

Suburban

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Seniors gather around Kathy McComas who illustrates how one of the exercise stations is to be used. On her left is Julie Espinosa, a member of Farmington Area Commission on

Aging. On her right is Lavon Cook, a student intern working with Botsford Hospital's Health Development Network.

Walking

A session of fitness with smiles

By Lorraine McClish
staff writer

KEEP MOVING. That was the message to the first group gathered together in Shawassee Park on one of Michigan's most colorful Indian summer days to learn how to walk their way to better health. The message came from Kathy McComas, an exercise physiologist from Botsford Hospital's Health Development Network, who began the fitness workshop for seniors under the covered picnic shelter as a starting point onto the park's walking course.

"We're concentrating only on the muscles most involved in walking," McComas told members of the audience who were dressed in what is known as jogging or running outfits. But neither jogging nor running were the subjects for the day.

"I'll bet you've never seen a jogger smiling. Joggers don't smile, but walkers do," McComas said. "You can learn to improve your strength, vigor and overall fitness level through a regular walking program, and you will be smiling while you do it. Besides, smiling burns more calories than frowning."

Walking is high on today's list of gaining and maintaining fitness because, the experts say, walkers are continuing their regimen, while those in other exercise programs lean toward a high dropout rate. Strain, stress, orthopedic injuries and excess fatigue that develop through high-impact exercises, which cause the dropout rate, just do not happen for the walker.

AND AS ALL FITNESS programs have rules, so are there rules for the walker.

"Start your exercise time with a

warm up, give it four-five minutes, sort of as a rehearsal for what's to come," McComas said.

"If it hurts, don't do it. Ease up."

"No bouncing when you are stretching."

"Listen to your body."

"The hardest part of any exercise program is getting started. Give it two weeks and it will be a habit."

"The time you spend walking is more important than your pace."

The bits of information were passed out as McComas led the walkers around the course stopping at each of the 14 exercise stations, which appear to the onlooker as wooden poles, blocks, and slats cut and arranged in every possible configuration.

Each station contains a chart explaining its purpose and how to use it.

For tight muscles that need to be loosened or weak muscles that need to be strengthened, for knee problems or back problems or joint problems, or the prevention of any of those problems, it's all spelled out on the charts that can be used by do-it-yourself walkers of any age.

"Some stations are not for beginners," McComas warned. "Read the hand-outs you were given and then pick up our booklet to begin to develop your own walking program."

THE BOOKLET McComas referred to, which spells out how to devise the walking regimen best suited to the individual, has been ordered by Margo Gorchow, executive director of Botsford's Health Development Network. Free copies of the booklet will be available in about 30 days in Farmington Hills Senior Adult Center. The center, operated by the city's Department

of Special Services, is within Mercy Center on 11 Mile Road, east of Middlebelt.

Gorchow, instrumental in initiating the walking workshop, said it was planned "to encourage exercise for non-exercising seniors, introduce them to this fantastic exercise course they have right in their own backyard, and to provide them with a new experience that can give them both new flexibility and strength."

She expects that she and some of her staff will be sponsoring another similar workshop next spring. Another planned event for next spring is a walking club that will be started by Maggie Loradis, who teaches dance and leads the water and floor exercises offered in Farmington Hills Senior Adult Center.

Loradis is encouraging walking to keep physically fit by offering a patch to wear on walking clothes after the walker has chucked up 100 miles.

"The patch is your reward for sticking with it, but it will be the very best of the rewards you will gain," Loradis told the walkers.

Shawassee Park turned into a haven for health enthusiasts and nature lovers with \$170,000 worth of improvements that came from the City of Farmington, a grant from Botsford Hospital and a grant from the National Fitness Campaign sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank. Some voluntary manpower came from Michigan Youth Corps.

After a question and answer session back under the picnic shelter, McComas' audience didn't want to leave the park on that sunny autumn morning. Walkers requested, and she complied, by taking them on a nature walk along the adjacent half-mile walking trail.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Kathy McComas (at far right) leads senior adults on their walk toward better health around Shawassee Park's fitness course.

'Spooktacular' opens band's 1986-87 season

Farmington Community band begins its 21st concert season with "Halloween Spooktacular" at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 30, in Harrison High School auditorium, 29995 12 Mile.

The concert will include thrilling and chilling sounds from classic and popular selections as well as the band's own "Count Dracula." The audience is encouraged to join band members in wearing costumes adding to the colorful evening. All concert guests will be admitted free.

"A Festive Celebration," featuring Shaul Ben-Meir, flute soloist, begins at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 7, in North Farmington High School auditorium.

Valentine Dinner-Dance, featuring the jazz and dance band and a buffet is set for Friday, Feb. 13, in Glen Oaks Country Club.

"Springs-A-Poppin'" with the concert and jazz bands is set for March 22 in Harrison High School auditorium.

"Michigan — 150 Wonderful Years," honoring senior citizens and handicapped people and featuring Miss Michigan, Kelly Lynn Garver, as a special guest performer, is set for Sunday, May 3, in Harrison High School auditorium.

"Curtains Up," a Broadway and

theatrical production in the spirit of "South Pacific," will be performed June 25-28 in Harrison High School auditorium.

Season family tickets are \$20 and are honored for all regular concerts. Tickets for the Valentine Dinner-Dance are \$22 per person and will be available in November. Tickets for

the Curtains Up production will be \$4 for adults and \$3 for seniors and students.

Tickets may be purchased by mail addressed to Farmington Community Band, P.O. Box 3001, Farmington Hills 48018. For other information, call business manager Mary Orwig, 477-3596.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Paul Barber opens the Farmington Community Band season with "Spooktacular."



The Dining Room

Farmington Players production of "The Dining Room" continues on weekends through Nov. 15 with cast members Jane Thomas (at left) Jim Snideman, Kirk Hanley, Duncan Mein, Teraynn Razzoog and Joyce Moore. The play is a nostalgic and imaginative look

at a vanishing breed, the American upper middle class. A series of vignettes depict an assortment of families and characters of all ages and generations acting out their lifestyle in the dining room. Ticket information is given by Julie Austin, 626-D185.