



DOUGLAS COUNTY Healthy Directions Wellness Newsletter

COMING FROM HEALTHY DIRECTIONS

With Healthy Directions into its second year, the opportunities to improve your health just keep increasing and improving.

Healthy Directions Chairwoman Kathy Goodman said a number of activities are in the works and she hopes to add more. She also wants to hear from you.

"It's very important that Healthy Directions provides programming to meet the needs and wants of our employees," Kathy said. "Give me your thoughts and ideas."

Those will include a summer walking challenge, lunch and learn opportunities, and more ideas based on the recently conducted needs and health assessments.

Kathy said the walking challenge is likely to begin on June 1, and there is the possibility of a Weight Watchers program downtown to join the one already in place at the Douglas County Health Center.

"Basically, we want to do everything we can to help you stay on track to become more fit," Kathy said. "We will keep the activities coming."

Phil Rooney

START YOUR DAY WITH A GOOD BREAKFAST!



Your mother's edict that "breakfast is the most important meal of the day" is true, experts say.

The Nemours Foundation suggests how you can get a quick but healthy breakfast each morning:

Fill your pantry with lots of healthy choices for breakfast.

The night before, try to get as much ready as possible for breakfast. Have dishes and flatware out, get fruit cut up, and prepare as much as possible in advance.

Wake everyone at least 10 minutes earlier than usual to make sure there's plenty of time to eat.

Encourage the kids to participate in planning and making breakfast.

Have quick, healthy breakfast options on hand when time has eluded you -- such as trail mix, yogurt, fruit or individual boxes of cereal.

HealthDay article from www.mayoclinic.com

What's Inside:

MAY, 2010

- Celebrate National Bike Month!
- Can Energy Drinks Really Boost A Person's Energy?
- Start Your Day With A Good Breakfast
- Tips For Managing Stress
- and more!



Walkers gather for a group photo before the noon walk. Dr. Adi Pour, Douglas County Health Department's Health Director, leads a group on 19th Street.

NATIONAL WALK AT LUNCH DAY

In groups large and small, Douglas County employees slipped on their Adidas (or Nikes) and hit the sidewalks on April 28 for National Walk at Lunch Day.

Walking groups were scheduled for 11:30, noon and 12:30, but many people walked alone. Along the way, they encountered walkers from other companies participating in the annual event sponsored by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska. The Douglas County Health Department and Healthy Directions were in charge of the county's participation.

Dr. Adi Pour, Director of the Douglas County Health Department, led the noon walk. "This year was the start of something we hope will become a Douglas County tradition," she said. "Let's plan now to double the participation next year."

Walkers received a complimentary flashlight-key chain provided by Blue Cross and Blue Shield. The Douglas County walkers were part of more than 13,000 Nebraskans who took part in the day's activities.

Phil Rooney

COMMIT TO BE FIT

THE HEALTHY DIRECTIONS WELLNESS COMMITTEE THANKS YOU!

The Douglas County Healthy Directions Wellness Committee would like to thank the 246 employees who completed the Health Assessment Campaign during the month of April. The committee utilizes the information to plan programs, classes, education and motivational incentives to assist employees in building healthier lives.

Thank You!

The \$5 Subway gift cards will be distributed by June 1. On May 18th the committee members held the drawing for 26 prizes donated by area businesses and those winners are listed below:

