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Community Garden Receives Major Grant

The City of Perris received \$20,000 from Kaiser Permanente this week to continue its community garden program and earned a big shout out for its commitment to improve the lives of its residents through active living and healthy eating.

"I applaud the City of Perris for its Live Well Perris health initiative," said Vita Willett, senior vice president area manager for the Kaiser Foundation, Hospital and Health Plan. "I'm very impressed with the comprehensiveness of the program, from exercise to health eating. Very impressive. You really are leaders in this area."



Vita Willett, (right) senior vice president area manager for the Kaiser Foundation, Hospital and Health Plan, presents a \$20,000 check to Isabel Carlos, Assistant Director of Administrative Services, Mayor Daryl Busch and Assistant City Manager Ron Carr during the July 12 City Council meeting. The funding will continue support of the Perris Green City Farm Program, a community garden on the City Hall Campus.

Willett made her comments July 12 during a presentation to the Perris City Council. She presented the \$20,000 check to Mayor Daryl Busch, Assistant City Manager Ron Carr and Assistant Director of Administrative Services Isabel Carlos.

The funding will continue support for the community garden, known officially as the Perris Green City Farm Program. The project employs a variety of high-tech growing platforms to produce corn, lettuce, tomatoes, onions, zucchini and herbs.

Cooking demonstrations conducted by a professional chef illustrate to Perris youngsters and adults the benefits of fresh produce to their diet.

Now in its fourth year with the City of Perris, the Live Well program has won national, state and regional acclaim for its success in encouraging residents to eat healthy and exercise.

The program has included an annual health fair, exercise classes on weekends and evenings at various Perris parks, a series of walks, hikes and bicycle rides, a "biggest loser" weight-loss program, nutrition-education classes for hundreds of school children and parents and a senior prom for residents 55 and older. The community-garden program marks the latest component of Live Well Perris.

Willett said the City's commitment to Live Well Perris reflects its concern to spread the message about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

"Your initiatives will improve the lives and health of your residents," she said.

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