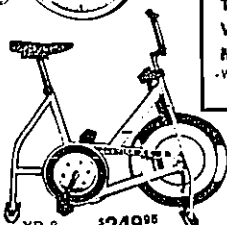


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Senior citizens

By Karen Hermes-Smith
special writer

SENIOR CITIZENS Marjorie Free and Betty Welton aren't spending their golden years rocking away in rocking chairs.

The Bloomfield Hills-area women, both over age 75, do aerobic exercises every Tuesday and Friday morning.

"I'm trying to keep myself limber," Welton said. "In the winter, I can't walk, and I know I need some kind of exercise."

"I hadn't had an exercise routine for several years, nothing except walking," said Free, adding that she gets tired of "too much sitting around. I feel better for having a little exercise," she said. "More relaxed, really."

Free and Welton are among a half dozen seniors enrolled in a twice-weekly, hour-long aerobic exercise class offered through Mature Minglers at its center on Wing Lake Road, north of 14 Mile, Bloomfield Township.

Their instructor, Carol Young of Bloomfield Hills, came to Mature Minglers six years ago with the idea of starting an aerobic class because of its benefits to seniors.

YOUNG BELIEVES that exercise may make people live longer because it slows down the natural deterioration of the body brought on by age.

"It has not been proven that exercise prolongs life," she said in a recent interview. "But numerous studies show that moderate, sustained activity does retard age-related deterioration, promotes good health and improves the quality of life."

"It is probable that moderate exercise can delay the onset of age-related disorders and may aid an individual in realizing his maximum life span."

Young, an exercise enthusiast with 10 years experience teaching aerobics, is studying for her bachelor of science degree in human biology at Oakland University, Rochester. For one of her classes, "The Biology of Aging," she is researching the results of exercise on aging and will record the differences in blood pressure, flexibility and other factors in her senior citizen students between the start and end of the class session.

YOUNG FOUND a willing customer in Anne McCarter, founder/coordinator of Mature Minglers, an organization providing leisure opportunities for older adults living in Bloomfield Hills School District, Bloomfield Township and West Bloomfield.

McCarter herself believes that activity keeps seniors active. "They're able to do more if they're more involved," she said.

When Mature Minglers originally advertised the class, no one signed up for it. Mature Minglers continued to offer the class each of the next several years until last September, but, again, too few people registered for it to be held.

Finally, McCarter realized the word "aerobics" was scaring off seniors. They thought it would be too vigorous an exercise for them, Young said.

Last September, the organization's brochure advertised the course simply as an exercise class; 10 people registered for it.

"Now the people in the class say they're proud they can do an aerobic workout," Young said.

Though the class involves aerobic exer-

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2 FOR 1

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