



Contact:

Melissa Wade, Public Health Information Officer
412-578-8312, cell 412-339-7995, mwade@achd.net

For Release: December 3, 2015

Two More Municipalities and Two School Districts Join Live Well Allegheny

PITTSBURGH - The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) announced today that the boroughs of Sewickley and Turtle Creek, along with the McKeesport Area and West Allegheny School Districts, are the four newest members of the county's *Live Well Allegheny* campaign. Their participation brings the number of *Live Well Allegheny* communities to 22 and school districts to five as they embrace the countywide effort to "live well."

"It's extremely exciting to add four more members to *Live Well Allegheny*," said County Executive Rich Fitzgerald. "Our goal from the beginning is to have the engagement and involvement of a vast number of stakeholders in this effort, because it's only by working together that we're going to be able to help our community be healthier."

"Each new *Live Well Allegheny* commitment expands the impact of our collective effort to improve the health of Allegheny County residents," said Dr. Karen Hacker, Director of the Allegheny County Health Department. "All of our Live Well communities and schools working together can promote simple changes to make their residents healthier. Whether it is offering employee wellness programs or access to bike and pedestrian trails, or healthier food options in schools, these are things which will surround residents with opportunities and help make the healthy choice the default choice."

In Council District 1, the West Allegheny School District is committed to creating a community of learners who value wellness, specifically nutrition, fitness, and personal safety. The district's *Live Well Allegheny* commitment is in four main areas including an active wellness committee that meets throughout the year to plan for wellness initiatives. Staff wellness activities include a partnership with FitBit to enable staff to purchase FitBits at a reduced cost, a Biggest Loser competition for staff and a summer fitness challenge. Student-centered wellness activities that

includes a commitment to physical education classes including swimming, recess every day and Wellness Walks conducted periodically at the elementary school. Community partnerships which include working with the food service provider on the provision of fruit and vegetables offered at every meal including 2% milk options, healthy fundraising activities and an annual 5k event. The district is planning a *Live Well Allegheny* wellness fair to take place in 2016.

“I am thrilled that the West Allegheny School District will be part of *Live Well Allegheny*. The district is planning a variety of initiatives and opportunities planned to empower students, teachers, staff and families to make healthier and more active decisions inside and outside of school to better themselves mentally and physically,” said District 1 Council Member Tom Baker. “This will go a long way to positively influence the lives of the students from North Fayette Township and Findlay Township in District 1 in Allegheny County.”

Likewise, in Council District 9, the Board of Directors of the McKeesport Area School District made a commitment to a comprehensive healthy schools program. They will offer fruits and vegetables at all meals and 2% milk instead of whole milk, utilize web sites and social media to provide information on physical activity, nutrition, stress management, tobacco cessation and other wellness initiatives as well as promote increased consumption of water. The McKeesport Area School District is the second district to join from the Mon Valley as part of the *Live Well Mon Valley Initiative*.

“Your diet, the way you live, and how you exercise are important things,” said District 9 Council Member Robert Macey. “They’re important for your health and well-being, but also impact your ability to learn and achieve your goals. I’m thrilled to see the school district recognize that connection and proud that they are a part of the *Live Well Allegheny* campaign.”

Turtle Creek Borough in District 8 joins five other municipalities as part of the Live Well Mon Valley Initiative in making a commitment to smoke-free buildings and parks, promoting a farmer’s market, making a commitment to plan a wellness event, promoting walking and biking activities and trail projects. The borough will also encourage the adoption of healthier food options at community events and promote wellness information to residents in a variety of ways including on web sites and on social media.

“Promoting quality of life, healthy development and positive health behaviors is important because it impacts each person individually by increasing quality and years of healthy life,” said District 8 Council Member Dr. Charles Martoni. “I am excited to see so many of our communities recognizing the importance of being healthy, but also supporting efforts for its residents to live healthier. I’m so proud to have so many District 8 communities committing to live well.”

Sewickley Borough in Council District 2 passed a *Live Well Allegheny* resolution in September 2015. The borough has an extensive 5-year employee wellness program including increasing steps, weight loss, heart rate awareness and annual physicals. Also, as part of their membership in the Municipal

Benefits Services for health care services they were able to purchase FitBits for every employee. The municipality has made a commitment to smoke-free parks and buildings and supports a weekly farmer's market that is held at St. James Church. Each year there are four 5k events held in Sewickley Borough. In addition, wellness is promoted to residents on both the borough web site and Sewickley TV.

“Promoting good health has an impact on individuals and communities, as well as their living conditions, and enhances the quality of life for everyone,” said District 2 Council Member Jan Rea. “Encouraging people to make choices that benefit themselves is not always an easy task, but efforts such as *Live Well Allegheny* engage residents and communities in making those decisions together. The buy-in from District 2 communities is exciting, and as we all begin working together more closely on initiatives, our residents and communities will benefit.”

Live Well Allegheny is encouraging Allegheny County residents to share personal solutions on healthy living by posting videos, tweeting ideas and sharing stories using #howdoyoulivewell via social media.

“Social media is a great platform for residents to share ideas on how they challenge themselves to live a healthier lifestyle,” said Dr. Hacker. “We can all learn from one another. We are excited to hear what's working on an individual basis to augment the invaluable support from our community partners, municipalities, and school districts.”

Participants in the *Live Well Allegheny* campaign work with the Health Department's staff. While monetary resources are not part of the initiative, participating communities can receive materials, information and collateral items to promote the campaign and their individual efforts to “live well.”

Live Well Allegheny was launched in January 2014 as a comprehensive, innovative strategy on wellness that embraces a broad concept of living well to include physical health, mental wellness, personal and community safety, prevention and preparedness, and much more. The effort is being led by the Board of Health and Health Department Director Dr. Karen Hacker.

For more information on the *Live Well Allegheny* campaign visit www.LiveWellAllegheny.com.

#