



## **Mayors Wellness Campaign Borough of Franklin Lakes**

### **Application for New Jersey Healthy Town Designation**

**Mayor's name:** Frank Bivona, [mayor@franklinlakes.org](mailto:mayor@franklinlakes.org)

**Contacts:** Gregory C. Hart, Borough Administrator, [ghart@franklinlakes.org](mailto:ghart@franklinlakes.org);  
Dina Robinson, Mayors Wellness Coordinator, [drobinson@franklinlakes.org](mailto:drobinson@franklinlakes.org)

**Address:** 480 De Korte Drive, Franklin Lakes, New Jersey 07417

**Phone:** (201) 891-0048 ext. 1201

**Fax:** (201) 848-9453

Campaign Start Date: January 1, 2012

### **Background**

The Borough of Franklin Lakes is located in a primarily residential area of northwest Bergen County comprised of approximately 11,000 residents. As evidenced by its name, the Borough enjoys the benefit of rolling hills, lakes and streams, parks, recreation facilities and natural open spaces for the passive and active enjoyment of its residents and neighbors. The Borough has active group activities spanning all ages including youth recreation programs, community center activities, organized special events, and an active senior citizen organization.

Community wellness became a priority in 2012 with the introduction of new and additional programs that promote health and well-being. In 2013 the Borough began to better organize and publicize its wellness programs and, in January 2014, the Borough added new programs and initiatives under the coordination of the new position of "Mayors Wellness Coordinator," as appointed by the Mayor.

The "campaign" that began in earnest in early 2012 is now fully operational including robust activities and programs for all parts of our community in an organized fashion. The Franklin Lakes Mayors Wellness Campaign mission statement as stated on the Borough's website is:

*The Franklin Lakes Mayors Wellness Campaign coordinates programs conducted throughout the year designed to promote healthy activities and well-being in our community. The goal of this campaign is to increase opportunities for residents to participate in physical activity with a long-term goal of improving health. "I am pleased to work with the Mayors Wellness Campaign to get our community exercising more, eating properly and living healthier, more active lifestyles," said Mayor Bivona. Activities and events are designed for all age groups, from youth to seniors.*

The Borough of Franklin Lakes submits this application for "Healthy Town" designation based upon the three year effort described herein. Franklin Lakes has made health and well-being a priority and your recognition of our efforts would only further our cause.

### **Get the Facts**

The Borough has met with the primary hospital in the area, Valley Hospital in Ridgewood, to review their Community Health Needs Assessment and develop a plan to work together to educate our residents in key areas of health concern including obesity, fitness, nutrition, chronic diseases, access to care, mental health and substance abuse. We have also partnered with other institutions and governmental agencies such as the American Heart Association, West Bergen Mental Healthcare and the Bergen County Prosecutor's office. We have taken the following steps to disseminate the needs assessment and related materials.

- Distributed copies of the Community Needs Assessment at our Town Fair and other events in our Mayors Wellness booth.
- Posted link to the Community Needs Assessment on the Borough website on the Mayors Wellness Campaign webpage.
- "E-blasted" notice to 2,800 residents that this publication is available.
- Partnered in several ways with the American Heart Association to provide residents with important information for cardiovascular health including: providing a booth at Franklin Lakes Town Fair, which featured CPR hands on training; and promoting AHA National Eat Healthy Day within our community to residents and within the Borough's middle school as part of Living Healthy Week.
- Partnered with West Bergen Mental Healthcare to provide mental health services and information for our residents.
- Partnered with our Municipal Alliance program and the Bergen County Prosecutor's office to offer several drug abuse presentations for all residents at our local high schools.
- Partnered with our Police Department, Fire Department, Ambulance Corps and high schools in presenting the "Shattered Lives" program to raise awareness of the perils of driving under the influence or while being distracted by staging a realistic and

comprehensive reenactment of an accident, emergency response, police and court response for all our high school children of driving age.

- Developed an online “Wellness Pledge” asking resident to take a pledge for a healthier lifestyle. Pledge also allows us to follow up with those residents with periodic communication. All who make the pledge receive a decal (see attached) to display on their cars or in their business windows.
- Held a Mayors Wellness logo contest for residents, with the winning logo now used on all Mayors Wellness Campaign promotional materials.

