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PINELLAS COMMUNITIES RECOGNIZED AS HEALTHY WEIGHT CHAMPIONS



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Five communities in Pinellas County were recognized by the Florida Department of Health as 2016 Healthy Weight Community Champions. 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.

These are the Pinellas Community Champions:

City of Safety Harbor

The most recent addition to the Safety Harbor park system is Folly Farms, a 10-acre passive park and community garden. Additionally, the city commission extended a contract with Jolley Trolley to provide residents continued access to the weekly farmers market in Dunedin and a grocer at Countryside Mall.

"The city of Safety Harbor continues to be innovative in providing healthy choices for its citizens," said Matt Spoor, City Manager. "We are honored to once again be named a Healthiest Weight Community Champion."

City of Clearwater

In order to promote physical activity, the city implemented a program called Healthy Choices for a Healthy Clearwater in which local employees and residents can sign up by committing to make at least one healthy choice a day. After signing up, the member receives an ID card that gives them access to discounts with local businesses that have signed on to partner with the program.

"We are pleased that our local efforts to improve the wellbeing of our citizens has been recognized as a Healthiest Weight Community Champion," said Wellness Specialist Regina Novak. "We remain dedicated to improving the safety and livability of our residential districts."

City of Largo

Largo sponsors a walking program, three outdoor fitness zones, and trail markers to various

destinations promoting physical activity in the community.

"Last year we were recognized for promoting healthy eating," said Director of Parks, Recreation and Arts Joan Byrne. "We are excited that our efforts to promoting a more active lifestyle has once again been honored by having Largo named a Healthiest Weight Community Champion."

City of St. Petersburg

In May 2015, Deputy Mayor Dr. Kanika Tomalin launched Healthy St. Pete, a citywide community engagement and empowerment initiative. Together, with the help of the Mayor's Office, Parks and Recreation department, and community partners, St. Petersburg will work to address the needs of the community – to improve the quality of life for those in our community through access, environment and lifestyle choices.

"Through the Healthy St. Pete initiative, the City of St. Petersburg is working hard to build a culture of health for our community," said Kim Brasher, Healthy St. Pete Program Supervisor of the Parks and Recreation Department. "We are excited that our efforts have led to St. Petersburg being named a Healthiest Weight Community Champion."

City of Pinellas Park

The Community Garden, initiated in 2008, offers raised gardens boxes to residents at a minimal charge of \$15 per six month growing season to facilitate the availability of fresh produce to our residents. The Garden is open to both residents and non-residents and produce is retained by the individual gardeners.

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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

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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