



Perris Press Release

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Live Well Perris Off to a Rousing Start!

The Live Well Perris program got off to a rousing start June 15 as close to 2,000 people descended on the City Hall Campus to take part in a community health fair featuring tips about getting into shape, better eating habits, blood-pressure, glaucoma and diabetes-screenings and lots of ways to get fit.

There were obstacles courses to finish, a rock wall to climb, zumba dancing to complete, t-shirts to win by entering the Presidential Active Living Award program and weight to shed through the City's "Biggest Loser" contest.

For the teen and pre-teen crowd there were other dance classes, puppet shows, a bounce house and pony rides.

Perris officials were more than pleased with the scope of activities offered at the City's initial community health fair and the number of residents who came out to learn simple ways of eating and exercising that will greatly add to their quality of their lives.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch said during opening ceremonies that the City hopes to make the health fair an annual event. "Completely pleased," was the way he described his reaction to the day-long gathering. "We set a high standard for this event and I believe we exceeded it."

Perris City Councilman Al Landers and Julio Rodriguez and City Councilwoman Rita Rogers were among 183 residents who weighed themselves at the start of the biggest loser competition.

The contest ends on Sept. 14 with a final weigh-in. Winners will be those who shed the greatest percentage of their initial body weight and will win tickets to Disneyland, a gym membership and gift cards. Landers said that the Live Well campaign includes several events in which elected officials will be taking part—including walks, hikes, bicycle rides and workouts with Perris residents.

The City Council's decision to take part in the "Step Out to Work Out" demonstrates their commitment to keeping fit and setting an example to the rest of Perris. "This is a united community," Landers said. "Our City Council is aggressive and progressive and committed to making available all the necessary resources to ensure that Live Well Perris is a resounding success."

The health fair coincided with the celebration of Juneteenth, the date African-Americans in Texas learned that slavery had been abolished and that the Civil War was over. Emmett Reid, one of the organizers of the Juneteenth celebration, praised the City for organizing the health fair.

"The time is right now for the City, the churches, the non-profit organizations and the citizens to work together to make a healthier Perris," he said. "A healthy community is one that is engaged. We have a great chance to work together with the people."

Damue Bagwell used the health fair as an opportunity to educate people about diabetes and high blood pressure. Bagwell said that regular exercise programs have been shown to reduce high-blood pressure and slow or reverse Type 2 diabetes.

Even small changes in one's lifestyle—like taking a walk around the block or doing some squats during television commercials—can help. "It's important to get the word out," Bagwell said. "Information helps people learn how to improve their health."

Perris resident Jose Razon said he appreciated the City sponsoring the biggest loser competition. "You get people motivated to do something to improve their health," Razon said. "It's nice that the City is supporting it." Another means of support came in the raffling of eight new bicycles and six juicing machines.

Edgar Gonzalez, 17, a senior at Citrus Hill High School, took home a 29-inch Genesis bicycle. He plans to do a lot of mountain biking on it. "This is good," Edgar said.

Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough will be hiking and biking around Lake Perris in July and August. Yarbrough spent much of the health fair working in the City booth, handing out t-shirts and pedometers, encouraging people to sign up for the Oct. 5 Tour De Perris bicycle ride and explaining the Live Well initiative to anyone who asked.

He also tackled the rock wall. "What a great event," he said. "We had a great turnout and we really offered everything for everybody. This initiative is needed in Perris. We all take our health for granted until there's a problem and this program is aimed at preventing a lot of those problems. I am glad to see so many people turn out—and so many people are taking it seriously."



Youngsters navigate an obstacle course during the City of Perris community health fair on June 15, which kicked off the Live Well Perris initiative.



Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association members

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch presents a new bicycle to high school senior Edgar Gonzalez, who plans on doing some mountain biking.



Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough (center) and Assistant City Manager Ron Carr present a juicer to resident Shawn Haughney, who won it during a raffle at the June 15 community health fair.



City records clerk Judy Haughney records City Councilman Al Landers' weight as he enters the biggest loser contest, part of the Live Well Perris initiative.