

as featured in
edina
OUR COMMUNITY / OUR MAGAZINE

[DEPARTMENT]
WELLNESS

BY
CYD HAYNES

PHOTO BY
EMILY J. DAVIS



Patty Storm (left) used to hate the gym but now loves to get a little exercise, thanks to Welcyon and co-owner Suzy Boerboom (right).

Fitness at 50 and Beyond

Edina baby boomers get a place of their own at Welcyon.

EDINA RESIDENT PATTY STORM SAYS EXERCISE IS A FOUR-LETTER WORD.

After turning 63, Storm decided she needed a makeover. She stopped coloring her hair, curious to see what the gray would look like. She began eating better and wanted some kind of exercise.

Although her condo had a terrific gym with treadmills and free weights, she was looking for something else. "I have never loved sports or activities and I hate exercise," says Storm. She knew that if the undertaking didn't appeal to her, she wouldn't keep up with it.

Enter Edina's Welcyon. This new slant on the fitness industry caters to the 50-plus crowd. It is designed for the specific needs of any baby boomer who strolls or rolls through the door. A fitness coach determines interaction with equipment, which is computerized to keep track of one's progress through his or her tailored program, navigating the circuit of machines.

Storm doesn't have to remember anything. She slides a Smartcard into each machine, which sets the weight load and cues her predetermined seat height, so she can easily perform the prescribed number of



Welcyon
4420 Valley View
Rd. Ste. 302
952.929.0279
welcyon.com

movements until she hears a beeping sound. If she “over-performs” her plan, the machine remembers and lets her build on it the next time.

“This is not like exercise,” claims Storm. “It’s a friendly environment and you don’t feel intimidated.” There is ample camaraderie among men and women—sometimes husbands and wives—who workout together. Mental faculties are exercised as well with an ongoing 500-piece group puzzle, or a game of cards or chess. Members can socialize over a cup of coffee. They can even join a book club.

The supportive, community aspect of Welcyon’s design is integral to its mission to help members live a more fulfilling life. “The staff always knows your name right away too,” Storm adds.

Another thing that characterizes Welcyon is the sound, or rather, the lack of it. Here you will not hear the squeak of shoes on a basketball court or the clanking of weights. In a tranquil environment enhanced by peaceful music playing in the background, smooth movements are most often accomplished from a seated position on machines that work by quiet air resistance that is easy on the joints.

The stealth health Storm acquired in a matter of months has allowed her to more easily get on the floor to play with her grandson, or lift him into his car seat. “These are things you take for granted,” she reflects.

Storm looks forward to workouts at Welcyon three times a week and is likely to gain continued strength and endurance next to someone like John Seward.

Seward was looking for more than a way to stay fit. After six weeks of physical therapy following quadruple heart bypass surgery,

“This is not like exercise. It’s a friendly environment and you don’t feel intimidated.”

—Patty Storm

he was seeking a way to stay alive. Scheduled for a kidney transplant, Seward knew he needed to be in the best possible shape. Upon entering Welcyon, he recognized newer versions of some of the same machines used during his therapy.

That’s no coincidence. Co-owner Suzy Boerboom, a registered nurse, and her husband, a long-term-care professional, know rehab and aging. With years in the industry, they wanted to help prevent or improve chronic illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease, plus provide a welcoming facility for those older than 50. Boerboom is certain, “If even a small percentage of older people can stay healthy, we can change the entire health care situation in America.”

The Boerbooms are determined to help people keep their independence. Regular exercise increases muscle strength and preserves bone density while improving balance. That leads to better overall health and, common among members, an increase in energy.

“It’s easy in and easy out, and no competition in there at all,” Seward offers. “They know I’m a kidney patient and they hand me a water when I walk in, every time—they know what I need. I’ve watched my better health unfold right in front of me.” With the help of Welcyon, Seward makes a potential donor proud. //