

Active Aging Day encourages healthy habits in elderly

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The North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement celebrated Active Aging Week with an all-day event promoting health and wellness for senior citizens.

"This event was started to get seniors moving and eating healthier," event organizer Sally Mundt said.

According to Mundt, Active Aging Week is a national program that the International Council for Active Aging started in 1966.

Even though the program is more than 10 years old, Mundt said this was the first year the NCCCR hosted an event for Active Aging Week.

"We decided it only makes sense to have this event. If we (NCCCR) are not actively aging, who is?" she said.

Mundt said physical activity is very important for seniors' physical and mental health.

"Physical activity increases circulation and helps the brain get the necessary oxygen it needs," she said.

According to volunteer Fran Ross, turnout for the Sept. 25 event was good.

"A lot of people got here this morning, but people have been trickling in all day. It's hard to tell when people are in class, but during the breaks, you can see there really are a lot of people here today," she said.

The event was held in the Reuter Center on campus. There were classes and lectures and a healthy food court for participants.

A number of community partners set up booths that offered information and services for healthy living and active aging.

Virginia Eudy, an employee at the Spice and Tea Exchange, said the company was happy to participate in the event and had people stopping by the booth all day.

Eudy said the store makes custom rubs for meats as well as herbal teas for customers that promote healthy eating.

"We love what we do. A person should be able to have good and healthy food, and we can make that happen for them. Because this fair is promoting health for seniors, we thought we'd be a good fit here today," she said.

The event, which lasted from 8:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., offered mini classes that lasted about 45 minutes each.



Dustin Stuart/staff photographer

Joanna Evans, left, spoke to Laurey's Catering owner, Laurey Masterton, during Saturday's Active Aging Day at the Reuter Center. Below, Crayton Bedford, of Tai Chi Chuan of Asheville leads a Tai Chi group.



During each section, there were three to four classes to choose from.

Each section offered two physical exercise classes, ranging from yoga and Pilates to Zumba and senior boot

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camp. There were also classes in hiking and line dancing. According to Mundt, men often feel classes like Zumba are more directed toward women.

"Men will usually hike or walk. They don't necessarily want to go to the more 'feminine' classes. However, we now have three male instructors who are teaching some of the exercise classes," she said.

There were also lectures that stressed the importance of mental and physical health for seniors.

"We wanted to offer a variety. We have different classes to fit different people's interests," she said.

Jane Abe, an NCCCR instructor, gave a lecture entitled, "The Kitchen Apothecary," which encourages the use of herbs and spices to help with everyday ailments.

According to Abe, herbs and spices can treat a wide range of common problems, from toothaches and coughs to burns and cuts.

"Try to use your herbs more. You can put them in just about anything," she said.

Abe said honey can be used to help with allergies as well as treat and disinfect minor cuts.

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