

NEWS RELEASE

Waterford on South Hill



For immediate release

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Take Steps to Reduce Risk of Falls

SPOKANE, Wash. — One in three Americans 65 and older falls each year, and 30 percent of them require medical treatment. Last month, a coalition of senior advocates requested \$20.7 million in funding for the Centers for Disease Control to help address the problem.

Earlier this year, Waterford on South Hill launched its own potential solution for residents. The weekly Balance and Posture class assesses participants and then employs a variety of exercises and techniques to help reduce the risk of a fall. It is part of its parent company's — Touchmark — award-winning Fall Reduction and Awareness Program, which was one of 10 programs recognized nationally by the Falls-Free Coalition at last year's joint conference of the American Society on Aging and National Council on Aging. It was the only program selected in the Northwest — and in any state where a Touchmark community is located.

Waterford resident G.G. Fisher, who has neuropathy in her feet as a result of diabetes, says it works.

“I'm losing sensation in my feet, which makes my balance very precarious,” she explains. “There's no question but my feet, ankles, even my body core, are stronger and react more quickly to an off-balance situation.”

Instructor Lori McCormick is a physical therapist and director of Waterford's Health and Fitness Center. She uses gentle walking, marching, weight shifting and stretching as well as chairs, towels, walls and balls to achieve such improvements.

“Increased posture deviations are a very large component of fall risk and, of course, so is balance,” she says. “We talk about posture when sitting, standing and lying down. We also do some finger exercises with the ball. Finger dexterity is important, because if people have a slip in

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the tub, they need to be able to grab that bar to prevent falling.”

The Waterford class has become so popular that McCormick maintains a waiting list of people interested in the sessions. “We’ve received feedback that they think the class is life-changing,” she says.

Waterford on South Hill offers a wide range of homes and lifestyle options — now including home health and home care services. The full-service retirement community is located at 29th and Pittsburg. For more information, visit WaterfordSpokane.com or call (509) 536-2929.

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SIDEBAR

**Public Invited To Learn What They Can Do—
Tips Offered From National Award-Winning Program**

The Touchmark Fall Reduction and Awareness Program was developed by Vice President of Wellness & Programs Marge Coalman, EdD. She will be in Spokane to discuss the importance of reducing falls. Two presentations are open to the public; there is no charge: Tues., May 6 at 6:30 p.m. and Wed., May 7 at 2 p.m. Seating is limited, and people are encouraged to call (509) 536-2929 to reserve a spot.

“The goal of the Touchmark Fall Awareness and Reduction Program is to take the process from information and education to the reality of reducing injury-related falls,” says Coalman. “Our initial efforts were even more successful than we’d hoped when designing the program,” she points out, citing an average 72-percent improvement among people who participated in an eight-week pilot program that included six weeks of personal training.

“Essentially this program is about the partnership created with community residents to enhance balance and mobility, support independence and thus reduce the risk of falls,” says Coalman.

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