



Perris Press Release

Contact: Joe Vargo, Perris Public Information Officer
Phone: 951-956-2120
jvargo@cityofperris.org

Live Well in Perris

The importance of good eating and physical activity has taken on greater urgency in Riverside County, a region with an alarming obesity rate and one with limited parks and open spaces to get regular exercise.

In 2011, supervisors unanimously approved a resolution to promote and support physical activity, develop policies to provide access to healthy and affordable foods, adopt preventive measures and programs to combat obesity and create or work with existing coalitions which further community health and wellness.

Since then, several communities have organized health fairs and other venues as a way of promoting the "Healthy Riverside County Initiative" in a county where nearly two out of three adults and one in six teenagers are overweight or obese, 75 percent of adults don't exercise at all and less than half of children eat sufficient fruits and vegetables.

Perris is taking that process several steps farther. The City's "Live Well Perris" initiative kicks off June 15 with a Community Health Fair at Foss Field Park on the City Hall Campus.

The fair features more than 100 vendors, many offering tips about healthy eating and exercise, dance demonstrations, rock-climbing, pony rides, face painting and the initial weigh-in for the "Biggest Loser" contest. In addition, fairgoers will receive many vendor and City giveaways, including t-shirts.

Perris has teamed up with the Riverside County Department of Public Health and the Friends of Diabetics for the Health Fair. Andrea Morey, a health education assistant with the department who is working with Perris officials on the Community Health Fair, praised the City for becoming a leader in regional efforts to improve the health and quality-of-life for residents.

In the next four months, at least six-major programs will take place in Perris, all part of a coordinated effort to get residents off their couches while emphasizing better eating. Morey used one word to sum up the Live Well Perris campaign: "wow." "The City of Perris leadership has been outstanding—it is showing real leadership in this area," Morey said.

"The variety of the programs offered is massive. The health fair is the kickoff of this program and we are really excited to take part." In addition, the City has organized several other events and venues in the coming months—all with the idea of getting people to participate in Health Eating Active Living (HEAL) endeavors.

Those include:

- ▶ The June 22 re-opening of the Perris Farmers Market on the City Hall Campus. The 2013 version of the hugely popular venue will emphasize locally grown fruits and vegetable. In addition to the Farmers Market, Perris officials are encouraging merchants to display more fruits, vegetables and healthy-food options instead of sugary drinks, cookies, alcohol and tobacco products. "The June 29 "Walk with the Mayor" led by Perris Mayor Daryl Busch.
- ▶ Several bicycle rides later this summer led by Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough, who will take residents on rides through the City and the Lake Perris State Recreation Area.
- ▶ Periodic workouts with City Council members have pledged to participate in zumba dance lessons and other activities sponsored by the City.
- ▶ The July 27 a three-on-three basketball tournament, which will be held at various venues.
- ▶ The Sept. 14 final weigh-in for participants in the Biggest Loser completion. The "winners" will be recognized at the Sept. 24 City Council meeting and earn several valuable prizes.
- ▶ The Oct. 5 Tour De Perris bicycle, which begins and ends at City Hall. The ride features 8, 30, 62 and 100-mile courses throughout southwest Riverside County as well as a Tour De Tots bicycle-safety program at City Hall. "The Oct. 19 "History Walk" along D Street. Participants will learn a lot about Perris history while burning off calories.
- ▶ Ongoing development of a pedestrian trail and "circuit-training" course at Linear Park, near Bradley Road and Rider Street in North Perris.

Perris officials are eager to support the Live Well initiative. During last week's City Council meeting, Mayor Busch said the "Live Well Initiative" has been in the works for a couple of months. "It's getting into high-gear now and we are looking forward to it," he said.

Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough said he hopes the Live Well Perris initiative is the first step in a lifelong commitment to better living. He believes that if enough residents join the program, the number of calls for emergency medical aids from strokes, heart attacks, shortness of breath and other obesity-related issues might fall in the future.

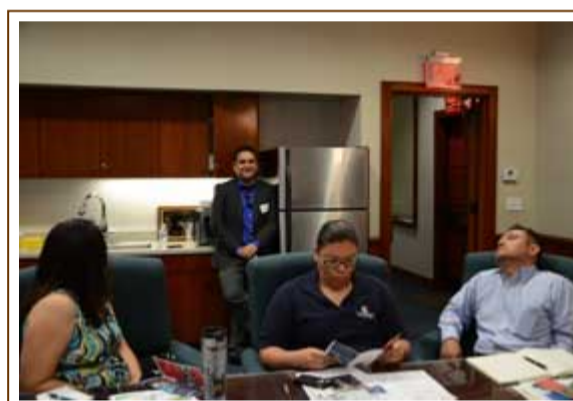
"This City is all about caring for its residents and this program is a perfect example of what we're all about," Yarbrough said. City Councilman Julio Rodriguez said the Live Well initiative provides elected officials "a great example of leading by example." Rodriguez and Assistant City Manager Ron Carr recently gave county health officials a detailed briefing about the Live Well campaign at a recent meeting of the Perris Community Partnership.

The partnership consists of residents, city leaders, county educators, and community organizations working to coordinate health services and family-based activities in the Perris Valley, build policies to support healthy living and equip residents to become more involved in their community. City Councilwoman Rita Rogers says she hopes to lost 40 pounds in the Biggest Loser competition and has already begun exercising more and eating healthier.

Perris City Councilman Al Landers said renovations of all community parks are underway, which will provide youngsters and adults more space and venues to exercise. He said Perris elected leaders and administrators are "deeply concerned about the health and well-being of all our residents." "The Live Well program," he said, "is another example of that concern."



Perris Assistant City Manager Ron Carr explains the "Live Well Perris" healthy-eating active-living initiative, which kicks off June 15 with a health fair on the City Hall Campus.



Perris City Councilman Julio Rodriguez says taking part in the "Live Well Perris" initiative is a "great example of leading by example."