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Quality Institute Announces Mayors Wellness Campaign New Jersey “Healthy Town” Winners for 2021

PRINCETON, New Jersey — The Mayors Wellness Campaign has announced eight 2021 “Healthy Town” winners that are addressing food insecurity, supporting COVID-19 testing and vaccinations, and organizing programs to promote physical and mental health throughout their communities.

The Mayors Wellness Campaign (MWC) is a program of the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute in partnership with the New Jersey State League of Municipalities. In addition to the eight Healthy Town Winners, another seven towns were designated as *2021 Healthy Towns to Watch*, and seventeen were designated as *2021 Healthy Towns Up-and-Coming*.

Each year, communities participating in the MWC complete a comprehensive Healthy Town Application outlining the research they’ve done to identify their community health needs and explaining how they have organized their local MWC committee. The application also highlights the actions the towns have taken to make their communities healthier places to live, work, and play.

Here’s a listing of the winners and the efforts that helped them receive recognition from the MWC.

The following communities were designated as *2021 Healthy Towns*:

City of Bayhead, 2021 Healthy Town

Bay Head had another successful year of MWC programming and has been designated as a Healthy Town. In addition to long standing programs like Sunset Paddles with the Mayor, where community members engage in monthly physical activity on the community lake, the MWC also integrated important mental health initiatives to address the changing needs of residents. The creation of a Gratitude Tree allowed a space for residents to express what they were thankful

for in a community setting. Additionally, Bayhead MWC provided support for local food pantries to help distribute food to those in need.

“Bay Head is honored to be recognized by the Quality Institute for a second time. Our municipality has a completely volunteer staff led by Meryl Clement and Sarah Erbe, who take great pride in the work they do for the town and our residents,” says Mayor Bill Curtis. “All through the aftermath of Super Storm Sandy and continuing up through the pandemic, our committees, made up of Bay Head volunteers, safely held a variety of offerings and events designed to involve every age group. These activities were purposely designed to be all inclusive, promoting healthy lifestyles and behaviors. Bay Head has embraced the Mayors Wellness Campaign since its very beginning, remaining engaged from day one. Our community has endeavored to design programs to improve the health and well-being of all our residents. I am so very proud of the work done by our leaders and their committees.”

Evesham Township, 2021 Healthy Town

Evesham Township has been awarded as a Healthy Town for the second year in a row. The township’s MWC programming focuses on a wide variety of health and wellness topics, including addressing food insecurity through an ongoing food pantry, blood drives, COVID-19 testing sites, supports for older adults such as the MWC Conversation of Your Life (COYL) program, and many others. Evesham’s continued dedication to responding to community needs results in a dynamic and robust program each year.

“It truly is an honor for Evesham Township to reach the Healthy Town designation for the second consecutive year under the Mayors Wellness Campaign and the Quality Institute,” Mayor Jaclyn Veasy said. “I want to thank everyone in Evesham who helped make this great achievement possible, including the residents who give their time to serve on all of our volunteer advisory boards. Their dedication ensures our township always has new and innovative programs to strengthen the physical, mental, and spiritual health of our residents.”

Montclair, 2021 Healthy Town

Montclair Township is a long-standing Healthy Town. Throughout the pandemic, Montclair’s MWC has been focused on maintaining programs to ensure that residents continue to have access to health and wellness activities despite the challenges they are facing. Specifically, the Community Farms Initiative served 475 people, increased SNAP purchases, created over 4,000 pounds of produce grown, and was supported by over 1,000 volunteers throughout the year. This successful program was done in partnership with community partners and enabled the MWC to tackle the increase in food security.

“We are thrilled that once again the Quality Institute has recognized Montclair as a Mayors Wellness Campaign Healthy Town,” said Mayor Sean Spiller. “Our township departments and community partners continue to provide a great variety of events and activities that promote healthy behaviors through sports and exercise. We have options for all ages, access to healthful foods and nutrition information, and newly renovated parks and open spaces for outdoor recreation. Combined with our organized events and celebrations, and numerous opportunities

for community engagement — it's the perfect fit to help improve the well-being of our residents.”

