



Seven-year-old Kiara Almeida filled out a pledge form held by her mother, Heather, at the Healthy City table at the CD-REC Kick-off to Summer

Soda-free pledge gains nearly 2,000 participants

Of nearly 2,000 children throughout Fall River who agreed to cut back or eliminate soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages over the summer of 2011, 44% signed a pledge form saying that they would only drink milk or water. Those 1,956 pledge forms were then displayed over the summer at Government Center.

Presentations at the Doran Elementary School, at the CD-Rec Kick-off to Summer event, at the 21st Century programs at Greene Elementary School and at the Boys and Girls Club Camp Welch were each accompanied by the opportunity to sign a pledge form printed by Saint Anne's Hospital.

"We wanted to engage children in the process of thinking about what they drink and whether it's good for them," stated Healthy City Fall River coordinator David S. Weed.

Children will learn more about the importance of avoiding sugar-sweetened beverages in their health classes during the school year.

HealthFirst Family Care prepares to move to new digs



Barbara Travis, who was on the first Model Cities Task Force in the early 70s, was one of the first to sign the beam that will hang in the entrance of the new building.

The Board of Directors of the HealthFirst Family Care Center invited staff, patients, officials and members of the community to sign a beam on September 15, 2011 that will



Silvia Elementary School physical education teacher Nancy Paulhus is joined by student for International Walk to School for a walk to Wilson Road and back.

Walk-to-School Day gets thousands of kids walking

Over 4,500 children from the nine elementary schools in Fall River joined in International Walk to School Day on October 5, 2011.

The event was celebrated at over 3,500 events at participating schools throughout the United States, and walkers from the U.S. joined children and adults in 40 countries around the world. Walk to School events work to create safer routes for walking and bicycling and emphasize the importance of issues such as increasing physical activity among children, pedestrian safety, traffic congestion, concern for the environment and building connections between families, schools and the broader community.

"This is a great way to get children and their parents to walk once so they might be willing to try it again," commented School Wellness Coordinator Marcia Picard who worked with school principals to organize the event

will soon hang over the foyer of their new facility. The new center is currently being constructed on Quarry Street, just a few blocks from the current County Street facility with an \$11.5 million grant from the ARRA Facility Investment Program. Funding has been arranged through BankFive, Citizens-Union Savings Bank and the Fall River Office of Economic Development made it possible for the center to purchase the building.

The project will significantly increase the amount of space available for medical and dental services from the current 10,000 to 40,000 in the new facility and will also accommodate specialty services by Southcoast Hospitals Group, National Physical Therapy, and Standard Pharmacy.

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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

Supported in part by DPH linkage funding from Saint Anne's Hospital

2009 - 2014
Priority Strategy Areas



Safety and ATOD Control



Recreation & Fitness



Food Supply & Nutrition



Educational & Medical Policies



Built Environment & Advocacy

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
Council on Aging
Department of Public Works
Health & Human Services
Mass In Motion
Street Tree Planting Program
Tobacco Control Program
Youth Services
Community Development Agency
Community Development Recreation
Child Nutrition Partnership
Community Foundation of SE Mass.
Corky Row Neighborhood Association
Corrigan Mental Health Center
Diabetes Association, Inc
District Attorney of Bristol County.
Fall River Adult Literacy Partnership
Fall River Chamber of Commerce
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, Incorporated
S.E. Mass. Visiting Nurse Assoc.
Seven Hills Behavioral Health
Shepherd's Center
Southcoast Hospitals Group
Saint Anne's Hospital
St. Luke's Episcopal Church
Stanley Street Treatment & Resources
The Trustees of Reservations
Thomas Chew Mem. Boys & Girls Club
United Neighbors of Fall River
UMass. Extension Nutrition Education
Y.M.C.A. of Greater Fall River

The Healthy City Fall River CONNECTION

Connecting the people of Fall River to improve our quality of life and health

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Food policy changes on the Healthy City agenda



Chef Tony Geraci will be the keynote speaker at this year's Legislative Breakfast at White's Restaurant

We all live in a society made up of systems. We have a school system, government system, public safety system, a water system, and a food system, to name a few. A food system includes the production, consumption, processing, distribution and waste recycling of the food we eat. Often we don't give these things a second thought and take it for granted that the system will work well to meet our everyday needs. If the system is not working very well, however, we may believe that it's too large and complex for us to make it better.

On the first-ever National Food Day, October 24th, we will be reminded of what our food system does for us and how we can make it better. For many of us, this could have been the first time that we have even thought about it.

