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Community residents participate in a senior health and fitness class sponsored by Portland Parks and Recreation.

Seniors Living Well

Health and fitness take center stage

Senior Recreation programs at Portland community centers are bringing recreational, educational, and wellness opportunities for adults aged 55 and up.

Portland Parks and Recreation offers classes in health and fitness, computer skills, music and dance, genealogy, activities to boost brain power, writing, arts and crafts, hiking, home and garden, multiculturalism and much more.

Participants say they enjoy wonderful life benefits and camaraderie from the wide selection of offerings.

Arla McKee of Portland received a diagnosis of diabetes just after Christmas last year. To combat the disease, she started taking PP&R's Enhance Fitness with instructor Judy Greer at the Charles Jordan Community Center in north Portland.

Since taking part in the class, Arla says she's lost weight and has been able to cut down on some of her medication.

"I have better movement, especially in my arthritic hand, thanks to some of the things we've done in there," she says. "I have a better self-image now. It's a nice pace for people my age. I don't go away breathless, but I leave knowing every part of my body has been worked!"

Enhance Fitness is offered this coming winter session at several Portland Parks & Recreation community centers. It involves activities such as low-impact ball exercises, working on breathing, and improving movement.

"Lots of stretching, it helps my strength for things like getting out of a bathtub or car," adds McKee. "[Judy's instruction] is very good. I like how they'll explain what

exercises, why we're doing it. We students do as much as we can and learn how to break a fall. Judy and the other instructors are patient and dedicated. I'd recommend PP&R's senior recreation classes to everyone! My doctor cut one of the medications in half. He said, whatever you're doing, keep doing it!"

Juanita Burns was stricken with a serious infection which affected her brain, coordination and thought processes. She takes part in Enhanced Fitness at PP&R's St. Johns Community Center and also sampled the BrainPower Boost class with cognitive skills trainer Victoria Morgan.

BrainPower Boost involves fun, interactive games and

continued ▼ on page 16