

One step at a time

New program provides incentives for faculty and staff to get in shape

BY KATHLEEN BARBOSA
Staff Reporter

Professors might soon begin leaving their cars in the garage and abandoning their bikes on the racks, choosing instead to take steps towards being healthier by walking across campus.

Not only will these faculty and staff members be improving their health, but they also will be eligible for prizes galore thanks to Truman's TruFit Walking Incentive for Faculty and Staff sponsored by the Wellness Coalition.

This program kicks off Jan. 19 at 12:15 p.m. in the Student Recreation Center and ends April 20. Participants can register as individuals or as a group of four.

Evonne Bird, health and exercise science professor, said allowing people to register as a group is a great way to promote team camaraderie.

Bird said poor health on college campuses drew the Wellness Coalition's attention to the need for a fitness incentive program. Other schools and businesses,

including the city of Kirksville, have similar incentive models, and this year the Wellness Coalition in partnership with the rec center is testing their own fitness incentive program.

Bird said the Wellness Coalition is "a group that was formed to address wellness issues on campus and to try to improve wellness of students, faculty and staff."

The walking incentive currently is the only program the Wellness Coalition has created. However, there are other ways for individuals to get fit. Cook said the Coalition specifically chose walking for a reason.

"The reason why we chose walking is because walking is less intimidating for people," Cook said.

The goal for participants in this program is to get sufficient daily exercise.

"We're trying to get them to take at least 10,000 steps a day, but of course more is always better," Cook said.

Cook said her goal for participation is 100 people. So far, 20 participants have signed up. The program is offering prizes as an added incentive to get people to sign up.

Senior Ashlyn McLard, an intern and the public relations coordinator for the rec center, has helped to gather prizes from local businesses. She said prizes for the kickoff event included gift cards to Steve's Garden Deli, passes to the Aquatic Center and a free round of golf at the Kirksville Country Club.

At the kickoff event, participants will pay \$5 that will be used to purchase some of the prizes given throughout the event. Participants will be given a pedometer, a device worn on the hip that counts the

number of steps taken. The rec center has 300 pedometers to give out, but participants can use their own.

Participants are entrusted to keep track of the number of steps they walk during the week and report them online every Monday before 5 p.m.

The rec center will then contact the individual and group that walked the most steps that week and award them a certificate and prize. At the end of the event, participants can keep the pedometers, and prizes will be given out for most improved and most total steps walked for individuals and teams.

One place on campus to exercise is the rec center. Brenna Cook, fitness and wellness director at the rec center said it provides options to do more than walk. Cook said the rec center opens Monday through Friday at 6:30 a.m. Classes also are offered at 12:15 p.m. so staff on their lunch breaks can work out at the various classes during that time.

McLard said participants are encouraged to use the rec center throughout the event.

"We're trying to encourage more participation in our rec in general," McLard said. "We're hoping that we see an increase in faculty

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Ashlyn McLard
rec center public relations
coordinator



Joyce Wong/Index

Campus planning staff member Lori Shook participates in a yoga class at the rec center Tuesday.

and staff participation."

In order to encourage walking outside the rec center, McLard said the rec center plans to create a map around Kirksville and campus so professors can know the number of steps they will walk if they take certain routes.

McLard said they hope

to take steps to expand the program to include students in the future.

Staff and faculty members who want to take advantage of this new program and get fit have two ways to register. They can register now at the rec center website or at the kickoff event Jan. 19 at the rec center.

Habitat group struggles to find qualified applicants

BY JOHN O'BRIEN
Staff Reporter

The stakes are high, the reward is great and the search is on.

The Kirksville and Truman chapters of Habitat for Humanity are working to find qualified recipients of Habitat for Humanity homes, putting an end to the two-year house-building dry spell.

Founded in 1996, the Kirksville Area Habitat for Humanity affiliate has built six houses during its existence, with the last completed in 2008.

"To build a house each year was their goal back when they started the chapter," said Steve Pennington, Truman bookstore manager and current Kirksville Area Habitat for Humanity president. "We haven't met that in the last two years."

From a struggling economy to a lack of public "face-time," a number of factors contributed to the lack of construction in Kirksville.

The building hiatus also is affecting the Truman Habitat for Humanity affiliate. Working through the Kirksville Habitat affiliate, the Truman affiliate is unable to take action independently in regards to building houses.

"Student chapters can't build a house on their own — they have to be affiliated, and so we have to wait for the Kirksville chapter to find a

family to build for," said junior Audra Schickler, Truman Habitat for Humanity president.

The majority of Truman chapter members have experience in building for Habitat for Humanity in locations outside of Kirksville. However, following the graduation of the group's remaining seniors this spring, no members in the organization will have worked on a Habitat for Humanity house in Kirksville.