### **Promote Healthy Eating**

The Borough understands that, in order to promote healthy lifestyles, we must partner with our food establishments, from restaurants to grocery stores, to encourage and highlight good nutrition. Healthy eating is essential to overall wellness and our best mechanism to communicate with residents is through these establishments at the point of sale. Programs we have instituted to promote healthy eating are as follows.

- The Borough has asked every food establishment located in Franklin Lakes to take the “Food Establishment Wellness Pledge”. This pledge promises to highlight and promote healthy choices. If they do so, they are entitled to display the Borough’s Mayors Wellness logo decal, which is provided to them. This raises awareness in our food establishments and reminds our residents about healthy eating choices.
- The Borough has partnered with Stop & Shop to hold special functions during key business hours that highlight healthy choices and good nutrition under the banner of Mayors Wellness Campaign including two days of special programming and displays during “Franklin Lakes Living Healthy Week.”
- The Borough’s Town Fair included Mayors Wellness Campaign and American Heart Association booths. Among other things, these booths featured a licensed nutritionist and technicians who provide literature, counseling, CPR hands-on training and blood pressure screening.

### **Promote Exercise and Active Living**

The Borough offers a wide variety of programs and activities for all ages that promote exercise and active living. We are blessed with many natural open spaces and parks that provide opportunities for all to get out and be active. We are also fortunate to have several health clubs and activity related businesses in town who we have also partnered with to encourage and promote exercise. Additionally, we have many organized activities that are well attended and designed to be annual events that encourage year-long training and preparation. Active living and exercise is a lifestyle, not just a moment in time. Here are the specific actions the Borough has taken and programs we have conducted that promote exercise and active living. Note that in

many cases it is hard to classify these initiatives or programs specifically as youth, employees, seniors or community.

- Outdoor fitness equipment will be placed at several stations around the walking paths around Municipal Field (behind Borough Hall) in Spring 2015. This equipment has been donated and the cost of installation will be provided, in part, by a Bergen County Open Space Municipal Park Improvement grant.

### **Recreation Programs**

The Borough of Franklin Lakes offers a complete set of organized team sport activities for its youth that range from instructional to recreational to competitive travel levels. These organized activities encourage year-long activity and exercise. Over 3,000 children participate in programs which include football, soccer, lacrosse, baseball, softball, basketball and cheerleading. In many of the team sport activities, the Borough partners with professional trainers to help teach and condition our young athletes. The Borough also runs summer camps that promote a wide range of activities.

### **Community Center**

The Borough has a 5,000 square foot Community Center that provides residents with access to a gym and a variety of exercise classes. The Borough has partnered with the Wyckoff Family YMCA, which is undertaking a complete renovation of the facility, improving the building and equipment, and expanding the number of classes and operating hours to better serve our residents. Classes will be designed for youth, teens, adult and seniors to address specific needs.

### **Health Club Participation in Living Healthy Week**

Several health clubs in Franklin Lakes participated in our first annual “Living Healthy Week,” highlighting and promoting sustainable health programs for all ages and fitness levels. All participating facilities are entitled to display the Borough’s Mayors Wellness logo decal and participate in the Living Healthy Fair (held mid-week at the Recreation Center) to highlight their businesses. This helped raise awareness in our communities’ health clubs and enabled our residents to try different classes and activities throughout the week for free.

### **Franklin Lakes Nature Preserve**

In 2006, the Borough purchased a 130 acre parcel of land and water which formerly served as a reservoir, which is now known as the Franklin Lakes Nature Preserve. This natural setting is preserved as Green Acres property and is forever protected from development. This purchase added to the Borough’s existing Green Acres designated open space, which now totals nearly 400 acres for people to enjoy as parkland, giving them ample opportunity to be active.

### **Development of Walking Trails and Accessible Trails**

The Borough has created partnerships and received grants to support the development of extensive hiking and trail networks for residents of all ages to use for active enjoyment. The Borough has partnered with the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference to blaze and maintain trails at the Nature Preserve and in wooded areas behind the Borough's municipal complex that promote hiking, jogging, or leisurely walks. We have been fortunate to receive grants from various organizations to build trails and bridges that help users of the facilities navigate the natural terrain. Our Boy Scout organization has also been very active building bridges and benches that help expand use. Earlier this year, the Borough completed a beautiful handicapped accessible trail at the water's edge at the Nature Preserve to serve those with disabilities.

