

COMMUNITY HEALTH

May 2013

The YMCA of Martha's Vineyard is a non-profit, cause-driven, charitable organization that relies on the generous support of friends like you.

WE'RE FOR HEALTHY LIVING

SO OUR SENIORS CAN PARTICIPATE MORE FULLY IN THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR COMMUNITY

Strength in NUMBERS.

Helping our seniors live healthier, fuller lives.

Older adults are a significant and growing segment of our community. The Martha's Vineyard Commission's Island Plan states that "There is a population surge moving through the Vineyard population. The 'baby-boom' cohort - born between 1945 and 1955 - will start to hit retirement age in 2010. By 2020, the population between 60 and 70 will triple." According to the Dukes County Healthy Aging Task Force, "Over the next 20 years, the greatest absolute and percentage increases will occur in the 70-84 brackets which will more than double through 2030". This data tells us that in the coming years, there will be a greater need for activities and services focusing on the health and well-being of the senior population.

When providing services for seniors, consideration must be made that the age range of this population spans more than 35 years, from 55 to over 90, with a variety of abilities and interests. No matter the age, all can benefit from engaging in activities that provide balanced, interesting, challenging, and safe activities that enhance physical, mental, and social well-being. It is important for this age group to participate in these types of activities to help improve sleep, cardiovascular conditioning, muscle strength, flexibility, balance, and decreased chronic stress. Equally as important, these activities and programs provide adults with the opportunity to widen their social networks, stimulate new friendships, and acquire positive new roles in their retirement. Support from other people is important to most older adults.



Leonora and Madison at a weekly Y After School/Woodside visit

So where do we turn for these activities?

The Island is home to several Senior Centers, Councils on Aging, libraries, support groups, Community Services, MV Hospital, Island Elderly Housing, and various other groups with the common goal of meeting these needs. The YMCA of Martha's Vineyard is in a unique position to proactively influence the health and well-being of older adults.

Health and wellness is an important component in our lives, no matter what age. But what does that really mean? Physical exercise - cardio workouts, stretching and strengthening - helps to maintain a healthy body, but is also important for stability, flexibility and strength that helps us to live each day easier, and safer. On the schedule, the Y has classes specifically geared toward older adults - Silver Yoga, Balance of Power, Water Aerobics and Deep Water Interval

Training. Also popular among this group are Zumba and Pilates.

Mental health is important for our emotional well-being and helps to combat stressful situations, depression, isolation, and strengthen our every day relationships with others. Small group activities that encourage older adult social interaction, provide meaningful engagement, build relationships, enhance a sense of belonging, and provide opportunities for involvement.

At the Y, intergenerational activities and time spent together is a positive experience for everyone involved. The saying that "everyone needs a grandmother," whether it be as a mentor figure or relation, is something most have experienced very deeply. The saying comes to life each week at Woodside Village in Oak Bluffs when the Y After School program visits. Elders and children take walks, eat lunch, and participate in activities together, as a part of the Y intergenerational social program. Children have bonded with particular grandparent figures and likewise, elders are given love and care reminiscent of the families they raised.

This month is National Older Americans Month, and the Y is offering some great activities to help get our older population get moving, mixing and learning! Back by popular demand, on May 4th, teens from the Y Digital Connectors program (a digital literacy & protocol program sponsored by Comcast) will be hosting the second Elder Tech Fair. From 10 am to 2 pm, teens will be providing technology assistance for elders by appointment, helping to demystify the new technology such as computers, cell phones, iPads and more. Held at the Y's teen center, "Alex's Place", the program is open and free to all.

And, on Wednesday, May 29th, join us for a day of fun and activities at the Y's Senior Health & Fitness Day. As a National event, 100,000 older adults will participate in activities at more than 1,000 locations throughout the U.S. The common goal for this day: to help keep older Americans healthy and fit. Always set for the last Wednesday in May, National Senior Health & Fitness Day is the nation's largest annual health promotion event for older adults. The event is geared toward building awareness of the importance of regular physical activity, and is FREE to all participants over the age of 55! The event includes a chair aerobics and stretching class, a water aerobics class, along with a nutrition talk with Josh Levy of Vineyard Nutrition.

Celebrate National Older Americans Month with your friends and loved ones by getting involved in Island activities that help to strengthen body, mind, and spirit.



OUR STORIES



"[The Elder Tech Fair] was excellent! I really learned a lot!" - Merrell Raymond of Vineyard Haven (shown above with Digital Connectors student Ian Shea)

"It was amazing to see how the students were positively affected by the intergenerational exchange. The elder participants enjoyed the interest that young people took in them, the one-n-one connections, and being able to learn technology from the tech generation."

- Ray Whitaker, Digital Connectors Facilitator commenting on the first Elder Tech Fair

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Friday Nights:

Community Open Stage, \$5
8pm @ Alex's Place

4/26: Bonitos Race Night*

4/27: Healthy Kids Day*
11-2pm



4/29: Spring II programs begin

5/4: Elder Tech Fair*
10-2pm

(Call 508.693.1676
for an appointment)



5/11: Happiness Without a Reason*
Drop-in with Elliot S. Dacher,
M.D. of MV Hospital, 9:30am

5/18: Parent's Night Out, 5-8pm

5/29: Senior Health & Fitness Day*

*Free community programs

View our full program guide
online at www.ymcamv.org

WHAT DO NEARLY 500 SENIORS DO AT THE Y? BELONG.



YMCA OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
SWARTZ FAMILY FACILITY
Home of Alex's Place

111R Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road, Vineyard Haven, MA 02568
P 508.696.7171 F 508.696.6806 www.ymcamv.org

This edition of Community Health recognizes our Financial Assistance Program sponsor.



