

Gym helps area women become healthier inside and out

BY ELSIE WALKER

Just like the hangout in the TV show Cheers, where "everybody knows your name", the Ladies Workout Express in the International Trade Center Shopping Center is a friendly and supportive place. It's a place that's helped its members to feel better about themselves and keep healthy.

"We have women of all sizes, all ages (from 16 - 75). It's non-intim-

idating...we can all relate to each other," said staff member Patty Woltz.

The staff and its owner, Yvette Tosado-Kull, know the women who exercise there and want to see them achieve their goals. Members can use either the gym area with its specialized circuit equipment, attend classes or both. (Non-members can also register for classes.) Tosado-Kull and Woltz noted that the women are allowed to go at

their own pace. They know which members can be pushed to do a little more and those that can't; there are those who like to socialize during a workout and those who want to be left alone. Classes offered include Zumba, one of the hottest dance workouts around and for which, Tosado-Kull is the only certified instructor in the area. Again, members do what they can and don't have to be perfect in doing the workout routine.

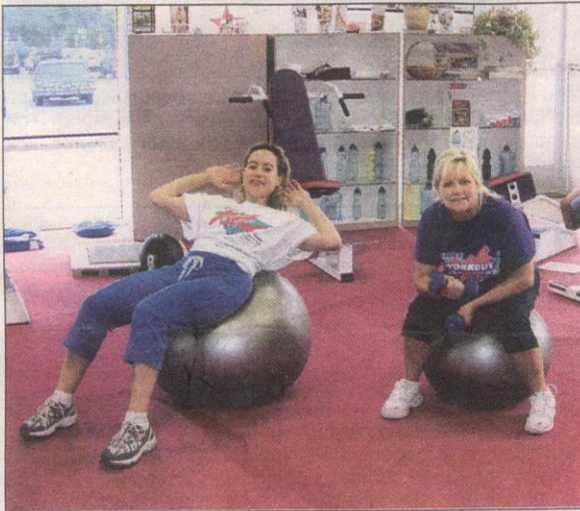
The reasons for getting into exercise, vary by member. For many, it's not just about looking better but maybe, more importantly, improving their overall health.

"You've changed my life," was a comment made by a patron as she saw herself losing weight.

Tosado-Kull emphasized that working out is as much for the inside as the outside. While some see weight-loss and body-toning as good for general well-being, there are others who are looking for help with specific problems. For example, exercise can help women who have trouble with cholesterol or osteoporosis. There are others that have had heart problems and see it as a way to strengthen their hearts; heart patients, by-pass patients, and even a heart transplant patient work out there. (Of course, the exercise is done with a doctor's permission.) Woltz said that she's seen her own cholesterol drop since



Yvette and Patty demonstrate some of the machines.



Women who come to work out have a ball!

working out.

Tosado-Kull explained that one member who has osteoporosis has received encouragement from her doctor on her progress since starting to exercise: "The doctor told me - keep doing what you're doing," the woman said.

Members work together to encourage each other, rejoicing over even the little accomplishments. That becomes especially

evident in contests held at the facility. The most recent was a "Spring Into Action" contest. A group of 12 women worked on their weight with a total of 98 pounds lost in eight weeks. "We lost a person," exclaimed Tosado-Kull. She noted that though it was a contest, all those involved were pulling for each other. "They shared their weight loss secrets," said Tosado-Kull.

Finally, Tosado-Kull and Woltz said that for some members the exercise time is not just a time of physical workout but a mental break. The Ladies Workout Express is place where they can take time for themselves and leave the rest of the world behind. There's even an area where kids can play while mom works out.

Tosado-Kull and Woltz noted that it's said that laughter is good medicine and there is plenty of laughter there. The mother of a three year old herself, Tosado-Kull said that many of the members share with her their stories of child raising and share tips and information.

Tosado-Kull said that unlike some other gyms that close for a period of time during the day, hers is open 8am - 8pm Monday - Friday (9am - 1pm on Saturday, 9am - noon on Sunday). So, members can come as often as they want when it's convenient and work on a healthier body - outside and in.

For more information on the Ladies Workout Express in the ITC Crossing Shopping Center, visit its website at: www.ladiesworkoutexpress.com/61internationaladriuesouth.com

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