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ST. ANTHONY CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Parish Seniors Getting Stronger and Healthier with EnhanceFitness

For Ginny Kiick, it's truly a special moment when someone realizes they can do something they couldn't do before.

"You see the progress, you see smiles on their faces," she says.

Ginny has been certified to teach EnhanceFitness classes for nearly four years, and has since been serving seniors at St. Anthony.

"It's like watching flowers bloom, like watching a

garden grow," Ginny says. "They're smiling, laughing and having fun. It's a really good program."

EnhanceFitness is an exercise program designed to help seniors become stronger, healthier and more able to lead independent lives.

"I'm up there in years and it keeps my body strong and keeps me healthy," says parishioner June Borges, who has participated in the class since it began. "I'm 89, so I need the exercise. And



The seniors who participate in EnhanceFitness have the opportunity to care for their physical health, while having fun and meeting new friends.

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it's important to my children. They all want me to continue my health."

The program is offered three times a week at St. Anthony — on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, from 4:30-5:30 p.m. in the cafeteria, for anyone age 55 or older. It includes 30 minutes of cardio workout, 20 minutes of strength training, and 10 minutes of stretching. The program provides regular fitness checks to help participants monitor their growth and progress.

"If you talk to anybody in the class who comes regularly, they'll let you know it makes a huge difference, even in little things — they can fasten a necklace, their fingers are more agile, they can put on their pants without having to sit down, their balance improves," Ginny says. "It's really awesome. It's amazing."

In many cases, participants' biomarkers and general health improves, and their doctors take notice.

"Their doctors will say, 'What are you doing differently? You're doing something!'" Ginny says. "Now doctors and physical therapists both are encouraging people to come to the class."

Not only does EnhanceFitness have a positive effect on people's physical health, but it also helps to strengthen their brain and overall wellbeing.

"We do a lot of exercises that are not only physically stimulating, but also are mentally stimulating — the two work hand in hand," Ginny says. "Once you're moving around, it gives you more energy, you're feeling better and you're happier."

In addition, those who gather for EnhanceFitness have developed a sense of community and camaraderie.

"Some of them started taking line dancing, and they'll go out to dinner and go out to the fair together," Ginny says. "If somebody's been gone for a while, someone will call them to see what's going on. There's a real sense of family. They're really tight.

"It's been beautiful watching the friendships grow," she adds. "Someone might be shy when they start and it takes a while, but after a while they get in there. It's a really beautiful program."

"I've met a lot of new friends," June says. "We go a little early and we chat about all kinds of things."

Ginny encourages seniors who are looking for a way to exercise and strengthen their bodies to consider joining EnhanceFitness.

"It's fun and it's not intimidating," Ginny says. "People may feel uncomfortable to go into a gym. A lot of people have never really exercised, so it's a little intimidating. But the class is not hard and it's not threatening. Everybody tries their best and nobody's judging anybody else.

"When people come, they see they're feeling better, they're having fun, they're making friends, they have something to do and they know it's going to be a positive experience," she adds. "I don't see anybody frowning in there. They're happy and they're having fun. They're doing good things for their bodies and they know it because they see the results."

Although the EnhanceFitness class at St. Anthony is currently full, those who are interested are invited to join the wait list and be notified when space in the class becomes available. A \$20 per month donation is requested. Financial assistance and flexible payments are available. You do not need to be a St. Anthony parishioner in order to join, although parishioners are given first priority on the wait list. For more information or to be added to the wait list, please contact Ginny Kiick at 808-280-6251.