TOWNSHIP OF LYNDHURST JOINS MAYORS WELLNESS CAMPAIGN
TO PROMOTE ACTIVE LIVING AND HEALTHIER LIFESTYLES
Unique Partnership Will Help Lyndhurst Stay Fit

Lyndhurst – Mayor Robert B. Giangeruso announced that he has joined the Mayors Wellness Campaign (MWC), a new effort to help the state’s communities get on the path to active living and healthier lifestyles. The announcement was made at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the grand opening of the Lyndhurst location of Weight Wellness Center, LLC. WWC Owner Jennifer Burns Katafigiotis spearheaded the effort to have the Township of Lyndhurst sign on to the state wide health initiative.

“I am pleased to work with Weight Wellness Center on the Mayors Wellness Campaign to get our community exercising more, eating properly and living healthier more active lifestyles,” said Mayor Giangeruso. “I am excited by the prospect of employing new programs in Lyndhurst to make a difference.” Kristen Collette, RN, Health Dept. Administrator/Coordinator will work to include the MWC principles into the events and activities the health department offers, and is excited to be part of this new initiative.

The goal of the MWC is to increase opportunities for New Jersey residents to participate in daily physical activity with a long-term goal of reducing personal and health care costs secondary to obesity. Through public-private partnerships, the MWC provides structure and resources for healthy community initiatives. By encouraging Mayors to play a leadership role in supporting local assessments and opportunities for active, healthy lifestyles, the intent of the MWC is to improve health and make New Jersey a national leader in community-based health interventions.

“Obesity rates, particularly among our children, and the resulting incidences of diabetes, heart disease and hypertension are rising at alarming rates for all New Jerseyans, but this trend could be reversed with changes to diet and exercise regimens,” said Burns-Katafigiotis of Weight Wellness Center. She has agreed to take on the role of co-coordinator for this campaign on a volunteer basis. “This is an opportunity to pay it forward to a community that helped to foster my success”. Burns-Katafigiotis’ father was a dedicated high school teacher in the township.

The Mayors Wellness Campaign (www.mayorswellnesscampaign.org) is an initiative of the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute (www.NJHCQI.org) in partnership with the New Jersey State League of Municipalities (www.njslom.org). The mission of the Mayors Wellness Campaign is to equip mayors and other key leaders with the tools to develop and implement active-living initiatives in their communities with the ultimate goal of improving health and reducing the skyrocketing health care costs that come with the obesity problem in New Jersey. Currently, more than half of the New Jersey’s 566 municipalities are participating in the campaign and are working aggressively to decrease obesity rates and increase the overall health of their communities. Major funding for the Mayors Wellness Campaign is provided by The Walmart Foundation.

“We are delighted to have Mayor Giangeruso and the Township of Lyndhurst join the MWC,” said David Knowlton, President and CEO of the NJHCQI. “It was alarming to me, when I heard that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recently concluded that the next generation of Americans (those born after 2000) may very well be the first in our lifetime to be LESS healthy than the generation which preceded it. We worked for many months to put together the kind of coalition that just might have an impact here in New Jersey.”

“The 2004 Institute of Medicine report which awakened the nation to the steps which needed to be taken in this area concluded that ‘mobilizing communities to address childhood obesity ... will require concerted efforts by many partners.’” said William G. Dressel Jr., Executive Director, New Jersey State League of Municipalities. “The MWC is a good-faith effort to put such a partnership together and has the wholehearted support of the League.”

“I’m excited about working with the MWC to implement a comprehensive program of outreach, education and technical assistance activities to combat obesity and inactivity issues for all our residents,” said Mayor Giangeruso. “By identifying existing programs and assessing our community needs, together with Weight Wellness Center we can shape our own plan for community health.”

For additional information, please go to www.mayorswellnesscampaign.org.
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