



NEWS RELEASE

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The 3rd Annual La Colonia Community Walk: Working and Walking Together!

Ventura County Public Health's Chronic Disease Prevention Program is hosting the 3rd Annual La Colonia Community Walk, this Saturday, September 24, 2011, from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Residents of La Colonia are celebrating the healthy changes that they have initiated for their neighborhood, themselves and their families. This year's Annual Walk is dedicated to celebrating the efforts of these residents in making their community, a community of excellence!

Activities will begin at the La Colonia Youth Center and include a Get Fit class demonstration, a ribbon cutting ceremony followed by a 1.2 mile walk around the neighborhood. The walk route will highlight community grocery stores where quality fresh produce and other healthier options are now available. Other highlights include a visit to the newly opened Camino del Sol Community Garden, where event participants will see how some plot users are already growing vegetables for their families and neighbors. The walk will end at Cesar Chavez School with a round table discussion, where community champions like Mrs. Estrada and other speakers will share their vision for community change.

Mrs. Socorro Estrada, a 33 year resident of La Colonia along with friends and neighbors, will share their efforts and achievements of making La Colonia a healthier and more walkable community. She and other ¡Si Se Puede! Walking Club members teamed up to collect signatures for a petition to build

a rubberized walking path around the park. They wanted a safe place to walk, that would also be easy on their aging joints. The only option was the track field at the local high school which was quite a distance from their neighborhood. In May 2010, during a La Colonia's Neighborhood Council meeting, the ¡Si Se Puede! Walking Club presented City of Oxnard officials with the petition. It had taken them just a little over a week to collect nearly 2000 signatures.

In addition to that, earlier this year, ¡Si Se Puede! Walking Club members and Ventura County Public Health's Community Gardens Project Coordinator, Silvia Lopez-Navarro, presented the Oxnard City Council with a proposal to use an unoccupied parcel of land at the end of Camino del Sol Road for a community garden. City Council members voted in support of that project as well. When she first heard the news, Mrs. Estrada, reflecting back on the hard work that went into accomplishing this, commented, "con gran esfuerzo, los sueños se cumplen!" (With great effort, dreams are achieved).

Efforts for community change began in 2007, with a Communities of Excellence (CX³) survey, conducted by the VCPH Nutrition Education Project. The survey showed that residents of La Colonia had some challenges to overcome when it came to eating healthier and staying active. The result showed that access to healthy foods was limited and walkability was poor. (For the full report please follow the link:: http://www.vchca.org/publichealth/CX3FINALREPORT_Rev092909.sflb.ashx).

For more information about the event please contact Silvia Lopez-Navarro at (805) 677-5252.

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