



Healthy City Fall River
4th Floor, Government
Center
Fall River, MA 02722
508-324-2411

Participating Organizations

Bristol Community College
Bristol County District Attorney
Bristol Elder Services
Bristol Workforce Investment Board
Catholic Social Services
City of Fall River
Board of Park Commissioners
Children In Balance
Clean City Committee
Department of Public Works
Health & Human Services
Street Tree Planting Program
Community Development Agency
Community Development Recreation
Child Nutrition Partnership
Community Foundation of SE Mass.
Corky Row Neighborhood Association
Corigan Mental Health Center
Diabetes Association, Inc.
Fall River Adult Literacy Partnership
Fall River Garden Club
Fall River Housing Authority
Fall River Office Econ. Development
Fall River Police Department
Fall River Public Schools
Fall River Realtors Association
Family Service Association
First Baptist Church
Gr. F.R. Chamber of Commerce
Gr. F.R. Real Estate Board
Green Futures
Health First Family Care Center
Katie Brown Educational Foundation
Khmer Family Resource Center
Maplewood Neighborhood Association
Mass Community Water Watch & BCC
May Institute
People, Inc.
S.E. Mass. Visiting Nurse Assoc.
Seven Hills Behavioral Health
Shepherd's Center
Southcoast Hospitals
Saint Anne's Hospital
St. Luke's Episcopal Church
Stanley Street Treatment & Resources
The Trustees of Reservations
Thomas Chew Mem. Boys & Girls Club
Univ. of Mass. Extension Service
Y.M.C.A. of Greater Fall River

The Healthy City Fall River CONNECTION

Connecting the people of the Fall River to improve our quality of life and health
Vol. 6 No.3 Spring 2010

New efforts now underway to grow Fall River parks, open spaces and community gardens



Nicole Fortier will be coordinating community garden development while Sandy Dennis will be coordinating parks advocacy for the City.

With the start of spring comes a desire to be outdoors after a long, snowy winter. What better place to go than one of Fall River's twelve parks, fourteen playgrounds or the Bioreserve, a large wooded area of the City accessible to the public. Starting this spring, Fall River residents can join a newly-formed group of Park Advocates that is working to make sure those parks and open spaces are welcoming and user-friendly. And, a newly-appointed Community Garden Coordinator will help those who want to take advantage of the spring weather to exercise their "green thumbs."

"As Massachusetts cities go, Fall River actually has an abundance of parks," commented Fall River parks manager Nancy Smith. "The problem is that we lack the resources needed to keep all of these facilities in their best repair, and, at this point, are trying our best to maintain the facilities we presently have." she added. The maintenance budget for the City's parks has been cut steadily over the past ten years leaving less than half the staff that used to be in place just for routine maintenance. Under the current fiscal crisis facing cities across the Commonwealth, it is unlikely that these budgets will be restored anytime soon.

The recently-funded Mass In Motion project, awarded to Fall River and eight other

communities using funds from private health insurance carriers, understands that there is a direct link between the availability of parks and the likelihood that residents will be physically active. "We can't expect parents to feel good about taking their children to parks if the playground equipment is broken or the ground is covered in trash," noted Mass In Motion coordinator Julianne Kelly. "Nor can we expect adults to take advantage of our wonderful wooded Bioreserve in the northeast section of the City if they get lost traversing the many trails that spider through the property," she added.

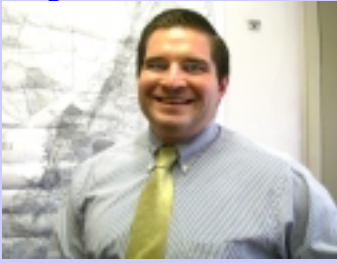
That's where the notion of an Urban Parks Advocate group comes in. The Putnam Foundation, working with the private Trustees of Reservations, has awarded Partners for a Healthier Community, Inc., an \$8,000 grant to help form a local advocacy group to promote park use and park development in Fall River. Partners has added \$2,000 to the grant and plans to hire a part-time City resident organizer to work over the next 18 months to develop a group of local advocates. This group, which has been holding monthly meetings at Government Center, is developing a network of groups and individuals committed to the protection, preservation and planning for the future of

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To learn more about how you can become involved in the Fall River **Parks Advocacy group**, contact Ms. Sandy Dennis at 508-673-2939.

