

## **New Faces Help Build A Community And Make A Difference**

*By: Dave Hogsett / Jan 18th, 2025*

The first several weeks of 2025, I have seen new faces at LifePlex where I work out. Some are actually old faces returning. A few have been people I know from other settings. One of their New Year resolutions may have been to work out more. Some are people I have never seen before. I wonder how many of them will be around when spring arrives. Studies show that that average date people no longer keep a New Year resolution is Jan. 13. If that is the case, I may never see several of them again.

The people who work out at LifePlex represent wide, divergent approaches to exercise and have numerous goals. The facility has a wide variety of offerings: cardio machines, strength machines, workout equipment, weights, a track, two pools, a gym, two courts, and various other kinds of equipment. There is something for everyone. I am fascinated by the individual exercises people come up with. Just when I think I have seen every possibility, someone will come up with something new.

An important element of a trip to LifePlex is conversation. There is a group of young men who use the equipment and weights and who always make sure to properly greet each member of their group when he arrives. They also spend a lot of time in discussion. The mornings will find a group of older men and women seated in a circle around a low table, drinking coffee, and discussing. Almost everyone engages in conversation electronically. Have to keep up! Recently while I was doing 10 minutes on a recline bike, I could see two young men at the leg extension machine engage in another kind of conversation. One of the young men was praying for the other.

LifePlex is a good source of information. You can pick up one of two monthly publications that contain news and information about the region. Several years ago, I found the name and address of a person who trapped animals on a note on a bulletin board. People will leave brochures about a variety of events and opportunities taking place in the community. There is an abundance of oral information.

In the fourth chapter of the Book of Ruth, Boaz goes up to the town gate and asks Ruth's guardian-redeemer and 10 elders to join him. He is wanting the guardian-redeemer to state publicly if he intends to redeem Ruth. The city gate was the town's meeting place where business was discussed, conversations were held, commerce took place and community built. LifePlex serves a similar community function for Plymouth. It is more than just a place to work out.

Every fall brings an influx of new faces. Athletics from Marion University and Ancilla College practice at LifePlex and play their games in the facility's gym. For a part of their workout, they interact with the members. One day I met a volleyball player who was from the west coast of England. Since Ancilla is a two-year school, every year almost half of the players are new. Ancilla College and their sports teams add to the social capital of Plymouth and Marshall County.

What new faces will you see in 2025? How will they be helping to build community and making a difference in your life? Some may be faces that have come a short distance, others may have come a long way. Each one will have something to add to your day.

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