

the Valley

Valley News Dispatch

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CARDIAC REHABILITATION

WestArm opens healthy heart program

*Service is available
3 mornings each week
at Pittsburgh Mills mall*

FRAZER

BY LIZ HAYES
VALLEY NEWS DISPATCH

John Framel of Allegheny Township credits cardiac rehabilitation with helping him achieve a metabolic age a dozen years younger than his actual age.

Framel, 76, exercises three mornings a week at the new Healthy Heart Program offered by the Pittsburgh Mills mall branch of WestArm Therapy & Homecare.

After undergoing angioplasty and then a quintuple bypass about 10 years ago, Framel began participating in a cardiac rehabilitation exercise program offered through Allegheny Valley Hospital in Harrison. When the hospital closed its cardiac rehab unit in early 2010, he and about 45 other patients were left without any local options for a monitored exercise program.

Until WestArm Therapy stepped in to fill the void.

Brian Jacobs, president and owner of WestArm, said his company began offering the Healthy Heart Program in May.

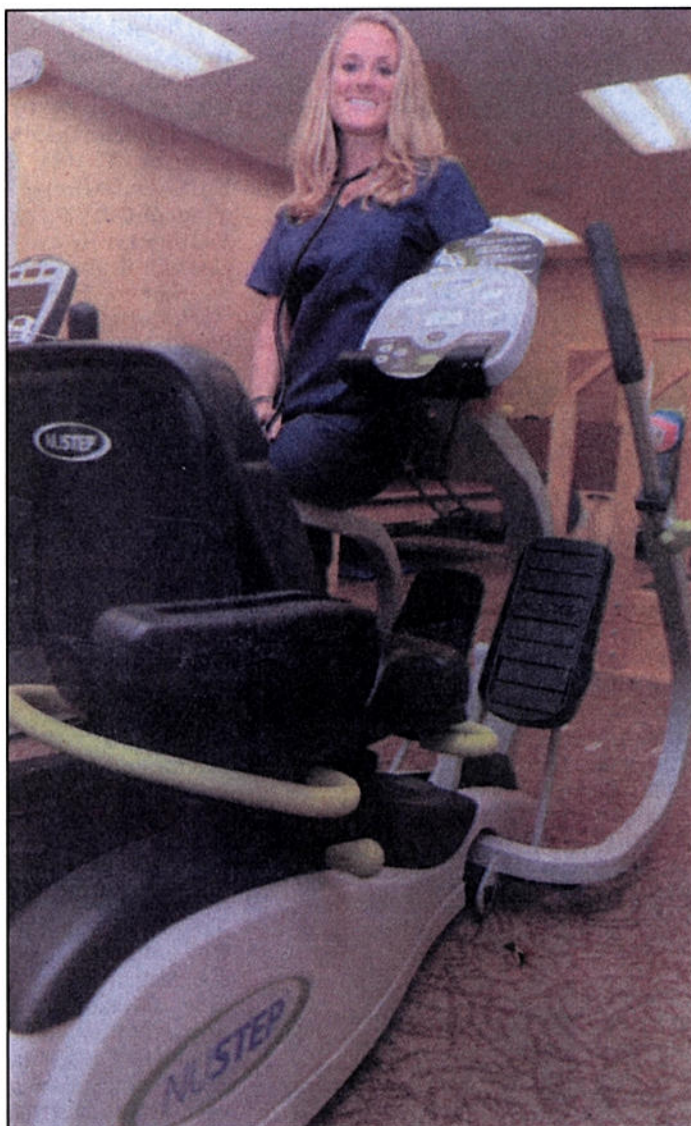
"Residents of this area had nowhere to go for this service without having to drive to UPMC Shadyside hospital," Jacobs said.

Jacobs said WestArm's program targets heart patients in what is called phase three of therapy — they've recovered from a heart attack or other heart conditions and have gone through the more intensive, hospital-based therapy.

Maggie Saracco, WestArm's exercise physiologist, said she designs an individualized program for each patient that depends on their level of fitness and their goals. They use equipment including a treadmill, a reclined arm-and-leg workout machine called a NuStep, an arm bicycle and free weights.

Before and after each session, Saracco checks the patients' blood pressure, heart rate and blood-oxygen saturation to ensure they aren't having any problems.

"This is a maintenance program," Saracco said. "I'm pretty selective. I won't let someone who's in pretty bad shape come in."



STEVEN DIETZ | FOR THE VALLEY NEWS DISPATCH

Physiologist Maggie Saracco showcases a reclined arm-and-leg workout machine called a NuStep at the WestArm Therapy & Homecare center in the Pittsburgh Mill's mall in Frazer.

Healthy Heart Program

WestArm Therapy & Homecare's Healthy Heart Program is available at its Pittsburgh Mills mall location, 1020 Village Center Drive, behind the Sonic drive-in.

The program is offered from 6:30 to 9 a.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Cost is \$50 per month.

For more information, call 724-274-4333.

Framel said he's pleased with the program, for which he pays \$50 per month. It is not covered by his insurance.

He said he couldn't find any

comparable programs when the AVH cardiac rehab unit closed and ended up exercising at home. He believes some of the other former AVH patients joined local gyms or participated in the YMCA's Silver Sneakers program.

Jacobs said only three people currently are taking advantage of WestArm's Healthy Heart Program. He hopes the clientele will grow.

"We have the best-kept secret in the world here," Jacobs said. "It's a beautiful, brand-new facility. We're trying to get the word out."

"I really feel a lot of my recuperation is the result of the rehabilitation I've done," Framel said. "I hope more people hear about it and take an active role in their own health."

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