YMCA 1-Month Membership	Karen Bieterman/Corrections
YMCA 1-Month Membership	Christopher Ivner/Sheriff
YMCA 1-Month Membership	Christine Wiech/Youth Center
YMCA 1-Month Membership	Renee Iwan/Youth Center
Omaha Beef Tickets - 4 tickets	Sheri Sweney/Corrections
Omaha Royals Baseball - 2 tickets	Leslie Cavanaugh Public Defender
Joslyn Museum 2-passes	Catherine Camden Register Deeds
Joslyn Museum 2-passes	Traci Fisher/Health Dept
Jason Deli - \$10 gift card	Debra Rezac/Treasurer
Kansas City Royals Baseball - 2 tickets	Robert Swoboda/Retiree
Fitness Together - 2 personal training sessions	Rocio Herrera Padilla/CoClerk
Fitness Together - 2 personal training sessions	Andrew Barry/911 Communities
Heart Monitor - UHC	Scharol Bronson/Health Dept
Healthy Direction Sweatshirt - X-Large	Kathryn Graham General Assistance
Healthy Direction Sweatshirt - Large	Deanna Roether/Health Center
Scheels - \$25 gift card	Brandon Clark/County Clerk
Scheels - \$15 gift card	Laura Caniglia/Treasurer
Fit Boot Camp - \$100 gift card	Patty Falcone/Health Dept
Settle Inn & Suites - 1 complimentary night	Lisa Draper/Assessor
Mutual of Omaha T-Shirt - Medium	Dawn Talich/Microfilm
Mutual of Omaha T-Shirt - Large	Jennifer Pedersen Health Center
Mutual of Omaha T-Shirt - X-Large	Mary Higgins/Health Center
Mutual of Omaha Duffle Bag/water bottle	Terri Goodwin General Assistance
Minnesota Life Duffel Bag/HD water bottle	Rich Kroh/Clerk District Court
ING Men's Glf Shirt - X-Large	Hong Huynh/Health Dept
ING T-Shirt - Large	Sharon Etter/Health Center
EXCEL T-Shirt - Large	Ray Goodman/Youth Center
EXCEL Comfort Gel Pack	Heather Thompson/Treasurer
Activate Omaha Sport Socks/Stop Watch	Sara Jackson/Health Center

Congratulations, everyone!

Who Participated in the Health Assessment?

<u>Department</u>	<u>Total</u>
911 Communications	1
Administration	2
Assessor	7
Civil Service/HR	9
Clerk of District Court	12
Construction/Roads/Engineer	2
Corrections	11
County Attorney	6
County Clerk	11
County Commissioners	2
District Court	3
Election Commission	1
Environmental Services	2
General Assistance	6
Geog Info Systems Div	1
Health Center	45
Health Dept	31
Hospital/CMHC	11
Juv Assessment Center	1
Juv Court	3
Land Reutilization Comm	1
Microfilm	4
Omaha Douglas Bldg Commission	3
Public Defender	6
Public Properties	2
Register of Deeds	6
Retiree	7
Sheriff	17
Tourism	2
Treasurer	23
Veterans Service	2
Youth Center	6

Health Assessment Comparisons

Completed Assmnt in 2009	159
Did not complete Assmtn in 2009	87
Grand Total	246

COMMIT TO BE FIT



THE COUNTY WELLNESS BICYCLING CORNER

With May being National Bike Month, we are looking at setting up an informal group of County Employees that would like to get together once a month or more to ride together or to ride in some of the various bicycle rides that are sponsored in the greater Omaha area.

Biking is a great sport and you can be a leisurely rider (periodically getting out with family and friends), be an "easy rider" (riding at moderate speeds and distances) or a rider who wants more strenuous exercise with longer rides and at a higher pace. Biking is both an individual and a group fun type sport that gets you outdoors, enjoying the (hopefully) nice weather, countryside and the camaraderie of family and friends. Almost all bike riders have one thing in common --- they are both friendly and willing to assist one another rider.

Looking forward to the Summer months, there are numerous formal rides put on by various bicycle clubs such as the Omaha Pedalers Bike Club and the Bellevue Bicycle Club. There are flyers at many of the bicycle stores around the City. Some rides of note are the Bike Ride Across Nebraska (BRAN), Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI), The Corporate Cycling Challenge, the Tour de Nebraska and the informal Wabash Trace Thursday Night Taco Ride. None of the bike rides are meant to be competitive; you simply come and enjoy a good time with a lot of great people. Distances and speeds are what you want them to be - most rides have short and long distances that you can ride.

