



Members of the Griffin Park team compete in a tug-of-war against the Pulaski Park team who ended up winning.

Summer Olympics pits parks against one another

Over one hundred young people from nine Fall River neighborhoods gathered at the Kuss Middle School on August 21st for the fifth annual Summer Olympics contest, sponsored by Partners.

“The Kuss field worked really well,” commented Community Development Recreation (CD-REC) executive director Grace Gerling. “It was much easier to keep everyone together than the high school field that we’ve used in previous years,” she added.

The event began with the singing of the Pledge of Allegiance by staff member Giulia Khoury and a brief welcome by Mayor Flanagan.

The day concluded two hours later with a tug-of-war tournament among the competing teams. The winning team overall was Abbott Court Park, with Griffin and Pulaski coming in second and third.



Young people and their parents at Camp Jack enjoy a game of dodge ball on the last day of the season.

Camp Jack supports youth with diabetes

The Jack Rua Camp for Children with Diabetes, a program of People, Incorporated is a friendly place where youth with diabetes, ages 5 through 14, their siblings and friends benefit from hands-on learning experiences in diabetes management and support within a fun and welcoming environment.

The program’s mission is to foster friendships among children with diabetes, their siblings and friends through a safe, active program while enabling them to learn about and face the common challenges of diabetes.

The Camp runs for six weeks during the months of July and August and is held at Camp Buxton, located in Rehoboth. The program’s small enrollment and staff-to-camper ratio ensures a quality program in which the campers receive plenty of supervision, take part in a variety of camp experiences and learn something new every day.

Y Summer Camp garden teaches gardening skills



Madison Miner and Yarielys Lopez measure the growth of their plants with rulers and report the results.

The Fall River YMCA runs a summer camp that engages over 100 children in constructive activities from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at their North Main Street facility.

As part of the program, the Y obtained the use of a garden space at the intersection

of Bedford Street and Oak Grove Avenue thanks to a donation from the Lapointe Insurance Company.

The program gives children the chance to plant, cultivate and harvest a variety of vegetables that are then donated to local food banks.

“Every week we have a different age group, so we teach them all the aspects of gardening,” comments staff member Charissa Lock.

“The kids have a lot of fun with it,” noted staff member Karen Correia who spoke about how they integrate math concepts into the gardening project as part of the Bridge To Success program.

For more information about programs at the Fall River Y, call 508-675-7841.

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



Healthy City Fall River Government Center Room 422 Fall River, MA 02722

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
Vol. 8 No.4
Fall 2012

Smoke-free multi-unit housing is good for your health



This month, almost 27,000 tenants of Boston Housing Authority’s 64 apartment complexes received letters announcing that their buildings will be smoke-free and that they will have to agree to the new policy when they sign their annual leases.

The policy is aimed at protecting nonsmokers, especially children, from breathing in secondhand cigarette smoke from neighboring units, which can cause asthma attacks, respiratory infections, lung cancer, and heart disease. Boston will join over 250 other public housing authorities who now have some restrictions on smoking, including all public housing in the State of Maine.

This new policy is not without its detractors, however, and many people have concerns about how enforceable this will be, given that a significant percentage of current tenants are smokers. As with any public health policy change, it is important to look at the merits of the proposal and weigh that against potential negative outcomes. So, let’s look at the facts.

Massachusetts implemented a “no smoking in the workplace” law in July of 2004, after Governor Mitt Romney signed the measure. At the time, over 100 local communities had already passed similar measures. While there were concerns

about enforcement, problems turned out to be relatively few and far between, and even many smokers praised the law for removing secondhand smoke from bars and restaurants. The most significant benefit was a reduction in heart attacks among both smokers and non-smokers in the months following enactment. A study using data from both Saint Anne’s and Charlton Hospitals found 23% fewer admissions for heart attacks in just the first six months following the ban when compared with the six month period just before.

Since 2004, concerns about the health effects of secondhand smoke continued to mount, and the U.S. Surgeon General Regina Benjamin issued a definitive report in 2010 in which she stated “there is no risk-free level of exposure to cigarette smoke.” Citing smoking as the cause of 85% of lung cancers and a major cause of heart disease, stroke, aortic aneurysm and peripheral arterial disease, the report recommended that exposure to even small amounts of secondhand smoke is enough to increase the risk of a cardiovascular events, cancers, and even reproductive problems, like low birth weight deliveries.

