

Getting better at living well

SOUND HEALTH INCLUDES SOLVING DAILY PROBLEMS AND ADVOCATING FOR PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

Paul and Anita Bjorling had polio as children but worked and raised a family without missing a beat. As they approached their 60s, however, daily routines began to sap their energy.

Hoping to avoid chronic medical conditions related to inactivity, including depression, the Eureka couple — like more than 150 Kansans — signed up for the workshop “Living Well With a Disability.” With seven other **Eureka** residents, the Bjorlings took the eight-week sessions offered in **El Dorado** by KU’s Research and Training Center on Independent Living.

Topics included problem-solving, exercise, and nutrition. The Bjorlings, for instance, added more fruit to their diet and began playing a new Wii fitness game. They also learned methods of advocating for change. Anita said: “Talking to others who had similar needs and concerns encouraged us to become involved by seeing it as a community need instead of a personal inconvenience.”

One result: The group’s goal of getting more and better sidewalks and a chair lift for the swimming pool in their Greenwood County community is being considered by the city council.

rtcil.org



Anita and Paul Bjorling of Eureka and their service dog, Crash.



CARING FOR THE CAREGIVERS

Mary and Richard Weathers of **Pittsburg** are among the thousands of families in 11 counties who have benefited from Southeast Kansas Respite Services Inc. since its inception in 1991. Richard is the daily caregiver for Mary, who has Alzheimer’s disease, but is able to get away a few hours every month while Respite Services — a program of the **KU Life Span Institute at Parsons** in collaboration with partner agencies — provides a companion for Mary in their home.

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