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Delco Seniors Cut the Rug

Free dances offered at Redwood Community Center

Calling all senior citizens who love to dance! If you're looking for a chance to cut the rug, party and make new friends, a trip to the Redwood Community Center fits the bill.

At the Redwood, seniors gather every day of the week to dance, share lunch and socialize. Located in Delaware County's Upland Park, the Redwood Community Center sits on 60 acres of parkland that features playground areas, softball fields and picnic spots. On any given weekday, dozens of senior citizens hit the Redwood dance floor to try every step from the cha cha slide and boot scootin' boogie to the traditional box step.

The Redwood, also called the Redwood Playhouse, offers daily activities that include line-dance classes, live entertainment and senior dances, complete with disc jockeys and great local bands. The programs are open to all residents 50 years and older.

Going solo? No problem. Married couples and singles unite to burn up the dance floor at these daily programs. Although the Redwood is home to the largest permanent dance floor in Delaware County, seniors can also visit for a friendly card game or Bingo tournament.

The Redwood also serves as a meeting place for several groups, including Redwood Seniors, Sun Oil Retirees and Park Side Seniors.

Based on the crowd, visitors like what they see. Each week, 600 to 700 senior citizens gather. Most visitors note that they've been attending the senior dances since the "red barn" underwent renovations over 15 years ago.

"The Redwood Community Center is a great way for our retired residents to socialize and enjoy free entertainment offered by Delaware County," said County Council Chairman Jack Whelan. "Local performers like Sal April and the Good Times band provide quality music and I encourage our seniors to take advantage of this fun opportunity to branch out, get exercise, and meet new people."

(More)

(Redwood continued)

Frank and Edie Benditt of Glenolden founded the Redwood Seniors group in 1993. While Sun Oil Retirees mix business with pleasure, providing seminars on public safety and identity theft, in addition to their musical entertainment, the Redwood Seniors keep their club simple and focus on their love of dance.

The Redwood Seniors gather 9:30 a.m.-noon Tuesday and Friday mornings. Dancing ensues and the fun concludes with a 50-50 raffle, announcements for charitable opportunities and friendly banter. At a recent January get-together, the group pledged to donate health kits for displaced Haitian residents.

Many seniors choose to attend the morning line-dance class, break for a long lunch with friends and return for the 1 p.m. live band. Stop by any Tuesday morning and you'll find a congenial group of friendly people who've spent 15 years enjoying life on the dance floor.

What keeps them coming back? Strong friendships and a desire to keep moving.

"It's great. It keeps us off the streets!" joked Betty Guthan, treasurer for the Redwood Seniors.

"And off the bar stools," adds Vi Porter, Redwood Seniors vice-president. Joking aside, these seniors know that the key to a long and happy life is to stay active and physically fit.

All dances and concerts at the Redwood are free and open to the public. New members are always welcome. The Redwood offers ample parking and handicap access. The Redwood is closed on holidays. Cancellations due to inclement weather are announced over KYW radio (1060 AM).

For information about the Redwood Community Center, or any other Parks and Recreation programs, call (610) 565-7410 or visit the county Web site at www.co.delaware.pa.us and click on Parks and Recreation.

The Redwood Community Center in Upland Park, on 6th Street in Upland. Upland Park is one of 11 Delaware County parks. The County purchased the former Salvation Army camp in 1968.

A full schedule of entertainment at the Redwood Community Center is available through the County Department of Parks and Recreation.

Some of the highlights include:

- Dances are held 6:30-9:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday through February.
- Lessons in line dancing are taught 12:30-2:30 p.m. Monday and Friday and 9:30-10:30 a.m. Wednesdays through February.
- Live entertainment is featured 1-3 p.m. Tuesday and 6:30-9:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday. Sal April is featured on Feb. 3. Good Times is featured on Feb. 4 and Bobby at the Keyboard performs on Feb. 11.