

# Weight Watchers Leaves South Shore

By Kathryn Reed



Weight Watchers is scaling back.

The national weight loss machine has stopped operating on the South Shore even though dozens of people regularly attended meetings at South Lake Tahoe Rec Center.

“It gave me my life back,” Pam Wheeler said of Weight Watchers. She joined a handful of years ago. Over time she lost 65 pounds. “It was the beginning of getting myself back, putting myself first.”

Wheeler and Virginia Boyar had been running the meetings the last few years. Both needed to move on because of other commitments. The national organization has chosen to stop offering sessions here.

Barton University had offered a Weight Watchers program to its staff twice a week. When Barton’s Amber Tanaka learned the community would be without Weight Watchers she tried to resurrect the class. She said the national organization said no.

When Boyar inherited the group more than four years ago about dozen people attended meetings. She more than quadrupled attendance.

“For me, the weekly weigh-in was important,” said Boyar, who lost more than 40 pounds. “We talk a lot about the comfort zone. You have to think about what food means to you.”

Men, women, kids, middle age, seniors, all ethnicities attended the meetings. Some wanted to lose a few pounds, while others set a goal of 100 pounds.

“Weight Watchers is a judgment-free zone,” Boyar said.

People have excess pounds for a variety of reasons “ all of which were addressed during the meetings.

Weight Watchers is about eating what you want, but keeping track. The emphasis is on healthy food. Exercise is called activity.

For those left behind, online programs are at [www.weightwatchers.com](http://www.weightwatchers.com).