“there is no risk-free level of exposure to cigarette smoke.”
U.S. Surgeon General Regina Benjamin

According to the report, children exposed to secondhand smoke can suffer middle ear infections, impaired lung function and are more susceptible to sudden infant death syndrome. A study that found that 53 percent of children with asthma are exposed to secondhand tobacco smoke resulting in more visits to doctors and emergency rooms, sleep disturbance, and exercise limitations because of wheezing.

(Continued, page 2)

Profiling Marilyn Edge



Marilyn Edge knows the problems we have in this City with sales of tobacco and drug paraphernalia.

Appointed Tobacco Control Officer in 2005, Marilyn now oversees the monitoring of illegal sales to minors in Fall River and twelve surrounding towns.

When she first started out, she began conducting “stings” by hiring people under 18 to attempt to purchase tobacco products in local store.

“It didn’t take long before I knew which stores were habitually selling to underage youth,” she stated. Though fines and appearances before the Board of Health helped to reduce those sales, she reports that some stores continue to sell to youth who they know in the neighborhood.

“It’s impossible to catch every illegal sale, but we’ve done a lot to make it harder to sell to minors and the word is out that we’re watching,” she added.

In addition to tobacco sales, Marilyn works closely with the Fall River Police Department to stem the sales of drug paraphernalia in neighborhood stores.

“The Police have been very diligent in confronting owners who I find who are carrying glass pipes and other items that are clearly sold for drug use,” says Edge.

“Having someone who can help us spot the problem stores has been a big help,” noted Fall River Police officer Paul Bernier.

“When it comes to helping us keep a lid on illegal sales, Marilyn’s the best,” he added.

(Continued, from page 1)

Given that smoking is dangerous to smokers and to those around them, it would seem natural that anyone wishing to avoid these dangers would simply stay away from smokers in all settings. That would seem to be an easy solution, however, recent studies have found that exposure to secondhand smoke can take place just from living in the same building with smokers in other apartments.

An analysis of airborne nicotine measurements collected in 49 low-income, multi-unit residences across the Greater Boston Area found that detectable levels of nicotine were measured in 94% of the residences, including 89% of homes where no one smoked. Surprisingly, some nonsmoking homes were exposed to the equivalent of approximately one cigarette per day smoked in their home even though no one in the apartment smoked.

“nearly 50 percent of multi-unit housing residents report secondhand smoke infiltration from other units.”

In a study of tobacco exposure from secondhand smoke among more than 5,000 children, researchers led by Dr. Karen Wilson at the University of Rochester found that youngsters aged 6 to 18 years who lived in multi-unit housing had a 45% increase in cotinine, a chemical byproduct of tobacco, in their blood compared with children who lived in detached family homes. This was among youngsters who lived in units where nobody smoked inside their own apartment, meaning that the exposure was occurring primarily via secondhand smoke drifting in from other units. In other studies, nearly 50 percent of multi-unit housing residents report secondhand smoke infiltration from other units.

So, wouldn’t better ventilation and insulation between apartment make sense? It would if it worked, but the evidence is clear that it cannot. The American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), which sets the standard for indoor air quality, has concluded that no ventilation system or air purifier is capable of eliminating secondhand smoke. Consequently, ASHRAE

does not recommend a ventilation standard for buildings that permit smoking. According to ASHRAE, “[a]t present, the only means of effectively eliminating [the] health risk associated with indoor exposure is to ban smoking activity.”

In addition to health risks from secondhand smoke, all tenants in multi-unit housing are subject to increased risks of fire and property damage. Even one smoker in a multi-unit dwelling puts every other tenant at increased risk of displacement, injury or even death. The recent multi-unit fire in nearby Dartmouth is a horrific example of what can happen when even one person is careless. Even without fires, all residents pay some of the increased cost associated with extra maintenance in cleaning up the damage that smoke causes to furniture, carpeting and external cleanliness of buildings where smoking is allowed.

So, when all of the factors are considered, does restricting smoking from multi-unit housing make sense? Many private landlords in Fall River are already doing so, including one large downtown Section 8 apartment building that went entirely smoke-free in May of this year. “Landlords are realizing that they can do this simply by amending their leases. There is no legal barrier,” noted Fall River Tobacco Control Coordinator Marilyn Edge. “Given that the vast majority of people even in Fall River do not smoke and even smokers prefer to live in smoke-free environments, it’s really a ‘no-brainer,’” she adds.

