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## CENTRAL FLORIDA CELEBRATES 2017 HEALTHIEST WEIGHT COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS



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**Orlando, Fla.**—Today, the Florida Department of Health recognized 98 communities as the 2017 Healthy Weight Community Champions. Florida’s county and municipal governments play an important role in decreasing the prevalence of unhealthy weight in their jurisdictions. Local governments can implement a variety of policies that have been shown to increase physical activity and improve nutrition. These best practice policies are reflected in the Healthy Weight Community Champion submission criteria. Between August and December 2016, local governments were invited to submit best practice policies they have implemented in their jurisdictions.

The Community Champions program is part of the Department’s Healthiest Weight Florida initiative. Healthiest Weight Florida is a public-private collaboration bringing together state agencies, local governments, not-for-profit organizations, businesses, schools, faith-based organizations and entire communities to help Florida’s children and adults make consistent, informed choices about healthy eating and active living.

Local Community Champions and their program highlights are as follows.

### **City of Belleview**

The city of Belleview will be working on upgrading recreational facilities at Cherokee Park. Cherokee Park is an underutilized park in a residential neighborhood with limited recreational opportunities. The city is planning park improvements that will make it more attractive to residents, starting with providing a shade structure at the playground. The city is also considering options to remodel and/or repurpose public facilities and is exploring funding options to create a walking trail around the park. These improvements will encourage residents to be more active by providing safe exercise opportunities.

### **City of Bunnell**

The city of Bunnell supports the local network of walking trails by connecting to neighboring city of Palm Coast and Flagler County trails and sidewalks. It is now possible to walk from Bunnell to Flagler Beach without leaving a sidewalk.

### **City of Clermont**

The city of Clermont works closely with South Lake Hospital who performs an annual "Community Health Needs Assessment." In addition, with information shared from Florida Department of Health and Lake County School Board, the city of Clermont develops strategies to augment health equity gaps and is working collaboratively with diverse agencies to develop inclusive economic development practices.

### **City of Dunnellon**

The city of Dunnellon has a First Saturday market and a seasonal farmer's market offering fresh produce. In addition, the city will be constructing a new trailhead park that will include bicycle racks, restrooms, benches and drinking fountains. It will connect residents to the Cross Florida Greenway trail. The city is also looking at more ecotourism options that include implementing healthier environmental options.

### **City of New Smyrna Beach**

The city of New Smyrna Beach has two farmer's markets that are privately operated. The city has worked closely with both markets and made changes to regulations to accommodate the markets. One of the farmer's markets operates in the parking area in front of City Hall.

### **City of Orlando**

Through the city of Orlando's Family, Parks, and Recreation Department and the city's Wellness Program, Orlando has partnered with Hebni Nutrition Consultants to teach healthy cooking to city employees and youth who participate in the city's afterschool programs to cook and eat healthy foods. The city, as a founding member of Good Food Central Florida, supports equitable siting of markets. More recently, Orlando was awarded the Farmers Market Promotion Program grant. As part of this application, a new farmers market will be sited in the community of Parramore.

### **City of Ormond Beach**

The city of Ormond Beach offers a community garden initiative within their Central Park system. The first garden opened in 2015 and two more are being developed, with the next one planned to open in the spring of 2017. Gardeners are required to grow edible crops, and master gardeners and agriculture extensions host tutorials and gardening workshops.

### **City of Oviedo**

The city of Oviedo is installing sidewalks along Evans Square with a grant from Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) and upgrading the sidewalk along Clara Lee Evans to stimulate pedestrian traffic from the New Downtown to a commercial development that includes a supermarket. Furthermore, Oviedo has a network of walking/biking trails.

### **City of Palm Bay**

The city of Palm Bay developed a U-Matters Wellness Program whose mission is to promote awareness of healthy lifestyle choices and to provide structured programs, education and resources to support improvement of the overall health and wellbeing of employees and their family members in each of five key dimensions that compromise the U-Matters Wellness Program. The city has partnered with businesses in the community in each of the five areas of the program: physical, emotional, social, financial and professional. The program encourages employees to combine the five dimensions of well-being into one single quality way of living.

### **City of Sanford**

The city of Sanford is planning for the development of bicycle and pedestrian ways which will connect residential areas to recreational areas and major activity centers. The plan will include potential funding sources and programs for implementation and will be consistent with roadway improvement plans identified in the engineered transportation master plan.

### **City of Satellite Beach**

The city of Satellite Beach is planning to create a kid's triathlon event, a Satellite Beach running club, an adult softball league and a comprehensive plan element dedicated to healthy living.

### **City of Winter Garden**

The city of Winter Garden has a community garden and farmer's market. The Tucker Ranch Farm will support community gardens that will be available for all city residents to utilize. In addition, the city is exploring a partnership with a Fleet Farming group to help community members transform their unused lawns into productive farm plots with the help of volunteers.

### **City of Winter Park**

In the city of Winter Park partners with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Board to provide a bicycle valet program for all special events. This encourages attendees to ride their bicycles to city events, and it gives them a place to check-in their bikes while visiting the event and/or the shops and restaurants downtown. A road race policy permits 10K run/walk events hosted by nonprofits throughout the year to take place on streets closed to vehicular traffic during the race.

### **Flagler County**

Flagler County promotes and supports healthy nutrition through various programs. For employees, Flagler County's CareHere facility has a nutritionist and web site available to staff to make healthy lifestyle choices. In addition, Flagler County maintains more than 20 parks and recreational facilities and has plans to continue to move forward with additional developments through 2035. The Flagler County Comprehensive Plan includes a Recreation and Open Space Element which provides for access to facilities associated with physical activity.

### **Marion County**

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners' "Health Happens" Wellness Program continues to promote and support physical activity initiatives throughout Marion County for employees, employee spouses, employee dependents and the community. Some of these initiatives include health education, physical activity challenges, promotions of community physical activity events, and distributions of maps of parks, walking paths, and other areas that promote and support physical activity. The "Health Happens" Wellness Program completed phase 1 and 2 of a multiphase project that included clay walking trails, outdoor fitness stations, stretching stations, rest stations, and water stations. In addition, the "Health Happens" farmers provides healthy and affordable food and gardening options such as fresh produce, honey, seafood, and local nursery vendors. The market is open to the community and is advertised as a healthy venue option for the county.

### **Town of Eatonville**

The town of Eatonville passed a resolution with a plan to extend walking paths through the towns north and south of Eatonville. In addition, the town encourages community garden initiatives and has a strong partnership with Healthy Eatonville (a community non-profit organization).

### **Town of Indialantic**

The town of Indialantic identified gaps in the existing sidewalks and filled these gaps to ensure that there exists an inter-connection of sidewalks and paths. Additionally, the town is in the process of implementing a grant funded program to prepare a sidewalk master plan. The town also partners with the Rotary Club in an annual Witch Way 5K Run and are currently working on the 9th annual event to promote and support physical activity.

### **Town of Ponce Inlet**

The town of Ponce Inlet maintains a network of sidewalks along the major roads and on many residential streets. In addition, the Atlantic Ocean Beach within town limits is part of the designated "World's Most Famous Beach" Walking Trail. Finally, many of the town's parks feature networks of hiking/walking trails and walkways through natural dune systems, wetlands and forest.

### **About Healthiest Weight Florida**

To learn more about Healthiest Weight Florida, please visit [www.HealthiestWeightFL.com](http://www.HealthiestWeightFL.com). A list of the 2017 Champion Communities and best practices can be found online at: [www.HealthiestWeightFL.com/Recognition.html](http://www.HealthiestWeightFL.com/Recognition.html).

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

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](http://www.nacac.org), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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