

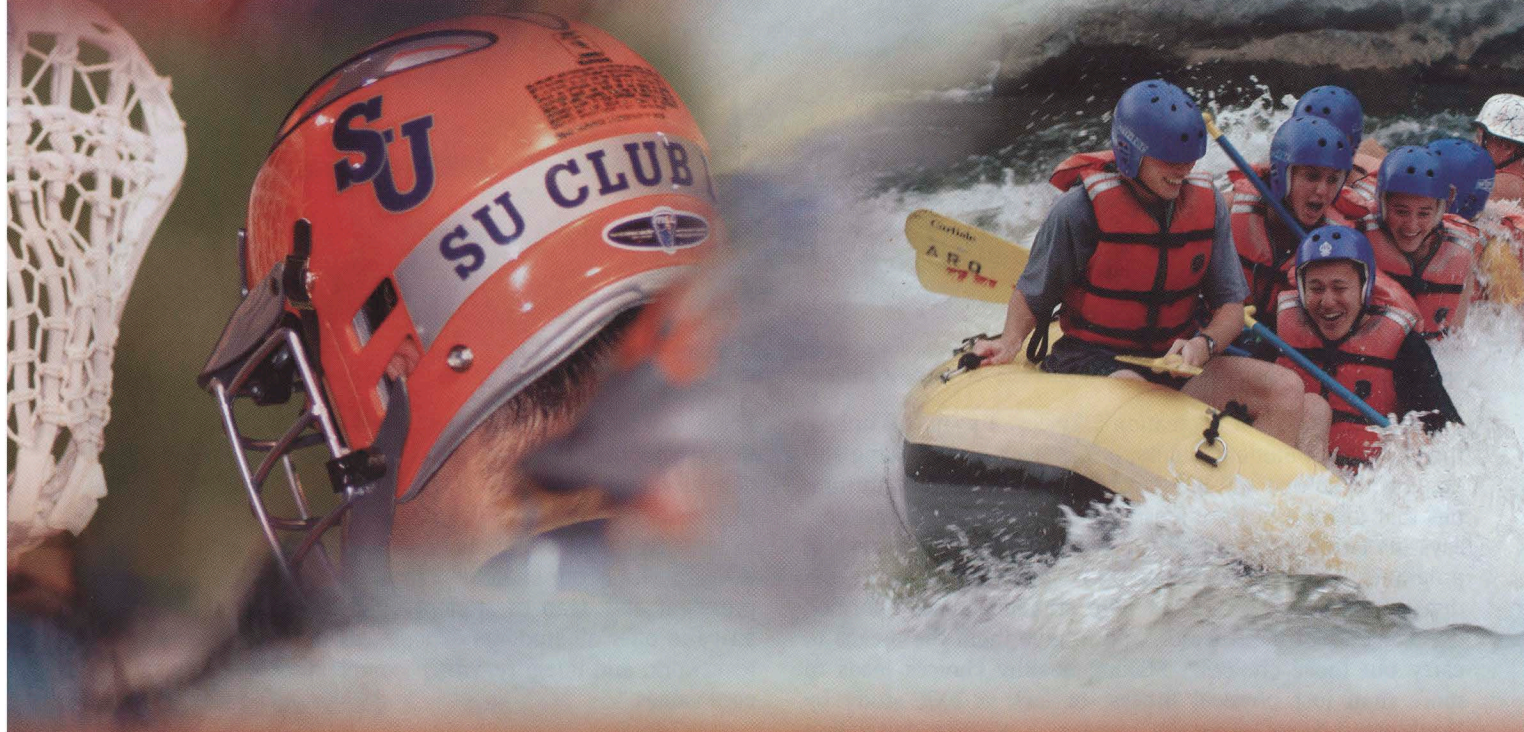
Recreational

A collage of recreational activities. On the left, a woman in a purple sari with a white patterned border is smiling. In the center, two fencers in white protective gear are sparring on a wooden floor. On the right, a person in a white protective suit is in a dynamic pose. The background is a warm, reddish-brown gradient.