The supposed right of individuals to smoke — a legal activity in one’s own home — is often defended, especially for the poor who may have few options when it comes to housing. What is rarely defended, however, is the right of a non-smoker, at any income level, to live in a smoke-free environment. Given the multiple risks that smoking assures, perhaps the opportunity to live in a healthy environment is one we should be extending to all.



Some residents of the Mitchell Heights apartments are exploring the development of a smoke-free housing policy.



HealthFirst Director of Community Relations and Development Paula Harrison congratulates Tom Cory on the Grand Opening of the lobby of the new HealthFirst Clinic.

Standard Pharmacy opens at HealthFirst

Standard Pharmacy held its Grand Opening off the lobby of the new HealthFirst Family Care Center on August 18th.

The newly-opened pharmacy will provide a convenient location for patients of the new clinic as well as other customers in the neighborhood.

“By making it easier for patients to get their prescriptions filled, we hope to have better compliance with the medications that our physicians order,” commented HealthFirst Director of Community Relations and Development Paula Harrison.

Similar to the Health Care Pharmacy that operates at the Truesdale Clinic, the Standard Pharmacy location will provide a full range of pharmaceutical products and a limited range of other products, including fresh fruit and a range of healthy snack items.

Other health services that will operate in the HealthFirst facility include Southcoast Hospitals Group and National Physical Therapy.

“Veggie-mobile” visits Father Diafario Village



Director of Family and Youth Services Joseph DaSilva, right, greets some of the residents as they come to the market to look over the produce on display.

The Fall River Housing Authority held its first “Veggie-mobile” event of the season at the Father Diaferio Village on



Corp members include (back) Dean Sylvaria, Oliver Pires, and Jarrod Amorin and (front) Alecia Cahill, Amber Beleville, Victoria Power, Amanda Nicholas and Morgan Nicholas.

Youth Corps cleans up Cook Pond views

Members of the Trustees of Reservations (TTOR) Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) spent four Tuesdays in July and August 2012 clearing brush and removing rubbish from the Dwelley Street entrance to Cook Pond.

The project is one of several that the Corps is involved in in the community in addition to their usual work on Trustees property.

The clean-up included the removal of invasive Japanese knot weed, bittersweet, and wild roses that had all but blocked a view of the pond and cleared the way for future development of a rustic walking path that will eventually circumnavigate the Pond.

That project is being led by Julianne Kelly as part of the Fall River Mass in Motion effort to create walkable spaces throughout the City to make it easier for residents to stay fit.

August 22nd. These events bring farmers to housing developments with fresh produce to make it more accessible to residents.

“Not all of our residents are able to get to the Ruggles or other farmers’ markets, and this event gives them some of the same choices to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables,” stated Director of Family and Youth Services Joseph DaSilva who worked to arrange the event

Partners employee Annemarie Sharkey was also available to exchange EBT SNAP benefits for tokens that can be used with these and other farmers at the City’s four active the markets.

Upcoming Events

September 22, 10:00-11:00 a.m.
Fall River Fitness Challenge
Warm-Up at CD-REC, 72
Bank Street. Call 508-679-
0922 for more information.

October 16, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Ounce of Prevention Confer-
ence, Best Western Royal
Plaza Hotel Marlboro, MA.
Go to mass.gov/eohhs/gov/newsroom/dph/ounce-of-prevention-conference.html for information & to register.

October 25, All Day
National Food Day. Go to
www.FoodDay.org for info.

October 31, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Greater Fall River Re-Cre-
ation Halloween Party at 72
Bank Street. Free! Call 508-
679-0922 for more informa-
tion.

November 30, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Third InterCHNA conference,
Plymouth Raddison Hotel.
Call 508-324-7900 for more
information.

December 1st, 12:30 p.m.
Annual Holiday Parade.
Starts at Kennedy Park and
ends at the Bank Street
Armory. Call 508-679-0922
for more information.

December 2nd, 2:00-4:00 p.m.
Greater Fall River Re-
Creation Christmas Party at
72 Bank Street. Free! Tree
lighting ceremony at Gov-
ernment Center to follow.
Call 508-679-0922 for more
information.

January 1st, Time TBA
Mayor’s First Day Family
Fun at Kennedy Park. Call
508-324-2600 for info.