

CONNECTIONS

Center for Civic Partnerships

California Healthy Cities and Communities

Rx for Better Health: Walk!

The City of El Monte became a California Healthy City in August 2009. Incorporated in 1912, it is the 10th largest city in Los Angeles County and has had several waves of immigration resulting in great ethnic diversity with the racial makeup of the city including 69% Hispanic, 24% Asian, and 6% White.

In July 2008 the City received a grant through the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's P.L.A.C.E. (Policies for Livable, Active Communities and Environments) Program. As part of the physical activity component of that program, the City developed Arceo Walk, a one-mile circuit walking path with mileage markers and signage connecting civic, educational, retail and health care facilities.

"This is a great community building opportunity that promotes healthy living. I am pleased that El Monte is working toward a healthier community."

Andre Quintero
Mayor, City of El Monte

El Monte wanted to ensure the Arceo walking path was utilized. With a grant from the California Healthy Cities and Communities (CHCC) Program, the City created the Healthy

El Monte Walking Club.

The City started by sending out over 1,000 mailings and 200 emails to residents to participate in the Arceo Walk Ceremony commemorating the opening of the new walking path. Staff participated in multiple City events to promote the walking path and recruit participants for the walking club.



Arpiné Shakhbandaryan (left) awards El Monte Walking Club members with the "Best Recruitment" award.

The Healthy El Monte Walking Club was officially "kicked off" on January 19, 2010 and drew 95 community residents. Registration is free. The walking club was initially offered via 17 separate sessions to gauge the community's interest in the different options.

By June 2010, 8 options were finalized and the walking club had over 370 registered members. Letters were mailed to thank the participants for their involvement during the January



El Monte Walking Club

Dose: Walking - when done briskly on a regular basis, walking can have many positive impacts on health, including:

- Decreasing the risk of a heart attack
- Reducing the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes
- Helping to control weight
- Improving muscle tone

(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, "Walking for Fitness, Taking Steps in the Right Direction," December 19, 2002)

– June 2010 walking program and invited them to the Healthy El Monte Walking Club Mixer held on June 30 at the El Monte Community Center.

Along with City staff, 75 participants took part in the healthy dinner and awards ceremony.

Recognition was given to the top 5 walking club members in the following categories: Best Recruitment, Best Participation and Most Steps.

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One of the main goals of the walking club was to increase walking activity by 60 minutes a week among all Latino adult and elderly participants. City staff administered pre and post physical activity and food frequency questionnaires to determine the levels of physical activity and diets of walking club members. The City has also maintained a daily log of steps administered during the walking program by the recreation leader and a monthly step log for recording of steps during non-walking club hours.

“We are proud of the Healthy El Monte Walking Club and we are looking for other opportunities to duplicate this successful model throughout the city.”

Rene Bobadilla
City Manager,
City of El Monte

The surveys were mailed to the residents’ homes. A total of 37 residents, representing a 10 percent return, completed and returned both the pre and post physical activity and food frequency questionnaires.


- 18 of 37 OR 48.6% increased walking by 60 minutes or more per week.
- 23 of 37 OR 62.2% increased walking by 30 minutes or more per week.

City staff developed relationships with several community health care providers to promote the importance of physical activity and the Healthy El Monte Walking Club to patients in need of recreational opportunities to improve their health. The El Monte Comprehensive Health Center currently refers patients to the Healthy El Monte Walking Club as a form of prescription for overweight, diabetes and heart disease prevention. This is an important component of the program and staff will connect with

local health care providers and provide them with toolkits to be able to prescribe recreation as the solution to qualified cases.

Maintenance, Public Works, Code Enforcement and the Police Department have been involved at various stages of the program and have enhanced their services in the areas at which the walking program is run. Arceo Walk is a designated walking path thus special care is taken to make sure that hazards such as dogs, hedges and other disturbances are resolved to create a safe and inviting environment for members.

The walking program has highlighted the success of the Arceo Walk demonstration project. The creation of trails, paths and programs that increase the visibility and use of community resources enhances collaborations and maximizes resources. The program design and funding has allowed for a clear presentation of the requirements to fund and sustain the program on a citywide scale.