So you have an old bike in the garage or basement, simply dust it off or take it to one of the many bike stores in town and they can assist you on getting it ready to ride. If you are interested in getting a better bike, the bike stores can help you. They are great people to work with (I purchased 4 bikes in the past 6 years for different family members); they will help you get a bike that fits you the best, provide help in making adjustments and provide advice on fun places to ride.

As a part of our Douglas County Healthy Directions Wellness Program, we are looking to start an informal biking group that will do a ride together periodically either after work or on a weekend. This could be a fun time to exercise, enjoy the outdoors and meet new friends.

If you are interested in being a part of a County riding group or just doing a group ride at some time, please send me an e-mail at lee.lazure@douglascounty-ne.gov or give me a call at 444-6123.

Lee Lazure, Human Resources
Douglas County Civil Service

Get Ready to Ride!

There is a bounty of group or individual cycling opportunities right here in the metro area! Here are just a few cycling opportunities from www.omahatrails.com. Have fun and remember your bike helmet!

Bancroft Bayliss Loop Bicycle Ride

Saturday's May 22 - Oct. 17, beginning at 10:00 a.m.

Starting at Bancroft Street Market
2702 South 10th Street, Omaha

FREE! Requires a helmet. Visit them on Facebook!

The Bancroft Bayliss Loop (BBL) is a community forming bicycle ride and cultural exchange engaging artists and cyclists between the Bancroft Market in Omaha and the Bayliss area of downtown Council Bluffs.

Each Saturday, artists and cyclists gather at the Bancroft Street Market to depart on a ride of the BBL. The ride, roughly 12 miles, travels a route that explores the Omaha riverfront, the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge, a beautiful natural landscape along the Missouri River, historic downtown Council Bluffs and many friendly residential neighborhoods on both sides of the river.

Midway through the ride, there's a stop at Bayliss Park in downtown Council Bluffs to picnic, or eat lunch at the Ellie's deli or La Carreta, Mexican restaurant.

Wabash Trace Nature Trail

The Wabash Trace Nature Trail is a converted railroad right-of-way running over 60 miles through the scenic Southwest Iowa countryside from Council Bluffs to Blanchard on the Iowa/Missouri border. The railroad tracks and ballast have been removed, and the trail has been resurfaced with crushed limestone. State agencies, individuals, families, businesses, and service organizations have donated the funding and labor to surface the trail, renovate bridges, and place benches and shelters along the trail.

The trail can be accessed in each of the towns it travels through: Council Bluffs, Mineola, Silver City, Malvern, Imogene, Shenandoah, Coin, and Blanchard. For more information and maps, log on to www.wabashtrace.org.

SAVE THE DATE! • 2010 Corporate Cycling Challenge

Sunday, August 15, 2010 Heartland of America Park

The 20th Annual Corporate Cycling Challenge is scheduled for Sunday, August 15, 2010 in Omaha. There are corporate (company), open (individual), and club (group) divisions offered in the largest one day bicycle event in the Midwest!

The Challenge includes three tours - 10, 25, and 42 miles long, featuring beautiful scenery and historical landmarks in a blend of urban and rural riding. The event is for all ages and abilities. The start and finish line is staged in front of the fountain at the Heartland of America Park, on 8th and Farnam in Omaha.

If you would like to receive a corporate packet, club packet, or an individual brochure, are interested in being a sponsor, or would like more information, contact the Corporate Cycling Challenge office at 932-RIDE (7433). You can also visit our web site at <http://www.corporatecycling.com>.

SAFE EGG STORAGE



Product	Refrigerator	Freezer
Raw eggs in shell	3 to 5 weeks	Do not freeze. Instead, beat yolks and whites together; then freeze.
Raw egg whites	2 to 4 days	12 months
Raw egg yolks	2 to 4 days	Yolks do not freeze well.
Raw egg accidentally frozen in shell	Use immediately after thawing.	Keep frozen; then refrigerate to thaw.
Hard-cooked eggs	1 week	Do not freeze.
Egg substitutes, liquid, Unopened	10 days	12 months
Egg substitutes, liquid, Opened	3 days	Do not freeze.
Egg substitutes, frozen, Unopened	After thawing, 7 days or refer to "Use-By" date.	12 months
Egg substitutes, frozen, Opened	After thawing, 3 days or refer to "Use-By" date.	Do not freeze.

www.foodsafety.gov

CAN ENERGY DRINKS REALLY BOOST A PERSON'S ENERGY?