The ability to help is hindered by a number of obstacles, halting the forward movement of both the Kirksville and Truman Habitat for

Humanity affiliates and leading to a lack of new housing. All obstacles center around one major problem: an inability to find the right applicants.

Kirksville Area Habitat for Humanity founder John Settlege and current President Pennington think this might come partially as a result of the struggling economy.

"With the economics of the general time, it's very difficult to find homeowners who are willing to risk getting into the building," Settlege said. "We've had an extremely difficult time finding a qualified homeowner in the last couple of years and, to me, I think taking on a \$300 a month mortgage is just pretty scary stuff if your income is pretty poor anyway."

The risk lies in the house-build-

ing process of Habitat for Humanity. Habitat volunteers stress that the house is not a gift. Accepted applicants are required to contribute 300 hours of construction labor on their own house, a process referred to as "sweat equity," in addition to helping with the construction of future Habitat homes.

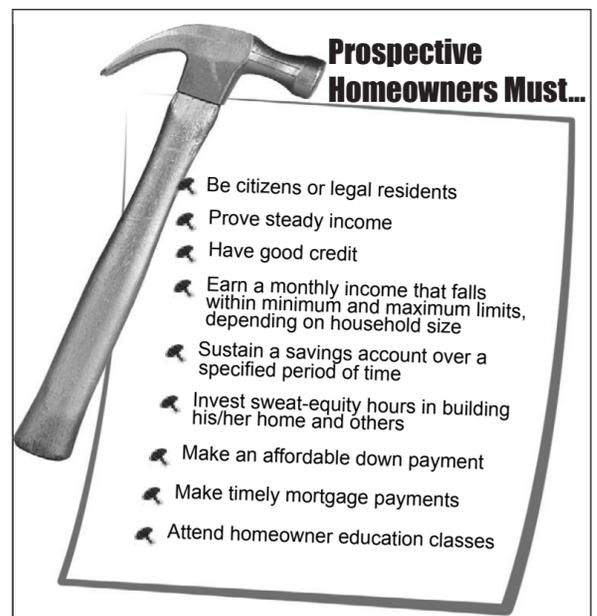
Along with the physical payment, accepted applicants make monetary payment on the house, paying a monthly mortgage to Habitat for Humanity. That money can be used for future projects.

The big advantage of participating comes from interest-free loans, donated materials and work of volunteers, which help cut the cost of the home nearly in half.

"The reason that it's hard is because there are very strict guidelines for finding a family," Schickler said. "The family has to be in a low enough tax bracket to qualify for the house, but they also have to make enough money that they will be able to make the mortgage payments once the house is built. There's a very narrow window of income that the international habitat has established."

Another problem splitting Habitat for Humanity volunteers from Truman and Kirksville is the restriction to Kirksville city limits. Established as the Kirksville Area Habitat for Humanity, the organization is limited to cases and projects within city limits, something that some consider a major hindrance in the organizations' forward movement and community development.

"If we can get the chapter where we can build outside the city limit of Kirksville, which is what we're working with the Kirksville affiliate on right now, then I think the campaign will work," Schickler said. "We



get a lot of applicants that are interested, but then they find out that they don't live in the right spot for it or we find out they don't own land in the right area."

However, Settlege is among some who think an expansion from "Kirksville Area Habitat for Humanity" to "Adair County Habitat for Humanity" would prove ineffective and is not the best move to be made at the moment.

"We can't very well take money out of Kirksville and go way out somewhere and build a house," Settlege said. "If you look at some of the houses folks are in, they really do need to be in better houses."

While some volunteers have defined sides to the debate, others, like Pennington, still are on the fence in the matter.

On top of the strict application guidelines, Habitat volunteers believe part of the problem lies in the community forgetting about the organization due to its inactivity.

"Habitat has kind of fallen on the backburner. People don't see us ac-

tively working in the community as far as the Kirksville chapter goes, so we haven't gotten a lot of applications," Schickler said.

In an effort to bring Habitat for Humanity back to the forefront and continue to aid the community, the Truman affiliate is launching a new campaign in alliance with the Kirksville affiliate to find a new family and get the organization back on its feet. Starting at the end of the fall semester, the public relations committee of the Truman Habitat for Humanity affiliate began organizing the search for a new family. Referred to loosely as the "Find-A-Family Campaign," the search will consist of volunteers sitting at tables outside popular local stores, such as Hy-vee, Salvation Army and Walmart, handing out applications for potential applicants.

With an eager attitude, a strong drive to help and a new campaign underway, the Kirksville and Truman Habitat for Humanity chapters are ready to end their two-year dry spell and hope to begin construction on a home by spring.

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