YMCA, Safe Way to Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle

Corey Buell
Photo Editor

Sweat pours off Ashli Brandt's face as she struggles up the final hill before the completion of her run, is she running up maple hill? No, she is on one of the automatic treadmills in the YMCA.

The YMCA is a Christian based community center designed to help make a difference in the lives of the local families. It also provides a place where everyone can go to stay in shapes. The YMCA has designed many free after-school programs for local teens. It is a place where entire families can go to workout and maintain healthy lifestyles.

Phil Carter, the YMCA's Chief Executive Director believes that " The YMCA's core values are assets in people's lives, they make everyone feel welcome."

To maintain a membership at the YMCA, the monthly fee is 18 dollars for teens 13 through 18. Financial Aid programs are offered to help people pay for memberships, so everyone has the opportunity to become a member. The Y is open Monday through Friday 5:15 a.m. until 10 p.m., Saturdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday from noon until 5 p.m.

The YMCA offers a wide variety of new equipment, from cardio to weight training. In total the Y has 61 different machines in the fitness area, a track and two basketball courts. There are two pools that can be used for either recreational swimming, laps or programs offered by the Y.

A diverse group of local teens have fun while working out with friends. Ashli Brandt, senior, attends the YMCA four to five times a week. She runs and uses the fitness equipment provided by the Y. "Some people think that I am addicted to going to the Y," said Brandt, who has been a member of the YMCA since the eighth grade.

Brandt usually attends the YMCA after school with a few of her close friends. They have tried several of the programs offered by the Y, such as pilates and kickboxing but maintain their usual workouts of running and lifting.

Ever since he was in the third grade, senior, Joey Stempky has been a member of the YMCA. He uses their facilities to prepare for the football and basketball seasons he participates in throughout the year. While at the Y, Stempky either plays basketball with friends or lifts weights.

"It is a good place to relax and let out all of my stress," said Stempky. He either attends the YMCA with his friends, or by himself after school everyday of the week.

The nearest YMCA is located on Maple St., just across from Maple Street Magnet School in Kalamazoo. Other YMCAs can be found at Lincoln Elementary School in downtown Kalamazoo and in Portage.

The YMCA helps to keep the local community of Kalamazoo not only healthier but safer for teens today. With all the programs offered for free with a membership, everyone can find something they are interested in. Carter believes in the Y's ability to make a difference in the health and physical fitness of teens.

"The purpose of the YMCA is to provide programs that help to build healthy spirits, minds and bodies for all," said Carter.

COREY BUELL / KNIGHT LIFE

Ashli Brandt hits a punching bag at the YMCA downtown on Maple Street. Ashli likes to use the Y's facilities because it is relatively inexpensive, and provides many different workout machines. Ashli has been working out at the YMCA with her close friends after school since the eighth grade.

LN Adopts New Sport

The Birth of Women's Lacrosse

Erika Glass
Copy Editor

Picture a sport that combines the speed of football and the collisions of hockey on a soccer field. It is lacrosse and it is coming to Loy Norrix, in the form of a women's team!

Spring of 2007 marks the very first year Loy Norrix and Kalamazoo Central have come together to create a women's varsity lacrosse team.

Frank Rogers, head coach of the men's team, is very excited. We started a men's team last year, and we thought that it would be a good idea to start a girl's team since there are already a few [teams] in the area.

Rogers has been coaching men's lacrosse for 12 years and has 35 years of playing experience, though he is not coaching the women, he is in the process of finding a coach. Despite the fact Rogers is not going to be coaching, he is still very involved in the process of the developing, funding, and staffing of the women's team.

Before the girls even start to compete in games, the girls need to raise money through grants and fundraising. Rogers, has also had a lot of help from some parents of the men's team. A majority of the money the girls receive will depend on how hard they work on their fundraisers.

The object of lacrosse is to get a small ball, the size of a tennis ball into the opposing teams net. Each team has ten players and one goalie. The ball is thrown from player to player and carried or hit by the lacrosse stick. Four players plus the goalie play defense, while three others play offense.

