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NEWS ARTICLE: Gainesville Times on December 24, 2011

Oakwood, YMCA still working to develop programs, membership base

Interim agreement now will expire March 31



Wellness coordinator Angie Vimont, left, gives advice about proper technique Tuesday to DiAnn Kiel as she works out at the Oakwood Family YMCA on Railroad Street. The interim YMCA program in Oakwood is being extended three months before the city considers starting a permanent program in the spring.



DiAnn Kiel works out Tuesday on an elliptical machine inside the Oakwood Family YMCA on Railroad Street. The interim YMCA program in Oakwood is being extended three months before the city considers starting a permanent program in the spring.

Where: City Park, Railroad Street, with offices at 3828 Main St.

Programs: Fitness center, after-school program offices, swimming (already managed by YMCA in summer)

Fees: Monthly fees and joiner fees vary, from \$22 for ages 62 or older to \$45 for a husband and wife without dependent children

Contact: Visit the [website](#); 678-997-2878, branch office; 678-622-3908, wellness center

Hoping to gain some steam at the Oakwood Family YMCA, Oakwood and Georgia Mountains YMCA have extended an interim agreement through March 31.

"We want to go three (more) months on this and let the activity build up to where we have a better way of evaluating ... how this relationship is going," City Manager Stan Brown said.

"It's going to take word of mouth. It's going to take more people at the YMCA's (main branch in Gainesville) to realize we have this facility down here."

The Oakwood City Council had voted in September to enter into a three-month agreement to launch the program and establish a base for parks and recreation programs in the city, marking the YMCA's first fitness-based steps in South Hall.

The YMCA program, operating out of City Park off Railroad Street and after-school administrative offices in a city-owned house off Main Street, would have launched more fully on Jan. 1.

Brown said that he now expects to ask the city council in March for a recommendation to "proceed or change direction."

The YMCA has turned one of two buildings now used for community functions into an equipment-filled fitness center, as of Dec. 2, and the other building is used for exercise programs, such as yoga and Zumba.

The community building used for programs will remain open for public bookings.

"People will start making their New Year's resolutions," said Mayor Lamar Scroggs at the Dec. 12 council meeting. "That'll be a good time to really open things up and let people see (the YMCA operations)."

Ivan Altuzar, executive director of the Oakwood branch, said the main reason for extending the Oakwood agreement is that "we were not able to get all the fitness equipment here until the first week of December."

Because of that lateness, "we don't really know what we'll expect (concerning) regular members coming in and out (of the fitness center)."

The additional time also will allow the YMCA to "assess exactly what (the community) needs are," Altuzar said.

Many of the Oakwood branch patrons either live in the city or work nearby, and activity has been hopping lately.

"In the past couple of weeks, I think we have had five to 10 families that have decided to join, just here in Oakwood," Altuzar said. "And we will be starting our New Year campaign in the next couple of weeks."

The Oakwood branch's next goal is to offer child care for parents while they are exercising.

The program would be housed in a second city-owned building on Main Street, next to the after-school offices.

"Once we have a steady flow of people ... that's when we'll be able to offer that," Altuzar said.

Angie Vimont, wellness coordinator, said the Oakwood branch may, at some point, offer a health fair.

The branch recently provided some yoga instruction at such an event held by Wayne Farms, based off Mundy Mill Road in Oakwood.

Teaming up with the YMCA means the fulfillment of a long-time Oakwood goal to expand parks and recreation services, Brown has said. "I think we've got a good model here," he added.

The YMCA has operated the swimming pool for several years.

The expanded services are "a natural evolution ... and a way for us to make use of current facilities," Brown said. "We create the need and then the need will dictate what the next facility will be."

Over the past couple of years, the YMCA has worked out similar parks and recreation agreements with Lumpkin and White counties, which are part of the Georgia Mountains YMCA's eight-county region that also includes Hall.