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First session of LifeLong Wellness a success

For the Republican

The Rush County United Fund, along with Rush Memorial Hospital, Anytime Fitness and the Boys & Girls Club of Rush County are pleased to announce that the first session of the LifeLong Wellness program is now completed, and was a great success!

The program, made possible by seven steering partners, Rush County United Fund, Indiana Association of United Ways and the Eli Lilly Foundation, is a comprehensive nutritional, fitness and wellness program offered free of charge to any citizen of Rush County.

The program is unique to the State of Indiana, promotes healthy lifestyle choices and encourages sustained healthy living for participants.

Just over two years ago, when RUF (Rush County United Fund) changed its annual funding structure to community impact funding, seven steering partners came to the table to discuss Rush County's strengths and weaknesses. Those seven partners were presented with an opportunity by the Indiana Association of United Ways to analyze the community through a planning grant offering a 5-1 match for funding.

The seven partners each contributed to the planning grant and received the maximum award available, \$35,000 for the community assessment, and planning period to implement the first impact project for Rush County.

The partners hired consultant Jim Dittoe of Winning Communities to facilitate the assessment process.

The Rush County Leadership Academy participants assisted with a lot of the legwork on the planning project.

At the end of the assessment, RUF was presented with a "road map" for areas, which held opportunities for improvement for Rush County. Presented with staggering statistics, the steering partners quickly identified LifeLong Wellness as the first impact project for Rush County.

According to data received, the U.S. has recognized a 448 percent increase of overweight children ages 6 to 11, a 378 percent increase of overweight children between the ages of 12 to 19, and an overall rate of obesity in excess of 25.2 percent in Indiana, ranking Indiana as the ninth highest in the country.

Rush County also has a high number of cases of cancer.

Rush County ranks eighth in the State of Indiana, according to the Center for Disease Control and the NCI. Rush County is also not meeting the criteria for "the healthy people objective" outlined by the National Cancer Center.

The core of impact funding is to ask that question, "Why?"

"As a United Fund, a community, a region or a state, we must look at the root cause of any undesirable community situation, and attempt to alleviate or eliminate that cause," RUF director Pam Leisure said. "In order to make a difference, we have to understand why a situation exists and attempt to create programs to rectify the situation."

LifeLong Wellness is a program designed to specifically address unhealthy living habits.



Participants in the first session were taught proper nutrition, exercise, smoking cessation and awareness. Participants blood glucose levels and cholesterol levels were monitored throughout the program. Many of the participants showed decreases in both glucose and cholesterol, body mass index, blood pressure and measurements.

Several participants have already registered for the second session, scheduled to kick off Oct. 1 at Rush Memorial Hospital.

There is no cost to participate in the program, which is limited to 10 existing participants and 20 new participants.

RUF currently has five adult openings, and will fill the openings on a first come, first served basis. Incentives for each 12-week session are \$250 cash prize, and a free 6-month membership to Anytime Fitness. At the end of the program, individual winners from each session, and participants wishing to enter the "Biggest Winner" competition, will vie for a \$750 cash prize. A "Family Winner," which will receive a \$2000 vacation to Florida, will also be named.

The second session will meet each Saturday starting Oct. 6 and continuing through Dec. 22.

"We have included several new segments including Pilates, yoga, and stress management to accommodate the fitness, wellness, and nutritional education segments. If you are interested in this program, please feel free to contact me at 765-932-2880," Leisure said.

Winners of the \$250 cash prize and 6-month membership to Anytime Fitness will be recognized at the Rush County United Fund Annual Dinner Sept. 27 at Flatrock Grill.