

seniors



Kinesiology department reaches out

The Department of Kinesiology at the University of Texas at El Paso has initiated a community service program in which El Paso seniors can achieve the principles of successful aging.

Under the leadership of Sandor Dorgo, assistant professor in the department, money has been obtained from the Paso del Norte Health Foundation.

This money provides a basis for a comprehensive health and wellness program that brings El Pasoans to UTEP to work with kinesiology senior students.

Thirty seniors with an average age of 67 are enrolled in the program and are trained to become "ambassadors" of successful aging. Participants are trained by a well-structured fitness program three times a week and also attend educational classes to learn about the various aspects of aging, health and fitness.

Because of the funding, these services are free. The first seven months serve as Stage 1 of the long-term program. In Stage 2, the 30 partic-



first seven months serve as Stage 1 of the long-term program. In Stage 2, the 30 participants will act as mentors and role models for 60 newly recruited participants.

Our plan is to expand this program by doubling the number of our participants in each stage. We are hoping that this program will soon have a substantial positive impact on El Paso by improving the health and fitness of our senior citizens.

The project is a cooperative venture that provides kinesiology senior and graduate students the experience of working with clients while providing service to the community.

Thus, this program is an opportunity for UTEP and the department to become a showcase of service to the community while providing learning experiences to the students.

"We have the personnel, facilities, knowledge and the skills to serve the older adults in El Paso with a personalized, high-quality health-related physical fitness program at no costs to the participants," said Harry Meeuwsen, chairman of the Department of Kinesiology. "We will educate our participants in the area of health and fitness and encourage them to become mentors for other citizens in El Paso. I am not aware of any other organization who has taken this approach."

The program has been running for more than two months with great success and health improvement of the participants.

Sandor Dorgo, assistant professor at the UTEP Kinesiology Department, submitted the article. Send questions or suggestions to SALSA, 1100 N. Stanton Suite 610, El Paso, TX 79902.