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"It's amazing how different I feel now than before I started exercising out here."

— Al Bigelow
— MCC Recreation & Fitness Center User

MCC Recreation Coordinator John Davis, right, works with Al Bigelow, of Stanton, on an exercise bike in the MCC Recreation & Fitness Center.

Recreation & Fitness Center expands, tailors programs to individual needs

Al Bigelow is no stranger to Montcalm Community College's recreation department.

More than 40 years ago, he played basketball as a member of the college's intercollegiate team. Today, he enjoys exercising in the MCC Recreation & Fitness Center and swimming in the college's NCAA-sized swimming pool.

"I'm a retired Corrections officer, and I have a bad foot," said the 59-year-old Stanton-area resident.

Bigelow said last year he ran into John Davis, who serves as the college's recreation coordinator, and he asked Davis if he could help him with a plan for some exercises.

"I was putting on some weight, and I knew I needed to start exercising. With my foot, I wasn't sure where to start. John is very knowledgeable and approachable," Bigelow said. "He listened to me and put together an exercise routine using a stationary bicycle and other low-impact exercises, exercise balls and weights. He also taught me how to use some equipment to help loosen up my foot.

"He doesn't just tell me how to do things, he shows me how to do stuff," Bigelow added. "John is just amazing."

Davis is passionate about his profession.

With more than 25 years' experience working as a personal trainer, pool instructor, life coach, manager and therapy assistant at the Lakeview Community Wellness Center in Lakeview, he became MCC's recreation coordinator in January 2018. Since then, he and the college's

Recreation & Fitness Center staff have worked to bring new life to the college's recreational offerings.

"We are focusing on finding out what our customers' needs are and really tailoring to that," Davis said.

In addition to a fully-equipped fitness center, gymnasium, pool, climbing wall and more, MCC's Recreation & Fitness Center is focusing on expanding its exercise classes and adding personal training and nutritional evaluations for its users.

"We are looking at the current trends as we determine our classes," Davis said.

New and expanded offerings include aerobics, yoga, Zumba, stability ball training, cardio boxing, abs and more, sit and be fit senior aerobics and Centurion training.

"Centurion training is based on the principal of rogue fitness or crossfit, where it's not traditional weight lifting. Instead, we utilize ropes, tires, medicine balls and different apparatuses like that, which really challenge the body through a cardiovascular standpoint and build core strength and stability throughout the body," Davis said.

Sit and be fit senior aerobics focuses on exercises for senior citizens of all abilities.

"We sit the majority of the time," Davis said. "We have chairs, exercise balls and light hand weights for them, and we focus on trying to keep their range of motion and basic strength."

Davis said cardio boxing is becoming increasingly popular.

"It's one-on-one, like a personal training session. We work to get people a great workout through boxing principles. It's fun and it's great for everybody because it is tailored to each person's fitness level and abilities," he said.

Another area of focus is to create custom programs geared toward each individual person's needs, Davis said. It's a service that Bigelow appreciates.

"As I've gotten older, my joints don't work as well as they used to," Bigelow said. "John considered my physical limitations and created a program that really works for me. It's helping my foot and the rest of my body. It's helping me get into shape and lose weight, which is taking some of the extra weight off of my bad foot.

"I like the atmosphere at MCC," Bigelow said. "I've been coming out here for quite some time. I see more retirees coming out here. It's a nice facility for the area and it's convenient.

"It's amazing how different I feel now than before I started exercising out here," he added.



For more information:

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