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Sun City West class celebrates year of Dance for the Health of It

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 Jeff Dempsey
 Daily News-Sun

One year ago Al Andrus, Recreation Centers of Sun City West Fitness Club president, was asked to put together a dance fitness class for the residents. He flatly refused.

"I told them, 'We're a fitness club, not a dance club,'" Andrus said. "I felt like it was going to be a lot of work and we'd have no place to hold it, and there wouldn't be any interest. I sure was wrong."

Saturday morning, the Dance for the Health of It class celebrated its one-year anniversary. Kort Kurdi, the instructor and developer of the program, said there are close to 300 people enrolled.

"Al always says he was skeptical, and I was skeptical, too. But it's been an overwhelming success," Kurdi said. "We started out with one class on Saturday mornings, but we had so many people interested that we now offer classes on Tuesday and Thursday nights, and we just started a couples class on Wednesday nights, too."

Kurdi said the class combines the fundamentals of dancing with fitness principles to get participants in shape while still having a good time.

"It's about rhythm, about balance, about motion," Kurdi said. "And you know, it's a fantastic way to stay fit in the summer because it's an indoor class. The ladies and the gentlemen who participate really seem to love it."

The types of dance vary, as does the music, which includes Big Band through today's Top 40 hits. Carolyn Jarvey, who has been in the class for about six months, was in attendance for the anniversary party. Before the class began, she sat with a large group of women, laughing and enjoying a piece of cake. Though they seemed like old friends, Jarvey said that was not the case.

"We only just met in this class, but we all get along very well," Jarvey said. "We have a lot of fun together. In fact, I found out one lady here used to live around the corner from me in North Dakota."

That lady, Terri Dobesh, has been a class participant since its inception. She said she is glad she joined Kurdi's class, and she plans to keep coming back.

"He's a wonderful instructor," Dobesh said. "He never points the finger or singles anyone out. It's a very comfortable environment."

All the women at the table agreed Kurdi is a hit.

"In just a year, (Kurdi's class) has a larger membership than any other class we offer," Andrus said. "Obviously, I'm glad we moved ahead with this."

Jarvey said she would enthusiastically recommend the class to anyone who is interested.

"It's great exercise and not just for your body," Jarvey said. "It keeps your mind sharp, too. It helps you maintain your focus. I absolutely love it."

To learn about Dance for the Health of It in Sun City West, visit www.scwclubs.com and click on 'Fitness Club.' Kurdi also offers classes at other locations in the West Valley, including Westbrook Village. For information on Kurdi's classes and locations, visit www.ucanlinedance.com.

ASHLEY LOWERY

Carolyn Jarvey and others dance during the first anniversary of the Sun City West Fitness Club's Dance for the Health of It celebration Saturday in the R.H. Johnson Social Hall.

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