Paterson, 2021 Healthy Town

The City of Paterson has been growing its MWC program since 2019 and received its second Healthy Town designation this year. In 2021, the city focused on a variety of health and wellness areas including environmental clean ups, a wide range of fitness classes, lead abatement efforts, and the first annual Green Fair to educate residents about sustainability efforts throughout the city. Mayor André Sayegh has also led the charge on significant COVID-19 testing and vaccination efforts, resulting in well above-average vaccination rates.

“Paterson is on the move and this designation for the second consecutive year proves it. Our vaccination rate is the highest among cities in the state and we are doing everything within our power to keep our residents safe. Moreover, we are investing heavily in renovating our parks and just completed construction on two inclusive playgrounds to accommodate children with special needs,” says Mayor Sayegh.

Plainfield, 2021 Healthy Town

2021 is the City of Plainfield's fourth year in a row being designated as a Healthy Town. In addition to programs that address physical health and nutrition, COVID-19 testing and screening, mental health awareness, emergency food services, and an employee wellness program, the city continues to focus on health literacy for its residents. One new success this year was having a health educator present at all testing and vaccine clinics. This increased access to important health information in a community space where residents were already gathering.

“We thank the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute for recognizing and acknowledging the City of Plainfield's efforts to promote health and wellbeing for yet another year. Through the Mayors Wellness Campaign, we have adopted a holistic approach to health, recognizing that exercise and active living go hand in hand with good nutrition and healthy eating choices. To that end, we've focused on renovating, upgrading, and improving recreational facilities across the city, investing well over \$4 million in this effort. We provided testing and vaccinations at no cost to residents throughout the pandemic. And we've ensured that access to information about good nutrition is accessible, partnering with local farmer's markets to provide fruits and vegetables to our community. Plainfield will continue to encourage every resident to maintain a healthy lifestyle and provide resources to help them on their journey” – Mayor Adrian O. Mapp, City of Plainfield

Scotch Plains, 2021 Healthy Town

The Township of Scotch Plains is a long-time partner of the MWC and is achieving a Healthy Town designation for the third year in a row. One of the Scotch Plains MWC's consistent areas of strength is its strong community partnerships. Collaborating with local organizations expands the reach of the MWC and enables a wide range of health and wellness programming to be offered to residents. New was a Pride Flag Raising ceremony at Town Hall that included an

event with LGBTQ+ support organizations, community entertainment, LGBTQ+ speakers, and overall public support for the community.

"Scotch Plains appreciates the opportunity to continually work with the Quality Institute and for the recognition, once again, as a Mayors Wellness Campaign Healthy Town," said Mayor Josh Losardo. "There is a shared commitment among our entire team at town hall, as well as countless volunteers, to provide our residents with a wide variety of exciting programming that encourages healthy behaviors. For people of all ages, we remain firmly committed to offering active and passive recreational opportunities, as well as information about healthy living and healthy eating. In 2022, we are pleased to have the opportunity to continue our work through the Quality Institute for the direct benefit of the entire Scotch Plains community."

Wildwood Crest, 2021 Healthy Town

After receiving a Healthy Town Up and Coming designation in 2018, Wildwood Crest has strengthened its MWC program each year and is now receiving a Healthy Town designation for the second year in a row. While physical fitness classes such as group exercise classes, organized bike rides, and wellness walks are staples of the program, the Borough made some exciting additions this year. Responding to community needs, an online mental health initiative was implemented to provide a way to engage the public virtually on mindfulness practices. The page includes thoughtful and inspiring daily posts on all topics regarding meditation, self-care, fitness, diet and education, self-perception. This initiative served as a link for community members to read and discuss issues pertaining to mental wellness and balance. Emphasis was placed on developing healthy habits that help to boost vitality and improve relationships with self and others.

