

Trainer helps cancer recovery

By **MARTHA ALLEN**
Staff Reporter

Women recovering from the trauma of breast cancer can face emotional as well as physical difficulties. But a new personal trainer in Lake Oswego has some answers, in the form of an exercise program targeted specifically at breast cancer survivors.

Andrea Leonard recently moved to Lake Oswego from the Washington, D.C., area, where she developed the first fitness training program for breast cancer survivors. Intended to restore strength and flexibility as well as confidence, the classes are a source of support and motivation for participants, Leonard said.

Leonard also has written a book about the specialized program, which will be published in October 2000. In addition, she offers training for fitness professionals who are interested in working with breast cancer survivors.

"My mom had breast cancer, and when I was trying to put together an exercise program for her, I realized there was just little or nothing out there," Leonard said. She worked with doctors, specialists and other personal trainers to develop the program, which in the D.C. area was



ANDREA LEONARD

called "EM-POWER."

Here, classes and individual programs will be taught under the name "EMERGE." The sessions are intended to start about six weeks after a woman has surgery, and are tiered to become increasingly strenuous.

Beginning with flexibility and range-of-motion exercises, the program guides each participant through a routine that works all the major muscle groups, with a special

focus on upper body strength.

"I start with an individual assessment, where I take a health history and learn how the woman was affected by surgery and other treatment," Leonard said. "I look at posture, test endurance and her cardiovascular system, and work closely with her doctor to prepare the best program.

"I generally meet with her for an hour, then put together a program," Leonard said. "We meet two or three times a week for about eight weeks, then re-evaluate."

Strength is the primary focus of the program, but endurance, stretching and general fitness also are part of the workouts. Each day's session varies, Leonard said, to provide mental as well as physical stimulation for clients.

Classes will be offered at Oswego Pointe and at the Body Balance personal training studio in Portland. Leonard also will work with women in their homes if they prefer. Rates vary depending on where classes are held, she said.

People who are interested in learning more about the program may call Leonard at (503) 358-5353. Her business is called Leading Edge Fitness Consultants and is based in her home at Oswego Pointe.