To learn more about how you can become involved in **community gardens** in Fall River contact Nicole Fortier at 508-679-6841

Neighborhood Coordinator



Recently-appointed Neighborhood Association Coordinator Perry Long works out of his 4th floor Government Center Office.

Full River Neighborhood Associations have been without a full-time coordinator for the past two years. With Mayor Will Flanagan's appointment of Perry Long to the position in March, however, those organizations will have someone working to improve their effectiveness in bringing improvements to the City's ten neighborhoods.

Mr. Long was appointed to the position of Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator by Mayor Flanagan on February 9, 2010, using funds from the Community Development Agency to address the needs of low to moderate income areas. He will work with neighborhood associations to identify problems and help them solve those problems with the help of the Mayor's Office and Government Center departments.

One of the first projects he will be involved with is a city-wide neighborhood clean-up, scheduled for May 1st. The event will focus on the City's major parks but will also encourage residents to clean up their own streets. Long is also working with Save Our Neighborhoods to get input for the City's Master Plan.

"It's all about building relationships," said Long. "We can do a lot if we all work together," he added.

Mr. Long can be reached at 508-676-0324 or by e-mail at plong@fallriverma.org.

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Fall River's parks and open spaces.

The group is in the process of bringing the collective voices of the Board of Parks and Cemeteries, the Friends of Heritage State Park, the Friends of Oak Grove Cemetery, the Street Tree Planting Program, the Fall River Garden Club, the Watuppa Water Board, the Trustees of Reservations, Green Futures, Partners for a Healthier Community, and each of the ten neighborhood associations together to form a single interest group to support all of the public parks and open spaces in the City. This group can help to assemble voluntary work groups to provide needed clean-ups and improvements, advocate for new funding to pay for upgrades, and work with city and state leaders to seek additional resources.

An example of what can be done with additional funding for parks is the design of a "boundless playground", one of the "Gateway Parks" expected to be constructed later this summer at both Bicentennial and Griffin Parks. Once completed, the project will provide handicap-accessible playground equipment for children and their parents. Funding for this project came through an environmental bond bill that created the Gateway City Parks initiative which also funded new park and trail development in Boston, Chicopee, Everett, Fitchburg, Haverhill, Leominster, Lowell, Methuen, Pittsfield, Revere and Worcester. This type of funding requires advocacy across the state, and the Urban Parks Advocacy group in Fall River will be joining a network of similar groups statewide to push for future funding.

Another project that has been started, but not yet funded, is the design of a system of trail markers and maps for the Watuppa Reservation. Two teams of UMass-Dartmouth seniors majoring in design, education, marketing or sustainability, and working under the direction of Professor David Chapman and Water Division Forester Mike Labossiere, developed signage that, once installed, would make the large wooded area more easily accessible to hikers and trail bikers. Finding the funding to produce and install this signage could be a priority for the advocate group.

In order to cultivate new ideas for planning and funding of parks and greenways, representatives of the Urban Land Protection Coalition and Groundworks Lawrence will be coming to Fall River in April to share their expertise with Fall Riverites. Over the past ten years, the City of Lawrence has made

numerous environmental improvements focused on making underutilized outdoor spaces safe, accessible and attractive. Groundwork projects have transformed vacant and often contaminated open spaces into parks, playgrounds, gardens, wooded trails and pathways, and promoted healthy pursuits like walking, running, cycling and gardening.

Parks and open spaces also provide access for children of every income level to increase their daily amount of physical activity. The Lunch and Park program, operated by Community Development Recreation in thirteen of our parks every summer not only offers school-aged children a nutritious lunch at no charge but also engages them in heart-healthy activity. This year, ten young people will be hired through a \$99,000 grant from Attorney General Martha Coakley's office to help with a Summer Olympics program as part of a two-year project. Last year's event brought over 100 children from parks across the city to the B.M.C. Durfee High School athletic field for a day of games and prizes, and this year's project should be even bigger.



