

Feature writing exercise

From the facts and quotes provided on the prompt, write a feature story. Make sure information flows smoothly from direct quotes to indirect quotes and to transitions.

Susan Kelso is a school psychologist. She is 34 years old, a graduate of the University of Kansas. She is married to Dr. Robert Kelso, a professor of chemical engineering at Southview College. Kelso has developed a program to assist overweight students. She has worked with nutritionist Molly Greer. The program consists of counseling, diet and exercise.

■ Susan Kelso

“An overweight child has a real dilemma, especially in this fitness-conscious age. No doubt, there’s a stigma in this society to being overweight and kids pick up on it. The television is especially guilty of portraying overweight people as stupid, lazy or evil. It’s important to realize that no kid wants to be fat. The New England Journal of Medicine recently produced concrete evidence that genetic factors play a deciding role in the weight of adults. We are led to believe that people are overweight by choice or by a lack of self-will. This is rarely the case.

“Overweight kids are often ridiculed, taunted or ostracized. They hear all the cruel nicknames and unless they are very strong, this can be devastating to the child’s self-esteem. We are trying to teach children that they control how they feel about themselves and the rest of the world.”

■ Molly Greer

“There are no miracle cures. You can’t sleep away those pounds, regardless of what you hear on the television. The new cure for obesity is no miracle at all — it’s simply good nutrition and exercise. We want the kids to change their lifestyles but they must be committed to losing weight. We try to see what psychological reasons lie behind the weight problem and to make sure there is adequate family support to sustain the child through what will likely be a lifelong weight problem. Then, the child begins a 10-week program of diet, counseling and exercise.”

■ Jeffrey Beaumont, junior

“I’ve been fat all of my life. Not just overweight but really fat. This program has really helped me. Before, when someone teased me about my weight, I’d console myself by eating. I’d look for satisfaction in food, generally sweets. It was a vicious circle.

“I’ve tried all sorts of diets but they never worked. This time, I’m really serious. I’m watching my diet and since I started the program five weeks ago, I’ve lost 30 pounds. I have a long way to go. But I have a picture in my mind how I want to look, and I’m not giving up until what I see in the mirror matches the picture in my mind.”