### **Bocce Court**

The Borough's Boy Scouts built a bocce court at McBride Field for residents of all ages. The seniors in particular have interest in this activity and we have organized events for them to play. Residents can now enjoy a nice park setting and play bocce which promotes activity and well-being outside.

### **Franklin Lakes Triathlon**

The Wyckoff Family YMCA has run a Triathlon for the past 32 years with over 900 adult athletes competing each year in an event that includes a swim in Franklin Lake, a bike race through our streets and a run through our neighborhoods. Although many outside residents also participate, many of our residents compete and train throughout the year. This event is co-sponsored by the Mayors Wellness Campaign.

### **Youth Biathlon "Splash and Dash"**

The Mayors Wellness Campaign, the Wyckoff Family YMCA, the Indian Trail Club and the Franklin Lakes Recreation Department partner to run a youth biathlon for the past five years where over 200 youth athletes compete in an event that includes a swim and run at the Indian Trail Club. Children of all ages compete in a fun-filled event that introduces them to more competitive events as they grow older and encourages them to be fit.

### **Franklin Lakes Scenic Half Marathon and 5K**

In 2014, under the banner of Mayors Wellness Campaign, the Borough partnered with the Wyckoff Family YMCA in holding its second annual half-marathon and 5K runs. This race is growing in popularity with over 500 participants this year. Many residents participate and the race raises awareness of healthy exercise to residents as the race meanders through most neighborhoods.

### **Paddle Day**

Under the banner of Mayors Wellness Campaign, the Borough partnered with Ramsey Outdoor, a sporting goods company, to hold Paddle Day at our Nature Preserve. In 2014, at our second annual Paddle Day, kayaks, canoes and paddle boards were provided free of charge for use on the lake. Over 300 people “paddled” that day which promotes activity. To further encourage and support active living the Mayor and Council approved a new ordinance in 2014 to allow non-motorized boating at the Nature Preserve. What was in the past a fenced-off body of water is now an active park where people can hike, walk, fish and paddle.

### **Nature Preserve Hike**

Under the banner of Mayors Wellness Campaign, the Mayor leads a nature hike in the Fall when leaves are at their peak colors. Hikers enjoy the wildlife and nature’s beauty on what is typically a crisp Fall day.

### **Living Healthy Week**

Living Healthy Week is a week of fitness and nutrition created around the American Heart Association “National Eat Healthy Day.” Stop & Shop hosted two days of nutritional seminars, healthy food sampling and promoted healthy eating. Several fitness facilities, including our Recreation Sports Complex, hosted FREE classes throughout the week for all residents The Mayor kicked off the week with a brisk walk around the Municipal complex walking path and was at most classes and events to support our businesses and residents. FAMS (Franklin Avenue Middle School) spoke to all the students via FAMS Live every morning on eating healthy. Our local grocery store and the MWC hosted a healthy breakfast on November 5<sup>th</sup>, AHA National Eat Healthy Day. The Mayors Wellness Campaign also hosted a Wellness Fair that evening to highlight the week and invited all town participants to promote their health facilities to the community. The week was promoted in the local papers and a town wide mailing. See attached.

### **Eight-grade Graduation Wellness Day**

Under the banner of Mayors Wellness Campaign, the Borough partners with Ultimate Sports in Franklin Lakes to put on a fun day for graduating eighth-graders on their last day of school, featuring various field games such as kickball, whiffle ball and other field sports. Kids have the opportunity to exercise in a fun environment while celebrating their graduation and are reminded of the need to stay active.

### **Baskets 4 Franklin Lakes**

Under the banner of Mayors Wellness Campaign, the Borough holds an annual three-on-three basketball tournament for all ages. Now in its second year, the event features over 70 teams, ranging from third/fourth graders to ages 46 and up. The event attracts over 400 people throughout the day and any money raised goes to local charities, the Dream Team (Franklin Lakes Special Needs baseball program), and helps funds future wellness events in the Borough.

