

## DONNA HECK

Sabes JCC fitness director

Kid-friendly, state-of-the-art exercise and interactive gaming equipment offers boys and girls in the JCC's KidsFit Club an opportunity to move their bodies without thinking about exercise. "They're constantly jumping, ducking, moving side to side and running," Donna Heck says. "They are getting their heart rates elevated and moving their muscles and joints. But the kids only care that they are having fun playing the game. They are having a blast!"

That's just one of the ways Heck works to make exercise enjoyable for the roughly 400 kids who participate in KidsFit each month. The Sabes JCC opened KidsFit last year, a fitness center designed specifically for children ages 5–12. Kid friendly fitness equipment replaces weight stacks and pulley systems often used in adult equipment with hydraulic based systems.

The focus is low resistance, low impact and controlling the body with fresh exercises and drills. "The key is to always change it up," Heck says. "One activity for five minutes and then something that is totally unrelated. An activity might be for balance, the next for strength and the next for hand-eye coordination."

Some activities also come with food for thought. One game includes throwing a ball and then naming one healthy food and one junk food. "It's amazing what we can get the kids to think about with a game as simple as that," Heck says. "They already have a very good idea of what is good for them and what is bad for them. It's just instilling it in a fun way."

According to Heck, the goal is "to build self-esteem, stronger bodies and to empower these kids to be fit and happy." The Sabes JCC offers kids' programming in boot camp, yoga and get-moving classes, as well as in traditional sports like basketball and tennis.

"They can participate in as many days as their parents want to sign them up for," Heck says. "We want to make sure that these kids, who are seated in school all day and only have a limited time for recess, are also getting the physical activity they need."

## SUSAN PRINCE

Natural wellness coach and educator

It's up to you: "Do you want to be healthy so you can play with your grandchildren?" asks Susan Prince. "Or do you not want to never feel well and not be able to fully par-



Avital Harris, Jacob Khabie and Toby Khabie

ticipate in your life as you age? You have to make a choice now."

Her St. Louis Park start-up business, Susan Prince Natural Wellness, focuses on "aging without getting old."

"What that really means is how do we make the appropriate lifestyle choices so that we age with grace, vitality and a sense of purpose and health," says Prince, 62.

"It's really a commitment to do something nearly every day, even if it's just a walk," she says. "It's getting out and moving."

Prince has a stable of several clients as she works to build her business across all age groups. One client is struggling with high blood sugar. The plan for this woman is to put together a program where, by eating every few hours, she can better control her blood sugar, while also exercising regularly and managing her stress level.

"Without appropriate stress reduction, high blood sugar creates an inflammation in the body and that inflammation is what drives a lot of these chronic conditions," Prince says.

The application of the program consists of regular meetings in person or by phone. The client determines the level of coaching and motivation Prince will use.

"What it comes down to with every person I work with is that you have a choice," Prince says. "I'm here to help you. I'm here to support you, but it's up to you to make the choice. I talk a lot about intention and purpose. You need to have an intention and a purpose in your life." //

## FOOD FOCUS

Experts Donna Heck, Hamish Ganga and Susan Prince all agree: Fitness is first, but it's all for naught without proper nutrition.

Prince subscribes to the message of Michael Pollan, author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma*: "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants." That's three small meals and two small snacks, she says. Ganga adds that we should refrain from eating after 7 p.m.

Heck offers several great healthy suggestions: for breakfast, whole grain cereal, low fat yogurt with fruit and granola, pita with egg, cheese and veggies; for an afternoon snack, whole grain waffles with a little bit of reduced fat cream cheese (or peanut butter) and jelly, low fat cheese and fruit. Drink plenty of water throughout the day.

All three suggest avoiding fast food and cooking at home when possible. "What I do know," Ganga says, "is what you put in your body is what comes out."

### FOR MORE INFORMATION FROM THE EXPERTS:

**Donna Heck:** 952.381.3418, dheck@sabesjcc.org

**Hamish Ganga:** 952.926.2687, hamish@myfortefitness.com

**Susan Prince:** 612.636.6509, spnaturalwellness@gmail.com