



The Gathering Place in Beachwood opens the Richman Family Wellness Center

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By **Faith Boone, Sun News**



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The Richman Family Wellness Center was opened as a part of the Gathering Place in Beachwood on Commerce Park. The facility is 2,500 sq. ft. and was opened in February.

Richman Family Wellness Center gallery (4 photos)

BEACHWOOD -- The Gathering Place has opened a new facility for cancer patients who want to get back to the gym.

Mayfield Village resident Stephen Cerne, a program staff member for the Gathering Place, said the Richman Family Wellness Center opened in February and was designed to give participants the advantage of using machinery and different types of equipment as opposed to the in-house programs the Gathering Place used to have, which was all body weight.

Participants used bands, small free weights, exercise balls and balance equipment before the wellness center was opened on Commerce Park in Beachwood, across the street from the main Gathering Place facility.

"I also designed this facility in order to bring my private clientele here to offset operations cost and hopefully in the future we will be able to make a balance that would make this facility operations free," Cerne said.

He said a lot of the equipment at the wellness center was purchased from a facility in North Royalton and some additional pieces were purchased elsewhere. The group worked with Bialosky and Partners to design the 2,500 sq. ft. space to give it a feel similar to the Beachwood and Westlake Gathering Place establishments.

"We wanted it to be something that was very comforting and very homey. Something that didn't feel like a

typical gym setting, somewhere where they would come in and feel comfortable, somewhere where they could feel like they would get the same thing in a large facility, but not have to feel like people were looking at them like they were different. That's a nice thing about this facility," Cerne said.

The Richman Family Wellness Center has restrooms and showers available for participants as well. Cerne said many of the people are coming to and from jobs so that makes it easier for them. It allows the facility to gain more participants so they don't have to worry about going home.

He said a number of classes were expanded at the wellness center and the group looks to start three different levels of classes.

One is an introduction class that people just out of or going through treatment, who possibly haven't had much exercise or are getting back into it, can attend. Cerne said this class can stress form, technique and safety.

"After awhile we reassess those individuals and see if they can move on to level 2, which are intermediate exercises. We do more compound movements and they are more balance oriented," he said. "It's slightly harder. Eventually in the third quarter we will have a transitions class and I will design the program and there will be handouts with the exercise and the instructions on it."

Cerne said he won't directly supervise the transitions course and participants will be able to go through the exercises on their own. He said this course is being created since the group wants the participants to eventually go back into the community where they can feel comfortable and safe whether they do it at an exercise class or within their homes.

"Generally classes are strength based. I set it up in a circuit and it rotates every week. It includes free weights. Body weight. A number of different machines. Upper body. Lower Body. Balance. Small apparatus," he said.

That way, participants coming in are learning. Cerne said he uses sheets that one participant made that were laminated so he can write down the exercises and instructions.

"When they read it, it prompts them. I set up 12 stations, but it's very specific when you talk about lifting weights. That helped. Reading it and doing it and reading it again brings reinforcement. I go around and make sure everyone is set up before they start. I check the breathing and range of motion," he said.

Cerne said he wants the facility to be somewhere people can take away knowledge and take it to the community setting.

"Whether they end up doing classes or strength training, the balance exercises are here," he said.

There are no classes on Monday, but there are plans to expand that. Classes are currently held during the

week from 12:30-1:30 p.m. for level 1, from 1:30-2:30 p.m. for level 2 and from 6:30-7:30 p.m. for a combination of level 1 and level 2.

"The bigger piece is that people get to make friends and find out each other's stories and vent or find support in some way. Our afternoon class goes out every two months to eat. They build friendships and have a support community without everyone sitting in a circle and talking," Cerne said.

According to Kristina Austin, director of community relations and marketing for the Gathering Place, before the Richman Family Wellness Center was opened, exercise was a component of the Gathering Place for survivorship. A 12-week program called "Moving Forward," for those in treatment or recently completed treatment, was very successful. The facility was an opportunity to do continue the program in a new way.

"Research shows exercise and nutrition help play a significant role in reducing the risk in recurrence for some cancers," Austin said.

Fred Richman and his family gave a donation to open the new wellness center.

For more information, call the Gathering Place at (216) 595-9546.

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Contact Boone at (216) 986-5472

fhampton@sunnews.com

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