The relationships with the El Monte Comprehensive Health Center (and other community health care providers) and the identification of community champions will provide the additional staff required to implement the program on a citywide scale. The Community Services Department has expressed their continued interest in program expansion and will be discussing the addition of new walking paths and trails with the Community Development Department. Great things are in store for El Monte! 

For more information on the Healthy El Monte Walking Club, contact Arpiné Shakhbandaryan at (626) 580-2210 or email at ashakhbandaryan@ElMonteCA.gov

California Healthy Cities and Communities Network

Congratulations and thank you to our long time Network members:

10 years plus

Cities of:

- Chino Hills
- Citrus Heights
- Delano
- Escondido
- Montclair
- Oceanside
- Riverside
- San Bernardino
- Selma
- West Hollywood

Center for Collaborative Planning

Center for Community Health & Evaluation

Tehama County Health Partnership

5 years plus

Cities of:

- Cerritos
- Chino
- El Monte
- Fontana
- Glendale
- Irvine
- Loma Linda
- Rancho Cordova
- Westlake Village
- Willits

Alameda County Public Health Dept.

Desert Healthcare District

Lewis Operating Corp.

NE Community Resources Coordinating Council


Public Health Law and Policy

Riverside Department of Public Health

Membership includes:

- Notices of relevant funding opportunities and resources via our weekly listserv
- Discounts on conference fees
- Network membership directory
- Specialized publications on a variety of community topics

Last year members received over 300 funding, event and resource announcements!

To join, contact Nicole Hara at nhara@civicpartnerships.org or at (916) 646-8699. 

**– Get Involved –
Become a Member
Today!**

In Rancho Cucamonga It's Healthy Mind-Body-Earth

As they say, “timing is everything” and this period of economic crisis for local government hardly seems opportune for initiating a new program involving multiple city departments and staff. However, for the City of Rancho Cucamonga, it has proven to be an ideal time to launch and grow “*Healthy RC*.”

Focusing on something positive in the midst of this difficult economy has been energizing for city staff, community partners and residents. In addition, it allowed Healthy RC's theme of healthy Mind, Body and Earth to serve as the framework for the recently adopted General Plan Update.

The City of Rancho Cucamonga with a population of 177,000 is located in western San Bernardino County. City leaders were concerned about the County's ranking as the fourth most obese in the country, with six times as many unhealthy as healthy food outlets. In March 2008, after gathering extensive input from community residents and staff, Council adopted a resolution formalizing its commitment to the Healthy Cities model and its intent to develop a Healthy Cities program. The City also joined the California Healthy Cities and Communities Network to connect with the statewide program and other California Healthy Cities.

“Healthy RC has been the right thing to do, not in spite of, but because of the dismal economy. It provides a positive focus for the community when many other things are discouraging.”

Dr. Donald J. Kurth
Mayor
City of Rancho Cucamonga

Several decisions were critical to *Healthy RC*'s success. The first was taking a very broad approach to develop policies and programs promoting a healthy Mind, Body and Earth. This comprehensive view of health required the involvement and expertise of multiple city departments,



The City of Rancho Cucamonga promotes sustainability by providing opportunities for all residents to make the healthy and sustainable choice, the easy choice. These young girls are proudly displaying their reusable bags which will reduce the use of plastic and paper bags in the City of Rancho Cucamonga.

staff and community partners and created widespread engagement, support and ownership of the program.

Second, designating the City Manager's Office to lead *Healthy RC* facilitated the integration of healthy cities principles across departmental lines. A Core Team composed of executives, managers and line staff from Planning, Public Works, Library, Community Services, Human Resources, Environmental Services and the City Manager's Office guided the development of *Healthy RC*.

They established a vision and used community assessment data to develop short- and long-term plans. Core Team members involved their departments in generating policies, programs and events to encourage healthy Minds, Bodies and Earth. This effectively spread healthy cities concepts, engaged staff at all levels, and made healthy cities principles the “way we do business” throughout City Hall.

