



FROM THE ACL NETWORK

Spotlight on Almyra Rourke and Enhance®Fitness

Staying active is an important way we can remain independent and engaged members of our communities. That's why the Administration for Community Living (ACL) is committed to connecting older adults with evidence-based [programs and activities that enhance their health, well-being, and quality of life](#). In honor of this year's Older Americans Month theme, Communities of Strength, we are highlighting an ACL-funded [falls prevention](#) program that helps older adults to become more active, energized, and empowered – stronger.

Enhance®Fitness is a group physical activity program that helps older adults sustain independent lives and prevent functional decline. Two or three times per week, participants attend a one-hour class led by a trained exercise instructor. Typically held at community centers and other accessible sites, many organizations have been holding virtual classes due to COVID-19. Each class includes a series of workouts that focus on cardio, strength training, balance, and flexibility. In addition to exercise, the program provides a fun atmosphere for older adults of all fitness levels to socialize and connect with their peers. According to [Project Enhance](#), over 99% of participants would recommend the program to a friend.

One participant who has noticed great benefits from the program is Almyra Rourke of Ypsilanti, Michigan. Once an employee of the Willow Run Aircraft Factory made famous by female bomb builders who inspired WWII's Rosie the Riveter, Almyra recently celebrated her 100th birthday. At 100, she still lives independently in her own home and stays active by participating in Enhance®Fitness three times a week through the [National Kidney Foundation of Michigan](#).

Almyra credits the program for allowing her to continue her active lifestyle, and her hard work and dedication have paid off. Nowadays, you will often find her spending time out and about with her daughter, shopping for groceries, visiting with friends, and even picking up her younger daughter from the airport. "I shouldn't brag, but I am quite strong," says Almyra of her physical condition.

The Enhance®Fitness classes also allow her to socialize, especially during the past year of the pandemic. "It's such a social outlet," she says. Even though she and her fellow participants now only see one another virtually, "We feel like we know each other!"

Almyra knows that if she weren't committed to being active, her life would be very different – not just physically but also in terms of mental health. "In these last three years, I would have lost ground. But my mind stays well because you're happy when you're exercising."

In honor of her milestone birthday, Almyra received a surprise visit from the American Rosie the Riveter Association of Michigan. They celebrated both her special day and her wartime contributions with a drill team chant and by leading the neighborhood in singing "Happy Birthday" to the new centenarian.

More about Almyra's Story

Radio interview: [The Lucy Ann Lance Show](#)
Article on birthday surprise: [MLive Michigan](#)
