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Summer rec program generates awareness, enthusiasm

By Nick Malitano
Bay Head's summer recreation program opened with a flurry of enthusiasm and smiling faces Tuesday morning, as 40 children showed up ready for a healthy dose of summer fitness.

Councilwoman D'Arcy Rohan Green was thrilled to see that participation and interest was so widespread in the community.

The councilwoman said the camp runs from 9 a.m. to noon, Monday through Friday, through mid-August.

According to Councilwoman Green, each day begins with "Kids Fit" exercises, which "prepare the kids for the activities that they do for the remainder of the day."

"Kids Fit" activities refer to a regular routine of calisthenics exercises, challenges from the Presidential Fitness Test and cardiovascular fitness exercises, which are new to the camp.

The program has been a mainstay of the community, and the addition of Kids Fit is a direct tie-in with the Mayor's Wellness Campaign, "Go Bay Head!" The Bay Head Mayor's Wellness Campaign is part of a statewide program designed to increase awareness of healthy living in local communities.

Mayor William Curtis said the program helps both parents and children in town, by providing fun, healthy and safe activities.

"My grandchildren, Tanner and Owen, were really excited about coming here," the mayor said Tuesday morning. "The Kids Fit component is a welcome addition to the program," Mayor Curtis said.

Callie Yeager, head counselor and proud alumnus of the program, said she was excited to again lead and participate in the recreation regimen, and give the children a fun summer to which to look forward.

"Thirty to 40 kids pre-registered alone, so we were very glad to see that kind of anticipation," she said Tuesday.

"Also, this year, the Kids Fit component was added to our schedule through the Mayor's Wellness Campaign, and I think it adds a lot to the camp," Ms. Yeager stated.

Shannon Curtis, the mayor's daughter-in-law, said her sons — Tanner, 6, and Owen, 5 — were looking forward to playing with their friends.

"They were eager to do



SUEANNE GOSS, The Ocean Star
Brady Niebling (left), 8, of Point Pleasant, and Ethan Hines, 7, of Bay Head, began their first day at the Bay Head Summer Recreation Camp with some flexibility stretches, a part of the new "Kids Fit" component of the program.

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SUEANNE GOSS, The Ocean Star
Forty local children attended the first day of the Bay Head Summer Recreation Camp on Tuesday, as did state and local officials, including (back, from left) Bay Head Councilwoman D'Arcy Rohan Green, Mayor William Curtis, New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute Mayor's Wellness Campaign director Emily Liffman, Bay Head Mayor's Wellness Campaign Committee co-chair Char Charlton, camp counselor Melissa Lehto, camp fitness instructor Melissa Savage, Therapeutic Fitness' Roger Falkenburg, and camp counselors Callie Yeager and Shanna Grace.

something besides things with mom and dad," Mrs. Curtis joked.

In addition to Ms. Yeager, counselors Shanna Grace, Melissa Lehto and Corinne DiCorcia help coordinate the activities for the children in the program.

Ms. Grace is working toward a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and certification in sign language, and Ms. Lehto works as a paraprofessional during the school year. Ms. DiCorcia teaches in North Carolina, and Ms. Yeager is an educator in Little Egg Harbor.

"The kids look forward to this all year long, and one reason is because they make friends here and meet new people," Ms. Yeager said. "I met my best friend here years ago, and it's just a great environment."

Councilwoman Green spoke highly of all the recreation staff members Tuesday morning, saying the town was "blessed" to have such a talented crew to work with its children.

Roger Falkenburg, of Therapeutic Fitness, in Point Pleasant, which is conducting the Kids Fit component of the program, noted that he was excited to see the strong turnout on the first day of camp.

"It's fantastic," he said. "They're ready to have a great time, and so are we, as instructors."

"The first day is a feeling-out process, but I think we're ready to hit the ground running with some activities that are really fun for the kids," he said.

Fellow fitness instructor Melissa Savage said Tuesday she was very much looking forward to the summer schedule of activities.

*First Lady Michelle

Obama has been active in promoting wellness in young people, and we're glad to carry that message forward," she said. "Studies have shown that people who regularly exercise and play sports as children continue that lifestyle choice into adulthood."

Ms. Savage works as a physical education teacher in Brick during the school year.

Mayor's Wellness Committee chairperson Char Charlton said Tuesday was an exciting day for the borough.

Mrs. Charlton co-chairs the committee with her husband, Tom.


"We have several new initiatives planned, such as a water safety program and culinary classes for kids titled, 'What's Cooking?'" Mrs. Charlton said. "On Monday nights, we'll also have a variety of lectures scheduled from various wellness professionals, as well."

The chairperson also noted

See PROGRAM, page 28

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Prized Drawings



Late last month, a centennial celebration of the Casino Pier Carousel was held in Seaside Heights. Part of the festivities included a drawing contest for grade-schoolers, and the winners received books of ride tickets for their next visit to the pier. Bay Head School second-graders earned top honors in the contest. Courtney McGarry (from left), 8, was named a third-place winner, while Mary Finnerty, 7, took home second-place honors, and Connor Brenna, 8, also earned a third-place finish.

Photo Courtesy of DEANNA FINNERTY