

Fitness club celebrates 15 years in Bancroft area

By Sarah Sobanski

Bancroft Fitness has celebrated its 15th anniversary.

The fitness club started in January 2002 as a clinic for those with mobility challenges such as fibromyalgia. It became a place for those with a medical need to get active to work on their health affordably. It then morphed into a place for the community to get active, inclusive to men and women of all ages.

"We're trying to have a clinic where you can have, at a slow time, these people who medically need to exercise can come in. We've had people from the integration association, disabled people, people with chronic pain syndromes ? lots of different needs to be able to come to exercise. That kind of got it started," said medical liaison and former president of the club's board Dr. Carolyn Brown.

It was also a place for children to expand their sports training outside of school. The club has seen Team Canada and university level athletes over its years across from the Dungannon Recreation Centre.

"We've had people come that have lowered blood pressure, diabetes. We've had people rehab for injuries [such as] knees [and] hips ? those kinds of things ? weight loss. [There's been] a little bit of everything," said club trainer and fitness instructor Heather Lockwood.

She added, "I think the main thing for me is working with people who have health issues that with exercise have improved. Some people think that that doesn't happen, but if you put your work into it, it does happen."

One woman who attended the anniversary party in May said that when she started with Lockwood she was only able to be on the treadmill for five minutes. Now, she can do 25 and she's only been training a year.

"It's about your life, your heart and your body. That's what's important to me is your life, not how you look," said Lockwood.

The club building was originally town offices, before Dungannon amalgamated with Bancroft. It was used as a boardroom and for town meetings. Before that it was a two-room public school. Town council then gave up the building for a place for community members to get active. The rest is history.

"You can have 10 people working out in here and everybody gets along," said president of the board Ron Speck, explaining there's never any fighting over equipment.

"That's true because when there's 10 people here three of them are visiting," joked board director Tom Malloy.

The club has also become a co-ordination centre for athletics in the area, such as organized sports. Anyone looking to know more or to find out about club rates can check out the club's renovated **website**. They can also call 613-332-6257.