



Saturday, March 11, 2017

**Boothbay Region Health Care's "Fit, Flexible and Strong" program completes mid-way assessments**

The "Fit, Flexible and Strong" program sponsored by Boothbay Region Health Care, Inc. (BRHC) that began in October and continues through May has reached its mid-way point. The goal of the program is to prove to participants that exercise is the best medicine. We are happy to report that mid-way assessments reveal that indeed to be true.



Boothbay Region Health Care's "Fit, Flexible and Strong" program participant, Mary Hull, does a balance exercise with a little help from wellness coach, Mary Baudo.

Photo credit: RCrink

Under the medical direction of Dr. Allan "Chip" Teel, Juliette Cohen, R.N., BSN, Mary Baudo, Wellness Coach and Personal Trainer, and BRHC Board members developed assessment tools to evaluate participants' basic medical, cognitive and fitness levels. Out of the 27 participants initially registered, 25, ranging in age from 48 to 93 years, were medically cleared by their doctors for the program. Based on an initial assessment, each participant was given an individual exercise plan with goals to improve various aspects of their health. Participants are encouraged to track both their daily nutrition and exercise activities-- which can include free walking for Seniors at the YMCA on Tuesday and Thursdays, walking on the Land Trust trails, taking exercises classes at various locations throughout the region, and, as an added benefit, participants are able to take classes twice a week at the Community Center with Wellness Coach, Mary Baudo. The just completed mid-point assessment with feedback on their progress is helping to keep participants motivated to continue with the program.

Nurse Juliette Cohen reports, "During the initial assessment, we measured blood pressure, blood glucose, oxygen saturation, pulse, and edema and performed a cognitive assessment. Some of the participants were apprehensive and doubtful of the program's success at the

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*"On medical guard duty"*

outset. Many were nervous to have the assessments performed due to their health concerns. However, at the second assessment, the participants were amazingly changed in outlook and attitude and they were eager to see how their results had changed. Many participants had, in fact, lowered their blood pressure, blood glucose, pulse, and edema. Participants were upbeat and excited to continue the program and improve their lives. I was impressed with how some participants stuck with the program, even through illness and physical ailments. They were proud of themselves and excited with the outcome so far, looking forward to what they could do next. One participant stated, 'This program has changed my life. I not only exercised, but I lost weight and, surprisingly, learned many other ways to improve my health. I learned how to make small changes to positively affect my nutrition and diet.' I think that says it all."

Mary Baudo, the Wellness Coach and Personal Trainer, stated that "One of the outcomes from the initial assessments was that, regardless of age, balance was the number one challenge with second being leg strength, and third, flexibility. With the CDC statistic that falling is the leading cause of accidental death in persons 65 and older, this was not a surprise. The mid-term assessments show balance has improved some, but leg strength and flexibility improved more so, with some participants improving by half! That is very exciting. The fact that in only a short time of doing basic exercises correctly, the participants gained so much benefit."

Laura Perkins, the youngest person in the program, not only signed herself up but her husband as well. They were in the category of already exercising but not knowing whether they were truly improving their health. "It's been even better than we expected and Mary Baudo has really helped us a great deal by tailoring it to our busy schedules. It's amazing how making some adjustments in what you do on a daily basis can make a huge difference health-wise", says Perkins.

Sandra Rumery and others are also noticing improvements in energy levels. Sandra said: "I was even able to do some snow shoveling, something I could not do before."

At the conclusion of the program, a final assessment will be conducted and the results will be documented, to hopefully seek funding through grants to run another program. BRHC board member, Jerry Homer says, "This program is in line with our vision of 'A caring community working together to take responsibility for our own health'."