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Pedal to the metal

By Adam Brandolph TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Friday, February 22, 2008

Andrew Joseph pedaled 6 miles on a dirt path in Squirrel Hill -- and he didn't even go outside.

Joseph, 30, of Swissvale worked up a good sweat on an Espresso Fitness bicycle, one of the new additions inside the Centerfit health and fitness center under renovation at the Jewish Community Center on Forbes Avenue.

The \$4 million project will be completed by March 16, weeks before the Squirrel Hill building's 20th anniversary in April.

The Espresso Fitness bicycle has an LCD screen that displays scenarios ranging from riding through a forest to chasing a dragon, and is one of the new additions to Centerfit. It's proven intriguing enough even for traditional nonriders like Joseph.

story continues below



"I usually don't ride a bicycle, even outside," he said.

"It motivates you more than a regular bike does," said Kim Stuyvesant, 25, of Shadyside, who pedaled beside Joseph.

The JCC in Squirrel Hill is an epicenter, of sorts, for many East End families. The organization has 10,000 members and another 8,000 who belong at its facility in Scott, said Cathy Samuels, the JCC's director of marketing and communications.

The Centerfit renovation will enable the JCC to open its doors to new members, Samuels said.

"The JCC is for everybody," she said, emphasizing that people don't have to be Jewish to belong. "We address the entire community because, first and

Let's get physical

What: The Leatrice and John M. Wolf Centerfit health and fitness center

Where: Jewish Community Center, 5738 Forbes Ave., Squirrel Hill

Amenities: 53,000 square feet includes two dance studios, two gymnasiums, two racquetball courts, a walking track, indoor pool, training pool, WiFi access, locker rooms and fitness areas.

Details: 412-521-8010

Source: JCC of Greater Pittsburgh

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foremost, we are a community-oriented organization.

"There's no one that we don't include."

JCC and state funds, and donations from The United Jewish Federation, are paying for the renovations, Samuels said.

Architects faced the task of adding square footage while keeping within the building's existing walls. They did so by replacing three racquetball and squash courts with a tiered second level.

Bright paint, indirect lighting and the use of glass helped open the floor plan and give the fitness center a modern look.

A spiral staircase snakes down to a new strength-training area in the basement, where a spinning room houses about 40 stationary bikes and a multipurpose room provides space for instructional aerobics, Pilates or yoga classes.

"With every change," Samuels said, "we tried to accommodate the people who have made the JCC part of their everyday life for years."

Having fitness machines that almost anyone can use was a central tenet of the project, said Matt Proskin, a JCC fitness instructor.

"An athlete or a teenager," he said, "can use the same piece of equipment as a grandmother."

*Adam Brandolph can be reached at [abrandolph@tribweb.com](mailto:abrandolph@tribweb.com) or 412-320-7936.*

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