National Food Day is the creation of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a consumer advocacy organization that focuses on nutrition and health, food safety, and alcohol policy. It is probably best known for bringing the issue of highly saturated fat in movie popcorn to the public's attention in 1994, but it has dealt with many other issues such as a food labeling, food borne illness and food contamina-

tion. The group has challenged us to learn about our local food system, to appreciate what is good, to take advantage of opportunities to get fresh, local food in season, and to understand what parts of our food system might not benefit our health and the health of our children.

There are four key priorities for National Food Day that impact the people living in our region:

- Reducing diet related disease by promoting healthy foods
- Supporting our local farms
- Expanding our access to food and alleviating hunger
- Curbing junk food marketing, especially to children

The Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community and the Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness planned their 12th annual Legislative Breakfast at White's Restaurant to center on Food Day on October 21st. At this event, a number of local community heroes will be honored, many of whom for making Food Day priorities a reality. In the spirit of the day, those who attended the breakfast were asked to bring a donation of a fresh fruit or vegetables to be donated to a local food program.

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Ana Vallpiez and Conner Mann choose from the variety of fruit on the cafeteria line at the Doran Elementary School where Whitsons Food Service is making changes.

Profiling Brian Pearson



When Brian Pearson found that he was out of shape and putting on more weight than he wanted to, he decided to take up bike riding to see if that would help. Within a year, he had dropped 35 pounds and discovered a whole new interest that has changed his life.

"My wife and I found out that we loved it. It was like being a kid again," he added. "And it's especially enjoyable when you ride with other people." Brian and his wife, Karen, now ride nearly every weekend, and Brian has organized the Fall River Bicycle Committee, a group of with over seventy people on their Facebook page, many of whom enjoy getting together for rides.

When he's not on an organized group ride, he and his wife like to bike through places like Newport, RI. "We don't have to worry about traffic or parking, even on a busy day down there," he said. "And Newport has a lot of restaurants and shops with bike racks, so it's easy to stop in." And when Brian goes looking for sites relating to the King Philip War, a bicycle is the perfect way to get there, especially when historic markers are well off the beaten path!

"We're working to show people how much better Fall River would be, both economically and health-wise, with more established bike routes throughout the City," he said. His vision is to make Fall River a more bike friendly community, like Fairhaven or Mattapoisett, so everyone can enjoy what he loves so much.

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Keynote speaker Anthony Geraci, who serves on the National Food Day Advisory Board, described how he helped to change the way children and community members relate to their food.

About three years ago, Geraci took the helm of the Baltimore City School District and brought fresh local foods into the schools, developed a working farm in the middle of the city that serves as a learning opportunity for students and community members alike, and made the district food program profitable.

We have much to celebrate for what we've already been doing right here in Fall River through a number of Healthy City projects, though there is still much to do. This year we have had three vibrant Farmer's Market that brought the best produce that the region has to offer into our neighborhoods. We have also begun bringing farmers to our elder and disability high rise apartments. And, we have increased access to food at these locations by providing tokens for SNAP benefit recipients.

We also have had a growing community garden initiative that encourages residents to reacquaint themselves with growing their own food to ease food bills and enjoy the bounty of the season. There are now a few school gardens which help school children understand how food grows and enjoy, possibly for the first time, a freshly picked tomato or cucumber that they have grown themselves.

And this past year, we developed a training for agencies and organizations called "Food For Thought" that helps people think about their own internal food policies about what they offer employees and clients. A video of the training is available at www.HealthyCityFallRiver.org.

The Southeastern Massachusetts Region has many such initiatives in larger cities and small communities. In an effort to create an umbrella group for all these activities, a small group of people has recently convened a committee to explore the development of a food policy council to look at our regional food system from a global perspective. The group seeks to determine where the region's strengths are and what we can work to make improvements, both in terms of local policy and the environment.

For instance, the more people choose to eat fresh locally grown foods, the greater our chances of making an impact of the overall physical health of the community.

Even a small improvement in making local produce more available stimulates our local farmers to expand their markets. Having a garden or working in a community garden can assist in lowering food bills for, at least, the summer season.

We could also increase access by working with grocery stores and restaurants to create a system to gather unused food each day and share it with food pantries and soup kitchens in our area. This kind of "system change" can assist our neighbors who are not quite able to make ends meet to also have access to healthy fresh foods that will benefit their overall health. State and federal food policies are changing the quality of foods available in schools, and day care centers making fresh, healthier foods available in the everyday environment. This will help our children learn in an environment that not only nourishes their minds but their bodies, too.

So how can we reduce junk food marketing to kids? We can make noise! Find a voice when it comes to bill board placement in areas that children frequent. Find a voice by asking that low quality foods not be placed at the checkout or near the door of a store. Find a voice with your dollars and choose to buy less junk food. Find your voice to let all the players in the food system know that you want fresh, wholesome, locally grown food in stores, schools and restaurants.

