

YMCA's Healthy Kids Day a hit with parents and kids

Also, Mandarin Garden Club holding plant sale today.

The Mandarin YMCA was an extra-noisy place to visit April 17. That's because families were busy putting some play in their day.

Children of all ages took part in the Y's Healthy Kids Day, learning lots of ways to live healthier and enjoy staying well and fit together.

The day started with bounce houses, face-painting and swim-testing in the pool. It wound down with a watermelon eating contest and "Zumbatomic" dancing. In between, kids and their parents enjoyed golf putting games in the pool, testing foods in the veggie fear factor challenge, making crafts, playing tennis, completing an obstacle course and watching a Wee Chefs demo.

"It's great," Amanda Boyd said of the day as her 6-year-old daughter, Sally, finished having her face painted. "There's something for everybody."

Boyd and Rita Mankin, parents who are regulars at the Y, said they believe children should learn the importance of staying healthy at an early age.

Elise Fenstermaker, a registered dietician who works with the Y, said it's also important for families to learn how to make wise food choices.

"I'm here to promote healthy



Photos by RHONDA REESE/For Mandarin Sun

Mandarin Garden Club members McGlade Holloway (from left), Sonia Jacobson, Sharon Wagan, Barbara Price, Becky Bathen, Mary Forester and Yvonne Corbett get ready for the plant sale.

eating," Fenstermaker said. "Little things can make such a big difference."

Little things such as eating a healthy breakfast, packing a healthy lunch, exploring kid-friendly healthy recipes and learning about the food pyramid. Fenstermaker handed out colorful worksheets showing parents how many servings of milk, fruits, vegetable, grains and meats children of different ages need per day.

She also set up a table where children and parents could make their own trail mix from healthy ingredients such as high fiber cereal, fruit and nuts.

"Picking up good habits when you are young can last a lifetime," Fenstermaker said.

Those good habits, she said, include eating healthy, making physical activity a part of play-

time, allowing children to have some unstructured playtime and limiting use of electronic media.

Big bargains available today

Today's the day. If you've been looking for something

green for your garden, luscious for your lawn or artsy for an outdoor room, you'll want to spend some time between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road.

Once again, members will have herbs, cacti, annuals,

container gardens, small trees, roses, gardening tools, gardening books and magazines, baskets, yard art and other treats for sale at their annual fund-raising plant sale. This event has been a favorite for visitors since it started six years ago.

"It's just continued to grow," said club vice president, Mary Forester. "It's a fun day."

In addition to "home-grown" plants for sale, garden-related vendors will share their wares.

Shoppers also can bring items to the sale. Eyeglasses will be collected for the Lions Club, cell phones for Duval County 4-H clubs and food for the Mandarin Food Bank. In addition, the garden club welcomes the donation of empty ink cartridges to help with its office supplies.

For more information about the club or its activities, call 268-1192.

Send news and tales from Mandarin, Beauclerc and other areas in the 32223, 32257 and 32258 ZIP codes to Rhonda Reese at 207-3232 or glreese@bellsouth.net. For events, information must be received at least 10 days in advance.



Rhonda Reese

Neighborhood Notes

Volunteer Anaïke Jeanphilippe paints Maria Mankin's face as her mother, Rita, looks on.



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