

“Get Some Balance in Your Life”: Falls Prevention Awareness

Featuring: Irene Lee of Hillsborough, NC

“Get Some Balance in Your Life” is a falls prevention program offered at the Seymour Center in Chapel Hill and the Central Orange Senior Center in Hillsborough. The 12-week program is offered twice a week and each class, taught by a physical therapist or certified personal trainer, has balance exercises, strengthening exercises, and “time on your feet”. Each component of the class challenges an individual’s balance. Our featured profile is of Irene Lee, from Hillsborough, NC and an A Matter of Balance participant.



Irene was motivated to take the “Get Some Balance in Your Life” at the Central Orange Senior Center because she feels like she depends too much on her cane. She was also concerned that she felt like she was frequently losing her balance. Her husband, Hilton, is always by her side and attends class with her. Since taking the classes, Irene is more sure of each step she takes, can walk farther and better, and has more confidence.

She has enjoyed working as a group with her classmates to improve her balance. She feels the class is a support team that has really helped her to improve her balance. The friendships made and the friendly competition has encouraged Irene to push herself as well as others, especially her husband. The most important thing is the class has been FUN. Outside of class, Irene enjoys gardening, keeping up her home, playing bridge with her friends, swimming, and dancing with her beloved husband. Irene always enjoyed exercising but when in the class it felt more like spend time with her comrades.

Falls prevention is a critical issue considering that falls are the leading national cause of doctor visits, hospital admissions, nursing home admissions and emergency room visits as well as the leading cause of injury deaths among people over the age of 65. North Carolina will recognize this issue during **Falls Prevention Awareness Week from September 19-25, 2010.**

To Prevent Falls:

1. Exercise regularly. Physical activity programs like Tai Chi that increase strength and improve balance are especially good.
2. Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medicines to reduce side effects and interactions that could make you dizzy or unsteady.
3. Have your eyes checked at least once a year.
4. Improve the lighting in your home.
5. Reduce the hazards in your home that can lead to falls, such as loose carpets and slippery or uneven floors.

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention]

For more information check out the NC Falls Prevention Coalition website:

<http://www.med.unc.edu/aging/ncfp/welcome.htm>