Pursuits

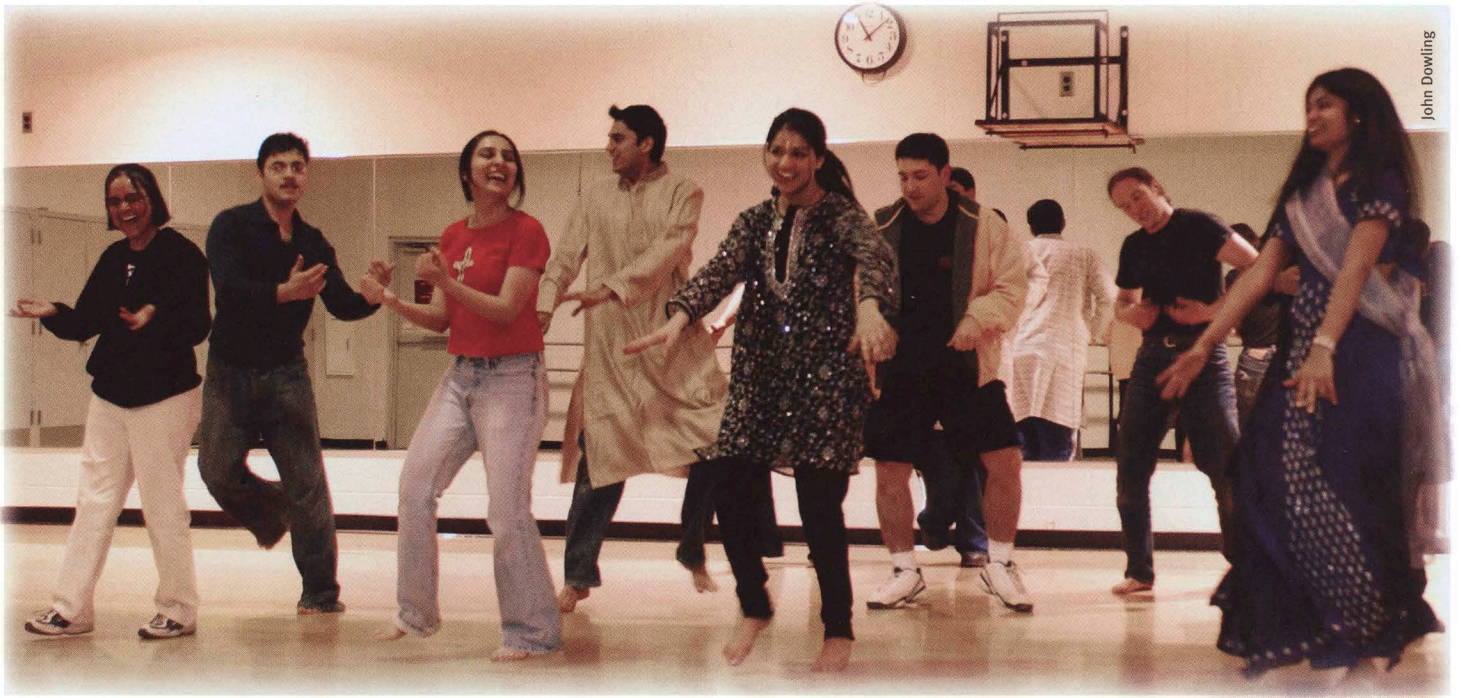
*From fitness classes to sports competitions,
the Department of Recreation Services offers
a wide array of fun, challenging, and
social activities to help students
maintain a healthy lifestyle*

BY KATE GAETANO



Crashing through turbulent rapids at breakneck speed, soaked to the bone from foamy spray and breathless from paddling, Courtney Bell '04 was having the time of her life. "It's an adrenaline rush," says Bell, one of more than 400 SU students who navigated the tumultuous Black River near Watertown, New York, during a whitewater rafting trip last fall. "People were screaming and cheering and working together not to get thrown off the raft when it smashed into the rapids. It's incredible."

The trip is one of the most popular activities sponsored by the Department of Recreation Services' Outdoor Education Program, which provides outdoor recreational opportunities for the University community. In addition to whitewater rafting, the program offers apple picking, rock climbing, skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, hiking, and more throughout the academic year—all at a reduced cost, thanks to funding the department receives from SU's co-curricular fee. Bell, a resident advisor who took her entire floor rafting as a team-building activity, appreciated the trip's affordability and the chance to get off campus. "It's an amazing opportunity for a student to have this type of adventure," she says.



John Dowling

Late Night at the Gym gets students in motion with classes in Indian dance, bellydancing, salsa, tango, and hip-hop, as well as a variety of other fitness and recreational activities.