"Winning this designation again is such great news! Wildwood Crest has embraced wellness. It has become our brand," said Mayor Don Cabrera. "I would like to thank our recreation department for coordinating the many wellness programs and events. Most importantly, I thank our visitors, residents, and staff for participating and supporting our wellness initiatives. Wellness touches each of us differently. Personal participation will vary. In the end, whatever wellness path one may take, it helps us create a better mind, body, and spirit. That is worth investing in for our community. Congratulations Wildwood Crest and all other communities. I'm looking forward to another strong wellness year!"

Woodbridge Township, 2021 Healthy Town

Woodbridge Township is receiving the Healthy Town designation for the second year in a row. The township is one of the longest standing partners of the MWC and has continued to grow and improve its program over the years. In 2021, in conjunction with the Woodbridge Green Team, the MWC rolled out a Bikeshare program. This was particularly important because the pandemic pushed many people to engage in more outdoor activities. Riders can take the bikes and return them to any of the eligible racks. The MWC is excited to expand this initiative with seven more locations coming in 2022 and would recommend it to any other municipality.

"We are honored to once again be designated a New Jersey Healthy Town by the Quality Institute and the New Jersey League of Municipalities," said Mayor John E. McCormac.

"Under the leadership and direction of Councilman Gregg Ficarra, Chairman of the Mayor's Wellness Committee, we were able to navigate the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and initiate new and innovative physical fitness and mental health wellness programming. It goes without saying that the pandemic highlighted the importance of accessible recreation for physical wellness along with outlets and resources for mental health. We are committed to ensuring that all 100,000+ Woodbridge Township residents continue to have access to wellness programs and activities."

The following communities were designated as *2021 Healthy Towns to Watch*:

Belleville, 2021 Healthy Town to Watch

The Township of Belleville is a first-time Healthy Town to Watch designee. By partnering with stakeholders, including the Recreation Department, Health Department, local businesses, and RWJ Barnabas Health, the township was able to offer varied programs to help residents focus on their physical health and community connections.

"Belleville is proud to have earned the Quality Institute's Healthy Town to Watch designation," said Mayor Michael Melham. "It is an especially impressive achievement when you consider how the COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted our lives. We have remained dedicated to finding ways to promote healthy lifestyles in our great township, whether we were hosting a Street Yoga Under the Cherry Blossoms event or organizing a brisk stroll down Washington Avenue for dozens of our municipal employees in honor of National Walking Day. Here's to a healthier and better Belleville in 2022."

Borough of Freehold, 2021 Healthy Town to Watch

Freehold Borough is a second time Healthy Town to Watch designee. Continuing the efforts from 2020, the Borough focused on the increase in food insecurity resulting from the pandemic by expanding the Freehold Food Safety Net. The Borough collaborated with community partners to offer monthly health and wellness programming to residents and launched an extensive vaccination initiative, resulting in a 90 percent vaccination rate for the town.

"I am so excited for Freehold Borough to be recognized by the Quality Institute as a 2021 Healthy Town to Watch," said Mayor Kevin Kane. "Our Mayors Wellness Committee mission is to improve the health and wellness of our residents. We recognize that health is more than a visit to the doctor; it's a way of life. Working with our community partners, we'll strive to provide programs and events for all our residents to empower them to improve health outcomes in Freehold Borough."

Franklin Lakes, 2021 Healthy Town to Watch

Franklin Lakes is receiving a Healthy Town to Watch Designation for the second year in a row. The Borough has a long-standing history of offering extensive recreational programs for residents of all ages. The Borough also hosts an Employee Wellness program dedicated to

encouraging staff to focus on various aspects of health and wellness and maintain an active lifestyle.

“We are honored by this recognition, which would not have been possible without the hard work and initiative of our staff and committees led by Dina Robinson, our Community Director. Our programs and efforts over many years have helped our residents focus more on healthy living while bringing a greater sense of community,” said Mayor Frank Bivona.

Hillsborough Township, 2021 Healthy Town to Watch

Hillsborough is a first-time Healthy Town to Watch designee. In 2021, Hillsborough provided a range of MWC programming including fitness programs for older adults; food security programs in partnership with Somerset County to address the continued increase in food insecurity due to the pandemic; a socially distant health fair; and a toy swap to increase awareness about the need for sustainable practices. The township also aided in vaccination registration and transportation for its most vulnerable populations.

