



Head Teacher Sandy Peckham shows two of the Head Start children some chives that they have planted.

## Head Start class visits the 7th Street Garden

Children at the Citizens for Citizens Head Start Program on Robeson Street had the chance to visit the Seventh Street Community Garden where they planted vegetables and then released two butterflies that they had raised from cocoons in their classroom.

Head Teacher Sandy Peckham invited Mayor Jasiel Correia II to stop by for a visit and State Representative Carole Fiola who came to read “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” to the children before they released their butterflies.

“The more we expose children to community gardens and encourage healthy habits, the more normal it becomes and the more likely children will want the opportunity to grow food themselves,” stated Peckham. Children will come back later in the summer to visit the garden and see their plants when they are big.



Anna Smith of the Bit Players of Newport, second from left, encourages her group members during an exercise.

## Improv helps youth learn to connect at Peace By Piece

Sponsored by the Bristol County District Attorney’s Office, the Fall River Shannon Community Safety Initiative, Saint Anne’s Hospital, Southcoast Hospitals, United Neighbors and Partners, this year’s Peace by Piece event took place on May 26, 2017 at the Boys and Girls Club.

The four-hour session offered an opportunity for students from B.M.C. Durfee and Diman Regional High School as well as participants in YouthBuild, to engage in a series of improvisation exercises led by members of The Bit Players of Newport, RI, that explored and expanded their interpersonal communication skills.

At the end of the morning, groups were then invited to create a two-minute Public Service Announcement (PSA) with a message about an important issue that young people face that they presented to the whole group after lunch.

## Kick-off to Summer brings hundreds to Ruggles



Partners School Wellness Coordinator Marcia Picard shows children how to make giant bubbles at the Kick-off to Summer event at Ruggles Park.

Hundreds of adults and children gathered under the elms at Ruggles Park on a misty June 17th Saturday for the 2017 kick-off to the summer season of Greater Fall River Re-creation programs and activities.

The free three-hour celebration offered

music, food and plenty of fun activities for hundreds of people including arts and crafts, games and prizes, face painting, bouncy houses, a fire demonstration house, pony rides, and the ever popular Wiggle-Kids bouncy balls.

A number of agencies offered information and give-aways to participants, including the Fall River Women’s Center, Stanley Street Treatment and Resources’ BOLD Coalition, and Partners for a Healthier Community covering its Sugar-Free Challenge.

Free pizza was provided by Seth Hockert-lotz, owner of Domino’s Pizza South Main Street, who helped to sponsor the event along with the United Way.

Lunch in the Park programs will run from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. every weekday in 13 City parks from July 5th to August 26th.

The Greater Fall River Health CONNECTION is published four times a year by Partners for a Healthier Community, Inc. P.O. Box 1228 Fall River, MA 02722



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Partners for a Healthier Community, Inc., the local Community Health Network Area (CHNA) is 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

Partners is supported by DPH Factor 9 funding from Saint Anne’s Hospital and numerous other grants.



