

Suburban Life

Lorraine McClish editor/477-5450



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Sports conditioning

One more push for endurance

By Lorraine McClish
staff writer

IN ANOTHER SETTING it might have been boot camp. The high intensity physical workout was much the same, but the fitness-minded participants were wearing Reboaks, as the beat of the background music kept getting faster and faster.

"All of us are in top physical condition," said Mary Fletcher, Farmington YMCA's director of Health

Enhancement. "This class is for those who want to be pushed one step beyond."

The class, which got under way in June, is called Sports Conditioning and is one of the first classes started by Greg Voss when he took the position of senior physical-membership director at the Y this spring.

The workout is a something extra, a complimentary for triathletes, runners, basketball or racquetball players who want a change, an alternative," he said.

Voss is well aware of all that has been written about woes that come to those who practice high intensity aerobics, but says of this "That does not mean it's bad for everybody. One program does not try to be everything for everyone."

"What we do at the Y is create classes and programs for those who serve in any particular area. I developed this class for anybody who qualifies who wants one more push to increase strength and endurance."

PARTICIPANTS in the Sports Conditioning class qualify the same way any person qualifies for any aerobics program offered by the Y. They go through a health screening for cholesterol, blood pressure, percentage of body fat and heart rate, then learn how to monitor themselves by taking their own pulse periodically through the sessions.

After the battery of tests to determine the individual's fitness level, the Y's fitness specialists make the decision for a go-ahead or an alternative.

The health screenings begin two weeks before classes begin in mid-September. Registration begins after the blanket mailing of the Y's fall brochure, generally late in August.

It will list a daytime class and an early evening sports conditioning class to accommodate all corners.

Voss's summer daytime class numbers about 10. The age range is 17-54. The class is heavy on cyclists, runners and his own staff.

"Summer fitness classes are al-

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Greg Voss switches from Farmington YMCA administrator to physical fitness instructor to lead the first class of its kind offered by the Y for the athlete who seeks high-intensity aerobic circuit training.



TOM ARNETT/staff photographer

Dave Rutledge, in foreground, keeps in shape during the summer for basketball play this fall. But he is also co-ordinator for Prime Time, Farmington Y's day care program, and it is a requirement for members of the staff to be their own best physical fitness advertisements.

Angela Hospice

Volunteers talk about their work

By Sue Mason
staff writer

Christine Millington believes that there's a lesson to be learned from the death of Cardinal John Dearden.

Cardinal Dearden died last week of pancreatic cancer. In failing health, he had hoped to leave the hospital and spend his last days at home. That hope never materialized, but had it, his home stay probably would have been facilitated by hospice volunteers, Millington said.

"His suffering has ended, but it draws attention to caring for the terminally ill in their own homes," said Millington, administrative assistant for Angela Hospice in Livonia. "Hospice workers support the primary care givers, attend to the patient's needs and give respite to those care givers."

Angela Hospice was founded four years ago and with a cadre of more than 100 volunteers, it is providing assistance to terminally ill patients in western Wayne and Oakland counties, including Redford, Westland, Livonia, Plymouth-Canton, Northville, Novi and Farmington.

The volunteers come from just as many communities and their reasons for doing the work are as varied.

Joan McElmell of Livonia was among the first group of volunteers to take the 30 hours of hospice training. She was drawn to the program after helping care for a friend, who died of cancer five years ago.

Granted the work isn't easy. The family dynamics — problems the family members have dealing with the patient or his or her prognosis — can make the job difficult. But that doesn't deter McElmell from her job.

"I GET a lot from this," she said. "In fact, I get more than I give. I've learned a lot from these people. It's kind of an honor that they let you come into their homes, especially a complete stranger."

Cancer also touched the life of Nick Parravano of Redford, another of the program's first graduates. His brother had cancer of the optic nerve. A school teacher by profession, Parravano has been so touched by his hospice experience that he is about to make a career change.

At the age of 45, he is preparing to close the book on teaching and become a pastoral minister. He's into

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— Nick Parravano

his second year of study for a master's degree in pastoral ministry and when he's done, he plans on devoting all of his time to caring for others. He is the instructor for the 30-hour hospice training class, but has done in-home work. Fluent in Italian, one of his first assignments was an Italian family. His ability to communicate with them in their own language "helped break the ice" and make the work easier.

"The reward I attained was the satisfaction in seeing the final days of this patient accentuated by the positive not the negative," he said. "We knew his days were numbered, but we didn't dwell on that."

"The thing I remembered was the faith they had and the faith I had to have to do this work."

Social worker Teri McLaughlin of Detroit can understand the problems families face dealing with the pending death of a loved one. Her understanding comes from personal experience. Eight years ago she was diagnosed as having acute leukemia and given a prognosis of less than a year to live.

HER ONLY hope was a bone marrow transplant, but McLaughlin opted for extensive chemotherapy. Five years ago she was diagnosed as being in remission.

While at Providence Hospital for treatment, she spent much of her time talking to other cancer patients and serving as a "symbol of hope."

"I was doing hospice work while I was dying," McLaughlin said. "Caring for the family is so important because they don't know what to do because of this tremendous loss they're going to experience."

"I'm in the right place because when I say to them I understand and I mean I understand."

Mary Kay LeFevre of Northville is one of several registered nurses

involved with Angela Hospice. She has the job of initially meeting with families and explaining the hospice philosophy.

The question she has heard most is what hospice is going to do for the family member that hasn't been done to that point.

"It's hard for them because the hospital is geared for healing and they have to accept that we're going to lay back and just take care of the patient's pain."

"There's no IVs, no tube feedings; we only try to make the patient comfortable. They have control over their care and that's the part they have to accept."

A psychiatric nurse, LeFevre had been looking for something to do in her spare time. She prayed a lot and each time she did the idea of hospice "came into my mind." It wasn't until eight months ago when she saw an advertisement for Angela Hospice that she conceded this was the volunteer work she wanted to do.

"SOMETIMES people just want someone to talk to or to have a nurse come in and say they're doing it right," LeFevre said. "It's so rewarding."

Millington, like the volunteer workers, believes hospice may be coming into its own. It is for any terminally ill person diagnosed as having less than six months to live, anyone including persons who have AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome), she said.

"Hospice is going to be used a lot because the illness is over such a long period of time," she added.

She also believes it takes a special kind of person to do hospice work.

"I find it hard to believe that people will go into a home filled with vile smells and do vile things and come back smiling," she said. "We didn't know there were little angels like them around."

Angela Hospice is at 14501 Levan, Livonia. It is in need of volunteers to work one or two hours an afternoon each week. Volunteers don't need to have health care experience, and training is provided. An eight-session training program will be offered from noon to 3 p.m., beginning Sept. 12. For more information about Angela Hospice, call 322-5157.

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