County Employees ‘Work Out’ Their Way to an Exercise Challenge Win

Three Monterey County exercise teams earned more than better health during this year’s Exercise Challenge – they came away with trophies for their hard work and overall, the County bested other large employers for minutes exercised!

Each year, the Health Promotion Partnership gets the word out about the Exercise Challenge - a 10-week program designed to promote a healthy lifestyle and encourage people to get regular exercise. If you have not participated, it works like this: you sign up, then chart the amount of time you exercise. To qualify for prizes, you must exercise for at least 90 minutes each week during the 10-week time period.

What some may not know is that this is a challenge between a 160 organizations and businesses throughout Monterey County. This year, 680 county employees joined the challenge, and were ‘competing’ with others in companies with more than 500 employees. Congratulations to all who took part – overall, county employees logged
1,287,093 minutes of exercise – putting the County in first place in its category for the fifth consecutive year.

While everyone wins when they get more exercise, the spirit of competition had some participants forming teams to take part in a County inter-office competition. The winning teams from the team challenge are pictured below. See you next year for the Exercise Challenge!

First Place: Office of Emergency Services
Team members: Sidney Reade, Sherrie Collins, Bertha Simpson, Teresa Meister.

Second Place: District Attorney’s Office
Team members: Cristine Lambarte, Dije Ndreu, Emily Hickok, John Hubanks. Not pictured: Jalaine Bradley, Louis Santa Ana, and Adam Sepagan.

Third Place: Laurel Internal Clinic
Fiesta of Hope celebrates its 10th anniversary this year with a sold-out event - more than 220 supporters came to this event on May 8th at the Embassy Suites in Monterey with a mission: raise awareness about mental health resources and support, honor those who have made a difference for those impacted by mental illness and celebrate the accomplishments of community members who have faced and overcome mental health challenges.

The Fiesta of Hope is sponsored by the Monterey County Mental Health Commission, and includes a beautiful art exhibition and sale, dinner, keynote speaker and awards ceremony. To mark the tenth anniversary of the event, the program featured a short film highlighting the impact of Fiesta of Hope has had in the Monterey County community.

This year’s keynote speaker, Julie Fast, addressed bipolar disorder and depression. Her talk, entitled, “My Mental Health Badge of Courage,” was about her journey in learning to manage her symptoms of bipolar disorder in order to have the life she wanted. The badge in her speech title represents achievement, starting from being a woman who wasn’t able to work and lost most of her friends, but because of the help from people like those attending the Fiesta of Hope and many others she was able to help herself and others by writing about bipolar disorder and by speaking about her experiences.

During the event, awards are given for outstanding service and achievement to patients, youth, families and professionals. Among this year’s winners is Dr. Alia Karim, a psychiatrist working in the south county Behavioral Health office in King City. Congratulations Dr. Karim!
**Health Department Reminder: Use Safe Food Handling Practices this Holiday Weekend**

The upcoming three-day Memorial Day weekend includes important traditions of outdoor fun such as picnics and barbecues with family and friends. But beware – those fun food activities also present opportunities for foodborne bacteria to thrive, especially with our warm weather.

To keep everyone safe, Health Department suggests washing hands and food-contact surfaces often and cooking food to a safe internal temperature. To help remember these important points use this simple phrase: clean, chill, separate, and cook.

**Clean**

- **Wash Your Hands.** Always wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food.

**Cook**

- **When grilling foods,** preheat the coals on your grill for 20 to 30 minutes, or until the coals are lightly coated with ash.
- **Use a food thermometer to ensure that food reaches a safe internal temperature.**
- **Hamburgers and ground meats should be cooked to 160º F, while large cuts of beef such as roasts and steaks may be cooked to 145º F. Poultry must reach a temperature of 165º F. Fish should be opaque and flake easily.**

** Separate**

- **When taking foods off the grill,** do not put cooked food items back on the same plate that held raw food, unless it has been washed with hot water and soap first.
- **Keep drinks in a separate cooler from foods.**

**Chill**

- **Always marinate food in the refrigerator. Don’t use sauce that was used to marinate raw meat or poultry on cooked food - reserve a portion of the unused marinade to use as a sauce.**
• In hot weather (above 90° F), foods should never sit out for more than one hour before going in the refrigerator.

• A full cooler will maintain its cold temperatures longer than one that is partially filled so pack plenty of extra ice or freezer packs to ensure a constant cold temperature.

More resources for consumers are available at www.foodsafety.gov.

Save the Date: May 30, 2014

The Resource Management Agency will hold an employee forum to answer questions about the County’s interest in possibly acquiring the former Capital One facilities in Salinas. An article about this potential purchase appeared in the CAO Weekly Report last month.

The meeting will be held in the Board of Supervisors chambers on May 30, 2014 from 9-10 a.m. For those who cannot attend, the meeting will be taped and posted online for later viewing.