Most energy drinks contain large amounts of caffeine, which can provide a temporary energy boost. Some energy drinks contain sugar and other substances. The boost is short-lived, however, and may be accompanied by other problems.

For example, energy drinks that contain sugar may contribute to weight gain - and too much caffeine can lead to:

- Nervousness
- Irritability
- Insomnia
- Rapid heart beat
- Increased blood pressure



Mixing energy drinks with alcohol may be even more problematic. Energy drinks can blunt the feeling of intoxication, which may lead to heavier drinking and alcohol-related injuries.

For most people, occasional energy drinks are fine. If you're consistently fatigued or rundown, however, consider a better — and healthier — way to boost your energy. Get adequate sleep, include physical activity in your daily routine and eat a healthy diet. If these strategies don't seem to help, consult your doctor. Sometimes fatigue is a sign of an underlying medical condition, such as hypothyroidism or anemia.

Katherine Zeratsky, R.D., L.D. - www.mayoclinic.com

MAY IS MELANOMA/SKIN CANCER DETECTION AND PREVENTION MONTH

Are tanning beds safer than natural sunlight?

Tanning beds don't offer a safe alternative to natural sunlight. Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation damages your skin, whether the exposure comes from tanning beds or natural sunlight. This damage increases the risk of skin cancer and premature skin aging. In fact, most tanning beds emit mainly UVA rays - which may increase the risk of melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer.

If you want the golden glow of a tan without exposure to damaging UV radiation, consider using a sunless tanning product. Avoid tanning beds, and use a broad-spectrum sunscreen whenever you're outdoors.

Lawrence E. Gibson, M.D., www.mayoclinic.com



belleiq.com

Kudos to everyone who attended the Healthy Directions/YMCA Health screenings. You're taking charge of your health! Below are the number of participants at each location:

Civic Center	100	Youth Center	75
Hospital	60	Corrections	100
Co. Roads	25		



SMALL STEPS TO HEART HEALTH

Do you sometimes think you can't be heart-healthy unless you're a vegetarian marathon runner with minimal body fat, barely detectable cholesterol and a pact to avoid ice cream that is signed in blood?

Well, think again. There's mounting evidence and support among cardiologists that moderation in the battle against heart disease can often achieve results that are at least as good as aggressive tactics.

Consider the testimony of Stephen Kopecky, a cardiologist at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. He likes to talk about a 49-year-old man who decided it was finally time to take his risk for heart disease seriously. The patient weighed 240 pounds and in almost every way you could measure his cholesterol, it was in the danger zone, Dr. Kopecky recalls. He may not have been a heart attack waiting to happen, but that was the direction he was headed.

The patient began eating healthier foods and made a point to get about 30 minutes of exercise a day, or 200 minutes a week. After 10 weeks, he'd lost 18 pounds – about 7.5% of his body weight.

What were the cardiovascular benefits? At the end of the 10 weeks, without the help of any heart drugs, a blood test showed that all of the patient's cholesterol levels came in near or below recommended targets, Dr. Kopecky says. His LDL, or bad cholesterol, for instance, fell 21% while his HDL, or good cholesterol, rose 24%.

The weight loss was relatively modest and the patient was still in the overweight category. Overall, however, his heart-attack risk fell substantially. In a little less than three months, the patient showed "that we can all help ourselves tremendously taking small steps and doing something that's achievable," Dr. Kopecky says.

Adds Christopher Cannon, a cardiologist at Harvard University-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston: "Going the moderation route is what we recommend to get real change for the heart patient."

That theme was evident at the annual scientific meeting of the American College of Cardiology last month. In three separate reports on efforts to reduce heart attacks, heart-related death and other major events with more intensive drug treatment, the aggressive strategy failed in each case to show a benefit over a more modest strategy. There was some evidence the aggressive approach caused harm.

