

BENSON CENTER FOR ACTIVE AGING EXPANDS HOURS, CELEBRATES



Benson Center for Active Aging celebrated Friday that the center is now open full time, operating from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, offering more programs for area seniors.

Debra Cardone, who serves as the program coordinator, saw the need to expand to longer hours to ensure area seniors can enjoy the services the center provides.

Town officials would like to open a larger center for seniors in order to be able to reach more seniors in the surrounding area. The center offers an array of activities such as arts and crafts, games, exercise programs no matter the mobility as well as day trips.

Seniors ages 60 years and older can enjoy a hot lunch daily brought in by Food Runners of Raleigh.

Benson Mayor William Massengill, who has now served as mayor for nine years, gave opening remarks at Friday afternoon's celebration.

"We are judged by two things — how we treat our children and seniors," he said.

On Friday seniors had the opportunity to enjoy food vendors and art vendors as well as information from health care providers. They also enjoyed entertainment by dance troop Sassy Feet, a group made up of senior women who enjoy dancing at area events, and music by Rockin' Dickie Rocks, who travels the state performing at assisted living facilities. They also enjoyed door prizes and a chance to catch up with friends and meet new people.

Laura Pitman of Benson enjoyed the celebration with two of her friends.

"It's nice to get out of the house and be around other people," she

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Laughter Yoga is a hit!



Rockin' Dickie entertained us.

said.

The center’s mission is to provide seniors ages 50 and older with an active lifestyle. Now that center is open eight hours a day and five days a week, seniors can now enjoy the many programs that are offered and can continue to enjoy an active lifestyle.

The center is able to operate by way of donations that are provided from the community and a host of volunteers.

As the aging population continues to grow, more centers for seniors will be in demand. Research has shown that seniors live longer when they experience an active lifestyle.

In the State of North Carolina, senior centers are divided into classifications based on participation. The Town of Benson will apply for a multiIpurpose certification, and if received, the center will then be recognized as a center of excellence. By reaching this goal the center will share that honor with two other centers in Johnston County — one in Smithfield and the other in Clayton.

Benson town officials are looking to provide more resources for the community that it serves. The process will take a year to achieve that, which will then call for another celebration that many seniors will look forward to being apart of.

The Benson Center for Active Aging is located at 1204 N. Johnson St. in Benson.

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Debra Cardone, program coordinator of Benson Center for Active Aging, is shown here with her nutrition assistant John Tracey during the festivities.