

Finding the road to health

Just Neighbors



By Jeff Inglis
Current Staff Writer

Fourteen years ago, Caryn Treister had a 1-year-old daughter and a son on the way. But her body was racked by headaches and nausea, and she knew something was wrong. The doctors told her she was having a rough pregnancy and sent her home.

"It really bothered me," she said. The doctors weren't helpful, and Treister, who had been a top model in Chicago for 12 years and was still living in Chicago with her family, didn't know where to turn.

She gave the doctors one last chance to figure out her problem, and a stomach specialist asked her the key question: which was first, the headaches or the vomiting? It was the former, and she was in for a brain-scanning MRI two days later.

Before Treister was ready to go home after the scan, her husband had already been paged and had raced to the hospital. She had a massive brain tumor, and went into surgery that evening. Doctors doubted her fetus would survive, if Treister herself did.

But she was a health-conscious woman who had tried to stay fit, so she pulled through and so did her baby.

"It was really a wake-up call," she said of her survival. The tumor was benign and hasn't returned, but she still feels its effects in how she lives her daily life, she said.

She got even more into fitness, and started teaching swimming and



Caryn Treister

Staff photo by Jeff Inglis

water aerobics part time, spending the rest of her time at home with her children. She also began paying more attention to nutrition.

"I really really tried to eat well," Treister said, reading labels, choosing whole grains, and doing research on dietary supplements.

"If I didn't do it, nobody else would," Treister said.

When she and her family moved to Cape Elizabeth in 1996, she was thrilled. She had grown up in Exeter, N.H., and her parents and four siblings live near there now.

"For me it was really coming home," Treister said. "We can all get together."

"I also wanted to give my kids the mountains and the ocean," Treister said.

They had a few health problems, too. Her daughter, now 14, had chronic fatigue syndrome, and her son, now 13, had asthma.

As Treister set up a gym in her basement and began to study toward her fitness trainer's certification at USM, she felt like she was missing something.

"I always felt there was something more," Treister said.

She had begun taking in individual clients for fitness training. "I love motivating people, I love

helping people," Treister said.

Then her aunt told her about a line of nutritional supplements that fit her needs and those of her family, friends and clients.

"It was like the final piece," she said.

Her daughter's fatigue disappeared. So did her son's asthma. One of her clients suffered terribly from fibromyalgia, a disease of unknown cause that gives a patient near-constant pain throughout the body.

But after using the supplements, "she's feeling great now," Treister said. "It's almost like a fairy tale."

Treister, who wanted to be a social worker when she was in high school, has now found her calling. "I really wanted to make a difference," Treister said.

She teaches water aerobics for adults three days a week at the Cape Elizabeth town pool, and has become a distributor for the supplement line. She also is the holder of three state records in corporate track competition, as a member of the USM corporate track team.

But the satisfaction she takes from her job is the wonder she has truly found. "I have changed a person's life," Treister said.