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## **NORTHWEST FLORIDA CELEBRATES 2016 HEALTHIEST WEIGHT COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS**



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**Pensacola, Fla.**— Today, Florida Department of Health announced the 80 communities recognized as 2016 Healthy Weight Community Champions, including two communities in the Pensacola 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.

### **Escambia County**

#### **City of Pensacola**

The Parks and Recreation Department, along with the Florida Department of Health hosts the 5210 NWFL Day of Play each September as a day for the family to turn off electronics and get out to spend at least an hour or more playing at the Community Maritime Park. This year the city had over 40 vendors offering healthy activities to get people up and moving as well as partnered with the JAKES event to introduce children and families to activities such as archery and gun safety.

“We are proud that Pensacola is being recognized as a 2016 Healthy Weight Community Champion,” said Mayor Ashton Hayward. “The 93 parks and 61 playgrounds that our City maintains is a testament to our continuing goal to promote a more active lifestyle. Our

communities work hard to support physical activity and this recognition validates that our work is paying off,” Hayward said.

## **Okaloosa County**

### **City of Fort Walton Beach**

The city has a running/walking team that competes against other local jurisdictions. Additionally, the city has have run/walk and weight loss events has grown their wellness fair to incorporate healthy lifestyles and weight loss.

“Fort Walton Beach is delighted to be announced as a 2016 Healthy Weight Community Champion,” said Fort Walton Beach Mayor Mike Anderson. “Our commitment to better health is evident throughout our community and we’re excited to continue with this success in Okaloosa County.”

### **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](http://www.healthiestweightflorida.com).

### **About the Florida Department of Health**

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