

Del Mar Estates

“Together We Are One Community”

JUNE 25, 2018

Steel Feather Exercise Programs

You asked me for feedback about the exercise program you initiated at Del Mar Mobile Home Estates last summer. Our Del Mar Homeowners Association offers information and activities – as part of our Blue Zones Program – for residents in our senior mobile home park. While we initiated a chair exercise program two years ago, the introduction to and implementation of the Steel Feather Exercise Program has been an incredible addition to our Park’s events.

Interest: Interest was good at the beginning of the program last summer, but gradually numbers started to decrease. We changed locations from Brookfield to Del Mar and did a door-to-door marketing of the program. Since then, participation has tripled. We now have at least 15-18 on a regular basis at our exercise program. There are additional people who may not attend a particular day, but they consistently exercise with our group. It is interesting to see how absent members feel it necessary to offer reasons they were not able to attend a particular day!

Success: Participants are improving at exercise abilities. Moves we couldn’t do when the program first started, now we can do – with gusto! As proof of this, [REDACTED], our exercise guru, has told us she will be getting a new color of stretch bands, reflecting on our ease of using the looser ones.

Another indicator of success, one retired gentleman started out as a “sitter” for most exercises. With gentle encouragement, he can now do most exercises he never even tried before. One of our toughest stretches we now call The Jerry because he encouraged us to do more reps each day. Some exercises saw us

Steel Feather Exercise Program

June 25, 2018

Page Two

holding onto chairs in the beginning; now many of us have “let go” and we no longer have to hold onto the chair to accomplish the moves.

A further indicator of success is the stability exercises. They looked easy but we were surprised how hard they were to do for us senior citizens. Many were sore the next day. After several weeks, our balance is much improved and most of us can do them successfully. The rest are “getting there.”

Another success story is that several regular members have had improved lab tests for cardiovascular and diabetes screening since starting the class. Another sign of success is that word of mouth and newsletter articles are resulting in new members joining our exercise group. Most are from Del Mar Mobile Home Park, but some are from the outlying neighborhood.

Community feedback: Participants are very enthusiastic about the program and about [REDACTED]. They have expressed how they appreciate her enthusiasm and her positive comments about people’s efforts. She has made significant progress with CJ, a woman with language-affected Alzheimer’s. When CJ started the program several months ago, she was not talking and couldn’t do many of the moves. Now she counts forward and back, staring intently at [REDACTED]. She can now do movements where she crosses her midline, something that was impossible at the beginning. She is beginning to respond to classmate’s welcomes and good-byes. [REDACTED] encourages us to give CJ positive comments and, in the absence of her primary caregiver, we have helped her to position herself for each exercise as, of course, does [REDACTED]

Our participants have said they feel the group is as much a social outlet as a physical program. We have made new friends, celebrated birthdays, brought healthy snacks, and sung the music played in the background. I can’t emphasize enough how this social aspect contributes to the success of the exercise program. It is a friendly, validating place to be and we feel safe to all move at our own levels, without comparison to others’ efforts. If people didn’t think the class was a “safe” place to be socially and physically, we wouldn’t be returning. We feel as a Steel Feather Exercise Program

June 25, 2018

Page Three

group we are [REDACTED] “best class,” but I bet all her classes’ participants feel the same way.

As an aside, the Thursday Bingo group appreciates our help in moving chairs back in place and bringing out extra tables for their group’s game that occurs after our class. Management also has mentioned to me that they see the benefit of the class for our residents and they have changed some activities to allow us to have our space for exercise.

I hope you can tell from my comments that we are very appreciative that you hold the Steel Feather classes at Del Mar. We also appreciate you following up with our insurance companies to make sure they know we are regularly participating in an exercise program. We all can tell the positive difference it makes in our lives! Thank you.

Sincerely,

Del Mar HOA President