial stability. CUBE helped us think through our value proposition and what we offered. I also enjoyed being among a cohort of other social entrepreneurs. Seeing everyone’s passion for the projects that they were working on was really inspiring and they always had great ideas to contribute to our presentations.

4. What are your hopes and aspirations for the future of your organization?

In the future, I hope that OCEANS has a national reach. We have some partners who are interested in assisting us with that so I do believe it is an achievable goal. I want OCEANS to be the go-to organization for adolescents experiencing obesity just as the Obesity Action Coalition is for adults. I think OCEANS has a lot of potential and I am excited to see where it goes!