

Local

Munday Center memberships spike

✍ By Austin Ramsey Messenger-Inquirer

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The Munday Activity Center has experienced enormous growth this year, partly due to an expanded membership campaign.

But staff with the free activity and information center, tailored toward Daviess County's senior citizen population, say expanded programming and a renewed effort to involve multiple groups has contributed to the growth.

The center, which operates out of a large facility on West Second Street in Owensboro, has signed up more than 200 members in just two months, says Executive Director Dana Peveler.

"It's really remarkable," she said. "We're trying to come up with new and innovative programs and develop partnerships in the community that reach seniors that have never been here before."

So far, she said, it's worked. Membership data shows that special event participation is reaching well past the county line, drawing individuals from as far as Muhlenberg and Hancock counties and even Rockport, Indiana. The center is reaching about 1,300 individuals right now, up more than 40 percent over numbers reported in June 2015.

"We want to make sure we're not the best kept secret in Daviess County any longer," Peveler said. "Our initiative campaign is not only reaching farther than ever before, but it's asking our members what they want to do and see, and we're making sure that programming is tailored to their wants and needs."

It's led to the development of modified Zumba classes for older individuals or people in wheelchairs, special clubs and groups and dances that involve people from across the region.

Activities Planner Sharon NeSmith said monthly dances used to attract upward of 40 people. But the most recent attendance topped out at just under 100 people.

Events like that aren't open only to senior citizens. Programming is open to anyone, and suggested donations are just that -- suggested. Staff say they are emphasizing that they want to serve people, no matter their ability to pay.

NeSmith said updating registration not only benefits the community, but it could mean better funding as early as next year. The Green River Area Development District administers state and local funding for senior citizens and makes up a large portion of the center's operating budget.

"We know that the most positive impact we can have is by getting the message out to as many people as we can," she said. "And that means reaching new demographics and getting creative with what we offer."

Later this month, the center will start hosting Spanish classes again with retired Brescia University instructor Iris Moreno-Brown. The classes, designed to teach fun, conversational speaking, meet five Wednesdays from 5-6 p.m. starting next week. It's the third time classes have been offered, and Peveler said they have been extremely popular.

Learning a new language, she said, activates the brain in unique ways and can stimulate memory loss prevention -- an important tool among senior populations.

For more information about the center or to register for classes, call 270-687-4640. The center is located at 1650 W. Second St. in Owensboro.

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