For instance, researchers expected that among patients with diabetes, aggressively lowering systolic blood pressure, the top number in a blood-pressure reading, to below 120 in one group of people would lead to better outcomes than getting the level under 140 in another patient group. They were wrong. A National Institutes of Health-funded study called Accord, involving 1,733 patients followed for nearly five years, revealed no meaningful difference in heart attacks, strokes or death from cardiovascular causes between the two groups. The results suggest there isn't much to be gained for patients who add the expense and potential side effects of another drug or two (to what is typically an already complex drug regimen) to achieve lower blood pressure.

A second part of the Accord study found that adding a drug called a fibrate to a cholesterol-lowering pill known as a statin reduced levels of potentially harmful blood fats known called triglycerides by 25%. But it didn't have any impact on heart attacks

and other major events. For most patients, the findings indicate, sticking to a statin alone seems to provide the same protection.

The third study, performed by researchers in the Netherlands, involved 614 patients with atrial fibrillation, a common heartbeat irregularity that heightens risk of stroke, among other problems. Controlling the heart rate, as measured at rest, is typically the preferred strategy to prevent serious cardiovascular problems. Medical guidelines, backed by limited data, have called for strict control, aimed at achieving a resting heart beat of 80 beats per minute. But the study found that achieving "lenient" control of fewer than 110 beats per minute was at least as effective in preventing death from cardiovascular causes, stroke and other life-threatening events.

Counting Heart Beats

Anti-arrhythmia drugs, commonly used to control heart rate, have potentially serious side effects, so "the concept that you can be comfortable with a higher resting heart rate is huge," says Ralph Brandis, a cardiologist and president of the American College of Cardiology, who wasn't involved in the study.

In all three studies, patients trying to reach aggressive targets typically had to take more or higher doses of drugs than were needed to achieve more modest goals. Researchers suggested that as a result benefits gained from more-aggressive treatment may have been offset by side effects from the medicines.

Of course, doctors say, none of this reduces the importance of striving to achieve such bedrock prevention targets for blood pressure (120/80 or lower) and LDL cholesterol (below 130 for people at low risk; below 70 for many high risk heart patients). Indeed, many cardiologists already urge patients to aim for LDL targets lower than current guidelines recommend. And it would be hard to find a doctor who believes there's an acceptable moderate level of smoking.

Aiming Lower

But the overall message of the reports was that patients appear to do just as well aiming for treatment goals that are easier to achieve, at potentially lower cost and with fewer side effects.

Which brings us back to Dr. Kopecky. The 49-year old patient whom he now describes as 55, and he is Dr. Kopecky himself. He had been an interventional cardiologist at the Mayo Clinic and says he had performed about 2,000 angioplasty procedures to open up clogged arteries of people who were unable to fend off the disease. He decided to become a preventive cardiologist.

But to do that, he felt he needed to follow his own advice. "It's not an all-or-nothing phenomenon," he says. "But any little benefit is a continuous curve. You add benefit by doing multiple things."

Included in his prevention strategy: fish-oil pills – they lower risk of heart attack and sudden cardiac death, he says – and interval training during exercise. If you get your heart rate up at a higher level for a minute or two several times while you're on a treadmill, "your good cholesterol goes up more, your bad goes down more and you burn more calories than if your heart rate stays constant," he says.

Dr. Kopecky says he recommends to his patients to aim for weight loss of one and one half to two pounds a week.

Anything more aggressive, he says, and "you tend to gain it back".

