

Talking 'bout their generational program

Peer communities interested in fledgling program for boomers

By JUDY WAKEFIELD
STAFF WRITER

Is Andover ready to serve its 5,000 baby boomers?

The Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging seems to think so, as it has asked the leaders of Andover's one-year-old BoomerVenture program to share their secrets at its annual conference in Falmouth tomorrow, Friday, Oct 17.

Karen Payne-Taylor runs the program and is delighted Andover's boomer program is being cited as a model program that is attracting boomers by offering courses geared especially for them.

The Andover Senior Center still offers the type of exercise classes, book groups, bingo and lunches found at most senior centers. But Andover has also created a Boomer "campus" filling with classes meant to attract a younger set — those in their mid-forties to early sixties.

"As part of its goals, the state committed itself to developing a process to make communities boomer ready as that population is growing," said Payne-Taylor. "In Andover, we got very serious about it."

A year-old Oct. 11, BoomerVenture programs have attracted about 1,300 residents, claims Payne-Taylor.

Some of the popular offerings have



Courtesy photo

Nordic Walking instructor Denise Boucher and Diana Tisbert, class participant and Andover resident, take part in a BoomerVenture program that ended for the season on Tuesday.

Please see **BOOMERS**, Page 6

BOOMERS: Senior centers eye national program model

■ Continued from Page 1

included a four-week program with a life coach, financial advice, and a talk by a college professor who opened up about feeling sandwiched between caring for both her aging parents and her daughter and husband. In her workshop, there wasn't an empty seat.

Andover's Director of Elder Services Kathy Urquhart said she believes BoomerVenture is a model program for other

communities that need to prepare to meet the needs of a growing senior population.

"Statistics show that the number of (seniors) will double in 10 years and Andover is on the high end of the state statistics," Urquhart said.

Currently, there is a course called "The Power of Ritual," which focuses on the "role of ritual in daily life and creation of meaningful ritual from personal and family experience." It's another example of the center,

through BoomerVenture, offering more than a typical senior center.

For Mary Lou Sumberg of California, BoomerVenture offers "uniqueness" and she is trying to get her senior center out west to copy Andover and start a similar program. She said her body always hurts after exercising at home. While visiting family in Andover over the summer, she went to the senior center and found an unusual exercise class that left her feeling wonderful,

she said.

"I have been searching for years for a place that felt comfortable and was oriented to someone over 50," Sumberg said in a telephone interview. "I was impressed with the forward-thinking and groundbreaking idea of the BoomerVenture program."

Sumberg said BoomerVenture offers a blueprint for others and provides "a much-needed service."

Contact

Karen Payne-Taylor
978 623-8321
kpaynetaylor@andoverma.gov

ASC

(Andover Senior Center)
36 Bartlet Street
Andover, MA 01810