

ARE YOU OFF YOUR ROCKER?

Senior Fitness Expert's Talk at Duncaster Encourages Losing the Rocker, Getting Off the Clock and Grabbing the Compass for a New Direction Toward "Active Aging"

Bloomfield, CT – April 9, 2008 -- Dr. Thomas Sattler is a man on a mission -- to have older adults "get off the clock and grab the compass." He wants them to shift out of neutral, see where their life is going and begin utilizing it figuratively as a "directional indicator for establishing their legacy."

When the 68-year-old fitness expert recently talked with a group of older adults about what he calls "The Magic of Aging Well," he was a living example of what he preaches. With the energy and speaking stamina of a man decades younger, he made the packed audience of residents and guests at the Duncaster Community into believers.

Sattler said aging well is a matter of a simple and systematic attitude adjustment. He urged that now is the time for older adults to live for themselves. That means cultivating an active mind and maintaining a positive attitude. He advocated a combination of emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual, physical and vocational dexterity. "On the way down the hill, you don't want to pick up speed towards your own decline," Sattler said, "A positive outlook and active lifestyle can prevent that. It's all about attitude and the willingness to make changes. Health and wellness are both barometers for active aging and living well. We can help ourselves and each other to do that."

Sattler, an inductee into the National Fitness Hall of Fame last year, alongside aerobics founder Jackie Sorenson and "Incredible Hulk" Lou Ferrigno, is also the Director of Education and Program Development for SeniorFITness, a division of Alliance Rehab, and has seen it all with the transformational stories to prove it. His own mother led a better quality of life in her later years before she passed on due to Sattler's coaching with a healthy diet, exercise and drop in lingering weight when she had been previously sedentary. As a retired Marine, Sattler is often called upon to bolster battle-weary-but-fit young men home on leave in his native Chicago to maintain a positive attitude in the trenches.

Praising Duncaster as "one of the top two continuing life-care communities in the country," who is on the right track toward a total wellness philosophy for care and lifestyle, Sattler spoke with great affection for his own demographic. He encouraged seniors to be adventurers instead of martyrs, to raise their level of effectiveness and learn the tools to help develop a higher energy lifestyle. Sattler also cited laughter and friendship as two of the joys and factors in longevity. One female resident of Duncaster commented after the program, "I don't want to be around people with a negative attitude. At this age, you have to get what pleasure you can." -- more --

The “willingness to try,” Sattler said, is also key. Older doesn’t mean it’s over. It’s simply a transition to another stage of life that can continue to be one of quality with the right tools toward brain and body dexterity. An avid golfer and former coordinator for the training and conditioning programs for the Chicago Blackhawks and Chicago Cubs teams respectively, Sattler bucks the system of what he calls “traditional views of aging.” Quoting hockey great Wayne Gretzky, Sattler reminded the Duncaster audience that “You miss 100 percent of the shots that you never take.”

“Seniors today are in a unique leadership role,” Sattler said. “By 2015, there will be 86 million seniors in the marketplace. Baby boomers are looking at what seniors can do.” Duncaster’s President and CEO Michael O’Brien agreed. “If 40 is the new 30, maybe 80 is the new 70. We love the fact that our seniors can be role models for fitness. In fact, people in any age group can draw motivation from the process that Tom talks about to lead happier, healthier lives.”

Sattler left the crowd with a challenge that was in the form of a poem that Sattler authored, entitled, *Are You Off Your Rocker?* ending with:

*“ . . . The oldest seniors tell us that life is fulfilling,
But you have to be ready and willing,
To open up the wellness locker,
And make a vow to get off your rocker.”*

It’s something that the Duncaster Community advocates. “Tom’s approach is a refreshing one,” said O’Brien, who adds that “This type of “active aging” philosophy is something that is both inspiring and motivating for our seniors. We like to provide our residents with the activities and social interaction to benefit every aspect of their lives and the impact on their physical well being and mental acuity shows as a result. When you see an 85-year-old doing laps at our aquatic center, it’s a testament to that person’s zest for life and staying fit even at an advanced age. You can’t help but be inspired by that. I know it inspires me!”

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Here are Ten Tips from Dr. Thomas Sattler's "The Magic of Aging Well":

- 1) Live by the compass – not the clock. Find an exciting direction, live in the present, not the past and establish your legacy.
- 2) Stay on the road to wellness not decline.
- 3) Get rid of fear and guilt; enhance love and develop a zest for living.
- 4) Concerning independence, dependence and interdependence: be as independent as possible but ask for help when you need it and give help when you can.
- 5) Obey the rules and avoid the pettiness.
- 6) Adjust your attitude and turn up the positive with laughter and companionship.
- 7) Become emotionally sound; stay in tune with your emotions but don't wear your heart on your sleeve.
- 8) Embrace activity and high energy to encourage and maintain both brain and body fitness and effectiveness.
- 9) Be mindful of limitations but set goals and take them one step at a time.
- 10) Share these tips and help a friend.

About Duncaster

Duncaster is Bloomfield's signature life care retirement community. This campus of 190 independent residences, assisted living and Duncaster's Caleb Hitchcock Health Center is designed to provide a lifestyle of security and fulfillment. The community includes an aquatic and fitness center and an on-site health clinic. Residents can participate in ongoing education, social and cultural programs. For more information, see www.duncaster.org or call (860) 380-5005.

About Dr. Thomas P. Sattler, Ed.D.

Thomas P. Sattler is the Director of Education and Program Development for the SeniorFITness division of Alliance Rehab, an HRA company. He leads the division's consulting practice and wellness team, and is a sought-after educator and speaker for retirement community and long-term care organizations, corporations, professional associations and other groups. He is also noted as an author on healthcare topics. Dr. Sattler is a University of Illinois Chicago associate professor emeritus, having retired from the faculty of the university's College of Applied Health Services after a 40-year teaching career. AT UIC, he chaired the graduate specialization of Applied Exercise Physiology and taught and advised undergraduates in the areas of Functional Anatomy, program Leadership, Assessment and Exercise Prescription. Dr. Sattler also has coordinated the training and conditioning programs for the Chicago Blackhawks professional hockey team (1978-1981) and the Chicago Cubs Major League Baseball team (1982-1988). In March of 2007, he was inducted into the National Fitness Hall of Fame. For more information, visit www.hranet.com.
