

Offers path to good health

By Jessica Williams Gibson | Posted: Thursday, March 1, 2012 10:33 am

Inside the Legacy Fitness Zone, located on the north wing of the Chase Near Eastside Legacy Center, spectators can get a glimpse of a community ready to get fit. It may seem like an average workout facility, but it has actually brought new life to the Near Eastside area.

Inside, adults of various ages and races walk or run on treadmills while a senior citizen gets a lesson on how to use a whole body exerciser machine. Steps away, Arsenal Tech High School boys play a basketball game.

“(Fitness Zone) fits in well with what this community is now trying to do – bring opportunities for people who don’t have them,” said Brian Culp, assistant professor at the IU School of Physical Education and Tourism Management at IUPUI. “This is one of the cornerstone pieces to rejuvenation to the near Eastside.”

Prior to the facility, neighborhoods near Tech were considered fitness deserts. Super Bowl XLVI and the Super Bowl Legacy Project on Indianapolis’ near Eastside helped propel this facility into existence.

From basketball to floor hockey to senior yoga to Girls Inc. workouts, at Legacy Fitness Zone, people young and old can participate in health screenings, health and wellness classes, personal training, group exercise and individual workouts.

Before people begin working out, members participate in an initial assessment to establish fitness safety, get an accurate view of their health statistics and create an individualized exercise program for improvement or maintenance. Keisha Virgil oversees each fitness assessment and said members are

also assessed every two to three months to ensure health and weight goals are met.

“They get your height and weight, then you sit in the Bod Pod which tells you your whole body composition. Then we measure their lower and upper body strength,” explained NiCole R. Keith, associate professor at the IU School of Physical Education and Tourism Management at IUPUI. “There’s a series of tests intended for older adults so that anybody can do it.”

Once members have completed their assessment, the sky’s the limit to how fit they want to be. Emmanuel Colon-Romero, fitness relations manager, said that Fitness Zone’s equipment accommodates every fitness level. There are also machines that are wheelchair accessible.

Because Legacy Fitness Zone is a part of IUPUI’s Physically Active Residential Communities and Schools (PARCS) program, members have IUPUI exercise science and fitness studies

students at their disposal to ask questions, get help on a machine or set up personal training sessions.

“This is part of an academic course,” said Keith. “There may be a nice track or sidewalks, but some people may not know what to do to improve their health. The students are well trained to offer help.”

“This is much easier than typing a paper. You’re actually showing someone how to do an exercise. I’m able to put my knowledge to use,” added IUPUI exercise science major, Brittany Usowski.

In addition to a holistic approach to wellness and ample student help, Fitness Zone members’ fees are reasonable.

“The general fee for members is \$20 per month. You can also get a family membership for \$40 a month. There’s no contracts, joining fee or cancellation fee either,” said Colon-Romero. “We also offer income based discounts.”

Fitness assessments, exercise classes and personal trainers are free for members. The gym also offers special rates to groups such as the Indianapolis Fire Department, members of closed PARCS facilities and members of Wishard Health Services’ HealthyMe fitness program.

Although any Indianapolis resident can become a member, Near Eastside residents are particularly grateful for the Legacy Fitness Zone. In fact, close to 200 people signed up to join the gym before the facility was even available for use.

Before Fitness Zone opened, exercise enthusiast, Andrew Hill, worked out at George Washington Community High School. He decided to join Fitness Zone because it was more conducive to his schedule.

“I had a heart attack in 2008 and I have diabetes and high blood pressure. I started working out to improve my health. Working out here allows me to keep losing weight and get better,” said Gloria Duncan as she completed a free weight exercise. “This facility is magnificent. You have so many options and machines to work on. I love that.”

The Legacy Fitness Zone has metaphorically brought down the walls of the Tech high school campus and has opened up a world of possibilities to a community in need of a greater sense of togetherness and healthy options.

“I hope that people use this to become active, gain independence and have an appreciation for health and wellness. I want them to feel empowered to make decisions and not feel as if ‘well, we don’t have facilities in our neighborhood so we can’t do this or that.’ This takes away that excuse. Its not going to end every issue, but at least it can empower people,” said Culp.

Legacy Fitness Zone

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