

PHHSBG Success Story: Clermont County Senior Takes Back Control of Her Life

Issue: A Clermont County woman, age 74, fell in March of 2010. She believed that falling was a natural part of aging and there was little she could personally do to change her risk of falling. Her doctor did not educate her about fall risk prevention or screen her for fall risks. Mrs. S. was overweight and had balance problems. She believed she was likely to fall again and that nothing could be done about it.

- CDC data shows that one in every three seniors 65 and older will fall in the next year.
- Seniors who have fallen are often at higher risk of falling again, especially if they are afraid of falling.
- Seniors with gait or balance problems are at high risk for falling.

Intervention: In collaboration with the Clermont Family YMCA, the Clermont County General Health District Senior Safety Program offered a free, one time exercise class in Union Township in May of 2010 to promote balance and strength in seniors. Funding for the Senior Safety program was received from the Preventative Health and Health Services Block Grant through the Ohio Department of Health and from the in-kind donation of the Clermont Family YMCA. The class was taught by a certified exercise instructor from the Clermont YMCA and all participants were given free exercise equipment and a set of instructions for doing the exercises at home. All participants were also given information on fall prevention, local community resources for fall prevention, information on the Senior Safety Program and information on county exercise programs serving seniors.

Clermont Senior Services, Clermont Family YMCA, Curves and several other athletic clubs offer exercise programs for seniors but some seniors aren't aware of the programs, cannot afford the cost of membership fees or exercise programs are not easily accessible to them.

Collaborations with local organizations help assure sustainability and draw on the expertise of the organization's personnel. Community agencies can help promote fall prevention efforts to the public.

Impact: Mrs. S registered for the exercise class and participated with twenty three other seniors. She took the exercise equipment and instructions home and continued to do the exercises faithfully. She was so motivated to continue exercising that she purchased a treadmill. By August 2010 she reported that she had lost 88 pounds through diet and exercise. She also had a home safety check and free grab bar installed through the Senior Safety Program in collaboration with Clermont Senior Services and Clermont Community Services. Through lifestyle changes, Mrs. S was able to get her hemoglobin A1C from 7.8 down to 6.1 and reduced her dosage of blood pressure and cholesterol medicines by half. Mrs. S. credits the exercise program with giving her the knowledge and tools to gain back control of her life and be in charge of her health and safety again.

Multi-faceted interventions are proven to be the best strategy for preventing falls. Falls are not an inevitable part of aging and seniors can take steps to be healthier and safer.

For more information on how to prevent falls among older adults please visit:

<http://www.healthyohioprogram.org/vipp/falls/fallsolder.aspx>

For more information on the Clermont County Senior Safety Program please visit:

<http://www.clermonthhealthdistrict.org/SeniorSafety.aspx>

