



Water Wins at "Live Well" Health Fair Event

The benefits of drinking water took center stage this week at a health fair sponsored by the City of Perris and several partnering agencies.

The "Rethink Your Drink" program was all about getting Perris residents to put down that glass of soda or energy-drink bottle and turn on the kitchen water tap. Water is cheap, readily available and just as refreshing as sugary soft drinks. Perris City Councilman Julio Rodriguez told the crowd that gathered at the Food 4 Less grocery store that replacing high-calorie drinks with water is part of the ongoing "Live Well Perris" healthy-eating active-living initiative. The Live Well program has included a community health fair, walk with the mayor, hike and bike-rides with the mayor pro-tem, twice weekly workouts with City Council members and participation by almost 200 residents in a "biggest loser" competition.



Perris City Councilman Julio Rodriguez addresses the crowd at the Rethink Your Drink program in Perris.

"Thank you so much for being here," Rodriguez said. "Making the proper choices about the drinks we consume not only affects us but also our children and neighbors. Help them make educated choices to they can live longer and healthier lives."

Rodriguez said the Live Well Perris program began with the notion of encouraging City residents to become more physically active while eating better. It has blossomed into a multi-faceted initiative that "will continue to grow and provide valuable and life-changing information to the people who need it."

Gayle Hoxter, a supervisor for the Riverside County Department of Public Health, praised Perris' commitment to the "Live Well" program.

"Perris is very actively engaged," she said.

Perris Assistant City Manager Ron Carr, Human Resources Manager Isabel Carlos and Administrative Assistant Michelle Ogawa spent Wednesday afternoon handing out informational flyers about upcoming Perris programs to hundreds of residents. Those events include the Saturday farmers market running through November, the Sept. 14 boot camp at Mercado Park for people interested in shedding some weight, the Sept.21 basketball skills camps at Bob Glass Gym, the Oct. 5 Tour de Perris bicycle ride and the Oct. 19 history walk down D Street.



Perris Assistant City Manager Ron Carr (center), Isabel Carlos and Michelle Ogawa chat with residents who stopped by the City booth during the Sept. 11 Rethink Your Drink event.

Perris officials are partnering with several agencies to spread the Live Well message. In addition to the Riverside County Department of Public Health, those include the Perris Elementary School District, the Network for a Healthy California/Champions for Change, Molina Medical, the Riverside County Diabetes Coalition, Eastern Municipal Water District and the CalFresh/Food Bank.

EMWD representatives distributed tap water and re-useable bottles. The county public health department provided samples of "spa water" flavored with oranges and cucumbers. Healthy recipe books also were dispensed.

Brandon Jones took home information about replacing sugary drinks with water and also learned about several City events, including the Tour De Perris and history walk.

"I've got two children and I want them involved in activities besides watching television and playing video games," he said.

Resident Raul Gonzales said he is pleased the City is offering a comprehensive approach to better living through diet and exercise. He said Perris is responding to the needs of a growing community.

"The City is doing a great job meeting the needs of its residents," Gonzales said.

Araceli Avalos picked up some information about the upcoming basketball camp, part of the free activities included in the Live Well Perris campaign. Affordable programs matter to folks on a limited income. Her son, Manny, 10, will be learning hoop fundamentals later this month.

"When you don' have a lot of money, it's the way to go," Araceli Avalos said.



Rethink Your Drink was the topic of the day at the program sponsored by several agencies, including the City of Perris.