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NEWS

Crestwood Kids Get Buff

Professional trainers teach campers how to work out

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The directors at Crestwood Country Day School are set on giving kids more than just an "amusement park" experience - they've seen the reports on childhood obesity and diabetes, and they want to show their campers how to lead healthy lifestyles.

That is why Crestwood introduced the Children's Fitness Center this summer, which involves a nine-piece fitness conditioning circuit open to every camper entering grades two through six.

"I want the kids to be happier and better people when they leave here," said Bruce Schnittman, owner and director of the camp.

And if you ask 8-year-old Nico Marulli, he'll tell you that he's already better off. "I think I'm getting a good workout," said Nico, as he took deep breathes while working three sets of muscles on the leg press machine, "because I'm really feeling the burn!"

Nico is so enthusiastic about the program that his parents registered him for an extra hour per week on the circuit - a special program that many campers are taking advantage of - but professionals like Judy Croce, of the Personal Training Institute, provide personal attention to each camper that uses the circuit. The trainers teach them how to use the equipment, offer them nutritional tips and track their weight.

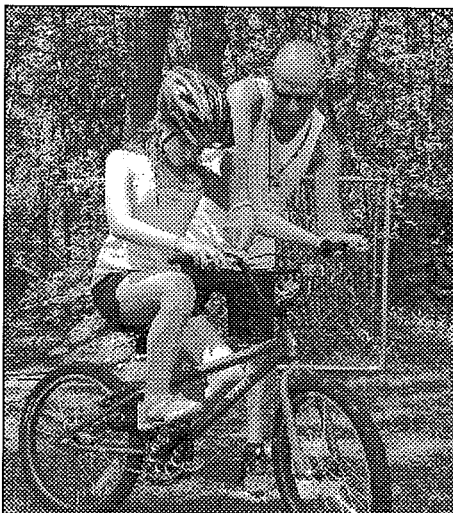
"It's really a way to establish good habits ... for the long term," said Crestwood Director Mark Hemmerdinger.

And Croce believes that there is no time like the present to start. "After a certain age, we lose muscle ... [Now], we're just building what [the campers] already have ... so that's their leg-up on it," she said, adding that the trainers target and isolate various muscle groups. "I educate them as they go along, [explaining] what's happening in their bodies."

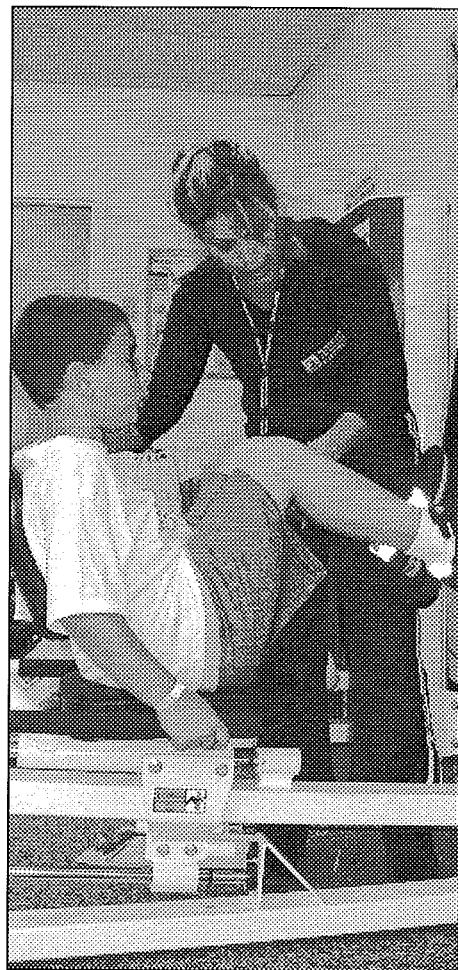
Crestwood campers also frequent a trail bike course - one trail measuring slightly more than a mile, and the other measuring about five - to further strengthen their muscles.

Don Hornick, a specialist who runs the courses, said he has received nothing but positive feedback from the campers.

"They never really thought of it [as exercise before], they just get on a bike and get going," he said.



Crestwood camper Samantha Koppelman, 11, is ready to take on the camp's bike course with trail bike specialist Don Hornick.



Crestwood Country Day School camper Nico Marulli, 8, uses the leg press to work out, with help from professional trainer Judy Croce.

Hills Photos/Aliza Israel