

St. Paul's Towers' Ping Pong Players Serve Up Good Exercise and Company

Four times a week, the table tennis players at St. Paul's Towers get together for company, exercise, and some good old-fashioned fun. The friendly team invites all to participate, no matter their skill level.

When resident Lorraine Highkin was looking for some more physical activity, the group was a hit. She's now known among her peers for her lightning-fast reflexes, built from muscle memory during her tennis playing years. "My body's accustomed to moving," Lorraine said. "Ping-Pong keeps me active."

For others, table tennis appeals to their competitive side. Evan Custer, who is in charge of the group, has a passion for sports and is always looking to better his game. His responsibilities include rotating players and keeping score. In the past, he's organized tournaments where residents play against staff members round-robin style.



Residents serve up fun and fitness.

Whether playing singles or doubles, table tennis gives Evan the chance to practice key skills like hand-eye coordination. Jill Custer, Evan's wife, says table tennis helps players stay sharp. "One of the people who got me into Ping-Pong here was an older gentleman with Parkinson's," she noted. "Despite his illness, he was a good player." Even players who haven't picked up a paddle in 50 years quickly find their chops again.

In the eight years that Evan and Jill have lived at St. Paul's Towers, they have made the table tennis court their second home. Along with a half dozen other core members, they create a welcoming environment for residents to socialize. "Anyone who wants to come can join," Evan said. "It's lots of fun."

Each group practice is an hour long and prospective players can drop in whenever they would like. Whether a newcomer to the sport or a seasoned player, they're sure to have a good time. Lorraine sure does. "It's a bright spot in my day," she said.