

Best Ideas

Walking the Y Way SARASOTA FAMILY YMCA, SARASOTA, FLA.

For the second year in a row, the Sarasota Family YMCA, Sarasota, Fla., is moving its members toward a healthy lifestyle, asking them to walk one million steps over the next six months through its program, Walking the Y Way.

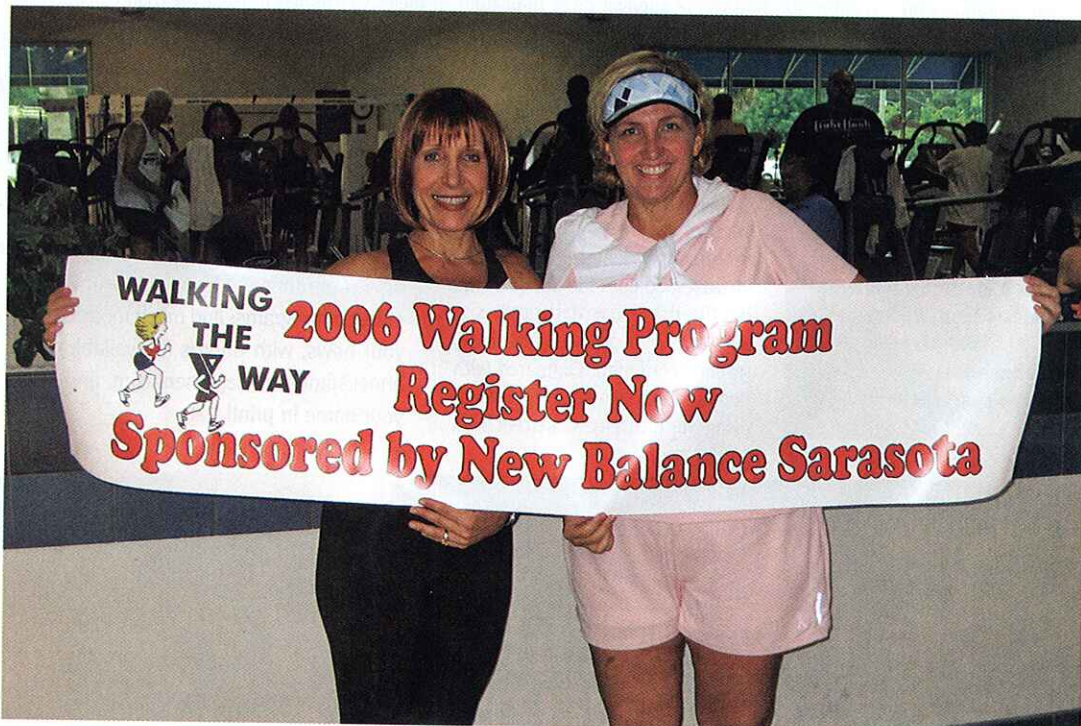
Sponsored by New Balance of Sarasota, the program encourages walkers to track the number of steps they take each day with a pedometer. "The walkers keep log books to

track their progress," says Carol Carra, association program director. "To increase their steps, they start by parking their cars farther away from stores and stop taking elevators,

even counting how many steps it is from the workout room to the bathroom." The branch then tracks members' progress each month, mapping the miles as if they were walking north on Interstate 75. Results are posted for all to see. For members, this provides "heightened awareness for fitness," explains Carra. "It's a win/win thing."

At the completion of the program in April, participants will be entered into a drawing

to win a six-month YMCA adult membership. Special incentive packages were given to the first 100 registrants. As of this writing, a total of 81 members are taking part in Walking the Y Way. The program was first run by the Sarasota Family YMCA last year, in which 120 members took part, 18 of which exceeded one million steps. **FM**

