



# Adult-ed aerobics

## Low key approach with high impact effect

By Cathie Breidenbach  
special writer

NINE AND a half years ago, when Jane Fonda was better known for her leftist sympathies than for her workout tapes, Sandie Knollenberg led her first aerobics class as part of the Birmingham Community Education Program.

Now she heads a full-blown aerobic program of 10 weekly classes at four locations — in Birmingham at Midvale School, Pembroke School, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, and in Southfield at St. Ives Catholic Church. The low cost, local program is open to everyone, not just those who live in Birmingham.

Knollenberg initiated a flexible card system 2 1/2 years ago similar to card programs used at health clubs. Fifty-five dollars buys a Participation Card good for 20 sessions, and there is no

expiration date. Card carriers may attend whichever of the 10 weekly class times that best fits their schedules and they may take classes at any of the four locations.

"Mix and match, day or night," Knollenberg says of the program. Those people who participate sporadically because they juggle many commitments or travel frequently especially praise the card system's flexibility.

IN A LITTLE OVER two years, Birmingham Community Education has sold more than 1,300 cards, many to repeat customers who have gotten hooked by the program's friendly, low-key approach to aerobic exercise.

"We don't get the hard-driving people you get in a health club," Knollenberg said. "We attract a different market."

Also, at \$2.75 per class, the price is right. "A lot of people want an aerobics

program but aren't willing to spend the big bucks health clubs charge," she added.

Classes through Birmingham Community Education thrive on a subdued, relaxed atmosphere. Music from a portable tape player doesn't throb with the volume or insistency common at many health clubs. During exercise, Knollenberg carries on a running commentary on the evils of the five S's — sipping, sitting, stuffing, smoking and stress.

Toddlers playing nearby watch their moms exercise and most everybody knows one another in the friendly groups. Facilities at the four locations lack mirrored walls, sophisticated sound systems, and locker rooms for changing, but nobody seems to mind.

KNOLLENBERG, A bouncy upbeat instructor certified by the American College of Health Medicine, will soon complete an Exercise Science

and Technology program at Oakland Community College. She's a local TV celebrity with her own exercise program, "Sandie's Fitness Firm" which airs five days a week on cable channels 3 and 11 in Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills and Bloomfield Township. In Southfield, her show, called "Southfield Body Shop," airs on cable channel 8.

Knollenberg teaches most morning classes herself and schedules live other instructors to cover evening classes. One evening instructor is a phys-ed major, another a pre-med student. All instructors are trained to teach aerobics and, for safety, all are certified to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

When people begin the program, they fill out a health appraisal form and Knollenberg said she watches for those with heart risk factors such as high blood pressure, smoking and high cholesterol.

"I PERSONALLY call and talk to them about it," she said. She follows medical safeguards to be certain those in the program can exercise safely.

"The classes differ in intensity levels," Knollenberg said, and range from total low impact to relatively high impact with jumping and bounding. "Now are real high impact any longer," Knollenberg said because sports medicine recognizes that extensive jumping can cause injuries."

Classes fall into "people patterns." Mondays draw big groups. Often, 25 people or more show up in leotards or shorts and T-shirts ready to rev up their heart rates and work up a sweat. Many people bring their own mats to use for cool down floor work designed to strengthen muscles — especially to tighten up troublesome "abs" — those abdominal muscles that sag if they're not toned faithfully.

Women predominate in the Birmingham Community Education's program as they do in most aerobic programs, but a few men regularly show up for the 9:15 a.m. classes. More men attend the 7 p.m. sessions. Knollenberg feels classes need at least 10 or 12 people to generate the energy and enthusiasm that makes it fun. Attendance at most classes hovers around 20 of mixed ages ranging from teens to retirees.

Many physicians recommend a method of treatment identified as the RICE Therapy: Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation. When initiated immediately following injury, RICE treatment can help control inflammation, reduce swelling, relieve pain and speed the healing process after sprains, strains, tendonitis and many other injuries.

Rest: Do not exercise until pain and swelling have subsided. After several days, you should be able to start moving and exercising the joint, helping to strengthen the muscles and heal the ligaments.

Ice: Apply cold compresses as soon as possible after the injury occurs. An Ace Reusable Cold Compress is recommended for approximately 30



Sandie Knollenberg practices what she preaches in one of several morning classes she teaches in the program she initiated two years ago. The program is open to all regardless of where they live.

MIXED-AGE CLASSES work well because instructors allow participants to create their own pace, slowing down when their heart rates climb too high, or when the intensity level makes them breathless, according to Knollenberg.

In her own classes, Knollenberg first warms up with a brisk Sousa march

then launches into combo dance routines to keep the heart rates within target zones for at least 20 minutes in order to reap the well-publicized benefits of cardio vascular exercise. At regular three or more times a week exercise program reduces the risk of heart attack by improving heart and lung efficiency, lowering resting heart rate, and increasing HDLs (the good

cholesterol in the blood).

Most people stick with an exercise program only partly because they know good things are happening internally, Knollenberg said. "Looking good" provides the real motivator that keeps people coming. Aerobic exercise rewards effort by burning calories and toning muscles so people look better.

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Many physicians recommend a method of treatment identified as the RICE Therapy: Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation. When initiated immediately following injury, RICE treatment can help control inflammation, reduce swelling, relieve pain and speed the healing process after sprains, strains, tendonitis and many other injuries.

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