“Hillsborough Township prides itself in being an active community, as depicted in attaining this recognition. We continue to explore opportunities to engage our community and employees and look forward each year to enhanced programming as part of the Mayors Wellness Campaign,” said Mayor Shawn Lipani.

Jefferson Township, 2021 Healthy Town to Watch

Jefferson Township is a Healthy Town to Watch for the second year in a row. In collaboration with the Health Department, the MWC hosted a variety of physical and mental health programming including a self-care program, "Defeat Diabetes", "Ten Tips for Winter Wellness", and the Conversation of Your Life (COYL) program. The Township's success can also be attributed to its ability to partner with neighboring communities to offer programs to a wider audience.

“Many thanks to the Quality Institute for once again recognizing Jefferson Township as a Mayors Wellness Campaign Healthy Town to Watch,” said Mayor Eric Wilsusen. “Our community highlights year-round recreation, trails, and exciting events and activities that encourage healthy behaviors and moving more. We encourage these ‘movement as medicine’ opportunities serving all ages across the lifespan. We’re looking forward to our new trail system advocating ‘being in nature,’ which will help participants feel better emotionally and increase overall well-being.”

Norwood, 2021 Healthy Town to Watch

Norwood has received the Healthy Town to Watch designation for the second year in a row. Focusing on social cohesion and creating space for active lifestyles, the town partners with local businesses and health experts to offer outdoor exercise classes, yoga in the park, hikes, and bike rides with the mayor, and "Norwood Day," an annual community event.

“Thank you to the Quality Institute for recognizing Norwood as part of the Mayors Wellness Campaign and acknowledging the accomplishments our residents have made in their quest

for overall well-being,” said James Barsa. “Along with our local businesses and volunteers, we expect to bring more exciting and educational programs and activities to our community this year.”

Vernon Township, 2021 Healthy Town to Watch

Vernon Township has been named a Healthy Town to Watch for the second year in a row. The township's ability to respond to the changing needs of residents throughout the pandemic led to innovative programming that has become a pillar in the community. Programs include a community farmers' market, group hiking events, curbside pickup for older adults to access nutrition programs, and partnership with Vernon Cares, an organization dedicated to addressing the needs of Vernon's most vulnerable populations.

“Vernon Township is, again, honored to have been recognized by the Quality Institute! As a good place to live and raise a family, plus a place where businesses want to locate and prosper, achieving Healthy Town to Watch recognition is a key objective of our Mayors Wellness Campaign. Vernon Township greatly appreciates the additional recognition from the Quality Institute when they selected our town to be one of just three municipalities to discuss our Mayors Wellness Campaign initiatives at the recent November 16-18 Annual New Jersey League of Municipalities Conference,” said Mayor Harry Burrell.

“A special thanks goes to Mishelle Downtain, our town's Director of Recreation and Community Affairs, for the key role that she played in leading our Mayors Wellness Campaign Team in the planning, organizing, directing, and coordinating functions required in researching and gathering the information and data required for the application to be considered for this prestigious award,” he added.

The following towns were designated as *2021 Healthy Towns Up-and-Coming*

Bernardsville, 2021 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

Bernardsville is a first time Healthy Town Up and Coming Designee. The efforts to engage with community partners resulted in programs focused on physical and mental health such as free workouts at a local gym, "Hit the Trails" initiative to encourage an outdoor day of activity, a Fitness and Wellness Fair, an Overdose Awareness Day ceremony, and Mental Health First Aid training for staff.

"We are extremely grateful to the Quality Institute for recognizing Bernardsville as a 2021 Up and Coming Healthy Town," said Mayor Mary Jane Canose. "As a small borough working solely with volunteers, we are proud that we were able to collaborate with other organizations in town to address the varied health needs of our residents. We look forward to expanding our program in 2022."

Borough of Oradell, 2021 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

Oradell Borough is a long-time partner of the MWC. In 2021 the Borough offered outdoor and virtual programs to address the ongoing concerns from the pandemic. Residents participated in

programs such as: STRIVE Movement for individuals with disabilities, yoga and meditation in the park, and a planting day to encourage volunteerism and community engagement.