The Department of Recreation Services, a principal unit of the Division of Student Affairs, prides itself on providing students with unique and life-enhancing recreational opportunities that foster a healthy lifestyle. “We run a big operation,” says director Mitch Gartenberg, who oversees the dozens of programs, activities, facilities, and fields that comprise the department. “Our goal is to help students make informed decisions about their health, and to give them the means to carry out those choices.” Making healthy choices leads to more than just physical fitness. In fact, a 2001 study by Washington State University revealed a positive correlation between use of recreation centers and higher GPAs at all grade levels. The study also showed that first-year students who most often used recreation facilities during a semester tended to have higher GPAs than their peers.

Recreation Services has something to interest nearly every student—and keep them coming back. The department is responsible for the operation and maintenance of two swimming pools, two sand-volleyball courts, four outdoor fields, 27 tennis courts, and the 25,000-square-foot Marilyn and Bill Tennity Ice Skating Pavilion. Its four fitness centers are open for a combined 118 hours a week; the Archbold/Flanagan gym—the department’s main complex—logged about 350,000 student visits last year.

Recreation Services also encompasses 43 club sports, 15 intramural activities, 15 fitness class categories, and myriad other activities designed to cater to the diverse interests of the University community. “The department is a key participant in initiatives across campus that focus on the well-being and development of our students,” says Barry L. Wells, senior vice president and dean of student affairs. “The staff members strive to offer all students experiences that promote respect, teamwork, and integrity, which complement the University’s core values.”

’Round-the-Clock Fitness

Teaching three fitness classes a day, four days a week, is just part of the routine for Donna Acox G’92. Between working as a registered dietitian for New York State and pursuing a mas-

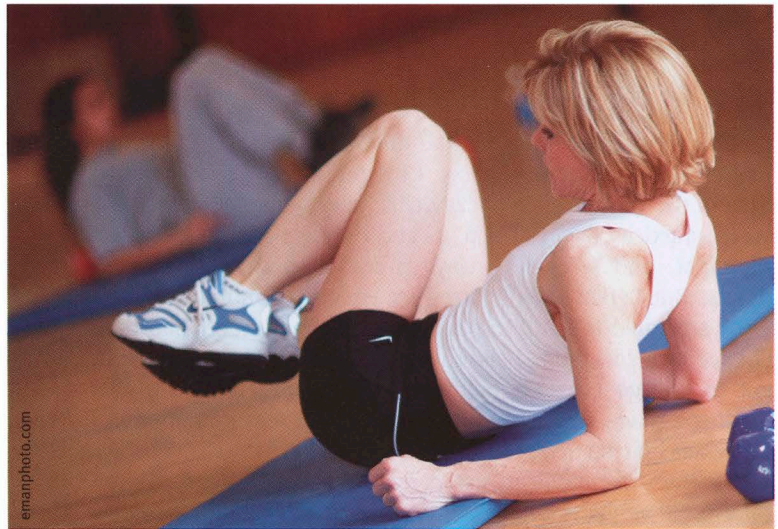


Webster Pool in Archbold Gymnasium is one of two Olympic-sized pools on campus.

ter's degree in exercise science at the School of Education, Acox instructs body sculpting, Pilates (a method of body conditioning designed to improve strength and flexibility), and yoga classes for Recreation Services. "Sure, there are days when I get tired," she says. "But when my students arrive it motivates me to give them the best class every single time. Before long I'm yelling, 'Yes, you can do it; give me one more rep,' and they do."

Each semester, approximately 1,100 students, faculty, and staff sweat, stretch, dance, kick, or skate their way through one of the department's fitness classes, which are held at various campus sites between 6:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. daily to accommodate busy schedules. Those wishing to slim down, tone up, or simply have a good time can choose among more than two dozen classes, from aerobics and kickboxing to aqua fitness and swim lessons, dance, strength training, fencing, tae kwon do, and ice skating. "There's really something for everyone," Acox says.