Healthy City coordinator David Weed and resident Ed Cote at the Doolan Apartment community garden.

For those who want to use outdoor spaces to grow vegetables, Healthy City Fall River has hired a new Community Garden Coordinator, Nicole Fortier, who will be helping those working with the half dozen community gardens already in place throughout the City as well as anyone who would like to start a new garden.

"All that's required is an interest in gardening and a willingness to learn," commented Ms. Fortier. "We can bring a number of resources together to help you get started," she added, "including young people who can help with the initial 'heavy lifting' such as building raised beds."

A series of educational opportunities will also be offered to teach soil analysis, plant and seed selection and the basics of garden care. People are invited to contact Ms. Fortier at 508-679-6841 for more information or to be added to the community garden Facebook page to be notified of upcoming events.



Stephanie Pineault, Holly Silvia and Michelle Pineault take advantage of the fifty degree weather to get their knee lifts in outdoors at the Bank Street Armory.

Fitness Challengers preparing to finish strong

The 2010 Fitness Challenge, the third offered by the Diabetes Association, Inc. (DAI), Children In Balance, Community Development Recreation (CD-REC), the Fall River YMCA and Healthy Lives Fall River, held its fourth Fitness Challenge on March 6, 2010 at CD-REC.

Personal Trainer Amy Jones challenged participants to ten minutes each of walking or running, leg lifts, knee lifts, arm lifts and stair climbing. Those who stayed to the end of the hour-long event were eligible for a drawing for prizes donated by Challenge sponsors. The Challenge continues for another eight weeks until the May 7th finale with special Challenge events held on April 3rd, 17th and May 1st at CD-REC on Bank Street. Participants will also be running in the annual Thomas Giunta 5K race on April 11th, starting at 12:10 p.m. at Bank and High Streets.

For more information, contact CD-REC program director Jamison Souza at 508-679-0922, YMCA director Frank Duffy at 508-675-7841, or DAI director Mike Ramos at 508-672-5671.



Pat Bebo of the University of Massachusetts Extension Nutrition Education Program and Chef Bill Walker of Durfee High School prepare for a taping of the show.

Cooking classes now taping for fall airing

Finding ways to improve the food supply in Fall River is one of the goals of Mass in Motion, a state-wide initiative to combat obesity. However, if people don't know how to prepare healthier foods, then it is unlikely that their diets will improve.

In an effort to increase the cooking skills of local residents, Fall River Mass In Motion coordinator Julianne Kelly organized students and faculty from FRED-TV, representatives of Stop and Shop Supermarkets and Dartmouth Building Supply (DBS), Southcoast Hospital dietetic intern program, and nutrition and cooking experts Pat Bebo of the University of Massachusetts Extension Nutrition Education Program and Chef Bill Walker of Durfee High School culinary arts to create a basic cooking show.

The series of programs, "Look Who's Cooking", will begin to air in the fall of 2010 and will focus on building a basic pantry of cooking ingredients and preparation of simple but nutritious and low-cost meals. For more information, contact Ms. Kelly at 508-324-2405.

Peace poles announce upcoming Peace Summit



Mayor Flanagan, Wendy Garf-Lipp and Christian McCloskey announce the March 27th Peace Summit.

The first of more than twenty Peace Poles was unveiled by Mayor Will Flanagan in the lobby of Government Center on March 3, 2010, as a prelude to the upcoming second annual Peace By Piece Summit to be held on

March 27th at Kuss Middle School.

A Peace Pole is a hand-crafted monument that displays the message "May Peace Prevail on Earth," usually in a different language on each side.

"Our aim is to promote tolerance, goodwill, friendship and respect for others and to reduce crime, hatred and violence in our community," added Wendy Garf-Lipp, Executive Director of the United Neighbors of Fall River.

Anyone interested in joining the planning process should contact either United Neighbors director Wendy Garf-Lipp at 508-324-7900 or Youth Services coordinator Christian McCloskey at 508-324-2419.

Upcoming Events

March 18, 2010

Absolutely Incredible Kids Day. Contact Christian McCloskey, 508-679-0922 for details.