Ron Winslow, Wall Street Journal

GET YOUR MP3 READY! THE BEST SONGS FOR BRISK WALKING



According to www.fitnessmagazine.com, these were voted the top songs in 2009 for brisk walking:

- "I Gotta Feeling" - The Black Eyed Peas
- "Big Green Tractor" - Jason Aldean
- "Smile" - Uncle Kracker
- "Uprising" - Muse
- "Lakeside" - BLK JKS
- "Down" - Jay Sean, featuring Lil Wayne
- "Fitz and the Dizzyspells" - Andrew Bird
- "When Love Takes Over" - David Guetta, featuring Kelly Rowland
- "Celebration" - Madonna
- "3" - Britney Spears
- "I Know You Want Me (Calle Ocho)" (More English Extended Mix) - Pitbull
- "Leave the World Behind" (Radio Edit) - Axwell, Ingrosso, Angello, and Laidback Luke
- "Jai Ho! (You Are My Destiny)" - A.R. Rahman and the Pussycat Dolls, featuring Nicole Scherzinger
- "Fire Burning" - Sean Kingston
- "Last Forever" (Original Dub Mix) - Norman Doray and Tristan G "Beggin'" - Madcon
- "Hundred Mile Stare" - Queensryche
- "Make Me" - Janet Jackson
- "I Get Lifted" - Eric Morillo
- "Dangerous Animals" - Arctic Monkeys



What music gets you moving? Classic Rock? Rap? 80's Big Hair Bands? Polka? Disco? Jazz? Hip Hop? Techno? E-mail your favorites to connie.lehman@douglascounty-ne.gov and we'll compile a list of Healthy Directions favorites!



WORKOUTS AT THE YOUTH CENTER

You may know Dan Archie as a Physical Education teacher at the Douglas County Youth Center, or as a college basketball player. Maybe you know him as a basketball coach. But now Dan has taken on a new role as fitness trainer for a group of 10 co-workers at the Youth Center. They just completed a six-week session of the P90X program, meeting three days a week, right after work.

P90X is a revolutionary system of 12 sweat-inducing, muscle-pumping workouts, designed to transform your body from regular to ripped. "I used a combination of all the videos to fit the needs of the entire exercise class," Dan said. "I improvised the P90X workouts; I kept it very basic and fundamental, with a high demand on hard work.

The P90X workouts consisted of cardiovascular, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, plyometrics, core and yoga activities. Dan said his main goal of the exercise class was to motivate people about physical activity and that participating regularly in physical activity can be a fun and rewarding experience. "Several co-workers that couldn't make it to the workouts received information on the workouts so that they could workout at home," Dan said. "In those six weeks we had an average weight loss of 18 pounds."

Dan said it was a joy to workout with the class and he looks forward to the next class starting on June 1. If anyone is interested in starting a P90X class or working out at the Youth Center contact Dan at the Douglas County Youth Center.

Phil Rooney

Get Great Curves At The Center Mall

The Center Mall Curves has a 30 day for \$30.00 promotion. Call 991-9887 for more details!



Have a Safe Summer
**Buckle
UP!**

COMMIT TO BE FIT



Marilyn Johnson, Dennis Rookstool, and Connie Lehman were runners in the 33rd Annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon & Half-Marathon.

MARATHON WOMEN (AND MAN)

On May 2, while many of you were still resting comfortably in bed, Marilyn Johnson, Connie Lehman and Dennis Rookstool were getting in some serious roadwork.

The two Douglas County Health Department employees and Treasurer's office worker participated in the annual Lincoln Marathon.

In addition to her daily runs, Connie follows an 18-week training program to, in her words, to make sure she can finish. She builds her mileage totals during the week, gradually building to several 20 mile runs on weekends.

"You take a beating and then you're ready for race day," she said.

The fact that it was her second full marathon didn't make it any easier. She began to experience knee problems about 3 miles into the race, but still finished. While disappointing, Connie's preparation had made her aware of the possibility.

"Some days it just doesn't happen," she said.

Dennis Rookstool, property tax manager in the Douglas County Treasurer's office, used the Lincoln Marathon as an opportunity to run his first half marathon. He previously had run some 10-K events and has participated in the Corporate Cup.

Dennis said he "ran into a wall" about 9 miles into the half marathon, but talked himself through it, and is glad he did.

An athlete in his youth, Rookstool took a 20-year break as he got married and had a family. Now he's training in preparation for the Aug.1 Omaha Triathlon.