“Oradell is once again honored to be recognized by the Quality Institute as a Mayors Wellness Campaign Up and Coming Healthy Town. The pandemic certainly focused our attention on physical, mental, and emotional health this year and we are grateful to all of our employees and community partners who helped us offer programs that addressed all aspects of wellness. Our programs ran the gamut from physical exercise to mindfulness and improved the wellbeing of our residents. With life returning to a new normal we hope to expand our programs and make Oradell even healthier!” said Mayor Dianne Didio.

Cranbury, 2021 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

Cranbury is a first time Healthy Town Up and Coming designee. The Township began its MWC program during the pandemic and was able to create virtual and outdoor programming to address the emerging health needs of the community.

"I would like to thank the Quality Institute for recognizing Cranbury as a Mayors Wellness Campaign Healthy Town Up-and-Coming awardee. Our Mayors Wellness Team strives to provide a variety of programs and events for our residents to help them achieve healthier lifestyles and improve overall health and wellness in our community," said Mayor Barbara Rogers.

“We have reached out to experts in nutrition, yoga, nature, and exercise to create a program for all ages that encourages healthier behavior through diet, fitness and access to our parks and open space. It has truly been an honor to be part of such a great team of energetic and passionate people that promote community participation and improve the well-being of our residents. I look forward to expanding our mission to include mental health in the coming year,” she said.

Cresskill Borough, 2021 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

Cresskill Borough is a first time Healthy Town Up and Coming designee. After joining the MWC in 2019, the Borough worked through the pandemic to offer residents programs such as "Mommy and Me" walks, an educational class about sun safety, and free health screenings.

“Our Borough is proud to receive this recognition from the Quality Institute after incorporating many new health and wellness initiatives in the past year through the Cresskill Board of Health. The Cresskill Board of Health plans to add even more programs in the near future, to better serve our residents and community. Many of our programs highlight the wonderful location of our borough, with excellent parks, a community pool, a recreational track, and trails,” said Mayor Benedict Romeo. “Our dedicated Board of Health and community partners have worked very hard to earn this accomplishment, and we look forward to the development of new activities and programs to continue to improve the health and wellness of our residents.” Mayor Romeo renewed his commitment to the Mayors Wellness Campaign by signing the Annual Pledge of Participation.

Deerfield Township, 2021 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

Deerfield Township is a first time Healthy Town Up and Coming designee. The Township began its programming during the pandemic and leveraged the MWC to create safe opportunities for residents to stay connected and engaged with their community. Social media was also used to keep residents up to date on healthy recipes, activity ideas, and important safety information.

“Deerfield Township would like to thank the Quality Institute for our recognition. Being a small, rural community, we had to consciously make wellness a priority in our Township while budget restrictions constantly pull us in different directions. We appreciate the guidance, tools and recognition that make our programs possible. We have rededicated ourselves in 2022 to further expanding our Mayors Wellness Campaign, continuing to improve our parks and outdoor areas, and continuing to bring our friends and neighbors together to learn about their health, to support one another and to enjoy our renewed sense of community during our many events,” said Mayor Abigail O'Brien

Denville, 2021 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

Denville is a long-time partner of the MWC and previous recipient of the Healthy Town to Watch designation. Denville has robust MWC programming including community gardens, Senior exercise, Senior Yoga, and adult yoga as well as children's programs such as Artist Studio, Teen Acting, and Music Theater.

“We are very pleased to receive this award for 2022. The wellness of the Denville community is very important to us especially now as we are preparing to get back to our normal daily routines,” said Mayor Thomas Andes. “This past year has provided us with an opportunity to look at the needs of Denville and be able to provide them with services that matter most. We are always seeking ways to help the community in any way possible, the Mayors Wellness Campaign has helped guide us there. We look forward to working with and providing more services for the residents in the future.”

