



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Castle Community Wellness Initiative Prepares Residents for Healthy 2012
Area youth are focus of efforts that include a smoke-free parks policy, family nutrition education, and outdoor after school program

New Castle, DE - Delaware Greenways and the City of New Castle announce the City's Smoke-free parks policy and community wellness programs that will emphasize the health of the community's young people for 2012. On Tuesday, December 20, there will be an official announcement of the policy and an educational program for a group of local elementary students starting at 4 p.m. at Battery Park, New Castle. Afterwards, students and their parents will gather nearby at the New Castle Senior Center for a healthy cooking class and meal, presented by the Junior League of Wilmington.

According to a 2005 report from the New England Journal of Medicine, the generation of children growing up today are the first in the history of the U.S. that are expected to live a shorter, less healthy lifespan than their parents. This dire prediction for the community's young people is what prompted the New Castle Wellness Team to focus the group's actions on young people. The Wellness Team is a group of community leaders including representatives from government, schools, the healthcare sector and community organizations.

The smoke-free parks policy is intended to protect children's health by helping to ensure smoke-free air; maintaining access to safe, comfortable recreational areas; and set a good example by acknowledging that smoking is a health hazard and smoke-free air is a priority. The Smoke-Free parks include: Buttonwood, Penn Valley, Susi, Bull Hill, and Van Dyke; the playground area in Dobbinsville Park; and the Battery Park playground, basketball courts and public restrooms. Signs will be installed in all locations in January 2012.

The New Castle Community Wellness Initiative is led by Delaware Greenways with collaboration from local stakeholders. The goal is to reduce barriers and generate opportunities to make healthy choices. As the Institute of Medicine stated, "it is unreasonable to expect that people will change

their behavior easily when so many forces in the social, cultural, and physical environments conspire against such change," which is the premise for the Wellness Initiative.

In preparation for a healthful new year, the New Castle Wellness Team is gearing up its programs and plans for 2012, which include:

- Green Hour outdoor education program, which engages students at Carrie Downie Elementary School in an hour of active, nature and wellness themed activities after school.
- Public art program led by area youth to bring attention to wellness issues with anti-smoking the topic of emphasis for early 2012.
- Development and maintenance of hiking and biking trails in greater New Castle.

The Wellness Initiative and associated projects are funded by the Delaware Division of Public Health, the Delaware Chapter of the American Lung Association (through American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds), and other local funding.

About Delaware Greenways

Delaware Greenways is a statewide non-profit organization committed to the preservation and enhancement of Delaware's natural, scenic, historical, cultural and recreational resources.

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