"That's going to be the real challenge," he said.

No kidding! The Omaha Triathlon involves a 1.5-K swim, a 40-K bike ride and a 10-K run. Dennis has even hired a swim coach to help ready him for the challenge.

He's training about eight hours a week at this point, putting in one three-hour session and mixing things up. "It's completely different," Dennis said, adding that swimming involves the most difficult preparation.

If the Triathlon goes well, Dennis may take the leap and compete in the Omaha Marathon in September. In the meanwhile, he hopes to get more friends and co-workers out to some of the

area's major events. Just feeding off the energy, he believes, will motivate them and let them see that they can take part in the events themselves.

"It's great, it's great," he says. "I don't think there's anything like it."

Marilyn Johnson, a Registered Dietician with the WIC Program in the Health Department, is serious about staying active and taking charge of her health.

In Lincoln, Marilyn did the half marathon for the second time. She swims or runs daily before work and walks at lunch.

Seven days a week," she says. "I don't take a day off."

Marilyn views her participation in the Lincoln Marathon as simply the next step in her fitness program and the outgrowth of an active lifestyle. Her preparation for Lincoln included a special 12-week training program.

She entered the event with two goals: to take 10 minutes off her time from the previous year, which she did, and her 9:36 minute pace per mile was below her goal of maintaining a 10-minute-per-mile pace.

With that accomplished, is she looking at a new challenge, say running a full marathon next time?

"I'm strongly considering it," Marilyn said.

She also encourages everyone to get in an exercise program and considering taking part in one of the local competitions.

"It gives you something to work for - makes it more interesting."

The Douglas County runners were unanimous in their enjoyment of the Lincoln Marathon. With a relatively flat course, the Lincoln Marathon is ideal for the less experienced marathoner, while the atmosphere is festive, with parties and various performers lining the streets.

"The city really embraces the race," Connie said.

Another highlight was the finish, where runners finished at Memorial Stadium and were featured on the giant television screen. Ending their run at the 50-yard line, the experience was one to remember.

Phil Rooney

Weight Watchers at the Health Center



Did you know that the Health Center has a Weight Watchers group that meets weekly? They meet every Tuesday at 11:30 in Town Hall. This is open to everyone and the price is \$12.00 per meeting. Weigh-in is at 11:30 the meeting starts at 12:00.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to all Douglas County employees. EAP's trained staff can help you with problems that affect your personal or professional life. Services are free to employees and family members, and records are kept confidential and are not included in the staff member's personnel file. Call 593-1711 for an appointment.

COMMIT TO BE FIT



TIPS FOR MANAGING STRESS

Identify the sources of stress. Try to figure out what's causing your stress symptoms. Maybe you are overextended (too many commitments) and feel fatigued

and irritable. Once you identify the sources of stress, try to minimize these as much as possible.

Talk it out. Talk to a friend, family member, or therapist if your stress level is too high. Getting your feelings out without others judging you is crucial to good mental health.

Take time out. Before you reach your breaking point, take time out for solitude. Take time to nurture yourself, away from the cares and responsibilities of the world. Find time for inner strength and emotional healing.

Set limits. Never hesitate to say "no" before you take on too many commitments. Especially if you are balancing work and family, it's important to prioritize. Saying "no" can help bring your stress to a manageable level and give you more control over your life.

Try exhaling. Breathing can measure and alter your psychological state, making a stressful moment increase or diminish in intensity. Often, people who are anxious or upset take shallow breaths and unconsciously hold them. By paying attention to your breathing, particularly exhaling during tense moments, you will feel more relaxed. Buy a bottle of inexpensive bubbles (in the toy section at most stores), and use it to learn how to exhale slowly. Breathing from your abdomen, blow through the bubble blower with a steady stream of breath. If you blow too hard or too softly, you won't get any bubbles. But smooth, steady breaths will produce a nice flow of bubbles. Use this breathing technique (without the bubbles) when you are feeling stressed.



