

## Club using indoor track for fitness

by Special To The Enterprise



Harlan County Walking Club members step up their pace as they make another lap around the indoor, rubberized track at Harlan County High School.

And they're off!

The Harlan County Walking Club is off at a fast pace, says Harlan County Community Education Director Cecilia Adams.

Since Feb. 1, a dedicated group of walkers have been meeting at the Harlan County High School indoor track for an hour twice a week.

Adams says walkers are participating for a variety of reasons, primarily health and fellowship.

“The club has been very popular,” said Adams, admitting she has been surprised by the positive response thus far. “I was overwhelmed by the response. My goal was to get 10 walkers signed up to begin. We almost immediately had 30 and are now up to 40 registered walkers.”

“The program’s popularity indicates that given the opportunity and resources, people do want to exercise,” said Adams.

Participants come anytime during the hour-long session and walk at their own pace and distance. Eight laps around the rubberized track equals one mile.

Some do a half mile; others are more aggressive and squeeze in up to four miles. An average of 29 walkers attends each session. With such a large track, and walkers setting off at different paces, the track is large enough to accommodate everyone.

Many of the participants say they enjoy walking year-round and appreciate the opportunity to continue their exercise indoors, away from the frigid winter weather. The walking club is also a place for fellowship, with several married couples walking

together, friends meeting for an hour of walk-and-talk, and a chance for everyone to make new friends.

“The walkers motivate each other,” said Adams. For example, when Willard Carmical finishes his laps, he stays a little longer to motivate others to “pick up the pace, keep going and do one more lap.”

Walkers Charles and Nina Simms are regular walkers, setting a great example for others.

“I walk for my diabetes (to help control it), endurance and health,” said Simms, as he approached completion of his four-miles recently. Simms and his wife previously walked along the Harlan bypass, but commented that the HCHS indoor track is much better and safer.

Simms adds that walking relieves anxiety and other ills. After having two back surgeries, he too finds the rubberized track easier on his body.

“I feel good,” he said. “I take no medicine, no pain relievers. If you exercise, you won’t need it.”

Principal Bob Howard said the walking program “sets a good example for the high school students to see adults participating in lifetime fitness activities.”

“From the beginning of the plans for the new school, we wanted the community to have access to the school,” said Tim Saylor, Harlan County Schools Superintendent. “We are happy the community is able to utilize this part of our facility in this manner and make those plans a reality.”

Walkers resort to a variety of measures to track their progress, with some using pedometers or lap counters.

Glenn Durham shared his ingenious way of beginning with eight pennies in his left pocket, and moving a penny to his right pocket after every lap to keep track of his mileage.

Many walkers are setting personal goals (either time walked or distance walked) and achieving them. Betty Lewis was thrilled to reach her goal of walking 3 miles on Feb. 15, finishing her trek with her arms raised and waving signs of victory. She uses a pedometer to mark her distance.

“I enjoy meeting the participants and hearing their stories,” added Adams. “It is rewarding for me to see them achieve their walking goals.”

The inaugural walkers received Harlan County Walking Club T-shirts from Howard. “They wear the shirts proudly and appreciate the recognition from Harlan County Schools,” said Adams.

The Harlan County Walking Club meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:30 to 11:30. Membership is free and open to all Harlan Countians.

To register, contact Cecilia Adams, Harlan County Community Education Director, at 573-4330 ext. 2061 or [cecilia.adams@harlan.kyschools.us](mailto:cecilia.adams@harlan.kyschools.us).

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