



Senior citizens from around the metropolitan area gathered at the Orchard Ridge campus of Oakland Community College to celebrate the benefits of the vigorous lifestyle and to compete in the Senior Olympics.

RAHMY BORST/staff photographer

# Senior athletes strike gold at Olympics

By Jean Adamczak  
staff writer

They were all winners before the games even began.

Smiling and waving their American flags to the applause of the audience, the senior citizen athletes marched in to the grand opening of the "Olympic Fanfare" played over the loudspeakers. Excitement was in the air last Saturday as 650 senior athletes gathered at Oakland Community College Orchard Ridge Campus to participate in the Fifth Annual Michigan Senior Olympics.

"I play to win, not just to run," said Marge Clark of Farmington Hills.

Clark, 65, was getting ready to compete in the women's 100-yard dash. "It's a long way, I don't know if I'll make it, but I have to try and make my kids proud of me," said Clark, mother of four children.

About 35 seniors from the Farmington Hills park and recreation senior adult program participated in the olympics, including the "Farmington Hills Fireballs" volleyball team, which won a silver medal.

"If I hadn't gotten into this program I would've gone back to work," jokes Ken Hill, volleyball captain.

Hill, 69, said he couldn't tolerate sitting at home in front of the "boob tube" all the time after retiring.

"This is my fifth year participating in the olympics," he said proudly.

Follow-through is what counted for many of the participants during the recent Senior Olympics conducted at the Orchard Ridge campus. At left Helen Morcom of Garden City demonstrated her winning form on the volleyball court. Below Evelyn Quanta of Westland gave that extra oomph to the horseshoe.

Taking the top honors for the mile run in the women's category age division 60-69, was Ettie Handelman, 63, of Farmington Hills.

Handelman has three daughters and six grandchildren and gets up every day at 5:30 a.m. to run.

She is also into weightlifting, aerobics and tennis. "It's loads of fun, I love working out," she said.

"The older I get, the more I exercise and the less I eat. I'm a real proponent of physical fitness and nutrition."

Handelman said she began running 30 years ago, "before it was fashionable."

"I'm gonna be just like Carl Lewis. I'm going for two more medals today," she said.

Winning the gold medal in the men's one mile run, age division 60-69, was another Farmington Hills resident, Bill Wright.

"My sons got me running and I run just to keep up with them," explained Wright, 64, who finished with a time of six minutes, 29 seconds.

Wright gets up at 5:15 six mornings a week, runs till seven and then goes to work in Oak Park.

"It's just a lot of fun," he said, adding that he is now training for the Detroit Free Press marathon on Oct. 14.

SENIORS COMPETED in events

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Alfred Diego of Troy makes a successful run in a heat of the 55-yard dash.



Ettie Handelman, 63, of Farmington Hills, winner of the one-mile run shows a championship smile after being awarded her gold medal. She also took the top spots in 100- and 50-yard dashes in her age division.

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