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## It's Time to Focus on Health at Annual Fair



A volunteer from West Coast University takes a blood pressure reading during the 2016 health fair in the City of Perris. Health screenings are part of the 2017 health fair, which takes place April 22 at the Perris City Hall Campus.

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Health screenings, a 5K run, a 24-hour walk, musical entertainment, Zumba lessons, the appearance of a popular sports mascot and the opportunity to win 75 bicycles and safety helmets are among the highlights of the 5th Annual City of Perris Health Fair on April 22.

The health fair is one of the City's main community outreach efforts and highlights Perris's ongoing "Live Well" program, which emphasizes exercise and healthy eating and food choices.

Perris Mayor Michael Vargas said the goal of the health fair is simple: getting and keeping City residents physically fit.

"This is a program that supports our residents and it is very important that we support such programs," Vargas said. "I'm glad we are able to support such programs. Reaching out to our community is always delightful."

Vargas noted that since he was elected Mayor in November, he has heard from many people outside of Perris who have commended the City for its community-based programs and events.

"People in the surrounding communities are learning about Perris," he said. "We are attracting residents from other cities to Perris to see what we have to offer our residents."

City Manager Richard Belmudez said the health fair typically attracts thousands of people to City Hall, making it one of Perris's signature events for the year. The wide range of information and activities make it easier for people to take a more active role in improving their quality of life.

"We are proud of our health fair because it reaches so many residents and provides them with the information and incentives to improve their health," Belmudez said. "It reaffirms our City's commitment to healthy eating and active-living through exercising and making more informed dietary choices."

The City is once again partnering with the Perris Elementary School District and the American Cancer Society as part of the 2017 health fair. All activities take place at the Perris City Hall Campus, 101 North D Street.

Activities begin at 8:30 a.m. with a 5-kilometer run that starts at City Hall and wends its way through Perris streets before returning to the starting point. At 9 a.m. the 24-hour "Relay for Life" takes off from Foss Field Park. That event, sponsored by the American Cancer Society, features cancer survivors, relatives, friends and supporters making laps around the field for an entire 24-hour period.

The health fair kicks off at 10 a.m. and runs until 2 p.m. The bicycle and helmet raffle is scheduled to begin at 1:15 p.m. Helmets have been donated by the non-profit Safe Routes to School, which encourages youngsters to bicycle or walk to classes.

Perris City employees will be wearing baseball jerseys, highlighting the theme of this year's health fair—getting folks to participate in sports. Fairgoers are encouraged to put on the jersey of their favorite team, whether soccer, baseball, football, basketball, lacrosse, hockey or something else.

Other health fair highlights include:

- Nursing students from West Coast University conducting health screenings to detect high blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes.
- Volunteers from four mobile screening centers conducting similar health screenings.
- Musical selections from the easy-listening music group "Brothers Igniting a Groove," who will perform throughout the health fair.
- The appearance of Thunder, the popular mascot of the Lake Elsinore Storm minor league professional baseball team.
- Tours of the City's Green City Farm Program, a community garden on the City Hall Campus. Several master gardeners will be on hand to explain the concept behind the community garden.
- City physical fitness instructor Laura Sosa leading Zumba lessons.

Arcenio Ramirez is helping organize the upcoming health fair. Ramirez is part of the City's "nutrition education obesity prevention" outreach.

"It's important to have a healthy community," Ramirez said. "The City of Perris promotes a healthy community through its Live Well Perris healthy eating active-living initiative."

Ramirez said he believes the health fair is a great way for Perris residents to learn about the ongoing programs and events created to improve their health and quality of life.

Those include weekly Thursday evening workouts at the Perris Senior Center, an early morning "boot camp" three times a week, the Wednesday morning walking club and an April 29 hike at the Lake Perris State Recreation Area.

"I'm thrilled at the opportunity to engage with the community and inform them about all the great things the City of Perris has to offer," Ramirez said.



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