Eatontown, 2021 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

Eatontown is a first time Healthy Town Up and Coming designee. Its MWC offered a variety of health and wellness activities including an annual 5K race, Eatontown Community Day, Nature Walks with the Mayor, and a voting initiative to encourage civic engagement.

“The Borough of Eatontown is proud to offer a large variety of recreational programming to its diverse resident base. We promote health across the whole age spectrum from 2 to 102 with varying fitness abilities,” said Mayor Anthony Talerico, Jr. “Eatontown is proud to be recognized by the Quality Institute. Our three pillars focus on Healthy Mind, Healthy Body and Healthy Community engage participants and provide access to the means of creating and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Through this program, we are providing quality clinics, activities, and events so that Eatontown residents of all ages have access to improve physical fitness, encourage positive

mental health, and connect with the community and its residents. We are making strides towards a healthier mind and body. Together, we will become a healthier community.”

Fort Lee, 2021 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

Fort Lee is a first time Healthy Town Up and Coming designee. Through a multifaceted approach to outreach, Fort Lee was able to provide MWC programming to over 8,000 residents in 2021. This included a collaboration with Hackensack Meridian Health to host a free health fair, virtual wellness programming for women, and a call center developed to address the social isolation of older adults.

“The Borough of Fort Lee expresses our thanks to the Quality Institute for recognizing our community. We provide Fitness Senior Style classes that focus on our seniors improving their ability to perform activities of daily living, building strength, balance and cognitive fitness to allow them to remain independent,” said Mayor Mark Sokolich.

Garfield, 2021 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

The City of Garfield is a first time Healthy Town Up and Coming designee. The city leveraged MWC programming to respond to the changing needs of residents due to the pandemic. Examples include providing over 120,000 meals to residents experiencing food insecurity, hosting five vaccine clinics, launching "Happy to Chat Bench" initiative to encourage residents to safely engage to reduce the impact of social isolation.

“Since I have been Mayor, the Mayors Wellness Campaign has been a priority of mine and a focal point of many activities throughout the city,” said Mayor Richard Rigoglioso. “My goal has been to encourage our residents to get involved and lead an improved, more active lifestyle. The events committee and I try to think outside of the box with the new events we establish to keep things new and exciting. The global pandemic of COVID-19 certainly made things a little bit more difficult, but it did not steer us away from achieving our goal; we just had to switch gears. I would like to thank everyone involved in making the Mayors Wellness Campaign a success and I look forward to continuing the progress through this initiative and through diet, exercise, and overall healthier lifestyles.”

Highlands Borough, 2021 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

Highlands Borough is a second time Healthy Town Up and Coming designee. In addition to physical health programs offered throughout the year, the MWC focuses on surveys and data collection to ensure community needs are being addressed. These efforts allow the Borough to develop and implement initiatives that meet the changing health issues of residents during a time of need.

Keyport Borough, 2021 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

Keyport Borough is a first time Healthy Town Up and Coming designee. The Borough's decision to kickstart its program amidst the pandemic resulted in important vaccine efforts aimed at supporting the community's most vulnerable populations. Keyport also dedicated MWC efforts to increase awareness about the importance of diversity and inclusion in the community.

“The Borough of Keyport participation in the Mayors Wellness Campaign is an opportunity to promote a healthy lifestyle in our community and to highlight the opportunities on our waterfront and in our parks, trails, and variety of recreational facilities. As an ‘Up and Coming Healthy Town,’ we look forward to working with the Quality Institute to expand the Keyport Wellness programs for everyone within the community,” said Mayor Collette Kennedy.

Lawrence Township, 2021 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

Lawrence Township has achieved a Healthy Town Up and Coming designation for the second year in a row. The Township focused on giving residents opportunities to stay active and connected to their community despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic. Programs offered include: a comprehensive catalog of organized sports for all ages, SoleMates, an adult walking club encouraging an active lifestyle and reducing social isolation, and a community garden.

"Lawrence Township is committed to providing our community with events and activities that promote healthy living through sports, exercise, and nutritional education. We will continue to build upon our successes each year, and being recognized by the Quality Institute motivates us to do more and be better for our community," said Mayor John Ryan.

