

SEASON TO GIVE PART OF A CONTINUING SERIES

Sports 4 All tries to improve fitness of disabled people

By Andy Humbles
THE TENNESSEAN

As a Special Olympics mom and coach, Kris Salisbury saw firsthand that many participants were very limited in how they could train and stay active.

"I was amazed at how many kids didn't have tennis shoes for track or basketballs to practice with," Salisbury said.

So Salisbury would donate items to the physically challenged and to agencies through the sporting goods store she and her husband owned for 38 years, Neptune Diving & Ski on Charlotte Pike.

And in 2005, Salisbury retired from a fulltime banking career and merged her business and sporting goods backgrounds with her experience as mother of a daughter with Down Syndrome to start Sports 4 All.

The nonprofit's initial focus was to provide sports equipment to the disabled, but Sports 4 All started a second component 2½ years ago.

Project HEALTH (Helping Every American Learn to be Healthy) puts Sports 4 All into the community to conduct exercise and nutrition classes and sessions for other agencies and organizations who serve people with disabilities.

"It's simple in concept,

but it's an issue not being addressed," said Salisbury, a co-chairwoman of a Tennessee Obesity Task Force committee that focuses on those with disabilities.

In Tennessee, 71 percent of the disabled population is overweight with 31 percent obese and 15 percent morbidly obese, according to Salisbury.

Friends Life, a nonprofit that helps adults with intellectual challenges at Hillsboro Presbyterian Church, is a private class conducted by Sports 4 All.

"Getting my child to exercise was difficult, and now she enjoys it," said Cindy Herndon, part of the Friends Life founding group. "They bring in occupational therapy students, and they do things like relay races and games to make it fun. And all of them are asking questions and talking about portion control, and it's not just mom and dad telling them."

Program hopes to grow

Project HEALTH regularly goes to the Tennessee School for the Blind each Monday evening for a class, and they visit different Metro community centers on Wednesdays and Thursdays in a partnership with the city's parks and recreation department.



Volunteer Brett Peterson leads a Project HEALTH class being conducted by Sports 4 All at Hartman Community Center. SUBMITTED

HOW TO HELP

Sports 4 All needs financial contributions, volunteers to serve in numerous aspects, and gently used and new sports equipment. The organization's first formal fundraiser is scheduled for Friday with Baptist Healing Trust as the sponsor. The event, An Evening 4 All, will include food and drinks, a silent auction and awards for a spokesperson and volunteer of the year.

An Evening 4 All

When: 7 p.m. Friday.

Where: Embassy Suites Nashville-Vanderbilt atrium.

Tickets: \$70.

Reservations and information: Call 354-6454, visit www.s4af.org or e-mail info@s4af.org.

Each Monday Project HEALTH offers a walking club outing in which leaders walk at a location that is announced on the Sports 4 All website.

Megan Graf, the wellness and volunteer coordinator for Sports 4 All, leads the classes with help from volunteers and college interns.

Natalie Herndon, Cindy Herndon's daughter, said "Tuesdays are my favorite

days," when she attends a Project HEALTH wellness session. Graf said enthusiasm is usually high for sessions.

Sports 4 All works in Davidson, Rutherford and Williamson counties and hopes to expand throughout the state.

"The reason we go to them is because transportation is often an obstacle," Salisbury said.

ABOUT THIS SERIES

Season to Give stories will run in *The Tennessean* through Christmas Eve. They highlight Middle Tennessee residents who have bettered their lives thanks to help provided by local charities. The series will cover organizations throughout the region that help people who find themselves in a number of different circumstances.