

Greenwood man establishes grant in parents' memory



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GREENWOOD—Although his father, Willie James Wideman Sr., died in 2009 and his mother, Bettye Jo Smith Wideman, died in 2010, Ram'on Wideman continues to support issues his parents were passionate about with the help of Community Initiatives Inc.

In addition to serving as the nonprofit's chief financial officer, Ram'on Wideman donated \$10,000 to be split between senior and youth programs.

Community Initiative's Safe Haven senior programs include respiratory health education and cancer awareness and education, and Safe Haven youth program focuses on education, after school, counseling and mental health.

Wideman, who is vice president for fiscal affairs at Denmark Technical College and manages and owns his own business, said he knew Community Initiatives will use the Wideman Memorial Fund the way he envisioned.

"I knew that the organization was a good steward of funds," he said. "For me, it was a no-brainer to give to an organization with a good track record of providing quality assistance for the population."

Community Initiatives kicked off the funding programming Thursday morning with chair aerobics during the monthly Senior Lunch Bunch meeting at the Community Initiatives Neighborhood Center located in the Mathews Mill Village.

As the Senior Lunch Bunch members stretched and flexed, Jennifer Moore, Anytime Fitness Greenwood manager, led about 20 seniors through the exercise to help the senior's respiratory health and fitness levels.

One of Wideman's parents' close friends, Matilda Mathis, 74, participated. Mathis said her doctors has been urging to her exercise more, so she tried the chair aerobics for the first time.

Mathis, who watched Wideman grow up and he was friends with one of her daughters, said the grant is a great thing for Community Initiatives.

Another Senior Lunch Bunch member, Molly Hart, 86, regularly does chair aerobics and said she got in a good workout Thursday.

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Although the Wideman Memorial Fund will touch various people's lives during 2016, Wideman is not a stranger at Community Initiatives.

Teresa S. Goodman, Community Initiatives Inc. executive director, said she started working with Wideman in 2014, and his level of professionalism is uncompromised.

In addition to consulting with Community Initiatives to help with financial affairs, Goodman said Wideman has also volunteered and taught financial stability classes.

"He has his hands in a lot of pots," she said.

With the funding focusing on senior health and education, Community Initiatives with the help of Wideman have designated various events throughout the year to target the goals including health screenings and education programs for both age groups.

The Self Regional Health Express will roll to the Community Initiatives Neighborhood Center at 201-203 Church Ave. Feb. 19 for health screenings as the month's event under Wideman's grant.

"I think they (my parents) would be very well pleased that services are being provided in their name to folks who can benefit from money to support their legacy," Wideman said.