



Popular games among the group's members are poker, Uno, bridge, euchre and pinochle.

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We've probably lost 10 people from the group over the years."

At the same time, however, the organization has added new members — including non-parishioners, Doran added. "It's pretty constant, one person tells another it's fun," she said.

Thea Schmitt, for example, is one of the "new kids." The 84-year-old woman began attending events five years ago.

What attracted her, Schmitt joked as she played pinochle, was the chance "to meet friends, to get a good lunch."

Dorothy Zimmerman, 74, said she

joined the group because it doesn't include the obligations of other organizations.

"I'm really not a joiner," Zimmerman declared, "but this is just a fun thing."

EDITORS' NOTE: Unless a special event is planned, the Fun After Fifty-Five group generally meets the fourth Thursday of each month. The group is planning a Dec. 12 bus trip to Buffalo to watch a performance of the "Singing Christmas Tree" and to view the "Festival of Lights" in Niagara Falls. Call St. Salome's at 716/323-1160 for information.

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a wish fulfilled is a tree of life.

Proverbs 13:12

'Tree of Angels' planned to benefit elderly citizens

ROCHESTER — In conjunction with the STAR (Support To Aged Residents) Program of Catholic Family Center, the Pinehurst Senior Living Community is sponsoring a "Tree of Angels" to benefit elderly residents of Monroe County.

The public is invited to participate in the event.

For details on how you can be a part of the program, call Dawn E. Provan at 716/624-5970.

Members find many pluses with Tier health program

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ELMIRA — One only needs to check the numbers to gauge this new senior health-care program's success.

"Our original projection was that we'd have 2,000 people over the first three years, but we have nearly 3,500 people right now," said Geraldine Schultz, coordinator of the "55Plus" program. St. Joseph's Hospital, 555 E. Market St., began offering the program last April.

The service's framework was based largely on findings from an eight-month study conducted in 1991 by Syed Kalamuddin, a student at nearby Cornell University in Ithaca.

"Surveys were sent out asking seniors that if we started something, what would they like to see. There were also populations studies done in Chemung, Steuben, Schuyler and Tioga counties, and they revealed a growing percentage of people over the age of 55 in those areas," said Schultz.

55Plus offers a wide array of free services for its members, including tests St. Joseph's sponsors to detect health problems such as high blood pressure and prostate cancer.

The hospital also holds frequent seminars for 55Plus participants, during which doctors and other health-care professionals speak on topics such as arthritis and aging's effects.

Other benefits available through 55Plus include: discounts for pharmaceutical goods from participating Southern Tier merchants; reduced rates for private rooms at St. Joseph's Hospital (subject to availability); transportation to and from the hospital when required; and a "homemaker service," in which aides visit seniors at their homes after a hospital stay in order to help clean the home and/or

keep company with those patients.

Social events are also becoming a part of 55Plus. A recent concert, featuring former members of the Lawrence Welk television series, drew approximately 900 people to the Clemens Center. Many in attendance were 55Plus members who received a discount on admission.

Participants don't pay any membership cost for 55Plus. The only requirement is that members be at least 55 years old.

Two 55Plus members, who also serve as volunteers at St. Joseph's, said the program has come in quite handy.

"Being a widow with no way to drive, (55Plus) really helps me," noted Lil Hanmore, an Elmira resident. "It's a great idea for anyone over 55."

Betty Maloney, also of Elmira, enjoys many aspects of 55Plus. She attended the Lawrence Welk program and said that her husband was able to receive a private room during a recent hospital stay. She also found the 55Plus-sponsored seminars to be "very interesting and informative."

Schultz noted that hospital administrators hope to offset 55Plus's expenses through "admission of people who have never been patients here before. The program pays for itself."

Due to the program's short existence, Schultz said that "concrete statistics" have not yet been compiled to reflect how the hospital has fared financially in that respect. She added that "22 to 25 percent" of 55Plus participants have never been patients at St. Joseph's before.

However, Schultz emphasized that the program's priority is on community service. Seniors should not avoid taking advantage of 55Plus just because they may choose to be patients at other Southern Tier hospitals, she said.



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