

Shorehaven in Oconomowoc plans community fitness center for seniors



By [Donna Frake](#) May 26, 2016

A new fitness facility focused on an older demographic is being planned for Shorehaven campus.

The state-of-the-art initiative geared for the 50-plus population, will be open to the public and include a pool, classes, exercise equipment, showers and locker rooms and a full-time fitness instructor.

The 10,665-square-foot building will be located on the northeast corner of, and connected to, the campus's Life Enrichment Center.

The price tag for the building project is \$3.5 million, of which Shorehaven is dedicating \$2 million. A community fundraising campaign has started to raise the remaining \$1.5 million.

"If all goes well, and we are able to break ground in fall, it should be done, hopefully, in the fall of 2017," said Shorehaven CEO Ed Somers.

Fitness features

Somers said several factors will make the facility more senior friendly.

"We will have a full-time fitness instructor, someone who would help people get registered for the fitness center and get started on the equipment, hopefully someone with a physical therapy, or kinesiology, or an exercise physiology background who can really help the population coming to our fitness center," he said.

The director would also be responsible for scheduling classes such as aerobics or yoga, given by independent contractors that would utilize the space and also coordinate a water aerobics instructor and other water classes.

Holly Tunak, Shorehaven's director of development, said the facility will feature a 45- by 25-foot aerobics room and a 27- by 25-foot yoga room.

"There will be a wall between those two rooms that we can open and expand the space for larger group meetings, wellness speakers, or bigger classes," she explained.

The fitness room will measure 45 by 24 feet with specialized strength equipment.

According to information from Shorehaven, the equipment works with a system where a profile is completed for the member to record goals, workouts and achievements of that session. The member will meet with a fitness coach to review exercise results and determine new goals as time goes on.

The exercise system uses technology that keeps track of machine settings, repetitions and records member's workouts. When the machine reads the profile from the member's bracelet, it automatically sets the amount of resistance and number of repetitions for the member for that specific piece of equipment.

"We've learned that (resetting equipment) is something that is intimidating to seniors and ends up being a barrier to utilizing the equipment," Somers said. "We want to make sure all those barriers are taken away and that it is a much less intimidating environment and that they feel comfortable coming in to work out and that we have someone there who can help them along their fitness journey and help them achieve their goals," he added.

In addition to the specialized equipment, there will be 17 pieces of cardio equipment, including treadmills, elliptical and recumbent bikes.

"The equipment we are looking at can start you really slow and help you build up your strength as you get stronger," Somers said.

Since opening its Life Enrichment Center in 2009, Tunak said its fitness classes have been the most popular of the classes offered there.

"We surveyed the community and one of the things we heard loud and clear was that people over the age of 50 wanted their own place to exercise," a place more geared to their age group, Tunak added.

The pool

The highlight of the new fitness center will be swimming pool, which ranges in depth from three feet to almost five feet.

The pool area will measure 3,830 square feet and includes a whirlpool.

"One of the features of the swimming pool is that instead of having steps into it, it will have a ramp. There will also be a bench area around the pool," Somers said. "The pool itself is not especially deep, but will accommodate a large water aerobics class, and there will be a swimming lane for laps."

Exercising in water has been shown to be easier on joints and helps build strength and was considered a "must have" by the organization.

Somers said their plan is endorsed by the YMCA at Pabst Farms.

"We have very complementary mission to the Y— many of their programs, especially swimming, caters to kids. They are incredibly supportive of the fitness center and pool," he said.

Memberships

While Somers said it "would be nice if we could get everyone over the age of 55 in Oconomowoc," to join, he said they will make the price point attractive to retirees.

The fitness center will operate on a tiered membership basis based on age.

"With the membership fees, our goal is to have enough memberships to cover maintenance costs of the pool and utilities; we'd like to operate at break-even," the CEO said.

"We don't have anything written in stone yet (about cost of membership). We want to make it a tiered membership, so people who are retired, think age 65-plus, probably in the \$25 range, which would get them use of the fitness room and the swimming pool."

Somers said the organization will extend trial memberships to people who graduate from its rehabilitation unit ,so they can begin their fitness journey.

"It is part of our ongoing mission to seniors in the Lake Country area," he said. "We haven't settled on a final amount for the underage 65 age group, but it would be more market competitive.

"The idea being, once you are on a fixed income, we don't think you should have to decide between your own health and buying a present for your grandchildren," Somers said.

Tunak echoed that sentiment

"We want it to be affordable enough that people take advantage of it and use it. With that membership fee, any extra classes would be extra — something that would require an outside instructor," she added.

For more information, or to donate to the fundraising, contact Tunak at htunak@lho.org For a virtual tour of the fitness center, visit the website at www.shorehavenliving.org.