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Story last updated at 7:33 a.m. Monday, August 2, 2004

KEEPING FIT

Skin-cancer screening: Free skin-cancer screenings will be conducted by MUSC's Hollings Cancer Center from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. Saturday near the gate of Whirlin' Waters Adventure Waterpark in North Charleston. The water park is located inside Wannamaker County Park. No appointment is necessary for the screenings. For more information, call 792-3565.

Studio space: Personal training studios are available at LifeQuest to those who want a more intimate setting for guided one-on-one or small-group exercise programs. They are located at LifeQuest Express at the Shoppes at Brickyard in Mount Pleasant (where Gravity Studio Fitness used to be). In addition to custom exercises, individual nutrition programs are offered. For more information, call Allison Foster at 452-9108 or 556-5749 or e-mail allison@lqhw.com.

Find a pickup game: A new Web site, called GameSnake.com, connects recreational athletes, including disabled ones, with pickup games in their area. GameSnake is a free service that matches players with pickup games and teams in more than 80 sports. It uses a player's age, gender, location and sports preferences to match them with games and teams on courts, fields and at facilities in their area. GameSnake also offers team managers tools to start and manage team rosters, games and schedules. In addition, it has added features to cater to athletes with disabilities. For more information, go online at GameSnake.com.

Lunchbox lesson: Parents interested in making healthier lunches for their children can stop by Earth Fare in Mount Pleasant between noon and 3 p.m. Saturday. Parents also may register to win back-to-school giveaways. For more information, call Mandi Starnes at the Towne Centre store, 284-0240.

The truth about Hospice: Myth: Hospice is a place.

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Reality: Hospice workers go wherever needed -- a person's home, a nursing home, a hospital room or a free-standing hospice house.

Myth: Hospice is just for people with cancer.

Reality: Hospice is compassionate end-of-life care for those expected to die within six months of heart, lung, kidney, liver or brain diseases or Alzheimer's as well as cancer.

Myth: Hospice is expensive.

Reality: Most hospices are Medicare-certified and there are few, if any, out-of-pocket expenses. For younger people, many insurance plans cover hospice or may be willing to convert a home-health-care benefit to hospice care. Most hospices also have indigent-care plans for people with no insurance.

Myth: Hospice can only help those with family members to care for them.

Reality: Many hospices coordinate with other community resources to provide home care for people who have no family, or they can help find an alternate location where care will be provided.

Myth: Hospice is just for people who require a low level of care.

Reality: Hospices employ medical professionals skilled in symptom control and state-of-the-art pain management. The hospice team coordinates care with the personal physician.

Myth: Hospice care hastens death.

Reality: Hospice care neither hastens nor prolongs death. In some cases, patients improve and leave hospice care for a time. Even when that does not occur, life for the patient -- and the patient's family -- is enhanced by the nature of hospice care.

Additional information: [The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization](#) reports that nationally, 885,000 patients had hospice care in 2002, up from 450,000 in 1996. The median length of care was 20.9 days, down from 29 days in 1995. Some 86 percent of those served by hospice in 2002 had Medicare or Medicaid, and their hospice costs were covered at 100 percent.

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