Third, social marketing strategies proved effective in creating interest and a sense of shared responsibility for improving individual and community health. Finally, the Council's fiscally prudent approach stipulated that *Healthy RC* require no city funds. Ironically, this saved the program from likely elimination during the last several years of budget cuts.

Healthy RC Kids, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is a new component of Rancho Cucamonga's

overall healthy cities program, aimed at reducing childhood obesity. Healthy RC Kids has two primary objectives: 1) to change community systems to “make the healthy choice, the easy choice” by developing common/complementary policies across the major youth-serving institutions, and 2) to improve opportunities for active living and healthy eating for residents of Southwest Cucamonga.

An executive committee comprised of decision makers representing Healthy RC Kids partners (schools, hospital, city, and community agencies) is examining current policies and identifying opportunities for common policy development to encourage and support healthy eating and active living among youth. Initial policy targets include requiring healthy food options in vending machines and all youth programs. The intent is to set new norms so that children encounter consistently healthy messages and have easy access to healthy food choices throughout their day.

Southwest Cucamonga has a predominantly Latino population with higher rates of poverty and risk for obesity. The limited access to fresh produce and dearth of infrastructure to facilitate active living (e.g. parks, sidewalks, bike lanes) are targets for improvements. As with the initial launch of *Healthy RC*, social marketing and engagement strategies have been effective in involving residents, youth and community partners in planning and implementing *Healthy RC Kids*. Following a series of workshops and a forum to identify and prioritize environmental and policy changes, a steering committee was formed and several sub-committees are researching farmers' markets and community gardens as initial strategies to increase access to healthy, affordable food.

As Rancho Cucamonga leaders, community partners, residents and city staff have learned, there is never a wrong time to launch a healthy cities program!

For more information, contact Erika Lewis-Huntley at (909) 477-2700, ext. 2008 or email at erika.lewis-huntley@cityofrc.us

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California Healthy Cities and Communities (CHCC) assists cities and communities with developing, implementing and evaluating inclusionary, community-driven programs, policies and plans, which address environmental, social and economic determinants of health. CHCC advocates a broad definition of health: a shared vision; widespread community participation; system reform; collaborative partnerships; engaging local assets; and a means to measure progress and base improvements upon results.

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Connections

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A Center of the Public Health Institute

Events & Resources

Events

10th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth Conference
February 3-5, 2011, Charlotte, NC
For details and conference registration, go to: <http://www.newpartners.org/>

2011 National Green Infrastructure Conference
February 23-25, 2011, Shepherdstown, WV
The Inaugural 2011 National Green Infrastructure Conference is a gathering of policy-makers, practitioners, and on-the-ground implementers of green infrastructure practices and design from around the country. To register, visit: <http://www.conservationsfund.org/gic2011>

California & Pacific Southwest Recreation & Park Training Conference
March 9-11, 2011, Sacramento, CA
For details and conference registration, go to: <http://www.cprs.org>

Websites

News California
California has launched a news hub that compiles and updates its many agencies' Twitter, RSS and YouTube news feeds. <http://news.ca.gov/>

New Green Fleet Website Resource
The Institute for Local Government has launched a new website to help local officials evaluate options for greening agency fleets. <http://www.ca-lig.org/greeningfleets>

Resources

Sustainable Design and Green Building Toolkit for Local Governments
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency developed the toolkit to help identify and remove barriers to sustainable design and green building within the permitting process. <http://www.epa.gov/region4/recycle/green-building-toolkit.pdf>

The Getting Around Guide: An AARP Guide to Walking, Bicycling and Public Transportation
This compact 16-page brochure encourages walking, biking, and taking public transportation or other transportation. http://assets.aarp.org/www.aarp.org/_articles/transportation_mobility/getting_around_guide_06-22-10.pdf

SAVE THE DATE



California Healthy Cities and Communities Annual Conference

April 21, 2011

The California Endowment
1000 North Alameda St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Have an idea you want to share at the conference? Complete an abstract submission form! Forms and conference information are located on our website www.civicpartnerships.org