If you find the idea of making improvements to the food system in our region something in which you want to be involved, contact UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program project leader Pat Bebo at 508-675-7315. Remember, while Food Day is celebrated once a year, the work to make our food system as good as it can be needs to be done every day!

Food Demos on YouTube



UMass Extension Nutrition Education educators offered cooking demonstration at farmers' markets over the summer using ingredients purchased either from local farms or from the farmers' markets. A web page at www.gfpartners.com/FarmFoodDemos.html has links to videos of all of the demonstrations, as well as links to recipes, information sheets and pictures of the visits to local farms.



City Councilor Eric Poulin talks with Healthy City Fall River Coordinator Dave Weed on the East Bay Bike Path.

Bike tours show what Fall River could have

Fall River City Councilor Eric Poulin accepted the invitation of the Fall River Bike Committee to join them on September 17, 2011 for a ride along the East Bay Bike path, a 14.5-mile route that goes from Bristol to East Providence, RI.

Fall River Bike Committee chair Brian Pearson led the group along with Fall River Mass In Motion coordinator Julie Kelly to demonstrate the benefits of bicycle paths for recreation, economic development, transportation and health.

"There's no reason why Fall River can't have the benefits of this kind of path," noted Poulin. Plans are currently underway to develop a bicycle path through the Quequechan River Greenway as well as through Britland Park connecting the new Veterans Memorial Bridge over the Taunton River with the bicycle path along South Watuppa Pond. The complete vision is for a Southcoast Regional Bikeway from Providence to Provincetown.

For more information, contact Pearson on Facebook/Fall River Bike Committee.

New Veterans Memorial Bridge sports a bike path



Patricia Pausek walks across the bridge with her grandsons, Lucas and Benjamin Ward, and other family members.

The new Veterans Memorial Bridge that joins Somerset and Fall River over the Taunton River was constructed with a wide



Annemarie Sharkey exchanges SNAP benefits for wooden tokens at the Bishop Eid senior high rise.

"Veggie-mobiles" visit the senior high-rises

Fall River's low-income seniors now have the opportunity to purchase fresh produce from local farmers right outside the door to their high rise apartment buildings.

A group of local farmers have been bringing their trucks to the Bishop Eid Apartments, Cottell Heights, Holmes Apartments, O'Brian Apartments and Mitchell Heights apartments.

"Many of these seniors have mobility impairments and find it difficult to get to the farmers' markets at Kennedy Park, Ruggles Park and on Old Second Street in downtown Fall River," commented Fall River Housing Authority Family and Youth Services Coordinator Joseph DaSilva who helped to organize the sales with Healthy City market coordinator Annemarie Sharkey.

Ms. Sharkey comes to the beginning of each session to exchange SNAP benefits for farmers' market tokens that can be used at any of the three markets that operate in Fall River.

pedestrian and bicycle path along its north side.

Named for Pvt. Michael Bouthot of Somerset, who was killed in Iraq in 2006, and dedicated on September 11th of this year, the path provides a wonderful way to get some heart-healthy exercise while enjoying breath-taking views of the River.

The path can be accessed on the Fall River side from the western end of Wellington Street. Parking is also available on the Somerset side for those who want to walk over and back from that side of the River.

It would make a perfect venue for your next walking fund raising event!

Upcoming Events

Sept. 24, 2011, 10:00 a.m.
First Fitness Challenge
Warm-up, CD-Recreation,
72 Bank Street, FR. Free.
Call 508-679-0922 for information.

Oct. 4, 2011, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
DPH Ounce of Prevention Conference, Royal Plaza Hotel, Marlboro, MA.
Contact drweed@cox.net for details.

Oct. 4, 2011, 8:30 am - 5:00 pm
Urban Park Advocates Summit, Mechanics Hall, Worcester, MA. Go to www.UrbanParkAdvocates.org to register.

Oct. 12, 2011, 2:30-5:30 p.m.
Public Safety City Tour and Public Forum, Advanced Technology & Mfg. Center @ 6:00 p.m. Contact Rep. Paul Schmid at

Oct. 12, 2011, 4:00 p.m.
Building Our Lives Drug-Free (BOLD) Annual Meeting, SSTAR, 386 Stanley St.. Contact Craig Gaspard at 508-324-3537.

Oct. 21, 2011, 8:00-11:30 a.m.
Annual Legislative Breakfast, White's Restaurant, Westport. Call 508-324-7933 for info & to register

Oct. 31, 2011, 5:00-7:00 p.m.
25th Annual CD-REC Halloween Party, 72 Bank Street. Call 508-679-0922 for information.

Nov. 11, 2011, All Day
Great American Smoke-out

Dec. 3, 2011, 12:30 p.m. 27th Annual Children's Holiday Parade, Kennedy Park. Call 508-679-0922.