March 23 & 24, 2010

Voices for a Healthy Southcoast, March 23rd Morning: Community Walks & Commentary (rain or shine); Afternoon: Safe Routes to School Workshop at Keith Middle School, March 24, Morning: Community Leaders Breakfast at New Bedford Whaling Museum and Workshops Contact Nancy Bonell at nbonell@ymcasouthcoast.org 508-996-9622 X 25, Free.

April 21, 2010, 4:00-7:00 p.m.

Healthy City Spring Workshop on Parks, Open Spaces and Community Gardens, Government Center atrium. Contact Julianne Kelly, 508-324-2405 for further information.

May 1, 2010, 9:00 a.m. - Noon

City-wide neighborhood clean-ups, Contact Perry Long, 508-324-2000, for details.

May 22, 2010

Stepping Out to Support Foster Care Walk-A-Thon, Heritage State Park. For information, call 508-324-7900 or go to www.UnitedNeighborsOfFallRiver.org.

June 4, 2010, 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Partnership for a Heart-Healthy Stroke-Free Mass. Annual Meeting, Hoagland-Pinkus Conference Center, Shrewsbury. Go to www.heartstrokema.org for registration information.



Monica Parker and other students assigned to the low-income group react as Michael Chhim presents them with their meal of bread and water.

Hunger banquet teaches students about food

Students at the Matthew J. Kuss Middle School had the opportunity to experience what the world population eats every day, including many families who live below the poverty line in the United States. Typically, the problem of hunger is seen as not having enough total calories. A more complicated aspect of the problem is the increase in obesity among poor children masking the lack of essential nutrients in their diet.

Much of the problem of hunger stems from the inequity in income and, ultimately, power among groups of people world-wide. The hunger banquet exercise divided participants at random into three groups: 1) The 15 percent in the high-income tier who are served a sumptuous meal, 2) the 35 percent in the middle-income section who eat a simple but nutritious meal, and 3) the 50 percent in the low-income tier who are served only small amounts of bread and water.

"This is a great way to make an impact about hunger and homelessness in Fall River" said LEADS coordinator Jarrad Plante who, along with UMass-Dartmouth students, put the program together with a group of eighth-graders.



Evelio Torres moves past a Providence team member during the final playoff game of the day-long tournament held at the Bank Street armory.

YouthBuild hosts third regional b-ball tourney

The Fall River YouthBuild program hosted a day-long basketball tournament among YouthBuild programs from across Massachusetts and Rhode Island at their headquarters in the Veterans' Memorial on Bank Street on March 3, 2010.

This is the third time that Fall River has hosted teams from YouthBuild programs in Boston, Brockton, Cambridge, Lowell, Providence, Quincy and Springfield. Despite training every day for the past three months, the Fall River team lost a close game to the first place Providence team by a score of 32 to 31.

"The tournament is a great way to build team spirit among our students as well as motivating them to get some very healthy exercise," stated Fall River YouthBuild director Terry Moran.

The program, a ten-month construction skills training curriculum for men and women ages 17-24 who have not completed high school run by the Old Colony YMCA, has been in operation in Fall River since August of 2006. For more information, contact Director Terry Moran at 508-678-1975.

New Youth CHOICES task force meets monthly



More than 20 different agency and youth organization representatives meet at the monthly CHOICES meeting.

The Youth CHOICES task force (Community building and mobilization for Healthy youth development through positive Opportunities, Intervention and prevention, Collaboration, Empowerment and Support to ensure Success) meets on the first Wednesday of each month at CD-REC to exchange information and to plan around four areas: youth leadership, GED, law enforcement and prevention.

For more information about the project contact co-chairs Christian McCloskey at 508-324-2419, or Jamison Souza at 508-679-0922.

The Healthy City
Fall River
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Healthy City Fall River is a collaboration between the Fall River Health and Human Services Department and Partners for a Healthier Community, Inc., the local Community Health Network Area (CHNA) organized by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) to establish a working partnership between DPH and area residents to improve the health status of all those who live or work in the CHNA

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2020 - 2014
Priority Strategy Areas



Safety and ATOD Control



Recreation & Fitness



Food Supply & Nutrition



Educational & Medical Policies



Built Environment & Advocacy