Ave Maria Law has added its very own Fitness Complex on the school’s twelve and a half acre campus. More than a facility, an entire Mind + Body + Spirit initiative has been launched within the school community.

A health trend has started on campus and it’s catching on. The Director of Health & Wellness Heidi Roderick is leading the charge on engagement and involvement. Group classes including Zumba, HIIT and yoga, as well as running and walking groups, are active on campus.

There’s a direct correlation with exercise and the brain. Exercise will increase the ability to succeed at the highest levels during our students’ law school experience. Just as it took months to build our complex, it takes time to incorporate new habits. Every small step adds up to something great.

**Why This Matters**

**How was it decided that the law school would build a fitness complex?** Because of the generosity of a benefactor of the law school who wishes to remain anonymous, the law school was gifted $2 million dollars specifically to build a fitness facility. It aligns with our school’s holistic mission bringing not only reason, but faith and wellness into the legal education of our students.

**How is this benefitting the law school community?** First and foremost, law school is high stress and the students do not have a lot of time for work-life balance. The law school is providing an opportunity to build healthy habits that will stay with them for a lifetime, well past law school and into their careers as attorneys. A well-rounded program has been launched that targets the mind, body, and spirit. Whether someone wants to take a spin class every day, or a thirty minute walk on the treadmill while reading torts, everyone is accommodated. We’re all individuals with different goals in mind. There are so many studies linking exercise and the brain. The more you move, the more productive you will be in the classroom, and in life.

**What is the big picture?**

When the law school community invests in students’ wellness, productivity rises. There’s a trickle-down effect and it begins to spread in positive ways. Recruiting goes up, study habits strengthen, grade averages improve, bar passage increases, and sick days lessen. The list goes
on. It can only make the community better and stronger as a whole. Health and wellness is a hot
topic in all industries. It continues to grow and the movement is not stopping anytime soon.

**Fitness Complex Quick Stats**

Total Square Footage: 21,740 (including the basketball courts and soccer field)

Equipment: Pulse Fitness for strength and cardio, Schwinn spin bikes

On-Site Elements: Covered Basketball courts, 3v3 Soccer field (with lights), Spin bikes, Pickleball, Personal Trainers, Group Classes, Tournaments, Showers

Architect: Victor Latavish

Construction Company: Compass Construction, Inc.

**CHIP Program**

Launched and implemented at a law school for the first time in the world: the Complete Health Improvement Program (CHIP) founded by Lifestyle Medicine Institute. The CHIP program is a research tested, intensive lifestyle medicine intervention solution designed to prevent, arrest and facilitate the reversal of many common chronic diseases.

*Talking with Heidi Roderick, Director of Health & Wellness*

**Why do you believe in CHIP?** The science behind it proves the program’s success. Also, the results. There are hundreds of testimonials from people like you and I.

**Why would you recommend people sign up for CHIP?** If you would like to change your lifestyle for the better, lower your risk for disease, lower your blood pressure and cholesterol, or even if your numbers are great, there’s always room to find new healthy habits to incorporate into your lifestyle. We can always learn something new. We all want to feel our best and live a long, healthy life.

**Is CHIP a strict vegan diet?** No, it is not. It promotes eating mostly a plant-based whole foods diet. The more your lifestyle reflects this, the better results you will see for yourself. The program also recommends incorporating exercise into your daily routine. This could be ten minutes a day to start, ideally moving up to thirty minutes a day. Your fitness routine could be as simple as a daily walk.

**Can one benefit from CHIP by taking small steps to changing their health and wellness rather than a big overhaul?** Small steps lead to big successes. I always like to tell people to look at this as an opportunity to add healthy plant-based whole foods to your diet, rather than looking at it as eliminating foods from your diet and lifestyle. The more of the healthy nutrients you add, eventually the less of the bad stuff you’ll crave. Add in some fruits and vegetables. Drink more water. Walk for ten minutes. Eat less meat and dairy. Eat less processed food.
Local Community News

The health reporter from the Naples Daily News visited the law school’s Vineyards campus to learn more about this new initiative. She wrote a feature story in their paper:

For More Details on Ave Maria Moves Initiative

Ave Maria Moves Program Website: http://wellness.avemarialaw.edu/

Ave Maria Moves Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/avemariamoves/