



home > city hall > press releases

Live Well Perris Program Pockets Awards

The City of Perris pocketed two awards from the American Heart Association for offering a series of fitness and healthy-eating programs to its municipal staff as well as City residents.

Margaret Sluyk, director of the Heart Walk for the Inland Empire, presented City Manager Richard Belmudez and Assistant City Manager Ron Carr with Gold Achievement Award and the Community Innovation Award. The presentations came during the March 25 City Council meeting.

Sluyk said she's very impressed with the scope and variety of offerings through its Live Well Perris healthy-eating active-living program. There's something for everyone, she said.

"You do a lot!" Sluyk said. "You offer a variety of programs to your employees and you've had great success in getting people from the community to work out. You have gone above and beyond."

The City offers its employees use of the municipal gym, walking breaks, exercise classes on weekends and participation in events like the April 26 Community Health Fair and Oct. 4 Tour de Perris bicycle ride.

For Perris residents, the City offers weekly workouts at two parks, a weekly farmers market, aerobics classes in the Bob Glass Gym as well as events like the March 29 Pets on Parade expo, April health fair, and a series of sports clinics. Other events include a May 31 senior citizens dance, walks and hikes with elected officials in the coming months.

For school children, the City is sponsoring a "chef in the classroom" program at various campuses between now and June.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch thanked the City staff for designing and implementing such a successful, community-supported, program. As he said several times since Live Well Perris began, "a healthy City is a happy City."

"We have a good program," he said. "Even more importantly, we have a good staff. They are who made Live Well Perris the success it has blossomed into."

Mayor Pro-Tem Rita Rogers said a healthy life depends on a healthy heart. She said she is grateful national organizations like the American Heart Association are recognizing Perris' commitment to "healthy living, healthy eating and healthy nutrition."

"It is so important that we have engaged the entire community," she said.

Perris City Councilman Julio Rodriguez said elected officials spotted a health concern—a large number of overweight and obese children and adults at-risk for heart disease, diabetes and high-blood pressure—and created a program to meet that concern.

"We are elected to address issues of importance to our community," he said. "I am grateful that we are being recognized for those efforts."

City Councilman Al Landers said the success enjoyed by residents taking part in Live Well Perris events reinforces his belief that Perris remains an "aggressive and progressive" community. Aggressive in its approach of confronting entrenched health problems affecting many residents. Progressive in that the City has sought to—and succeeded—in involving thousands of residents who are benefitting.

"We are giving something back to our residents," he said. "We are batting 100 percent in our health-related programs."

Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough said he was "surprised but not surprised" at the award presentation. The commitment of elected officials, City staff and especially the public combined to make, and continue making, Live Well Perris a special kind of success.

"We have been focused on improving the health of the community through our Live Well Perris initiative and the community has embraced it," he said. "This is their award."



Margaret Sluyk, director of the Heart Walk of the Inland Empire, presents an award in support of the Live Well Perris health initiative to Assistant Perris City Manager Ron Carr and City Manager Richard Belmudez.

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