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By Lauren Shopp

Two floors down from Archbold Gymnasium is a place where the gentle hum of National Public Radio's Morning Edition is more popular than Lil' Kim, and air-conditioning replaces the whir of industrial-sized fans.

Healthworks, the faculty gym in the basement of Archbold run by the exercise science program, offers an alternative for those disinterested in the chaos and commotion of the student-filled gym. For \$50 per semester in the fall and spring and \$40 during the summer, the faculty have their own place to work out in peace.

Managed by a program director, student director and six exercise science master's students, Healthworks has provided personalized training programs for the faculty, staff and spouses of Syracuse University and State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry employees for seven years.

"When they come in, we talk with them about their goals, their fitness history and discuss health problems," said Stella Gouloupoulou, a graduate student and Healthworks's current student director. "After that we do a fitness evaluation and, according to the results, we design a program for them."

The staff shows gym members how to operate machinery, lift weights and perform exercises in a safe and correct manner before they can begin to work out.

"Sometimes I go upstairs to the gym and see people lifting weights and I think to myself, 'Ouch-that's going to hurt tomorrow!'" said Bridget Lichtinger, a special events coordinator at SU.

Most of Healthworks' members are between the ages of 40 and 45, Gouloupoulou said. She said they usually have minor health problems and come to the gym by their doctors' recommendation for overall health improvement. Individual programs vary, but Gouloupoulou said the most common problems members seek to improve are blood pressure, hypertension, diabetes and obesity.

Other members, like Lichtinger, come in with more specific goals.

"Basically, I wanted Linda Hamilton arms and to lose some weight," Lichtinger said. "I adhered to my program and noticed the results right away."

Karen McGee, director of the career center at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, attained results at a slower pace.



"It took me three years to get to my goal because I would only come in three days a week," McGee said. "I learned that I had to exercise every day, and when I started doing that, I lost the 19 pounds and have kept them off."

For some older members, however, the gym is used for the continuation of good health, not an overall improvement.

"I mostly garden; I'm not a jock," said Flora Nylan, a librarian at SUNY ESF's Moon Library. "At my age it's about the sustainability of balance and flexibility, not improvement."

If gym members ever tire of their routine, the staff welcomes them to modify their program or make it more challenging.

"After six months, they can take another fitness test to see if their condition has improved," Goulopoulou said. "If they're doing better, we can make changes to their program."

In addition to gym standards like treadmills, elliptical trainers and a nine-piece Universal circuit, Healthworks also includes more specialized pieces of equipment such as a lower body Crossrobsics machine and a kayak machine.

The specialized equipment is not the only thing that keeps members coming back - it's the atmosphere. Faculty members chat as they burn calories. Special bulletin boards with inspirational quotes like "Go heavy or go home" decorate the walls, and exercise science students are always ready to offer advice and encouragement.

Almost everyone at Healthworks is on a first-name basis with one another, and, like friends Lichtinger and McGee, they tend to work out in small groups.

"I liked the variety and availability of the equipment at the gym upstairs, but I missed the camaraderie that we have down here," said Joe Stoll, a professor in the geography department.

This camaraderie has developed because of Healthworks' members' similar ages and goals. Faculty members say that they feel more comfortable working out next to their colleagues than their students.

"It's nice to come down here and not have to work out next to girls who weigh 100 pounds or wear a size zero," Lichtinger said. "This is a sort of haven for us - there are people my age here who are worried about more than just looking good for other people."

Members of both gyms would agree that it is often difficult to make time for physical fitness while balancing a heavy workload. While many Healthworks members make time to work out during their lunch, the gym's limited hours can put a damper on schedules.

"I think a lot of people wait until the end of the day to work out," said Stoll. "It can be too time-consuming to work out, take a shower and then head back to work. Luckily, my department's office is very cool so I can skip doing a lot of that."

Despite Healthworks' physical distance from the main gym, faculty members cannot escape student contact before and after their workout. Archbold's locker rooms and showers, which are used by both students and faculty members, keep Healthworks members too close to the student population for comfort.

"It would be nice to have a separate locker room for us," McGee said. "I don't really like to shower next to students that I counsel. I don't want them to know my bra size, what kind of bathing suit I'm wearing or if I have tan lines."

Even though the locker room could use some improvements, many Healthworks members have been coming to the gym for three years or more.

"There are a number of us who've been here for about four or five years, and we're pretty hardcore," said Betsy Elkins, director of Moon Library. "We support each other. If someone doesn't show up for a few days, we call them and ask when they're coming back to the gym."

Because the program is relatively inexpensive, some members say that they are surprised that Healthworks has not done more work to recruit new members.

"I don't think they market it as well as they could," Nylan said. "With the hours it has and for the things you can do here, I think they could do more to publicize it."

More people, however, would detract from the intimate atmosphere the Healthworks staff and its current members value so much.

"When you come in here, it feels like a big family. People talk with each other and help each other a lot," Goulopoulou said. "When you go to a big gym, it can be cold and filled with lots of people - in here it's much friendlier."

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