### **Modern Mentor Yoga**

Under the banner of Mayors Wellness Campaign, the Borough partners with Maggie's Modern Mentoring for several yoga sessions during the year. Girls reflect on the end of school year, let go of the old to make way for the new, and find their center both on and off the mat. They learn how to unplug in order to develop a healthy inner relationship and focus on learning to like themselves from the inside out.

### **Dream Team Baseball**

The Borough supports "Dream Team" Baseball which is held at its sports complex on Friday nights during the summer months. Now in its ninth year, the league is for special needs children ages 6 to 21 that have been diagnosed with developmental disabilities. They play baseball with the help of a "Buddy" who helps them around the bases and in the field. The field was built by the Borough for this purpose and is artificial turf and completely walker and wheel chair accessible.

### **Movie Night**

Under the banner of Mayors Wellness Campaign, the Borough holds a Movie Night which features and recognizes two sports teams (one girls and one boys) during the past year. Teams are chosen who have stood out via dedication, sportsmanship and commitment. Although this is not an event that involves exercising itself, it does promote sports and during the event Mayors Wellness information and distributed and Wellness Pledges are solicited. The movie is sports-themed.

### **Employee Events**

Under the banner of Mayors Wellness Campaign, the Borough sponsors several events which involve exercise, nutrition, or well-being. An annual employee picnic includes activities like basketball and softball. Walks are sponsored behind the municipal complex. Various speakers have been invited to talk about nutrition and other health related topics, and a wellness luncheon/fair is offered which includes booths for health clubs, massage therapy, and other wellness items.

### **Stigma-Free Zone Designation**

Recently, the Franklin Lakes Mayor and Council adopted a resolution designating the Borough as a "Stigma-Free Zone." In adopting the resolution, the Mayor and Council seek to address the stigma associated with the disease of mental illness. As recited in the resolution, this stigma is identified as the primary reason individuals fail to seek the help they need to recover from the disease. Designating the Borough as a Stigma-Free Zone is intended to raise awareness of local resources that are available to treat the disease of mental illness and encourage residents to engage in care as soon as the need is identified so that recovery can begin. The resolution notes how "establishing Stigma Free Zones is consistent with the community health and wellness objectives of the Franklin Lakes Mayors Wellness Campaign."

## **Smoke-Free Borough Buildings, Parks and Recreational Facilities**

In another health and wellness initiative, the Mayor and Council recently introduced an ordinance which prohibits smoking in public buildings and on public property, such as public parks and recreation areas. The ordinance is scheduled for adoption on December 16, 2014.

## **Marketing and Promotion of the Mayors Wellness Campaign**

Through the direction of Mayor Bivona, the Mayors Wellness Coordinator and the Borough's Communications team, the Borough has an integrated and comprehensive marketing and promotion program for the Mayors Wellness Campaign and its events and activities. Among the promotional vehicles utilized by the Campaign are the following:

- Mayor's Wellness Campaign webpage on the Borough website, [www.franklinlakes.org](http://www.franklinlakes.org)
- Facebook – Borough of Franklin Lakes
- E-Blasts
  - Borough
  - Recreation and Parks
- Twitter - @Franklin\_Lakes
- Local Newspapers
- Online News and Media
- Cross promotions
  - Health and Fitness Facilities
  - Food Establishments
  - Wellness Centers
  - Schools – Elementary, Middle and High School
- Mailings
- Promotion booths at Borough events

## **Mayors Wellness Campaign Summary**

The Borough of Franklin Lakes has always been a healthy town. In recent years the Borough has made it a priority to organize and prioritize our efforts. We have a Mayors Wellness Coordinator, Dina Robinson, who leads our efforts with Mayor Frank Bivona. Our Recreation and Parks Committee help support and organize activities as well. All of this is done with the support of volunteers who firmly believe in our mission of promoting health and wellness in our community. We have vastly increased the number of organized activities, and increased awareness through our award-winning municipal website and communication programs. We believe we have met the requirements to be named a healthy town, however, the real "award" we are striving for are healthier and happier residents who are proud to be part of a community where wellness is a priority.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

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Frank Bivona, Mayor

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Dina Robinson  
Mayors Wellness Coordinator

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Gregory C. Hart, Borough Administrator

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Jason Robinson  
Recreation and Parks Director

Date: December 5, 2014