



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LIVING WELL COALITION SEEKS TO GET FAYETTE MOVING, BUILD A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY

Uniontown, PA – As the name implies, the goal of the Fayette Living Well Coalition is building a healthy community. The coalition has put together a multi-faceted effort to achieve that goal, including a series of “Walk Your Way to Wellness” events that began on Wednesday evenings earlier this summer.

“The walks actually date back to when there was an organization called Steps to a Healthier PA,” coalition board member Muriel Nuttall said.

Nuttall also is executive director of the Fayette Chamber of Commerce, which along with the Redstone Foundation, is involved with the administration and organization of the Fayette Living Well Coalition.

Nuttall explained that Steps to a Healthier PA was a grant-funded program, but even when the funding ran out, a dedicated group of people continued to hold the walks.

“The group was always somewhat connected to the Community Health Improvement Partnership,” Nuttall said. “Because they were so intensely focused on building a healthier community, it made sense to pull that group together and concentrate on ways to support them and reorganize the program.”

Nuttall said the Community Health Improvement Partnership eventually became the Fayette Living Well Coalition.

This year’s walks kicked off June 2 at Connellsville’s Yough River Park, with the second event held June 23 at Mt. Macrina. A July 14 walk was slated for Uniontown’s Main Street, where walkers would be regaled with stories of some of the buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The walk began and ended at Storey Square.

“We have two more scheduled that will take us through the end of August,” Nuttall said.

Those walks will be held Aug. 4 in Brownsville and Aug. 25 on the South Union Township portion of the Sheepskin Trail.

Nuttall said though the walks have previously been limited to the summer months, plans are in the works to continue them into September and October.

“We’re actually in the process of doing the expansion,” she said.

The walks generally are educational, with participants learning about the areas through which they are walking. But the coalition has gotten requests to make the events more fitness-oriented.

“In September and October, we will be adding that component,” she said.

Nuttall said all walkers will begin together, but then those interested in fitness can separate from the participants who are interested in the educational aspect and a more leisurely pace.

“We are trying to match every fitness level, wherever they are and whichever they prefer,” Nuttall continued.

Nuttall said the walks have drawn about 100 people each time, both repeat and new participants.

Another facet of the coalition’s effort to improve the health of Fayette County residents is the Blue Zones Project. Fayette County Chamber President Devan White said the project was listed on a meeting agenda and prompted questions from a few attendees, who wanted to learn more about it.

White explained that Blue Zones are regions of the world where people frequently have a longer than average lifespan. The Blue Zones Project is dedicated to studying why that is, as well as assessing communities to determine how they can improve their lifestyles to move toward the goal of living longer, healthier lives.

Out of that discussion, White said, the Blues Zone Book Club was born.

“I’m a lover of books,” she said. “I think the best way to understand the Blue Zones is just to read the books.”

So White, along with several other interested parties, got together to form a book club revolving around the topic.

“There are four sessions. We have done three,” she said. “They were three weeks apart. The last one is July 21, which is right ahead of when the whole project will be kicked off.”

Nuttall said a Blue Zones assessment will be done for Fayette County, and the report should provide some guidance on how the community can improve its overall health.

“That’s going to take place in October, but people will start to see the Fayette Living Well Coalition pop up in all kinds of places,” she said.

One of those is at the upcoming Fayette County Fair, where the coalition will set up an informational booth. This year’s fair dates are July 29-August 7, and the full schedule of events can be viewed at www.fayettefair.com.

“Many local partners are working hard to build a healthier community – both from the standpoints of economic vitality and physical wellness, Nuttall said. “It all comes together in making Fayette County a great place to live, work and do business.”

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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