

Tuesday, July 29, 2008

OU offers programs to keep faculty, staff healthy

By **Rebecca Wyatt Thomas**, OU Web Writer

Fall semester brings new students, the start of classes and the opportunity to get into a fitness program through Oakland University. Shape Up OU and Building a Better U provide opportunities for OU faculty and staff to become healthy and educated about important wellness topics.

Shape Up OU is a wellness initiative designed to encourage healthy living through motivation, accountability and incentives. Employees make lifestyle changes to lose weight, get health and feel better about themselves, and they do it with support. The program, now in its third installment, has expanded to Shape Up OU First Year, for first time participants, and Shape Up OU for Life, a program for those who have participated in the past.

Kathleen Osentoski, office assistant in Financial Aid, has participated in both phases and will take part in Shape Up OU for Life this fall. As a result of her two previous experiences, Osentoski has lost about 60 pounds and hopes to shed another 30 pounds in the program this year.

"I joined the program initially because I wanted to increase my health, my physical activity and lose weight," Osentoski said. "Shape Up OU is a wonderful program and I would recommend it to everybody."

Osentoski works out at the Rec Center in the morning, takes water aerobics classes and walks at the mall. Prior to the program, Osentoski said she worked out off and on, but not regularly. With the help of the Rec Center's nutritionist, she was also able to make adjustments to her diet and learn more about the food she was eating.

"This was a lifestyle change," Osentoski said. "I miss my workouts if I don't get them in."

Nicole Artanowicz, library assistant at Kresge Library, will participate in Shape Up OU For Life after taking part in the program for the last two years.

"I wanted to start exercising more and to lose weight," Artanowicz said. "It was just the right program at the right time. There's so much support from the staff at the Rec Center. It was really helpful and encouraged me to get in there and exercise. I made a lot of friends at the Rec Center that work out at the same time."

While her original goals were to exercise more and lose weight, Artanowicz has a new goal this year—to try and prepare for the **Brooksie Way** half-marathon that will start at Oakland University Oct. 5. Artanowicz isn't sure she'll be able to compete in the full half-marathon, but she is training for it and plans to participate in the 5K regardless.

Over the last two years, Artanowicz has lost weight and was able to stop taking medication she previously needed because she is working out and getting her body back into shape. Artanowicz said she also notices a difference in her mood and feels happier most of the time.

"There is a lot of accountability in this program," Artanowicz said. "You can slip so easily over the summer. This program helps you get back on track."

The Shape Up OU program includes nutrition, aerobic exercise, strength training, wellness and stress management to help improve the overall wellness of each participant.

Shape Up OU First Year is open to the first 75 registrants. Shape Up OU for Life has 100 spots available. Registration runs through Sept. 19. To register, visit the **Training** Web site and click on Mind and Body or call (248) 370-4910. Shape Up OU participants need an annual membership to the Recreation Center. Participants were also required to complete pre- and post-participation paperwork, blood work at Graham Health Center and a fitness assessment. In addition, Shape Up OU participants are required to attend one health and wellness programs per semester, meet with a fitness mentor once a month, attend a group meeting once a month and work out three times a week for 30-60 minutes.

Building a Better U is a lunchtime program that will help the Shape Up OU participants meet their health and wellness program requirement. The program will focus on stress during the fall semester. Mila Padgett, assistant director of programs in Campus Recreation, said stress is a topic many on campus have expressed interest in. Topics for the semester include:

- "Be Healthy, Be 'Ducky'" with Richard Paul, Wednesday, Sept. 24 from 12:05-12:55 p.m., Oakland Center Gold Rooms
- "Dealing with the Stress Headache" with Lisa Meloche, Wednesday, Nov. 5, 12:05-12:55 p.m., Rec Center Pioneer Room
- "Take the Stress out of Entertaining," with Chef Paul, Wednesday, Dec. 3, 12:05-12:55 p.m., Rec Center Pioneer Room

Registration for Building a Better U is not required. The programs are open to the entire campus community.

For more information, visit the **Campus Recreation** Web site, or contact Mila Padgett at (248) 370-4910 or padgett@oakland.edu.

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