



YMCA joins helpful resources for aging adults

By Ellen Waldman

April 30, 2019

We are very fortunate that there are so many sources of continuing education for adults here in the Rogue Valley. Some you're probably already aware of, such as the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at SOU (<https://inside.sou.edu/olli>) and the Ashland Library talks (jcls.org; look for the events calendar). You can now add the Ashland Family YMCA (ashlandymca.org) to your list of free and low-cost presentations. In particular, becoming better informed on topics related to aging is really important to your health and well-being. There isn't one central place to learn all the intricacies of this terrain. So, being able to piece this together on your own seems like the best way to become educated and prepared. Those who take these steps feel much more relieved and relaxed about their options going forward.

The Ashland Family YMCA is developing a robust older adult program to serve the over-50 crowd. Jami Hanna was hired in March as the coordinator of the Active Older Adult Program, where she will oversee existing programs and create additional ones based on client needs and interests. She informs us that "older adults" seems to be the most widely acceptable title in 2019, so the YMCA added the word "active" to the title of the program to create a more positive focus on the phrase. Hanna, who is certified by the FAI (Functional Aging Institute) and is an ACE (American Council on Exercise) Certified Senior Fitness Specialist, wants to continue to bring quality programs for the aging population to the Ashland Family YMCA.

Beginning in May, they are introducing a brand new Wellness Wednesday program. Although it's available for all ages, many of these upcoming topics will hold a particular interest to aging adults. They are designed to foster the development of healthy habits and lay the groundwork to lead a more balanced lifestyle. Featured speakers will deliver talks on a wide range of healthy living topics, such as nutrition, fitness, mindfulness, successful retirement, money matters, legal matters, mental health, relationships and more.

The first class in this series is called Fall Prevention. I have written about this presentation in the past, but it's such an important topic, that it's being repeated. The YMCA has partnered once again with Asante and Ashland Fire and Rescue to offer this fall prevention class that is open to the community. The class will be held from noon to 1:00 p.m. Wednesday May 29, 2019, at the Ashland Family YMCA, 540 YMCA Way. Seating is limited, so pre-registration is required either online, at the front desk or by calling 541-482-9622. For more information, check the YMCA website (above) for details, or call Hanna at 541-482-9622, ext. 502. These talks are free to everyone.

In addition, the YMCA and OLLI have plans to work together to bring even more programs to the aging population. And coming soon, the YMCA website will boast a new active older adult page with all related classes, upcoming events, and resources. Check back in the future and see what's happening.

Although not a new class offering, it's worth noting that the YMCA already has an ongoing and extensive active aging adult program for those older than 55 years old. Some focus on balance and fall prevention

through Tai Chi and building better bones. Others are water-based, such as those focusing on cardiovascular health and toning, or for creating “joyful joints.” Whether you like to exercise, attend informative talks, or both, you will find some great resources here at the YMCA. And they will soon be adding more social gatherings such as dances, potlucks, and games to the repertoire. Plus, upcoming day trips and hikes like the one Thursday, May 16th, on the Pacific Crest Trail at Pilot Rock. Calling the YMCA or visiting its website will provide more details.

The refrain I often hear is that it’s hard to meet new people, make new friends, and find peers to connect with, which is really vital to healthy aging. Here we are surrounded by a wide range of offerings. Please find one that appeals to you and stay involved by creating an active, healthier and informed life.