



Leader photo by LAURA SLOAN

Louisiana Tech University Dean of the College of Applied and Natural Sciences James Liberatos passes out a pedometer to Dubach Health Outreach Project participant Clara Campbell. The project kicks into gear as mentors start health information meetings and physical activities this week.

Health project involves much study, stretching, swinging

By Laura Sloan
Education Reporter

Dubach residents will soon discuss nutrition and country line dancing as the first steps to prepare for a new, healthier lifestyle.

The Dubach Health Outreach Project (DUHOP), a three-year program to combat obesity and related chronic diseases in Dubach and neighboring communities, takes off this week with several activities on tap.

"Our bodies are designed to exercise," said Louisiana Tech University Dean of the College of Applied and Natural Sciences James Liberatos, who spoke to Dubach's residents about good health at last Thursday's kickoff meeting. "We lose sight of that because we have so many conveniences—such as remote controls and grocery stores with everything in one place."

Earlier this year, under the direction of Tech professor Mary Murimi, the university's department of Human Ecology received a Rural Health Care Services Outreach grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration for more than \$500,000 to

launch DUHOP.

More than 200 adults and 85 high school students have received health screenings to participate in the project.

"Out of the 200 adults, 45 percent were rated as overweight, and 30 percent had diseases or risk factors they were not aware of," Tech Director of the School of Human Ecology Janet Pope said. "That was the purpose of these screenings—to target problems before (damage was done)."

Many health plans target the outcome, or short-range goals such as losing weight, Pope said.

"How many of us remember the first time Oprah Winfrey lost all that weight?" Pope asked the numerous residents inside the Dubach Community Center at the kickoff meeting. "After a few months she gained it back. She was not keeping it off because the program she was on focused on a short-term goal rather than lifestyle change."

Nine Dubach and Hico area residents have been selected and trained to serve as mentors to educate their fellow community members about ways to make long-lasting changes in diet and exercise.

One mentor, Dubach Mayor Margaret Rogers, encourages all residents with a

Dubach mailing address to partake in country line dancing at 6:30 p.m., Thursday at the Dubach Community Center.

"Anybody can come," she said. "Even if they have not been screened."

Ann Houch, one of the Hico Baptist Church mentors, said her group will meet at 6:30 p.m., Monday in the fellowship hall to hand out pedometers and nutrition information and set up an exercise program.

The Hopewell Baptist Church group plans to get together on Saturdays at 8 a.m. inside the Community Center.

Hico group mentors include Janet and Brenda Murphy, Martha Craft and Houch. Hopewell mentors are Bonnie Gipson and Janice Hargrove.

Rogers, Margie Dyes and Gina Stokes are mentors for the Dubach Community Center group.

For additional meeting information contact Stokes at 777-3482.

Rogers emphasized the importance of getting involved with DUHOP to maintain good health.

"I discovered everything that can go wrong with your body will if you don't diet and exercise," she said.