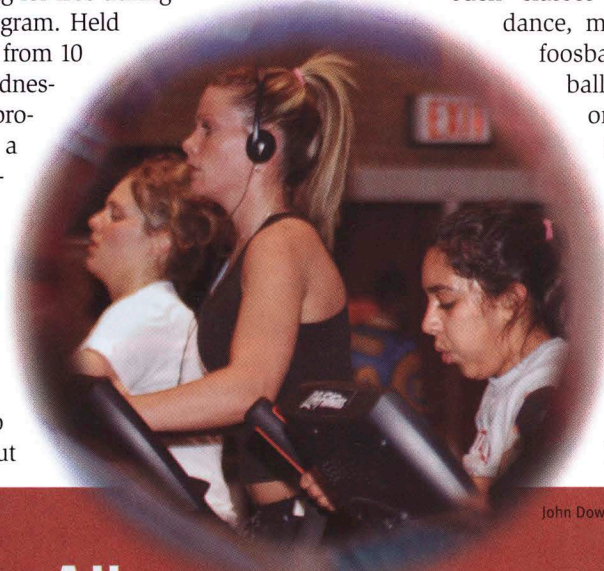
While participants pay a fee ranging from \$20 to \$70 per semester to attend a fitness class, many students take advantage of firming and flexing for free during the Late Night at the Gym program. Held in the Archbold/Flanagan gym from 10 p.m. to as late as 2 a.m., Wednesdays through Saturdays, the program provides students with a variety of free and healthy after-hours social activities. "It's a fun alternative to partying or sitting in your room and doing nothing," says Gartenberg, who estimates more than 1,200 students frequent the program each week. "We offer free classes not only to spur interest in Late Night, but



Instructor Donna Acox G'92 leads a body sculpting class.

also to be sensitive to those who cannot or might not want to spend the money on a class."

Night owls with a hankering for exercise can participate in such classes as self-defense, bellydancing, Indian dance, meditation, and yoga. Such activities as foosball, table hockey, indoor soccer, volleyball, Wiffle Ball, and basketball are available on the gym's courts, and the fitness center's cardio machines and free weights are also used. But Late Night isn't just about working up a sweat. "Free massage night is the best," says Paul Smith '04, who took advantage of the monthly pain relief, stress reduction, and sports practice massages given by therapists from The Art of Massage, a local therapeutic practice. According to Smith, free snacks are another of Late Night's popular perks. "There's always a



John Dowling

Activities for All

The Syracuse University Department of Recreation Services is home to the following programs:

Aquatics—water aerobics, water fitness, and swim lessons

Club Sports—recreation, competition, and instruction in sports-related activities

Intramural Sports—basketball, volleyball, soccer, racquetball, walleyball, flag football, indoor cricket, indoor lacrosse, basketball, outdoor soccer, softball, and tennis

Outdoor Education Program—outdoor recreational opportunities, services, and educational experiences for the University community during the academic year

Recreation at Drumlins—partnership with Drumlins Golf and Tennis Club that includes free access to Drumlins Tennis Club and Drumlins West Golf Course for full-time undergraduates and reduced-cost access for full-time graduate students

Tennity Ice Skating Pavilion—open skating sessions, individual lessons, skating and hockey classes, skate and shoot, skate rentals, and a pro shop

Wellness Program—personal training, fitness clinics, percent body fat clinics, nutrition consultation, facility orientations, and information on physical fitness designed to promote a healthy lifestyle

