

Sunday's Feature

YMCA branch opens

■ New Littlestown facility receives first visitors

By LISA LOEFFLER
Evening Sun Reporter

LITTLESTOWN — Even the frigid weather couldn't put a chill on the grand opening of the Littlestown Branch of the YMCA Saturday.

Hundreds of people visited the new facility at the corner and Keystone Street and Lakeview Drive, across from the community park and pool.

Some came as prospective members and some came as curious guests, and everyone seemed to like what they saw.

Bill and Sharon Morrow caught a tour with Ed Strevig, vice president of the Littlestown branch board of managers.

The Morrrows, who live just across the Maryland border, haven't joined the YMCA in the past, but were ready to become members of the new facility.

"We've been looking forward to it," Bill Morrow said, checking out the first floor's strength training room.

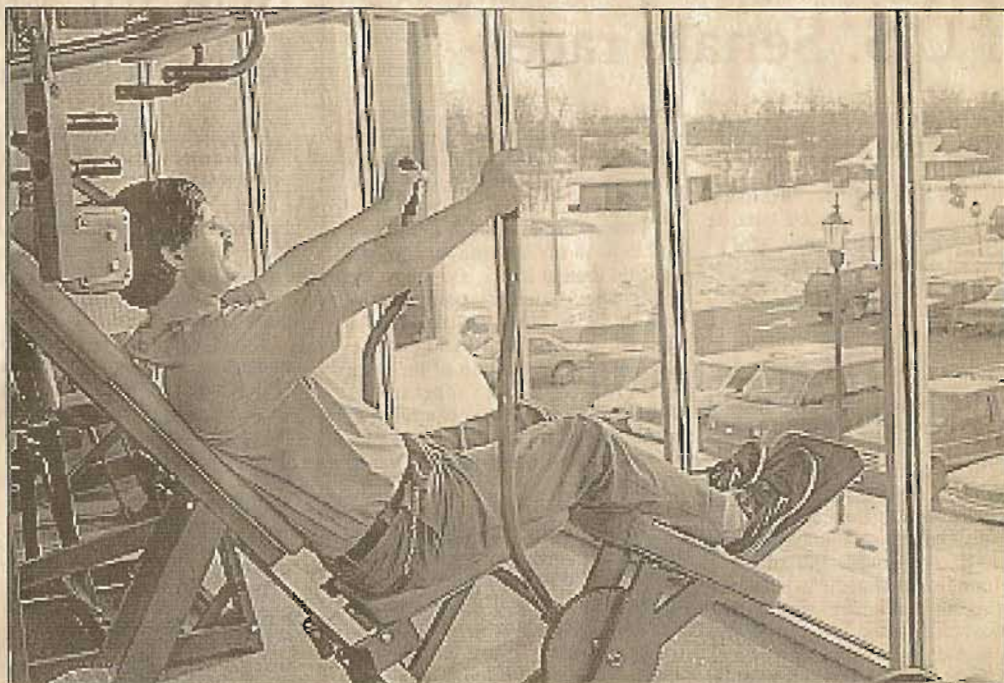
"It's beautiful," he said. "I think it's going to be a pleasure to come here."

Locker rooms, a whirlpool, sauna and the entrance to the full-size gym are also located on the building's first floor. The gym is not yet complete, but should be within the next month or so. When adequate funds are available, the YMCA will also finish the racquetball court off the strength training room.

An elevator will eventually be installed, although the facility is currently handicapped accessible on both floors.

The second floor houses what Strevig called the "signature room" — a cardiovascular Nautilus room in which the outside wall of the building is all glass windows. The airy room overlooks the parking lot and is bound to be the favorite of many exercisers.

"I love this room," said Howard Basehar, who was touring the YMCA with his son Chris. The



Evening Sun Photos by Lisa Loeffler

Howard Basehar tests the new equipment in the YMCA's cardiovascular Nautilus room. Basehar and his son, Chris, toured the building Saturday and found the cardiovascular room to be their favorite.



Less than a year after its groundbreaking, the Littlestown branch of the Hanover YMCA is open for business. Hundreds of people toured the facility during Saturday's grand opening.

two belong to the Hanover YMCA, which grants them access to the Littlestown branch as well.

"I'm impressed with this weight room," Basehar said.

A door off the Nautilus room leads to the running track around gym which will also be soon completed.

Other second-floor features include a meeting room that can be rented out and a bigger multipurpose room. Until the gym is done, exercise classes will probably be held in the multipurpose room, Strevig said.

"We're very happy with it," he said of the facility. "Everybody said that this could not be done in this size of town."

Barry Newton, branch executive director, said everyone involved with the project is very

pleased with the new building.

"It's really going to have an affect on this community," he said.

Almost all of the \$800,000 was raised from pledges and in-kind gifts, Newton said. This means that the building is more or less debt free, with costs only for staff and utilities.

When they broke ground in February 1992, the YMCA had been fund raising for about 1½ years and had about \$600,000. Newton said the project started with an understanding that they would complete the first floor and wait to do the second until more money became available. But as the project progressed, donations continued to come in, enabling almost all of the building to be completed at one time. Gifts and services worth more than \$125,000 were

"It's beautiful. I think it's going to be a pleasure to come here."

BILL MORROW

donated by area businesses and residents, Newton said.

The staff has already grown threefold and will probably continue to grow, Newton said.

For those who can't wait to get at it, the YMCA will be open for normal business today from 1 to 5 p.m., its normal Sunday hours. It will also be open Monday through Friday 6:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Newton said these hours of operation are just the starting hours and may change if necessary.

"We'll react to the needs of the community," he said. The YMCA offers programs to pre-schoolers through senior citizens, he said.

John and Sheila Chatlos live in Fairfield, but Littlestown holds a special interest for them. John Chatlos is retired as a pastor at St. James Church, but the two like to keep up on developments in the town. The couple liked what they saw at the grand opening.

"It's nice, it's lovely," John Chatlos said.

No one seemed to disagree with the Chatloses, which makes it all worthwhile for Newton and those connected with the YMCA.

"It's been a lot of work," he said. "But it's been rewarding."