Exercise daily. Exercise is thought to increase the secretion of endorphins, naturally produced substances in the brain that induce feelings of peacefulness. Many studies show that exercise, along with the boosted endorphin levels, really does increase confidence and self-esteem and reduce tension. Exercise also acts as a displacement defense mechanism for those who are "stressed out." What does that mean? If you've ever walked for several miles, you know how hard it is to think of your problems when your mind is focused on walking.

www.webmd.com

GET ACTIVE!

[WWW.ACTIVATEOMAHA.ORG!](http://WWW.ACTIVATEOMAHA.ORG)



It's a terrific resource for an active life! Click on Calendar to see what's going on right here in our area. Here are a few events from the May calendar:

May 22 – 10:00 AM - Omaha Hiking Club Hike, Schramm Park State Recreation Area, Schramm Park SRA is picturesque park near the Platte River and home of the exceptional Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium. Also the site of Nebraska's first fish hatchery (1882), the old hatch house is now a fish management museum, and there is an interesting geologic display nearby. The hike will be an easy 2-3 mile hike on some fairly flat dirt packed trails on the north side of the Platte River. Be prepared for mud if it has recently rained. Our pace will be approximately 3 miles per hour depending on the condition of the trails. Meet at 10:00 a.m. in the parking lot of the Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium at the west end of the park. Water and rest rooms are available in the Aquarium/Visitors Center and at the trail head. Those interested may also pack a lunch or a snack to eat prior to carpooling down to the pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the Platte for an additional 1-2 miles of hiking after finishing on the recreation area trails. Feel free to make plans to tour the Aquarium after completing the hike. A state park permit, or day use pass (\$4.00) is required. Permits are available at the Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium, at the west end of the park. Hike will be cancelled in the event of rain. For more information or directions: <http://members.cox.net/omahahikingclub/index.htm>

May 29 – 8:30AM - 11:00 AM - C.A.R, Alliance 3rd Annual Walk for SaferTeenDriving, Zorinsky Lake, Shelter #5 - 1 and 5 mile walk or run, family orientated, kids games, free water/food while supplies last, music, raffle. All proceeds go to help educate teens and parents about non-distracted driving. For more information, contact: Rob Reynolds at rr@saferteendriving.org. Sign up at: www.saferteendriving.org.

June 5 – 8:00 AM - Omaha Urban Adventure Race! It's the ultimate adventure! Get a team of three and be prepared for the most fun you'll ever have with a race number pinned to your shirt as you bike, run/walk, climb paddle and navigate your way through Omaha to find hidden chick points. Mystery team challenges along the way will also keep you on your toes! This is an event geared for FUN and is open to all levels of fitness with a short course and long course available. For more information, log on to www.activateomaha.org.

We'd like to hear from you!
If you have a question or comment for the Healthy Directions committee, e-mail chairwoman Kathy Goodman at kathy.goodman@douglascounty-ne.gov, drop her a note to Human Resources, Rm 505, or call her at 444-6099.

The Healthy Directions Wellness Newsletter is brought to you by the Douglas County Healthy Directions worksite wellness committee. Contributing editor: Phil Rooney; layout and design: Connie Lehman; distribution: Sunday Uribe.

COMMIT TO BE FIT



URBAN OMAHA

THE ULTIMATE ADVENTURE

JUNE 5, 2010

JOIN US FOR URBAN OMAHA THE ULTIMATE ADVENTURE!

Get a team of three and be prepared for the most fun you'll ever have with a race number pinned to your shirt as you bike, run/walk, climb, paddle and navigate your way through Omaha to find hidden check points. Mystery team challenges along the way will also keep you on your toes! This is an event geared for FUN, and is open to all level of fitness with a short course and a long course available.



Angry Cow Adventures

BlueCross BlueShield of Nebraska

live well omaha ACTIVATEO

CHIPOTLE MEXICAN GRILL

ACTION 3 NEWS

MC MIDTOWN CROSSING

Short Course - \$35/person Long Course - \$75/person
8:00 AM Start Time
for more details, log on to:
www.activateomaha.org