

## Family Resource Network looks to new programs for those with disabilities in Salem County

Posted by

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**SALEM** -- The Family Resource Network (FRN) is working to start a new program for those with disabilities to Salem County.

The FRN consists of the Autism Family Services of New Jersey, Caregivers of New Jersey, The Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey and the Family Support Center of New Jersey.

The FRN has teamed up with Rowan University to start "Get Fit."

The purpose of "Get Fit" is to improve access to wellness programs for people with disabilities and their caregivers, increase the capacity of the field of health and wellness to serve individuals with disabilities, and improve early detection of secondary conditions and their risk factors.

The program, which has been serving the disabled of Gloucester and Camden counties for the past year, is run by Rowan University professor Dr. Barbara Wilhite.

"I decided to coordinate this program because believe in its mission and I wanted to get involved in that," she said.

Last year the program had 25 participants.

Although the majority of the program takes place on Rowan University's campus, the organization has done a few sessions at The Arc of Salem County, which sparked the interest of several Salem County residents.

"Get Fit" uses Rowan University students to teach disabled persons and their caregivers proper nutrition and fitness plans.

According to Wilhite, clients usually come in for three sessions to determine their personalized nutrition plans and up to three times a week to work on their individual fitness plans.

Wilhite believes that "Get Fit" is beneficial to all who participate, clients, caregivers, and students included.

"The clients benefit because people with disabilities typically have less access to wellness facilities and now they have the opportunity to workout, interact with, and meet new people," she said. "Many of the caregivers have said that they enjoy the program because they learn things they can do as a family. The program also reminds them that their health is important. And the students benefit as well, working with the clients enhance their ability to help a more diverse population. I think it is a win-win for all involved."

Because the program uses the school's facilities and students, it runs according to the academic schedule. The program will hold an orientation meeting at the end of the month, and plans to operate from September through May.

Those who are interested in participating in the "Get Fit" program can contact Dr. Barbara Wilhite at **(856) 685-8852** or visit the FRN Web site at **[www.familyresourcenetwork.org](http://www.familyresourcenetwork.org)**.

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