

The City—It Never Gets Old

By Dane Wells

A new, groundbreaking organization, Friends in the City, or FitC, a membership based “community without walls,” is open to all who wish to enrich their urban experience. FitC is part of Friends Center City (FCC), a nonprofit Quaker-based organization that also manages FCC Riverfront, a residential community at 22 South Front Street. Unlike many residential community-programming efforts, FCC decided to take a groundbreaking step and open its membership to adults beyond the walls of Riverfront so all could enjoy its benefits.

In addition to a book club, play reading group and walking group, FitC organizes a monthly dinner and Curtis concert as well as an intimate monthly luncheon with a civic leader at a private club. A group makes a monthly visit to various ethnic restaurants around the city and another explores the area parks. FitC also coordinates *Continue on page 10*



Judy Wicks, a well known champion for sustainable eating and living, was a recent speaker at the monthly luncheon meeting of the Friends in the City held at the Cosmopolitan Club on Latimer Street.

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cultural and education experiences but tends to focus on under-the-radar events. Some members also find interesting and engaging volunteer opportunities through FitC, which is not surprising given the organization's Quaker roots.

According to Ted Reed, the President of FCC, "Friends in the City is the first organization of its kind in the United States." Apparently, adult residential communities have never before greatly expanded their portfolio of activities and invited adults of all ages to participate. "The advantage of this is that FitC is not just made up of an older age group," says Reed.

The organization thrives on its diversity. Some of its members may later join a

participating residential community; others may live in what are called "naturally occurring residential communities" (NORC) and want to broaden their horizons. Should a FitC member later choose to join FCC Riverfront or a Center City NORC, they would have the advantage of already knowing many of their new neighbors.

Experts on aging agree that most people enter residential communities too late in life to get the full advantage of their benefits. FitC is a good way for adults to test the waters and see if this type of community fits their needs. By getting involved with FitC, one can get to know those who have already made the move to a residential community and be better able to decide if this option would be good for them. Unlike the many

fine suburban options, FCC and FitC focus on those who live in the city and want to continue to enjoy urban life.

The philosophy of FCC and FitC is grounded in its Quaker roots: All people are inherently worthy, have different capacities and strengths and deserve to be treated with integrity. Furthermore, all religious and ethical traditions should be honored.

Membership in Friends in the City is just \$25 per season or \$50 for the year. For more information, go online to www.friendscentercity.org, email to info@friendscentercity.org or call 267-639-5257.