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CENTRAL FLORIDA CELEBRATES 2016 HEALTHIEST WEIGHT COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS



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Orlando, Fla.— Today, Florida Department of Health announced the 80 communities recognized as 2016 Healthy Weight Community Champions, including 14 communities in the Orlando area. The recognition program highlights local government efforts to increase physical activity and improve nutrition as part of Healthiest Weight Florida.

“By working toward creating healthy environments, these local governments have shown their commitment to improving the health of all Floridians,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “We are proud to see the number of recognized communities growing steadily each year.”

Local governments can implement a variety of policies that help people become more physically active and encourage better nutrition. These “best practice” policies are reflected in the Healthy Weight Community Champion Recognition Program. Examples of criteria for the recognition include whether a jurisdiction maintains a system of parks, provides incentive programs to attract grocery stores to underserved neighborhoods and prioritizes personal safety in areas where people can increase physical activity.

Local Community Champions and their program highlights are as follows.

Brevard County

City of Palm Bay

When the city provides refreshments at a meeting or event, they do offer healthy food and beverage options. Fruit, granola bars, juice, and water are some of the options provided.

“Palm Bay is proud to achieve the Healthy Weight Community Champion Recognition for the first time,” said Lori Parker. “We are excited to continue reshaping environments, moving our City and the State forward by increasing the opportunities for our residents to become more active and to increase the access to resources that will make it easier to make healthier choices and improve nutrition.”

Town of Indialantic

Over the past twelve years the Town has prioritized repairing broken sidewalks by replacing broken sections and/or grinding areas where a section of concrete has protruded beyond the level area and installing new sections of sidewalk to connect with existing sections of sidewalk in Town to create a safe continuous path for pedestrians.

"The Town of Indialantic is very happy to be a 2016 Healthy Weight Community Champion in Florida," said Mayor Dave Berkman. "We look forward to spreading the healthy message to our residents and getting them engaged."

Flagler County

Flagler County plans for pedestrian and bicycle travel when planning for improvements or new construction to help promote physical activity in the community.

"In Flagler County we are constantly looking toward the future and how to make health sustainable," said Barbara Revels, Chair, Flagler County Commission. "This Healthy Weight Community Champion Recognition is a wonderful symbol of our county's commitment to health, and I'm excited that we could achieve this award for our residents."

Lake County

City of Clermont

Clermont has 350 acres designated for parks and recreation, and 25 parks that include regional parks, community, neighborhood, and mini or pocket parks. Lake Hiawatha Preserve is a 217 acre passive park with miles of open trails and playground.

Marion County

The County is certified for their efforts in designing and constructing a sustainable, energy efficient library facility with walking trails, a bicycle rack and Florida-friendly landscaping.

City of Belleview

Belleview has a Comprehensive Plan policy that requires bicycle and pedestrian facilities be considered during design of new roadways in an effort to improve the roads for bikers, pedestrians and drivers.

"The city of Belleview is honored to be a 2016 Healthy Weight Community Champion," said Mayor Christine Dobkowski. "By incorporating bicycle and pedestrian facilities into our infrastructure, we can encourage residents to include more physical activity into their daily lives."

Orange County

City of Orlando

The city of Orlando is developing the Healthy Kids Orlando (HkO) initiative, which provides an innovative and effective public health model that creates a sustainable solution to the problem of childhood obesity in Orlando. It is a comprehensive, multidimensional, long term approach to

promote healthy lifestyles and combat childhood obesity and will target 300 youth in the Parramore neighborhood.

“As Mayor of the city of Orlando, the health and wellbeing of our citizens is extremely important to me and I am proud of the efforts we have implemented to further this like investing in bike trails and sidewalks, expanding our parks and green space and providing diverse and innovative activities for all of our residents,” said Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer. “This award is a testament to the work we have done so far as a City and community to make a positive impact in the lives of our residents, and I look forward to continuing and expanding this effort.”

City of Winter Park

A Complete Streets Resolution was passed by the City Commission in May 2011. Sidewalks are required per code for new construction and are always considered with redevelopment projects. Additionally, all local city streets are available for cycling with bike lanes or bike routes.

Osceola County

City of St. Cloud

The city has ten parks, two sporting complexes and four facilities that provide activities. The Community Center offers activities like dance, aerobics and a wide variety of activities for active adults and the Civic Center offers activities for children and adults through various programs including, youth and adult basketball, pickleball, dance, baton, futsal, yoga and creative movement.

“City of St. Cloud is proud to be recognized as a 2016 Community Champion for the second year in a row,” said Parks and Recreation Director Stephanie Holtkamp. “We have seen quite a few meaningful improvements in our health efforts within our community over the past year, and I’m excited for our residents and visitors who will benefit tremendously from these changes!”

Seminole County

City of Oviedo

As part of the city’s employee wellness committee’s initiative, healthy snacks started being sold at City Hall for employees. Additionally, the City’s Wellness Center provider offers monthly webinars to employees on themes covering healthy eating, how to deal with stress and healthy habits.

“Oviedo has now been a Healthy Weight Community Champion for the last three years,” said Mayor Dominic Persampiere. “Our city is buying in to creating healthier environments in our communities, and we’re proud to be able to offer these services for our residents.”

City of Sanford

In the city, all housing developments are required to adhere to the Land Development Code requirements for site and building design promoting pedestrian, bicycle and transit modes making the roadways safe and accessible for everyone.

“Sanford is proud to be a Healthy Weight Community Champion for the second year in a row,” said Mayor Jeff Triplett. “We are seeing major improvements in our infrastructure to accommodate health, and we continue to provide our residents access to programs that support healthy lifestyles in the Sanford community. I’m excited about our potential for future endeavors.”

Volusia County

City of New Smyrna Beach

The city has adopted a Sidewalk Master Plan and has conducted a feasibility study for the multi-use trail system to look at completing the existing pathway network.

City of Ormond Beach

The city requires all new private and public developments to provide bike parking as well as requiring bike lanes when road construction occurs. Additionally, the third Mayor’s Health and Fitness Challenge was held this year with 199 challengers losing approximately 480 pounds.

“The City of Ormond Beach is delighted to be recognized by the Department of Health as a 2016 Healthy Weight Community Champion,” Mayor Ed Kelley said. “Our consistent enhancements to benefit the health of our citizens continue to facilitate a lifetime of healthy choices.”

Town of Ponce Inlet

The town incorporates standards encompassing aspects of Complete Streets such as providing sidewalks and bike paths, pedestrian crosswalks at busy intersections and beach approaches, and access to transit stops. Additionally, the town adopted amendments to its development requirements which allow vegetable gardens in front yards and allows fruit trees to count toward meeting minimum landscaping requirements.

About Healthiest Weight Florida

Healthiest Weight Florida is a public-private collaboration bringing together state agencies, not-for-profit organizations, businesses and entire communities to help Florida's children and adults make consistent, informed choices about healthy eating and active living. To learn more about how to be active and make nutritious food choices, visit www.healthiestweightflorida.com.

About the Florida Department of Health

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