

## DEBBIE MILLER



Debbie Miller has spent nearly three decades encouraging Oklahoma seniors to be active, and now she's taking her own advice.

Since turning 50 last fall, Miller said she feels more compelled than ever to lead by example.

"It's about accountability to the other seniors I work with," Miller said. "I know how good I feel when I am physically active and I want them to see that."

Miller has been the Wellness Director at Yukon's Spanish Cove Retirement Community for 28 years. She has been a board member for the Oklahoma Senior Games for two years and competed for the first time this spring.

Athletes must be at least 50 years old to compete, making Miller one of the youngest competitors.

In her first race walking event, the Midwest City resident walked away with a gold medal.

Unlike power walking, which Miller also plans to compete in, race walking is about technique not speed. Maintaining one foot on the ground at all times and perfecting the signature hip rotation has provided a challenge for the former distance runner. For years, Miller ran 5ks, 10ks and half marathons to stay in shape, but as she aged running became painful and she switched to walking to take some pressure off of her joints.

"It's a little bit silly looking, but it's been an Olympic event for years and it's kind of hard," Miller said. "There's a lot to think about but it's actually a lot of fun."

Miller has hosted race walking clinics at Spanish Cove and encourages all of the residents to participate in the Senior Games. The competition and camaraderie motivates them to work out and ultimately prolongs and improves their quality of life, something that she said Oklahoma residents desperately need.

“These aren’t wheelchair races,” Miller said. “It’s amazing to see what people can do at any age. There are some amazing athletes, and there is something for every level of competitor.”

Oklahoma Senior Games competitions occur annually in September and October. This year, competitions will be held in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Shawnee, Norman, Yukon and Warr Acres.

Events include three-on-three basketball, track and field, golf, swimming, water walking, 5K and 10K runs, 5K power walk, 5K race walk, bowling, tennis, table tennis, golf croquet, shuffleboard, cycling, cornhole, badminton, archery, pickleball, racquetball, softball and triathlon. Participants age 50 and older will compete in categories by age and gender.

Oklahoma Senior Games qualifies athletes for National Senior Games competition held every two years. About 300 athletes who qualify in 2020 will represent Oklahoma in the National Senior Games competition November 5-18, 2021 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

For more information visit [www.okseniorgames.com](http://www.okseniorgames.com) or call (405) 821-1500.