

Business

Residents embrace Wellness Expo

> Laura Cummings

With health and well-being continuing to gain momentum as top priorities for many, OrLéans played host to the second-ever Ottawa Wellness Expo earlier this month.

Held Sunday, April 6 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Mouvement d'implication francophone d'OrLéans (OrLéans Cultural Centre), the expo offered lectures and demonstrations exploring the areas of martial arts, fitness and yoga, as well as general wellness advice from 29 exhibitors.

Approximately 250 visitors came out during the day to learn more about how to stay healthy, explains organizer Dr. Nathalie Beauchamp of Beauchamp Chiropractic.

"(The expo) lets people know what's available in the east end to them," she says, adding that both the number of exhibitors and visitors increased from last year's original edition. "A lot of people have questions when it comes to wellness."

Though offering a wide-ranging list of services, all exhibitors connected in some way to three key wellness areas, Beauchamp continues, either physical, nutritional or psychological. Each of them also offer wellness methods and services that are free of drugs or chemicals, she adds, and focus on preventing rather than simply treating.

"It's an alternative way to obtain wellness," Beauchamp explains. "It's optimizing your life. You have to be proactive ... you can't wait for disease to be knocking at your door."

For the businesses involved, one benefit was the "targeted market" attending the expo, she says, who already have a vested interest in the wellness realm.

"Everyone's thinking more about their health," agrees Dianne Villeneuve-

Labonté, owner of Personal Pace Fitness, an OrLéans-based circuit-training facility for women, and a second-time exhibitor at the expo.

The event allows health-minded residents to expand their knowledge of wellness-related topics and make better health decisions, she adds.

Overall, visitors "seemed to enjoy it – there were quite a few people there," Villeneuve-Labonté says.

Denise Tattersall, owner of OrLéans Wellness and Massage, also returned to the expo as an exhibitor this year. The natural health practitioner and iridologist – who works alongside five full-time registered massage therapists – says she decided to participate in the event to support fellow east-end wellness-based businesses.

"We loved the idea it was all east-end businesses," she explains. "It's important for the community."

With the expo geared specifically towards health-related topics, Tattersall continues, it drew a group of people looking to learn more about the realm of wellness – many from the OrLéans area.

"There are a lot (of these services) in Centretown, and the west end has developed quite nicely ... it's time for the east end to start paying some attention," she says, adding that the availability of area wellness services is now comparable to anywhere else in the city. "That's exactly what (the expo) does."

Looking towards next year, Beauchamp laughs that she "may not have a choice" when it comes to the decision of whether or not to hold the expo.

"I think people will be expecting it," she adds.

For more information, please visit www.expo.beauchampwellness.ca.