

Despite construction, Newtown Youth Academy flourishes

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NEWTOWN -- With all the construction taking place at Fairfield Hills, attention is often diverted from the sports complex behind what will soon be Town Hall.

Even so, the Newtown Youth Academy is growing.

It now operates seven days a week to handle the 900 people who have signed on as members since it opened in November.

So far this spring, it has played host to soccer and tennis academies, preparing youth for spring and summer sports.

The building, with its three courts, turf field and weight room, is completely air-conditioned. There is a snack bar with healthy food and drink options and a birthday party room.

Day care is offered in the mornings so parents of young children can work out.

The staff is planning summer day camps for children of all ages and tournaments for high school students. They plan a re-opening in July, to remind people the academy is fully functioning.

There are movement and fitness programs for children as young as 3, who are also introduced to soccer, tennis, basketball and lacrosse -- all of which improve their hand-eye coordination.

"I think if we create the opportunity, kids will come," said program director Ken Good.

A spring fitness challenge is kicking off, in which members to compete against each other and themselves to reach their fitness goals.

"We understand people want to be outside (now) -- so do we," Good said. "When the oppressive heat of summer (arrives), people



will come back."

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But all the construction -- and its delays -- does affect business.

"We feel awful about the parking situation, but that is out of our hands," Good said.

When the Fairfield Hills tunnel work is done and Greenwich Hall is demolished, the long-awaited parking lot will be extended in front of the academy, to the site of the new Town Hall's green.

The academy staff remains positive about the re-opening in July, when the parking lot will be completed and the back fountain bubbling.

Behind the building there will be a bocci court and benches for people looking to get some air or shade while taking a break from working out or waiting for their children's day camp to wrap up.

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