

Exercise helps boomers maintain an active lifestyle

One thing residents of independent living communities have come to learn is, “It’s never too late to be weaving exercise into your daily life.”

From traversing nature trails to participating in strength and flexibility classes to playing Wii sports, those who are in their 60s, 70s, 80s and even 90s are learning to achieve and maintain a healthy fitness level.

Potential residents of Blakehurst, a senior living community in Towson, were reminded of this healthy vision, and how possible it is, after a recent talk by Lynne Brick, president and owner of Brick Bodies Fitness Services.

“Yes, I’m the exercise lady,” the exuberant and noticeably fit business owner said as she addressed a room full of baby boomers, presenting them with health statistics and leading them in simple exercises.

She offered up the examples of her parents (her mother is 78 and her father is 81), who go dancing and Hazel McCallion, the 88-year-old mayor of Mississauga, Canada, who is serving her 11th term in office and still plays ice hockey.

“What you believe, you will achieve,” Brick said to the attentive audience.

A Blakehurst representative spoke of the variety of options available at Blakehurst such as an exercise room and pool as well as dances, book clubs, Bible study and support groups. One resident leads a popular Tai Chi class.

Across the state, independent living communities are eager to help residents

maintain a healthy, active, lifestyle as they age.

“We have exercise classes perfect for all ages,” said Ginny Gullett-Tawes, director of marketing and development at Pickersgill Retirement Community in Towson.

She said residents participate in yoga, Wii bowling and utilize a walking trail that winds around the 16-acre property.

A sense of camaraderie and a good rapport with the instructors make fitness classes at Broadmead in Hunt Valley fun for all.

Director of Wellness Jody Tromble said residents can engage in everything from stretch and strengthening class to different types of pool classes to brain aerobics.

“They really look forward to the classes,” said Tromble, noting that some 200 residents engage in wellness activities monthly, ranging from classes to swimming laps in the pool.

“It helps maintain their fitness level and some are increasing their ability to do things,” said Tromble, who has worked at the community for nine years. “They incorporate it into their daily lives.”

She said at Broadmead, they address the six dimensions of wellness: social, physical, intellectual, spiritual, cultural and emotional.

Fitness events such as a “trail day” where residents walk around the campus, also encourage healthy, active living.

“I am a firm believer of prevention, and I think by exercising and taking care of your body and mind, you do a lot of prevention,” Tromble said. “People stay healthy the more active they are. We have many residents in their 90s who attend our exercise classes, so the people are an inspiration.”