### 2014-2019 Priority Strategy Areas

#### Factor I: Diet & Exercise

#### Factor II: Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drug Use Prevention

#### Factor III: Sexual Activity and Infectious Diseases

#### Factor IV: Access to Quality Dental, Health, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Care

#### Factor V: Education, Employment, Income and Disability

#### Factor VI: Community Safety and Violence Prevention

#### Factor VII: Family, Cultural and Social Support, and Housing

#### Factor VIII: Environment and Infrastructure

### Participating Organizations

Arbour Counseling  
BMC Health Net Plan  
Bristol County District Attorney  
Bristol Elder Services  
Catholic Social Services  
Citizens for Citizens, Inc.  
City of Fall River  
Board of Park Commissioners  
Community Development Agency  
Community Maintenance Council on Aging  
Health & Human Services  
Mass In Motion  
Street Tree Planting Program  
Tobacco Control Program  
Youth Services  
Dog Tag Navigators  
Fall River Housing Authority  
Fall River Police Department  
Fall River Public Schools  
Fall River WIC Program  
Family Recovery Project  
Family Service Association  
First Baptist Church  
Gr. F.R. Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Fall River Re-Creation  
Green Futures  
Habit OPCO  
HealthFirst Family Care Center  
Katie Brown Educational Program  
Mass. Department of Public Health  
NHP Ship’s Cove Apartments  
People, Incorporated  
Diabetes Association, Inc.  
Early Intervention Program  
Seven Hills Behavioral Health  
SCI AmeriCorps  
Southcoast Health  
Saint Anne’s/Steward Hospital  
Stanley Street Treatment & Resources  
The Trustees of Reservations  
Thomas Chew Mem. Boys & Girls Club  
Town of Somerset  
Town of Swansea  
Town of Westport  
United Neighbors of Fall River  
United Interfaith Action  
Y.M.C.A. of Greater Fall River

### Partners Web Sites:

www.GFRPartners.com  
www.HealthyCityFallRiver.org  
www.FallRiverFitnessChallenge.com  
www.SouthCoastWorksiteHealth.com  
www.MyFallRiver.org

# The Greater Fall River Health CONNECTION

Vol. 13 No. 3

FINAL EDITION

Summer 2017

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

## In this final edition, Dr. weed talks about what he’s learned about promoting health

If we were all to eat whole, unprocessed food, as people largely did before the 1960s, most of our diabetes and related heart disease would disappear. If we were to never have allowed the manufacture and advertising of cigarettes, as we did at the end of the 19th century, the remainder of heart disease would also disappear. If we had never supported the manufacture and sales of sugar in most of its forms, we would not have seen an epidemic of tooth decay, rising rates of diabetes and at least half of all cancers. If we had said no to artificial flavoring, coloring and preservatives in foods and had banned the explosion of toxic chemicals in our environment, the rest of cancers would also disappear. If we had not supported the sales of handguns, we would not see 73,000 injuries and 33,000 deaths each year, thirty times the rate in Britain and equal to U.S. automobile deaths.

“Other than HIV/AIDS, STDs and teen pregnancy, I can think of no public health problem we are addressing that doesn’t have its origins in decisions that were made decades ago to increase profits or, in the case of guns and prisons, that wasn’t based on fear.” stated retiring Executive Director Dr. David Weed. “When I began working on these issues ten years ago, I assumed that all that was needed was straightforward education. Just tell people what to do – stop smoking, eat healthy food, stay away from drugs – and the problems will solve themselves. What I had not factored in was that there are large and powerful forces that work to make people sick in order to line their own pockets or exploit our fears,” he added and then stated:

• We all know that **Big Tobacco** companies earn billions by promoting products that kill millions of people each year, all for their own profit. These companies vigorously oppose limits on smoking and market heavily to teens. Before the manufacture of cigarettes, lung cancer was practically unknown and heart attacks were rare. The per capita annual consumption of cigarettes rose from 54 in



Partners Executive Director David S. Weed, Psy.D. is retiring after ten years at the end of June, 2017.

1900 to a peak of 4,345 in 1963 and then began declining to under 3,000 today, but today, there are just as many smokers as there were in 1963. It’s just that the percentage of the population has declined to under 20%, so it’s still a huge health issue.

• Large national and international food companies design foods that bring the highest profits by ignoring nutritional health and engineering their products for immediate appeal and use advertising to convince people to purchase them. Sugar is in 70% of all of our food and the unhealthiest foods are advertised the most. Meanwhile research funded by **Big Sugar** created false reports that moved us away from sugar and toward fat as the cause of heart disease and diabetes. The USDA and **Big Food** have fueled the obesity and diabetes epidemic that has grown from 13% in 1960 to 36% today, and continues to rise. What also happened during this time? Portion sizes at restaurants increased. Fast food and drive-thrus became ubiquitous. Highly processed foods were introduced at the grocery store, including a vast variety of

(Continued, page 2)

## Profiling Maura Ramsey



Maura Ramsey has a passion for leadership development. “I want to help people formulate their vision by helping them look at the available resources and the opportunities around them,” she says.

