Rowing champion gives back



Laurentian University sculler and rowing gold medalist Nick Van der Woude shows Andrew Riedl some key points for rowing power. / TONY PEARSON Special to This Week

By Tony Pearson

Andrew Riedl's latest passion is rowing. As often as he can, he heads for the new LiveFit gym off Hastings to work on its rowing machine.

Last week, he got a bonus where Bancroft athlete Nick Van Der Woude, a Laurentian University student who won rowing gold at last summer's Royal Canadian Henley Regatta, showed up to offer some training tips. Van der Woude was back in town from Sudbury on reading week. He was glad to offer advice on technique to Riedl.

Riedl is definitely not typical. Despite having autism, and the after-effects of a childhood brain tumour, he is extremely active both physically and mentally. He is also a lively conversationalist.

The LiveFit trainer who works with Riedl, John Tait, strongly believes that fitness training can help kids with special needs. He is currently working on special programs in conjunction with Bancroft's Community Living program for developmentally delayed youth. Tait feels that simple weight training techniques can do wonders for both physical and mental health and well-being, and is anxious to grow more of such activities.

Riedl also enjoys competing with his brother Sam, and is an enthusiastic and very diligent operator of a paper route for *Bancroft This Week*, taking care not to leave the paper out in the elements but placing it in a safe dry space.