

YMCA plans new center for total health

By Jonno Mallazowski
Staff writer

The Farmington YMCA's planned \$130,000 Health Enhancement Center will be more than just a weight-lifting room with the newest lines of exercise equipment.

"It will be a complete lifestyle center. We will try to emphasize the complete person. This would be a unique concept in terms of its program thrusts and contemporary equipment," Executive Director Kevin Bush said.

The Farmington Hills Planning Commission last week approved a site plan for the proposed 2,200-square-foot center that will be behind the existing 38,000-square-foot facility on Farmington Road, north of 12 Mile.

Planning commissioners' approval was subject to the completion of a six-foot berm along the parking lot to serve as a buffer between the YMCA and nearby residential area, as well as securing for the facility's dumpster.

Commissioners also requested a landscaping plan for the YMCA complex that must be completed and approved by commissioners before a building permit is issued. City Planner Ed Gardiner said.

THE HEALTH enhancement center is Phase 3 of the YMCA's capital improvement program. The first two phases included the purchase of property that brings the YMCA's complex to 8+ acres. Phase 4 includes the planned addition of a multi-purpose room for community programs, Bush said.

The building program is being financed with \$380,000 in proceeds from the YMCA's 1985 capital improvement fund drive, Bush said.

The decision to purchase additional property, build a health enhancement center and community activities room stems from the YMCA's growth and acceptance in the Farmington area, Bush said.

The Farmington YMCA boasts 7,500 card-carrying members, 80 percent of which are families with parents in the 30-45-year age group. On an annual basis, the facility is host to approximately 1,000 patrons a day, Bush said.

Depending on financing, Bush said, YMCA officials are hoping construction on the health enhancement center to begin as early as mid-fall or as late as spring 1987.

YMCA officials have yet to name the health enhancement center, but the new program will follow concepts developed by YMCA founder George Williams in 1842. "The idea is to take and develop the whole person — the mind, body and spirit," Bush said.

ONCE THE center is complete, YMCA staff will provide members with a "supervised and personalized wellness plan," Bush said.

Staff will conduct a health risk appraisal of interested members to determine the type of health and exercise program that should individually be followed.

"We will store that information into a computer and will use it to monitor their (members') progress," Bush said.

In addition to the exercise and weight-lifting opportunities available at the center, the YMCA will provide seminars on stress management, nutrition, cigarette smoking — topics that are useful in guiding patrons involved in the program, Bush said.

Improving the body with exercise and proper nutrition, for example, also produces a better mind and healthier attitude toward life — a part of the spirit, mind and body concept embodied in the ideals of the YMCA's founding father.

"It's really like preventive health care. The idea is to strengthen mind, body and spirit. All studies have proven that a combination of balance — things like nutrition, work hours, stress, spiritual needs — is needed for a healthy lifestyle. We're really going to get that concept imbedded in our members' minds. It sounds idealistic. But if any organization can do it, the YMCA can."

EVENTUALLY, YMCA officials would like to expand the center's program to include non-members who are in need of such a program.

"We hope to contract with hospital groups, clinics and private physicians to help patients continue with rehabilitative prescriptions," Bush said.

The health-oriented program, like the YMCA's other fitness programs, are overseen by the YMCA of Metropolitan Detroit's medical advisory board, led by Dr. Joseph Arends, a Detroit-area cardiologist.

And closer to home, the Farmington YMCA also has trained fitness specialists on staff to help members develop a personalized fitness and health program, Bush said.



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Farmington Observer

(USPS 187-640)
Published every Monday and Thursday by Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150. Second-class postage paid at Livonia, MI 48151. Address all mail (subscription, change of address, Form 3569) to P.O. Box 2420, Livonia, MI 48151. Telephone 591-9550.

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