



# Profile:

## Ann Kenderson

If you need to reach her, don't bother calling Ann Kenderson at home during the day— you're not apt to catch her. "I'm out and about," bubbles the 73-year-old, married retiree of Wilkinsburg, just east of Pittsburgh. Ann is exuberant about her family, friends, her activities, her good health and her mobility. "I'm blessed with good health and get around well. I'm a walker, I still drive, and I take advantage of my free senior's bus pass," she explains. And that means trips around the neighborhood and into downtown to attend concerts, theater and AARP events. It means trips to Baltimore to visit grandchildren and to Chicago to see the *Oprah Winfrey Show*. Plus Ann maintains a home, and she participates in church activities and routine yoga and exercise classes at her health club. "Though I do usually settle in for the evening," says Ann.

The silver-haired, African American woman was a small-town country girl growing up in McDonald, Pennsylvania, but now she thrives on city life. She moved to the city 43 years ago when she married her husband, Fred. After staying home to raise her two girls, now in their thirties, Ann worked out of the home for 20 years before retiring. "I enjoyed a career as a library associate at Hillman Library at the University of Pittsburgh," says Ann. "I worked the reference desks on two floors and helped thousands of Pitt students over the years with their reference questions." In that way, Ann's helped generations of college students to become educated.

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### A Breast Cancer Survivor

But in 1996, just retired, Ann was diagnosed with breast cancer. "The timing was so unfortunate," explains Ann. "I had just retired after working 20 years, and I was diagnosed with breast cancer that very year. But I've been very lucky. The doctors surgically removed the tumor. I didn't have to undergo chemo. I had to have some radiation. And I've had no recurrences," she says.

"I will tell you this—once I got that clean bill of health and they gave me the go-ahead, I went for it!" says Ann. "I really started watching my health like never before. I had always been in good health, and I was going to keep it that way. I wanted to enjoy living every minute. Cancer really changed my life."

### Thriving on Exercise

Then another life-changing event happened for Ann about 2005, this one very positive. "We're enrolled in the FreedomBlue<sup>SM</sup> PPO plan with Highmark and I got info in the mail from them about a program I'd never heard of—SilverSneakers. I read it, and re-read it. I was so delighted! They were offering us a membership to a health club for free. I thought, this is marvelous, I'm joining this."

The SilverSneakers Fitness program is a benefit of Ann's Highmark FreedomBlue<sup>SM</sup> PPO health insurance, a Medicare Advantage preferred provider organization (PPO) that offers many valuable services beyond those of traditional Medicare.

Highmark's Medicare Advantage and Medigap plans offer members the benefit of health club memberships at participating clubs as a means of preventive health care. Members can also attend fitness classes taught by certified instructors, receive wellness counseling and take advantage of social events.

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*FreedomBlue is a service mark of the Blue Cross  
and Blue Shield Association, an association of  
independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans.*

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## Helping to control hypertension, weight and stress

"SilverSneakers is available at Vintage, a senior community center in East Liberty," says Ann. "That's where I go to take yoga classes once a week, and I work out on the machines once a week. Plus I take another yoga class every week through the Healthy Black Family Project. It keeps me busy, and I feel so good!"

"Like many seniors, I do have hypertension and it's totally under control. I credit the combination of exercise and the medication I take. Plus my exercise routine has definitely helped me to control my weight and my stress. And I've made so many friends here.

"I am so thankful that Highmark understands the value of keeping me healthy by providing such a terrific fitness benefit. I'm constantly telling friends, 'You can do it! You can get healthy!' Those who do it, talk about how terrific it is. We sell it! It's a beautiful thing.

"By the way, you won't catch me at home very often," Ann adds. "I'm off to Baltimore to visit grandchildren all the time." And there she goes again.

*Highmark Blue Shield is a health plan with a Medicare contract with the Federal government.*