Maura was recently hired as Executive Director of GroundWork Southcoast, a newly-launched project supported by both the cities of Fall River and New Bedford in partnership with the National Park Service.

The mission of the GroundWork USA network is to bring about the sustained regeneration, improvement, and management of the physical environment by developing community-based partnerships that empower people, businesses, and organizations to promote environmental, economic, and social well-being.

Maura has years of experience working with youth in public housing and a statewide project to organize mothers around climate change where she organized a statewide volunteer led movement of 5,000 volunteers across the Commonwealth to develop skills to engage local government and citizens in creating their desired change for their community.

We welcome Maura and GroundWork Southcoast to our city and look forward to working with her in the years ahead!

(Continued, from page 1)

chips, snacks, frozen food entrees and deserts all formulated for taste appearance and convenience and making home cooking less frequent. Home economics classes in schools disappeared as did the ability of many people to cook wholesome foods at home.

- **Big Pharma** and pain assessment regulations pushed MDs toward opioid over prescription of addictive drugs. Furthermore, they exploited the market for pain relievers by convincing doctors that these drugs are not addictive. Pharmaceutical companies expanded their lucrative markets by creating drugs that do little to treat diseases that diet and exercise alone can prevent.

- **Big Auto** and government regulations continue to favor private (automobile) transportation over public (bicycle, bus and rail) transportation, reducing our daily physical activity. And, while gym memberships have grown over time, we spend more and more time sitting in automobiles and less and less time walking. Cities have to fight for funds just to repair the sidewalks we have.

Big Banks and developers moved us away from constructing affordable housing for low and middle income families toward more profitable upper income housing leaving millions homeless and at great risk of declining health in cities across the nation.

- **Big (read “private”) Prisons** have been profiting while millions are needlessly incarcerated, mostly for low-level substance abuse offenses. People of color are disproportionately jailed and suffer lifelong effects of imprisonment. The U.S. has by far the highest prison population rate in the world and a high proportion of those released from prison suffer from untreated chronic medical and behavioral health conditions.

- **Big Guns** and its associated lobbies have moved us to acceptance of the highest rate of gun deaths world-wide. Gun manufacturers make huge profits (\$31 billion last year) largely in response to fear of crime. The same number of people are killed by guns (31 million) each year as the number of people who die in car crashes.

- Finally, **Big Business** fights to keep minimum wages low to ensure profitability resulting in fifteen percent of working Americans remaining in poverty, a chief driver of poor health.

I would love to think that a little more education, a few more appeals for people to change their behaviors, a few more health promotion messages, and we would be on our way to a healthier country. Unfortunately, huge vested interests with lots of money overwhelm these efforts, and we are left to suffer from high rates of disease, disability and death principally of

our own making.

So, what should we continue to do? Oppose big tobacco and pass more restrictive laws; change institutional food policies promulgated by the USDA to reduce sugars and refined grains and increase healthy fat consumption; severely restrict legal access to addictive pain medications and drastically increase access to acupuncture, meditation and other proven pain remedies; increase government support for subsidized housing and low and moderate income housing construction; work to raise minimum wages for all to livable levels; outlaw handgun sales to all but a few who demonstrate a need to have them; and stop treating substance abuse as a crime and sentence offenders to treatment and not prison.

Unreasonable you say? Sixteen other developed countries have much better health than us. They also have far fewer guns, imprison far fewer people, subsidize a greater proportion of housing, provide more public transportation, have lower rates of drug addiction, support access to healthier foods, and tax cigarettes at a higher rate.

It’s really our choice. We can continue to put profits over quality of life and suffer the consequences, or we can enact policies, laws and regulations to make it more difficult to earn a living by making people sick. We keep acting as if people simply need to make the right personal decisions to be healthy and all will be well. However, when the environment, laws and regulations support unhealthy choices, it’s clear that none of us can be healthy in an unhealthy environment. We can easily improve the health of this nation once we stop making profits the more important value.



### RWJF Culture of Health Prize Winner gather in May

Staff and members of Partners for a Healthier Community joined other Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Prize winners on May 5th in Springfield, MA for a daylong session of sharing and collaboration.



