

PREVENTION

SUFFOLK ON THE MOVE SUFFOLK WALKS - GETTING EMPLOYEES OUT OF THEIR CHAIRS IMPROVES WORK!

by Deborah Nadell, Walking Coordinator, Suffolk Partnership for a Healthy Community

Whether you move fast or slow, are in or out of shape, Suffolk on the Move Suffolk Walks, a Healthy People Healthy Suffolk initiative, wants you to get up and get moving.

The goal is to get fit for life... one step at a time.

We believe that moving makes you happier and healthier. By adding a few extra steps each day, you can transform your outlook, your health and your life.

"...moving makes you happier and healthier."

Thanks to a grant from the Obici Healthcare Foundation, 40 businesses, churches, schools and organizations have started movement programs with more than 1,000 people in the community participating in these customized programs.

The Suffolk community has been really receptive to starting various types of movement programs. Approximately 85% of organizations that have been approached by the Suffolk Partnership for a Healthy Community are actually participating in a program specifically designed for them.

To start a movement challenge the organization selects a coordinator, who is passionate about fitness. The Suffolk Walks Coordinator discusses a series of options available to that particular group and select a start date. First, they select a start date. Then, they determine the length of the program, which is usually 8 to 12 weeks (with the option to extend).

Goal setting is a key component of the conversation. Generally, groups have different levels of fitness. The key is to keep things challenging, but not so challenging that it excludes anyone.

Once goals are set, rewards are discussed. When participants achieve their goals, they're entered into a weekly drawing for gift cards. This keeps the program top of the mind and helps integrate more movement

into people's lives. Plus, the key takeaway is to get up every single hour and move for five minutes.

In schools the fitness of students and teachers has an impact on the health, attendance and active learning of each. According to Dr. David Reitz, principal at Booker T. Washington Elementary School, "Great program! Very informative and motivational. All staff members have enjoyed participating, and I have had nothing but positive feedback."

The fitness of individuals affects our families, our communities and our lives. A fit person is a healthier, more vibrant member of the community. Carol Warren, with Birdsong Peanuts, says, "Suffolk Walks really connects office fellowship with exercise and breaks down the stress. It's really nice to see so many positive aspects of what the program has done for individuals. We thank you for giving us the push, the incentive, the knowledge and most of all a healthier us, and a healthier Suffolk!"



Phyllis Felts, Darden Langston and Carol Warren, employees of Birdsong Peanuts, participate in the Walking Club at work.

Leading by Example: Foundation, Grantees Adopt Food Policy

by George Y. Birdsong, CEO, Birdsong Peanuts and Obici Healthcare Foundation Board Chairman

The Obici Healthcare Foundation developed a new policy to bring change to the nutritional value of meals served at events sponsored by the Foundation and its grantees.

The Healthy Workplace Meeting Meals Policy requires food paid for with Foundation funds to be heart and diabetic-friendly.

Items served must meet the American Heart Association and Diabetes Association's guidelines that include foods that are low in saturated fat, high in fiber, nutrient dense and low in calories.

More specifically, guidelines for more nutritious foods include fruits and vegetables; whole-grain products; low-fat dairy products, lean meats, poultry, fish and legumes prepared with small amounts of salt, sugar and saturated fat. Consideration should be given to incorporating these choices and remember portion size also matters.

Everyone should implement this policy at work so healthy food choices are available at staff and board meetings, in break rooms and in vending machines.

Beverages frequently have excessive amounts of sugar. The American Diabetes Association reports that, "A 12-ounce can of regular soda has about 150 calories and 40 grams of carbohydrates. This is the same amount of carbohydrate in 10 teaspoons of sugar."

The importance will be placed on setting an example of healthy eating and making it a part of the business plan.

The Foundation has been using this approach for nearly two years at community events and at our Board meetings.

Frequently, we will avoid desserts altogether after

dinners. When dessert is served, it is in small sizes, low

in sugar and relies on the natural sweetness of fresh or baked fruit for great taste.

The Foundation snack basket now has peanuts, protein bars, apples, oranges and seasonal fruit as selections.

Gone are the days of sugary doughnuts, high-fat hot dogs, soft drinks loaded with high-fructose corn syrup and salty, deep-fried chips served at programs funded by the Obici Healthcare Foundation.

Keep healthy foods on hand and you will eat healthy! *Make the healthy choice the easy choice.*

"Keep healthy foods on hand and you will eat healthy!"



George Y. Birdsong is a founding member of the Obici Healthcare Foundation as well as the Board Chairman.

HAVE YOU WALKED HERE?

A SAMPLING OF PARKS IN WESTERN TIDEWATER:

Franklin, VA – [Barrett's Landing Riverfront Park](#), Main Street, Franklin, VA • 757/562-2475

Gates County, NC – [Merchants Millpond State Park](#) – 176 Mill Pond Road, Gatesville, NC • 252-357-1191

Surry, VA - [Chippokes Plantation State Park](#) – 695 Chippokes Park Road, Surry, VA • 757/294-3728

Isle of Wight County, VA – [Carrollton Nike Park](#), 13036 Nike Park Road, Carrollton, VA • 757/357-2291 and [Windsor Castle Park](#), 301 Jericho Road, Smithfield, VA 23430 • 757/365-4200

Suffolk, VA - [Bennett's Creek Park](#), 3000 Bennetts Creek Park Road, Suffolk, VA • 757-484-3984; [Lake Meade Park](#), 201 Holly Lawn Parkway, Suffolk, VA • 757/514-7250; [Lone Star Lake](#), 401 Kings Highway, Suffolk, VA 23432 • 757-641-6511 and [Sleepy Hole Park](#), 4616 Sleepy Hole Road, Suffolk, VA 23434 • 757-923-2385