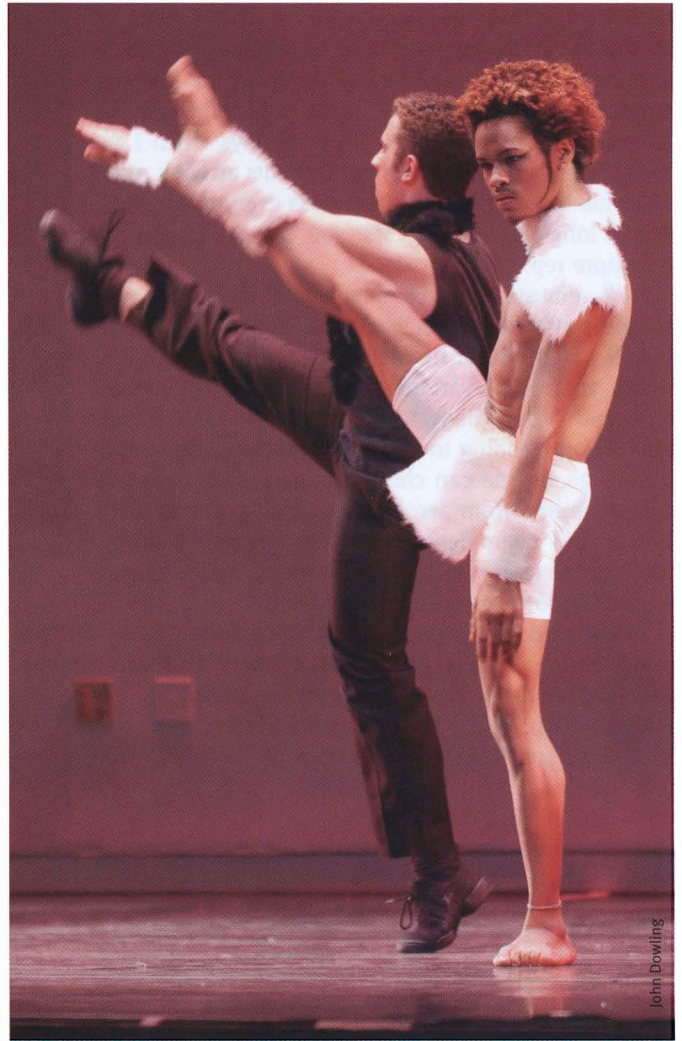
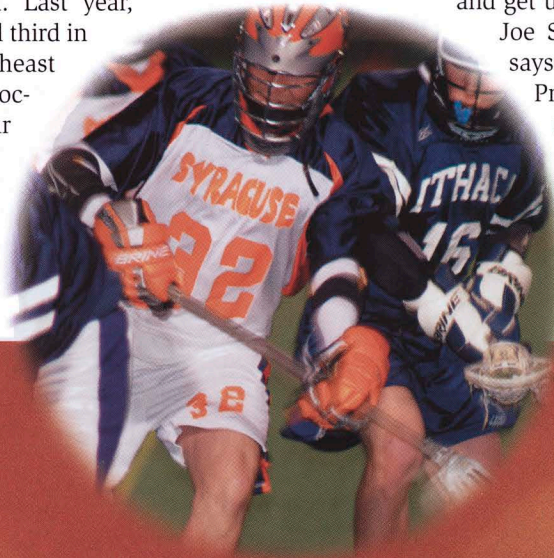
basket of fruit and vegetables around,” Smith says. “It’s just another reminder to maintain a healthy lifestyle.”

Join the Club

Late Night gym-goers aren’t the only ones burning the midnight oil in the name of sport. Christine Lefebvre ’05, president of the women’s ice hockey club, says her team’s twice-a-week practices begin at 9 p.m. and don’t end until close to midnight, and weekend away games often make for long nights. But Lefebvre isn’t fazed by the time commitment. “I always wanted to learn to play ice hockey, but never had the chance in high school,” she says. “I decided that as soon as I got to college I would buy my own equipment and play. Finding a place with a club hockey program was a major factor when I chose Syracuse.”

Lefebvre isn’t alone in her passion for a club sport. More than 1,200 students dedicate their time to one of SU’s 43 club sports each year. Established in 1972, the Club Sports Program is designed to supplement intercollegiate and intramural activities through recreation, competition, and instruction in a sport or related activity. According to Joe Lore, director of the program for the past two decades, the appeal of club sports lies in the opportunity for everyone to participate in an activity, regardless of skill. “It’s the best of both worlds for all students,” he says. “Some may have competed in high school but don’t have the time or aren’t experienced enough for the intercollegiate level, yet still want to compete in collegiate sports. Others just want to learn something new and have fun.”

SU’s club offerings are as diverse as the training and abilities of the student participants. They range from the highly competitive—men’s and women’s gymnastics, ice hockey, ski racing, volleyball, lacrosse, rugby, equestrian, and figure skating—to the purely instructional—aikido, martial arts, and ballroom dance—and everything in between. “Many of the sports have volunteer coaches and conduct tryouts because of the number of interested students,” Lore says. “Some, like ski racing, are even broken down into varsity and junior varsity teams.” Many club teams compete against other colleges and universities throughout the country and are nationally ranked. Last year, Lefebvre’s team placed third in its league, the Northeast Women’s Collegiate Hockey Association. “Our team plays so well together,” Lefebvre says. The secret to the team’s success? Lots of practice—



DanceWorks members hold jazz, tap, ballet, and hip-hop performances on campus throughout the year.

and potluck dinners. “The dinners are a real bonding experience,” Lefebvre says. “They make us feel like more of a team and get us pumped up to play.”

Joe Scaduto ’04, former president of the bowling club, says the reason he became involved in the Club Sports Program was simple: He loves to bowl. With approximately 50 members, the club meets once a week and rarely enters outside tournaments, although members compete against one another in playoffs at the end of the academic year. “I swam competitively for 10 years before I came to SU,” says Scaduto, a computer engineering graduate who also worked

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part-time at Bird Library. “Between schoolwork and my job, I didn’t have a lot of time to invest in a competitive sport. The bowling club provided a very social, laid-back atmosphere. It was fun to do on a Sunday night if you wanted to take a break from your work and relieve some stress.”