Mayor Correia talks with Ms. Innes about one of the plans that was displayed in Government Center for public comment and input before the plans will be forwarded to the state for review..

### Redevelopment Planned

Fall River Redevelopment Authority Chairman and City Planner Bill Kenney held a public input session with Mayor Jasiel Correia II in the atrium of Government Center on May 23, 2017.

After people had the opportunity to look over large display boards depicting proposed plans for the Fall River waterfront and downtown areas, Senior Urban Planner Emily Keys Innes of Harriman described the plans and then solicited questions and responses from the audience.

Retired city planner Al Lima asked about the possibility of daylighting the Quequechan River below Government Center. Patrick Norton of the Narrows Center for the Arts recommended cleaning up existing areas on the waterfront before anything else is done, and businessman Jim Rogers talked about plans for downtown development. Other suggestions for the Davol Street area were offered by resident Todd Rego before the session concluded.



Fall River Substance Abuse Grants Manager Michael Aguiar and SSTAR CEO Nancy Paull meet with providers at Blount Fine Foods.

### Substance Abuse Talk at Blount

Fall River Substance Abuse Grant Coordinator Michael Aguiar and Stanley Street Treatment and Resources CEO Nancy Paull invited a number of people to a four-hour session held at Blount Fine Food headquarters on May 12, 2017.

This initiative was designed to develop a substance abuse strategic plan for the City of Fall River.

“We have developed many plans for different grants targeting substance use over the years but have not worked on an overall plan inclusive of all the existing efforts many different groups and organizations are working on,” stated Aguiar.

Richard H. Dougherty of DMA Health Strategies and BasicNeeds US, Inc., who has led strategic planning engagement on substance abuse prevention with the City of Boston, was invited to lead the planning process.

### Walk audit focuses on Greene Elementary School



WalkBoston Project Manager Adi Nochur, right, joins Marcia Picard and Eric Andrade in front of the school.

Mass in Motion Fall River Coordinator Julie Kelly and SSTAR Community Prevention Coordinator Eric Andrade invited staff from WalkBoston to Fall River to conduct a walkability audit around the Greene

Elementary School in the Niagara Neighborhood on May 10, 2017.

Fall River Police Department School Resource Officer Chris Gibson, Principal Lourdes Santiago, Fall River Traffic Director Laura Ferreira, Adjustment Counselor Robin Thorpe, St. Luke’s Episcopal Church Pastor Rev. Susan Lee, Partners School Wellness Coordinator Marcia Picard, Erin Reed of MassDOT’s Safe Routes to School Program, and SRPEDD Director of Highway Planning Lisa Estrela-Pedro joined WalkBoston staff to review some of the ways that walkability can potentially be improved.

## Upcoming Events

June 17th, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm  
Greater Fall River Re-Creation Kick-off to Summer, free activities and pizza. Rutgersl Park, Pine and Seabury Streets. Call 508-679-0922 for more information.

June 20th, 9:00 to 10:30 a.m.  
Partners Design Team meeting to review progress on the 2014-20179 Goals and Objectives over the past year. HealthFirst Community Room, 387 Quarry Street. Call Dr. Weed at 508-837-9029 for information.

June 20th, 10:00 a.m.  
Greater Fall River Food Pantry open house, 235 Nashua Street, Fall River. Call Dave Perry at 401-266-8335 for more information.

June 24th, 9:00 a.m. to Noon  
Quequechan River Rail Trail Clean up and Bicycle Helmet Give-away (10:00 a.m.), Britland Park. Call Julie Kelly at 508-324-2405 for more information.

June 27th, 11:30 a.m.  
First Step Inn homeless shelter ribbon cutting, 134 Durfee Street, Fall River. Call 508-679-8001 for more information.

August 1st, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.  
National Night Out and Police Public Pooza, Britland Park. Call Christian McCloskey at 508-982-4297 for info.

September 6th, 7:30-8:30 a.m.  
First Day of School “High Five” exercise at Fall River elementary schools.