

# Brain Fitness

Cary seniors benefit from mental workouts



Written By Tom Harris  
Photography By David Sciabarasi

Woodland Terrace Activities Director Carola McClure encourages resident Betty McManus while she works through the Brain Fitness Program.

A year or so ago, Jo Kastelberg, age 81, had trouble remembering the names of her grandchildren. She'd given up trying to do her own finances, turning that job over to her children. She had a computer once, but gave it to her grandson.

"I never used the thing," she said. "I was afraid of it."

Today, Kastelberg not only does her own finances, with the help of her husband Joe, she also remembers all the grandkids and corresponds with them regularly — by e-mail.

"I keep a budget now; I know what I'm spending," said Kastelberg. "... And now I'm sending e-mails all over the country, to my grandchildren. I've noticed that I'm interested in a lot more things."

"I first heard of it at a conference and thought it was a wonderful program," said Carola McClure, Woodland Terrace's activi-

ties director. "But it was expensive, and I knew it wasn't within our budget."

**"It was like my mind had been coasting for a long, long time. I was like Sleeping Beauty, who woke up and found all of these wonderful things around me. I'd like to keep going."**

Luckily, a few months later, officials from PositScience called Woodland Terrace Executive Director Tom Ford

when the company began offering its product to retirement communities.

Details were worked out, and Woodland Terrace held its first Brain Fitness classes — two classes of six students each — last year. Woodland Terrace pays the costs of the computer programs, which run \$395 or more.

"We were the first facility on the eastern seaboard to use it," said McClure. "I believe strongly in it. And it's a worthwhile amenity to offer to our residents."

The Brain Fitness Program uses a series of six exercises designed to focus on listening to, storing, then recalling information. The "practice" sessions last one hour and are conducted five days a week for a period of eight weeks.

There have been no clinical trials to prove that such mental exercises can actually improve

brain function or delay the onset of age-related dementia or Alzheimer's disease. But PositScience officials claim that such exercises, by focusing on listening, can help the brain collect, store and recall information more efficiently.

Brain Fitness students from Woodland Terrace agree wholeheartedly.

Betty McManus, age 81, called the program "very beneficial." But, she added, a recent trip to the dentist showed her just how much she'd learned.

"The dentist told his assistant to get a certain thing, and she didn't hear him very well and got something different," McManus said. "I stopped her and told her exactly what the dentist had said.

"I could pick up on that because I paid close attention, which is what we learned from PositScience," she added. "My recent experiences have made me think that I got more out of the program than I thought I had."

Vivane Dunham, age 83, said she had seen a story about Brain Fitness on the TV

show "60 Minutes," and when Woodland Terrace offered the program, she was among the first to sign up.

"I enjoyed it; the exercises were fun,"

program left off. Both McManus and Dunham said they'd be first in line to register for the new program.

They'll have to beat Jo Kastelberg to get there.

Kastelberg has had two strokes and suffers from Parkinson's disease, which sometimes makes keyboarding difficult. She gets help from husband Joe, whom she met and married at Woodland Terrace about 2 1/2 years ago. Her first husband died shortly after the couple moved from California to the Triangle, to be closer to two of their four children.

"The program was difficult at times, but I thought it was fun," Kastelberg said. "About halfway through it, I woke up.

"It was like my mind had been coasting for a long, long time. I was like Sleeping Beauty, who woke up and found all of these wonderful things around me. I'd like to keep going."

And Jo Kastelberg now has all the equipment she needs to do that. For their second anniversary, Joe gave her a laptop computer. **CM**



Betty McManus, Viviane Dunham and Jo Kastelberg believe that the mental workouts on the computer have helped them retain and remember information more efficiently.

Dunham said. "And I remember things better now, particularly names."

McClure said that PositScience soon may offer a new version of the Brain Fitness Program, which will pick up where the first

**YOUR HOME TECHNOLOGY SOURCE**

**WE POUR OUR HEART AND SOUL INTO EVERY JOB,** always granting the appropriate time to plan and institute real solutions. The investment that you make in your home technology is a significant one; we understand that and respect your decision to choose our company to provide this service to you.

**WE OFFER YOU THE UTMOST IN PROFESSIONALISM,** knowledge, experience, education and passion. We have worked hard to unite our strengths, share new skills and introduce the latest products to bring before you the best home technology integration around.

**CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT TODAY.**  
Toll Free: 866-621-0631 or visit our Web site [www.AHAV.net](http://www.AHAV.net).

**IAX**  
INTEGRATED AUDIO VIDEO

**Advanced Home Audio & Video specializes in**

- Home Theater
- Surround Sound
- Home Networking
- Multi-room and Outdoor Sound
- Lighting Controls
- Home Automation
- Perimeter Monitoring Systems
- Central Vacuum

The ComPoint (paging/doorbell system) and iBridge iPod dock can be installed in new homes and into almost any existing home! For more information on these exciting lifestyle enhancements please visit our website and follow the link to [www.Russound.com](http://www.Russound.com).

Have Music Control in Every Room With This Easy to Use Audio Zone Keypad From Russound and AHAV

**2006 CARY CHAMBER MEMBER**