Typical gear necessary to play women's lacrosse includes a stick, mouth guard, cleats or tennis shoes, gloves (optional), and a uniform with a jersey, shorts or a skort, which is a cross between a skirt and shorts.

Even though lacrosse is not a well known sport in the high school sports arena, there are two teams who play in Kalamazoo (Portage Northern and Portage Central). Lacrosse is dominated by males, but that is changing very quickly.

Andrew Laboe, head of athletics at Norrix has faith in the formation of the women's lacrosse team, Woman's lacrosse definitely has the ability to become a strong sport. Students seem to be dedicated enough for it to last a long time, said Laboe.

Coaches and current lacrosse players are in favor of starting a girl's team as well.

"It would be a good idea to get a girl's program going because lacrosse is growing in Kalamazoo and most other schools around here have women's teams already, and if we get a team, we can compete," said senior lacrosse player Jordan Balduf.

One question still remains: Are girls at LN even going to be interested in playing?

Junior Christina Pillsbury said, "Oh yeah, I'd play, I think it would be fun."

Rogers also stated, "Earlier this year we put out sign-up sheets, and twenty girls from Loy Norrix signed up."

From Injuries to States, Norrix Cross Country Battles Back

TYLER FLEMING / KNIGHT LIFE

Seen on their way to practice. Upon arrival the men's cross country team stretches and did six 800 meter repeats.

Tyler Fleming and David Gumbleton
Sports Editor and Staff Writer

The Loy Norrix Men's Cross Country Team is hoping to make a run to the state competition this year. The only thing keeping them from dominating the SMAC is injuries.

"This has easily been, uhhhhh, the most injurful year," said senior Nathan McWethy.

Senior leaders Steve Tobochnik, Ross Nelson, and Mario Cooper have all been slowed down due to injuries. Pool workouts as well as stationary biking are a big part of the rehabilitation program.

Nelson, who is battling a possible stress fracture and is currently confined to the pool, said, "I hope to be back to 100% by conference so I can have a meet to work out the kinks before regionals."

"The seniors on the team are highly motivated despite a slow start due to injuries. The top five spots are all seniors and we expect to have a good chance [to qualify for states]," said Tobochnik who happens to be the top runner, finishing 41st at states last year. Tobochnik should be able to break the 16 minute barrier this year.

Senior Seth Wolbert echoed Tobochnik when he said, "Not too bad [of a team], seem to be a lot of injuries, we should be straight by conference."

All are expecting to be in top form by conference, which is important so that they can get a meet in prior to regionals. The top three teams in the regional meet get to move on to the state competition.

Currently LN is hovering around fifth place but is planning on peaking towards the end of the season. Nelson will hopefully be back from his injury. While Cooper, who took a break during the summer, will be back in top shape.

The scoring for cross country is similar to golf, the less points the better. For each race the top five finishers (from each team) places are added up. Thus the closer to first your team finishes the better.

Once everyone is healed and back to top speed, the cross country team is confident they are going to run away with a trip to states.

With all five top runners being seniors, the team could be hurting next year; however, there will be a few returning juniors and several freshmen with potential.

Tobochnik invites anyone interested in cross country to come out for the team, he said "We prefer people coming at the beginning of the season, but if you are in shape, and ready to work your butt off, we will be glad to suit you up."

Fall Sports Updates

- The women's tennis team is doing better than previous seasons.
- Sophmore Liz Houghton is lighting up number two singles flight with only 2 losses and 24 wins.
- Varsity's overall record is 4-5. Junior varsity is holding their own with a record of 3-7-1.

Women's Tennis

- The men's soccer team has had a few early losses and has fought back to a record of 8-11.
- The JV men's team had a record of 11-3-2.

Men's Soccer

- The women's swim ming team is doing well this season and has won 3-7.
- They are led by senior captains Reyna Levine and Erika Glass, who swim 50 freestyle, and the 500 freestyle respectively.

Women's Swimming

- With a new coach in ex-NFLer Duane Young, Norrix has their first win since the 2005 season.
- Sophomore Abe Ebscamp, is the one time sophomore on the team.
- The varsity team had a record of 1-8.

Men's Football