

# LHO creates Life Enrichment Center

Classes, programs geared toward those 50 and older

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Baby boomers are on the brink of retirement, but Lutheran Homes of Oconomowoc knows the largest generation isn't running toward the nursing homes.

LHO is putting the finishing touches on its Lake Country Life Enrichment Center, which is designed to inform older adults how to lead a healthy, independent life as they age in their own homes.

"This is truly an opportunity to change the face of aging in a positive way," said Geri Heppe, the director of the new Lake Country Life Enrichment Center. "They want us to go kicking and screaming, but I don't think that's going to happen. I think we should accept the fact that we're aging, but we also know we need to change some things to make it better for all of us."

Lake Country Life Enrichment Center will be the first facility of its kind in the state and one of three in the country, Heppe said. Spanning more than 26,000 square feet, the facility is the largest life enrichment center in the country, Heppe said.

The center will offer an array of classes to meet the needs of community members 50 and older. Ranging in cost from \$5 to \$15, the classes will explore topics such as home modification, stress reduction, fitness, nutrition, spirituality, computers, personal finance and new rules for Medicare and Medicaid.

Local residents also volunteered to teach classes about their areas of interest – everything from Creole cooking to foreign languages. Ideas for possible classes have come from the community through the center's advisory



council. The center will also collaborate with the YMCA at Pabst Farms, ProHealth Care and other health organizations.

"We can collaborate in ways that we never could have before by bringing different organizations together," Heppe said.

Heppe said she also hopes the community will turn to the Life Enrichment Center as a hot line for information about area resources related to health and aging.

The center will also function as a satellite campus for **Waukesha County Technical College's** Learning in Retirement Program, which will bring three courses to the facility in the fall.

The Life Enrichment Center will also feature a drop-in area to meet others or to consult a medical professional. Heppe, a gerontologist, is available to talk to small or large groups.

The center also features a cafe that provides breakfast, lunch, snacks and coffee for those that are in the mood to socialize with others or even grab something quick on their way to a class or program.

The facility will eventually connect to Lake Shore Place, which will feature at least 33 upscale apartment units on the shore of Lac La Belle. Although the facility will be easily accessible to other LHO facilities, Heppe encouraged the entire community to get

## IF YOU GO

**What:** Lake Country Life Enrichment Center open house  
**When:** 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. July 15  
**Where:** Lake Country Life Enrichment Center, 1306 W. Wisconsin Ave.  
**Contact:** Geri Heppe, (262) 244-6592

involved with the facility.

Roughly 80 people have purchased lifetime memberships to the center so far. Single lifetime memberships are available for \$500, and a couple can purchase a membership for \$700.