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Program Promotes Fitness, Wellness

A program designed to promote fitness, selfness and wellbeing through the sport of running is making its debut in the United States, with Trenton being the first area in which the program is being presented.

Dr. Johannes Huber and his wife, Dr. Tania Heimsatz-Loyola are involved in a program called "Alpharun," a meditative form of running that was initially developed for military

pilots who were finding themselves physically and mentally exhausted after completing flying maneuvers. Col. Eligius Adam, a flight instructor and avid runner, was finding that his pilots were physically exhausted and mentally drained after a flight and he wanted to come up with a program to change that. At the time, pilots were doing deep breathing exercises, followed by a slow run.

Dr. Huber, meanwhile, was working on his doctoral thesis. An avid runner himself, Dr. Huber had a strong interest in the relationship of running and meditation. In meeting Col. Adam, they discussed those connections and were able to come up with the "Alpharun" concept - combining the sport of running with meditation.

According to Dr. Huber, it is a program that anyone can do.

"You don't have to be a run-

ner when you first start the process," Dr. Huber said. "The whole run is done at a relaxed pace so that those who don't run can do this as well as those who run a lot."

Dr. Huber said persons run two to three times per week for about 30 minutes in each session.

"It really doesn't require a lot of effort and time, but is

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very good for your health," he said.

State of mind is important in the process, he noted, as the relaxation techniques go hand-in-hand with the actual run.

"We have many influences from the outside that cause stress," he said. "This will help in relieving those stresses while running, which in turn helps promote fitness."

Four European countries are already involved in the Alpharun approach, which has become quite popular in Europe with many businesses using them as part of their wellness programs. The Alpharun headquarters is local in Thal Austria, home of Arnold Schwarzenegger who, Dr.

Huber said, is considered the father of fitness in Austria.

"It only made sense to base the company there, the home of fitness," he said.

With its success in Europe, Dr. Huber and his wife, Dr. Heimsatz-Loyola decided to expand the program into the U.S., with Trenton being the first stop. Why Trenton?

Dr. Heimsatz-Loyola, who serves in a counseling role with Alpharun, has strong ties to Trenton, having spent a year in the community as a Rotary Exchange student from 1998-99. While here, she lived with the Larry and Carolyn Schmidt, Phil and Connie Hoffman and Tim and Patty Whitaker families and it was her positive experience in Trenton that led them to decide that this would be a good place

to start.

"It is so nice to be back here," she said. "I have so many good memories."

The pair have been staying with the Schmidt family and will be in the area for another week before heading to Las Vegas, NV, where they will continue to promote their program.

But before they leave, they will have a seminar about the program in Trenton this Sunday afternoon. Persons interested in learning about it can come to the Eastside Park shelter house at 5 p.m. for a two-hour session. The session will include information about the theory of Alpharun as well as learning the technique and practicing. The cost is \$35 per person or \$30 each if you bring a friend.