



"Live Well" Awards Success and Plans to Continue

The City of Perris presented medals, plaques certificates, gift cards and bicycles to the most ardent participants of its "Live Well" health initiative this week and announced plans to continue the program through the winter and again next year.

Residents praised the City for creating and implementing the "Live Well Perris" campaign, which offered a series of activities aimed at getting people to exercise and replace fatty foods with lean meats and fruits and vegetable. Those programs—including a community health fair, walks, bicycle rides, hikes and aerobics workouts with elected officials—drew thousands of people to City Hall and various parks around Perris.

Nearly 200 people participated in the City's version of the Biggest Loser weight-reduction contest. Hundreds more participated by working out at the City gym and with Perris officials. The most recent Live Well Perris event took place Sept. 21, when 100 coaches and kids took part in basketball skills camps at Bob Glass Gym. The final Live Well event in 2013 takes place on Oct. 19 with a walk down historic D Street.

To keep residents in shape over the winter, the City will offer periodic "boot camps" in the coming weeks and months, similar to the gut-busting experience that drew 75 people to Mercado Park earlier in September. Dates of the winter workouts, and the 2014 version of Live Well Perris, still are being finalized and will be posted on the City's website, www.cityofperris.org and its dedicated Facebook page, Live Well Perris.

But the Sept. 24 City Council meeting was all about celebrating the residents who participated in the Live Well program with gusto. Perris officials thanked those residents for making Live Well an unqualified success.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch presented prizes to the "biggest loser" winners and people who completed the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award and the President's Challenge, a program that awards points for specific activities and established benchmarks for completing them. Residents who completed the active lifestyle award program received certificates. People who earned 40,000 points received a plaque with a bronze medal; those who topped 90,000 got silver medals and one person—Perris parks and recreation employee Margarita Sanchez—earned a gold medal for accruing more than 160,000 points. Carr and Perris minister Ted Norton received silver medals. Seven people earned bronze medals.

Busch predicted even better success for Live Well Perris 2014.

"It's going to be difficult but we are going to make the Live Well program better next year," he said.

Julie Loffer took home two tickets to Disneyland for winning the top award in the women's category in biggest loser. Ruben Paz received the same prize for topping the men's competition. Perris High School sophomore Jose Estrada won a bicycle and helmet for losing the most in the boy's youth competition.

Brianna Brown and Janessa Brown took top honors in the girl's category. They both received a bicycle and helmet. Loffer said she enjoyed working out with other Perris residents on walks, hikes and boot-camp activities that comprised elements of the Live Well campaign. She also learned to trade in red meat, bread, sugar and cheese for chicken, asparagus, broccoli and romaine lettuce.

"It made a big difference," Loffer said. "I like going out in the community with my family and taking part in the activities. I appreciate the City of Perris offering this program and I hope they continue it next year."

Jose, 15, said he feels great after losing nine pounds. Jose previously won a bicycle in a raffle as part of the Community Health Fair in June. He used the bike to cycle around the City and to ride to the Bob Glass Gym, where he worked out daily on the treadmill and stair-stepper and pumped iron. His second bike gives him more commuting options.

"I'm really grateful to the City to make this possible," Jose said.

Perris elected officials were delighted to receive such feedback.

Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough led residents on the hike at the Lake Perris State Recreation Area and is taking part in a series of bicycle rides as training for the Oct. 5 Tour De Perris. He encouraged people to take part in the third annual Tour De Perris, whether they ride in the 100-mile section, the 62-mile, the 30-mile or the 8-mile, the latter geared for families.

"It's all about having fun," Yarbrough said. "Perris continues to go above and beyond."

City Councilwoman Rita Rogers and City Councilman Julio Rodriguez took part in the biggest loser competition and enthusiastically supported the twice-weekly workouts at City parks.

"This program was an incredible success," Rodriguez said. "I know I had a lot of fun participating. I am so excited for the future."

Rogers said Perris residents embraced the Live Well program. Since it began, Rogers said she noticed more people walking in parks or through City neighborhoods to get some exercise.

"You all did a great job!" Rogers said. "Congratulations."

City Councilman Al Landers also thanked everyone "who did so much." While many people who took part in the biggest loser program shed pounds, Landers said his weight went up.

"I gained six pounds," he joked, drawing smiles and laughter from the audience.

Here are the final results of the Biggest Loser and Presidential Active Living Award (PALA) Challenges.

Biggest loser winners and the prizes they earned include:

Women 16 and over:
Julie Lofferets: two tickets to Disneyland.
Chineze Ndukwe: one-year membership at Fitness 19.
Jackie Ramos: \$50 gift card from Big 5.

Men 6 and over:
Ruben Paz: two tickets to Disneyland.
Chris Malone: one year membership at Fitness 19.
Jose Ramos: \$50 gift card from Big 5.

Juveniles 14 and 15:
Jose Estrada—4.86 percent body weight lost; bicycle and helmet.

Brianna Brown and Janessa Brown took top honors in the 11 to 13-year-old category. They both received a bicycle and helmet.

PALA winners:

Gold Medal: Margarita Sanchez
Silver Medal: Ron Carr; Ted Norton
Bronze Medal: Saida Amozgar, Richard Belmudez, Arturo Cervantes, Marlene Jones, James McElvain, Jackie Ramos and Joe Vargo

PALA Lifestyle Certificate Recipients:

Jesus Alejandro, Saida Amozgar, Richard Belmudez, Lonetta Bryan, Isabel Carlos, Ron Carr, Ben Cayton, Arturo Cervantes, Michelle Clay, Regina Enriquez, Veronica Farkas, Judy Haughney, Helen Hibbing, Marlene Jones, Julie Loffer, Darren Madkin, James McElvain, Penny McElvain, Chantal Melendez, Chineze Ndukwe, Ted Norton, Joyce Norton, Jose Ramos, Jackie Ramos, Rita Rogers, Margarita Sanchez, Joseph Vargo and Thomas Ziska.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch presents the Gold Medal to Margarita Sanchez, who earned the most points in the Presidential Active Living Award (PALA) competition, part of the Live Well Perris initiative. Sanchez bikes daily, runs nearly every day and works out regularly in the City gym.



Perris resident Julie Loffer receives a certificate from Perris Mayor Daryl Busch. Loffer won the women's portion of the Biggest Loser competition, earning two tickets to Disneyland.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch with the three top points earners in the Presidential Active Living Award (PALA) completion: Silver Medal winner Ron Carr; gold medalist Margarita Sanchez and silver medalist Ted Norton.