

SOUTHERN DUTCHESS FOCUS

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Beacon group will discuss health choices

By Daniel McIntyre
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A new support group in Beacon will offer information about making healthy food choices and address a variety of health issues without the use of drugs.

A free orientation for individuals and families will be offered Monday at 7 p.m. at Homespun Foods, 232 Main St., Beacon. Call 1-347-432-5856 to RSVP. The group will officially start Sept. 1.

The group is led by healthy eating and balanced living expert Andrea Ramirez. She is a holistic health counselor certified by the American Association of Drugless Practitioners.

"I wanted to establish this model of support because it's very effective for people who want to take steps towards a healthier balanced living style," she said.

The group meets 12 times every two weeks for 90-minute sessions. E-mail support is given throughout the program and there is a final one-on-one consultation.

Topics simplified

"I break things down into simple steps and people can take what they want from the group," she said. "They won't feel overwhelmed."

Ramirez said the orientation is a great way for people to see if the program is for them.

She said she approaches the group as a counselor. She asks questions and provides information about nutrition. She does not tell people what to do, she simply points them in the right direction and guides them through the process.

Some of Ramirez's clients have said the experience

has led to many positive changes in their life.

"I have struggled with a negative self-body image all my life and tried every fad diet there is, never feeling comfortable in my own skin no matter what I weighed or how I looked," Stacey Kalish said. "Andrea was revealing to me how to make food my food my friend, not my controller and how to love the body I'm in."

"Attending Andrea's presentation offered many

insights into my relationship with food," said Dayna Rittenberg, director of the Starlite Studio for Yoga and Spiritual Wellness. "I found that Andrea offered information in a style that was meaningful, but not preachy, and interesting yet simply understood. She covered all realms of nourishment, not just food that we put in our mouths, but relationships, emotional/ mental outlook and exercise and spirituality. She was full knowledgeable in all these areas."