

New Partner on the Path: Lathrop's Fitness Committee

This week a group of residents from both campuses met as a newly formed fitness committee. They wrote a straight forward but challenging mission, “to keep everyone as physically active as possible for as long as possible.” Members present were Camilla Knapp, Ron Robbins and Lynne Howe (Easthampton) along with Arlene Jennings and Marlisa Parker (Northampton). Hans Van Heyst and David Morrisey of Northampton are also planning to join the conversation.

Knowing that physical fitness enables us to continue to participate in the other domains of wellness, this group hopes to positively influence—and model—healthy fitness behaviors and help guide the process of increasing and improving the fitness component of Wellness at Lathrop. Two goals were set for their first 6mo of work:

1. To start a walking club in Easthampton, similar in popularity to the “Hiking with Hans” group in Northampton. Its hoped that Hans will help get this off the ground and the two groups can collaborate and plan hikes and walks out of the area using the Lathrop van.
2. To renovate and improve the two fitness areas we currently have on each campus, taking inventory of equipment and removing or replacing old, unsafe or broken machines.

Building fitness options and participation has been a goal that Deb Peavey and I have long shared. And like everything we do at Lathrop, it is a question of identifying and agreeing on priorities. In bringing this group together we considered what I am coming to see as the push and pull of independent living. We work the edge between helping support what is wanted and trying to put in place what we think is needed. When it comes to effective outcomes, and responsible use of resources, what works is what we can help the residents make happen. And certainly when it comes to our own fitness, we know that sustained benefit will only happen if it’s something we want and commit to making happen. Just having equipment or a class is not enough. Longtime residents have surely witnessed the coming and going of successful initiatives in numerous realms, successful not because staff made them happen but because they rose out of the community spirit of the residents! Everyone has an opinion about what Lathrop should do. Only together will we discover what Lathrop can do.

So, if you have thoughts about what would help you get in the game or onto the track, do share it with one of the committee members. If you would like to join in the planning and implementation of programs, contact Deb Peavey for updates on the next meeting of this new and exciting team.