

Neighborhood FOCUS

A fountain of “youth” in East Liberty

By Andrew McKeon *The Bulletin*

East Liberty - When most people think of senior care centers, they seldom call to mind a festive environment. Visions of wheelchairs and candy dishes are never vibrant. But one building in East Liberty is re-writing the rules, one dance step at a time. Vintage Senior Center (401 N. Highland Ave.) is far from ordinary.

Ever since the non-profit organization Family Links joined on as a managing agent in July, Mary Bockovich, the agency’s director of development and marketing, has marveled at the unique ways that Vintage staff and its volunteers enhance seniors’ health and wellness.

“It’s not your traditional ‘just come for lunch and bingo’ routine,” Bockovich chuckled. From the pool sharks racking up games to the gym rats lifting weights, the building feels young and full of energy.

The atrium’s skylight ceilings and floor displays gradually intersect with various hallways, where each room is named after a different East End neighborhood. While enamored with the building itself, Bockovich credits the neighborhood’s proximity to the busway, and its youthful spirit, for creating such an accessible social environment for seniors.

“We’re helping these seniors become active and vibrant enough to keep up with the young *renaissance* in East Liberty and enjoy all the new things coming to the neighborhood.”

– Tom Sturgill, Vintage Senior Center

Her organization knows that its partnership with Vintage will be mutually beneficial. “[Family Links] can help Vintage with some of their administrative needs, like handling the back office, while they help us enhance our continuum of programming,” Bockovich told *The Bulletin*.

Although he is proud of the facility’s capacity to serve all East End residents, Vintage director Tom Sturgill really enjoys making a local impact with life-long residents of East Liberty.



ABOVE: Stepping to it, with some zeal and a bit of flair, senior center members and volunteers show off their line dancing skills during a Sept. 17 “open house” event at Vintage Senior Center (401 N. Highland Ave.) in East Liberty. Photo by Andrew McKeon.

“Here in East Liberty and the surrounding neighborhoods, we have a lot of older adults who have been here for years,” he said. “They started here a long time ago and this is still their home.”

Sturgill hopes that events like the “senior prom” and Zumba Gold dance classes can help elderly locals stay healthy while they connect with old friends.

“We’re all about shat-



ABOVE: A pool shark readies to strike the cue ball during a game at Vintage Senior Center (401 N. Highland Ave.) in East Liberty. The facility offers a number of recreational amenities to help seniors keep fit with active aging in mind. Photo by Andrew McKeon.

tering the stereotype of aging,” he said. You come here and people are weight-training and practicing Yoga stretches. They’re doing very active, engaging things to keep themselves healthy.” During an “open house” event on Sept. 17, Sturgill welcomed the public to explore every corner of Vintage’s impressive facility.

The building speaks for itself, but it is the weight-lifting and line-dancing seniors whose achievements testify to Vintage’s positive impact. “We’re helping these seniors become active and vibrant enough to keep up with the young *renaissance* in East Liberty and enjoy all the new things coming to the neighborhood,” Sturgill said.

For more information about Vintage’s very affordable memberships, visit <http://VintageSeniorServices.org>. ♦



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