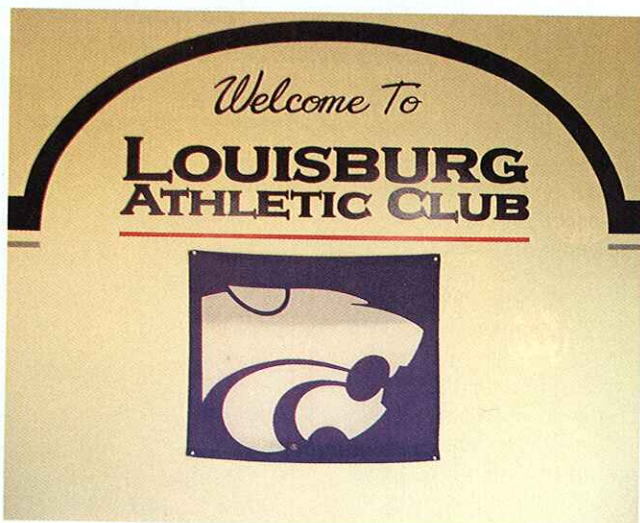


Carol Carra (left), Sarasota Family YMCA association program director, poses with Molly Jackson, owner of New Balance, sponsor of this year's Walking the Y Way.

Motivation Bingo! LOUISBURG ATHLETIC CLUB, LOUISBURG, KAN.

THE SUMMER months are often the time when many members prefer to be outside, neglecting their fitness center workouts. Knowing this, the Louisburg Athletic Club, Louisburg, Kan., designed a program called Motivation Bingo! As part of the program, members pick up a Bingo card at the front desk. Each day, a new Bingo number is posted in the facility. If the Bingo card the member possesses has the posted number, they can mark their card only if they came in to work out that day. According to Lesley Seufferling, managing partner, it is up to the member

to keep track of their own card. Each time there is a winner, the game starts over and the cards are cleared. All winners receive a



2006 Le Tour de France

THE CENTER FOR HEALTH IMPROVEMENT, HAYS, KAN.

THE CENTER for Health Improvement, Hays, Kan., capitalized on the excitement of the 2006 Tour de France by holding its own mini version of the Tour. The goal was to keep members motivated during the summer when it is typically slow and extremely hot outdoors, says Fitness Manager Stephanie Schaffer.

The Tour took place July 3 through August 6. Participants had to complete 20 stages during a five-week period, completing four stages each week. Each stage consisted of 10 percent of what the actual Tour stages were in France. "On the fitness floor, we dedicated a board where we posted a week's worth of stages," explains Schaffer. "The board displayed the actual stage distance being done in France, facts about the event and what was required of our members: distance and program workout (Manual, Fat Burner, Alpine Pass, etc.)." Cardio programs were chosen based on what the real competitors were doing in France (mountains, hills, etc.). Members could choose whether they wanted to ride a recumbent or upright cycle on any exercise level, as long as the cycle was set on the pre-selected program for that day. Each participant was then responsible for recording their time and distance in a notebook



Participants in the Le Tour de France competition cycled 10 percent of what the actual competitors in France rode each week.

A bulletin board promoting the Le Tour de France competition showed the overall leaders' names in the actual Le Tour de France, as well as names of competing members and their rankings.

placed at the wellness desk. Substitution methods were used for members who took a group cycling class or rode their bike outdoors.

A total of 20 members participated, averaging 11.3 miles per stage and traveling approximately 227 miles over five weeks. Awards (juice bar smoothies) were given to the winner of each of the 20 stages. Names of the overall leaders of the actual Tour de France were posted, along with the names of members and their current rankings. At the end of the program, each winner received a yellow T-shirt that read, "I'm the winner of the Le Tour de France @ the Center for Health Improvement."

"The program challenged our



members in many ways, from burning calories, to shaping their bodies," says Schaffer. "It was a program that got many of our members

out of a summer rut, got their competitive juices running and, in return, many of our members lost weight, lost inches and felt better." **FM**

\$10 club credit.

Seuferling says that a total of 75 members are participating in the Motivation Bingo! program, which has been continued because of the enthusiasm, resulting in three winners to date. "We are finding there is a winner about every six weeks," says Seuferling. Club credit can be redeemed for either reducing membership dues, tanning or tanning lotions, shakes, massage, etc. "Whatever we offer, they can use the credit to apply toward the purchase," explains Seuferling.

How long will they continue offer it? Indefinitely. "Our members love it, as it gives them that extra incentive to come in to work out, especially on the days when they are close to getting a Bingo,"

Seuferling says. "It helps with member retention, and it gives us a way to reach out to members of all ages." **FM**

Club members participated in Motivation Bingo! to earn credit toward any club services.

