

# CV-Well Done

## Members in the Spotlight

by Jean Storlie, MS, RD, CV-Well Leadership Cultivation Director

Our first “CV-Well Done” shines the light on Karen Collins, MS, RDN, CDN, FAND. In an interview conducted by Jean Storlie, Karen shared these thoughts and perspectives.

Karen Collins wears many hats that include writing and speaking on cardiovascular health, cancer prevention, and cardio-oncology. From serving as nutrition advisor to the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR), to writing research updates for KarenCollinsNutrition.com, Karen focuses on translating nutrition research into the key points health professionals need to know. Karen was 2016-17 Chair of Sports, Cardiovascular and Wellness (SCAN) and is now on the CV-Well Expert Rapid Response Team. She lives in a small town on Chautauqua Lake in western New York.

### What do you enjoy most about your work?

I love connecting and collaborating with my dietitian colleagues. I believe dietitians can transform people’s lives, but it takes time to accurately translate nutrition science. I find great satisfaction in providing my colleagues with reviews and tools to help them conquer “information overload.”

### What do you like most about collaborating with colleagues?

Collaboration can accomplish so much. For example, several SCAN cardiovascular dietitians teamed up to revise a dietary assessment tool for use in cardiac rehab, and then conducted a validation study. The new tool, [Picture Your Plate](#), is now available free of charge for programs across the country. And amidst this hard work, we had fun together.

### What are you most proud of in your career?

Any time colleagues tell me my efforts to sift out key research messages gives them valuable support, it means a lot. Likewise, I’m humbled and grateful that in 2019, AICR presented me with its first Distinguished Service Award, citing my work in translating nutrition research into empowering evidence-based messages.



### What has helped you in your career?

No question: I owe my personal and professional growth to respected colleagues who have become treasured friends. What a difference it makes to have even a few people who nurture our dreams and support us during challenging times!

### What drives or motivates you?

I love having a goal ahead that’s both challenging and meaningful to me. For example, both of my sons, who served in the Army, always aimed to “max out” (score the maximum) on the Army PT test. So when I was turning 60, I challenged myself to see if I could train to “max out” on that test for a 30-year old woman. When my birthday deadline arrived, my score didn’t reach the max—but I did exceed, by far, the passing grade for someone half my age! That was a great way to feel connected to my sons, one of whom was deployed to the Middle East at the time, and to focus on moving forward.

### Why did you become active in SCAN and later in CV-Well?

I was a “silent” SCAN member for a long time. I loved the educational resources and felt inspired seeing high-performing members each year at SCAN Symposium. Ultimately, I realized there never would be a “good time” to get involved volunteering. What a life-changer that was! I continue to be amazed with how the relationships formed through volunteering enrich my life, professionally and personally.