As Scaduto knows, participating in a club sport isn’t always about winning. In fact, many club sports don’t compete at all. “The juggling club is unbelievable,” Lore says. “They perform at the Westcott Street festival each year and have performed for the Chancellor in the past.” DanceWorks is the University’s largest club sport, with more than 120 members who choreograph and perform jazz, tap, ballet, and hip-hop dances to sold-out audiences each year during SU’s Winter Carnival, Homecoming, and Parents Weekend. “I never imagined an organization like this existed at SU, or that I would have the opportunity to participate in it,” says A.J. Lombard ’04, who joined the group his sophomore year in hope of finding a new hobby. “It feels great to perform in front of my friends and family now. The shows are amazing. DanceWorks is something I’ll never forget.”

Fitness for All Ages

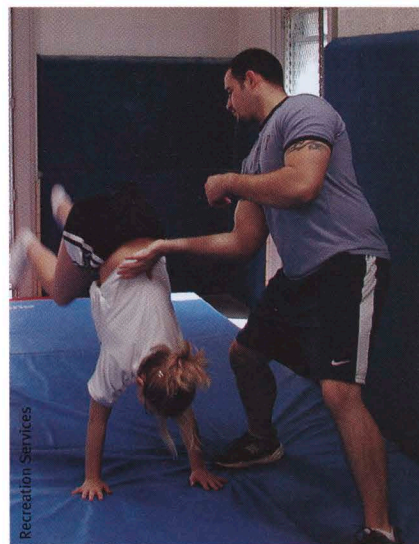
John Lacirignola ’03, G’04 knows that doing the job he loves often means getting kicked in the head repeatedly—but he doesn’t mind. An instructor in the Neighborhood Youth Recreation Program, Lacirignola spends his weekends in Archbold gym teaching beginner, intermediate, and advanced gymnastics to local students ages 5-18. “I’ve gotten ‘beaten up’ by a lot of kids who accidentally hit me when they’re learning back handsprings,” says Lacirignola, a former SU cheerleader. Lacirignola has worked for the program—which is free and open to elementary, middle, and high school students in the greater Syracuse community—for two years, and says the benefits far outweigh the occasional bump or bruise. Sev-Ira Brown, assistant director for operations in Recreation Services and director of the program, agrees. “The goal of the program is to help participants build their self-esteem, give them the confidence to get over their fears, and realize how

much they can accomplish on their own,” he says. “We’re here to teach and to make it fun.”

In addition to gymnastics, the program offers swimming, dance, and cheerleading lessons. Brown, who has run the program since 1990, says that approximately 100 children ages 5-7 take advantage of the swimming, dance, or gymnastics, and more than 250 girls ages 7-18 are currently enrolled in gymnastics and cheerleading lessons. “Because it’s free, some students travel as long as an hour to participate,” he says. “The program is diverse and brings children from a wide variety of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds into contact with each other. We always stress to them the importance of getting along and accepting others.”

The Neighborhood Youth Recreation Program has been a way of life for Quinn Flowers ’05 for nearly eight years. She joined as a Syracuse city school eighth-grader at the advice of her cheerleading coach. “The facilities at SU were far better than those at our school, and the instructors were extremely encouraging,” Flowers says. The experience made such an impact that she didn’t hesitate to begin working in the program the moment she arrived as a first-year student at SU. Three years later, Flowers says she is proud to be a role model for the program’s participants. “It’s great to hear the older students talking about wanting to go to college,” she says. “They see us here and know that we’re making it, and they imagine themselves in college and want to strive for more. It’s great to be an inspiration to them.”

Whether teaching community youths, competing in club sports, exploring the outdoors, or taking advantage of one of the department’s many programs and facilities, SU students reap the rewards of Recreation Services’ offerings every day. “Recreation Services provides students with a sense of belonging,” Lore says. “It gives them the opportunity to establish relationships, to lead, and to grow.”



A participant in the Neighborhood Youth Recreation Program practices a back handspring with the assistance of an SU student.



The Marilyn and Bill Tennity Ice Skating Pavilion is home to the men’s and women’s ice hockey club teams, as well as the curling and figure skating clubs.