Morristown, 2021 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

Morristown received the Healthy Town Up and Coming designation for the second year in a row. The town has an extensive network of partners working to provide programs that include local businesses, health systems, nonprofits, and houses of worship. Activities offered in 2021 included a senior holiday meal program, numerous vaccine clinics, brain health classes for older adults, health education classes for youth, and exercise classes for older adults.

“Being honored as a 2021 New Jersey Healthy Towns Up and Coming is a great distinction and further proof of Morristown’s commitment to a healthy lifestyle. From extensive healthy cuisine options that pepper our town to the various outdoor and indoor community activities and all of our parks. A healthy Morristown is a happy Morristown, and our great community deserves to be recognized. Thank you to the Quality Institute,” said Mayor Timothy P. Dougherty.

Princeton, 2021 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

Princeton Township was recognized with a Healthy Town Up and Coming designation for the second year in a row. The MWC is closely aligned with the Township's Health Department, enabling data to be used to determine that one of the highest community needs is addressing social isolation of residents. In 2021, a Social Isolation initiative was developed and planned, and the program will launch this spring.

“Princeton is proud to be recognized by the Quality Institute as a 2021 New Jersey Healthy Town Up and Coming designee. The Princeton Health Department staff worked diligently to develop meaningful programs with lasting impact, and we are looking forward to continuing those efforts. Our social isolation campaign, launched in 2021, continues to help isolated members of our community become more engaged through art and gardening projects. While

this specific effort is meaningful any year; it is even more meaningful due to the added isolation from the COVID pandemic. The theme, Look How We Have Grown, encourages these vulnerable individuals to reflect on their personal experiences with optimism and purpose. I'm grateful for the support of the Quality Institute and the opportunity to promote initiatives like this in the future," said Mark Freda.

Ridgewood, 2021 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

The Village of Ridgewood achieved a Healthy Town Up and Coming designation for its dedication to the health and wellness of its residents. The Village's success can be attributed to its strong community partnerships with a diverse group of stakeholders such as the Ridgewood Health Department, The Valley Hospital, the YMCA, and more. These relationships supported the Village in reaching over 5,000 residents with its programs.

"Ridgewood is thrilled to accept the Healthy Town Up-and-Coming Award on behalf of our Village residents for their incredible work towards achieving a healthy lifestyle," said Mayor Susan Knudsen.

South Brunswick, 2021 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

South Brunswick is a first time Healthy Town Up and Coming designee. The township offered a wide variety of programs throughout the year including a community garden, senior health and wellness programs, food insecurity assistance programs, and COVID-19 vaccines, physical therapy, and other health screenings in partnership with Penn Medicine Princeton Health.

"Many thanks to the Quality Institute for recognizing and designating South Brunswick Township as a Mayors Wellness Campaign Healthy Town Up and Coming. Several of our township departments and community partners continue to provide a variety of wonderful and engaging special events, programs and activities that promote healthy behaviors for all ages, through sports and exercise opportunities, access for those who may need financial assistance for housing and food insecurity, many parks and open spaces for outdoor recreation, organized social events and celebrations, and numerous opportunities for community engagement — all designed to help improve the physical, mental and emotional well-being of our residents," said Mayor Charlie Carley.

Stafford Township, 2021 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

Stafford Township is a first time Healthy Town Up and coming designee. After beginning its program in 2019, the township has worked hard to strengthen its local MWC efforts. With a focus on sustainability and community infrastructure, Stafford has made great progress on its health and wellness goals.

"Thank you to the Quality Institute for recognizing the Township of Stafford for the first time as a 2021 New Jersey Healthy Town Up and Coming municipality," said Mayor Gregory E. Myhre. "Our Township departments and community partners continue providing a truly great variety of events and activities that promote healthy behaviors through sports and exercise options for all ages, access to healthy foods and nutrition information, parks and open spaces for outdoor

recreation, organized events and celebrations, and numerous opportunities for community engagement — all designed to help improve the well-being of our residents.”

For More Information

To learn more about the MWC, visit: <http://www.njhcqi.org/MWC> or contact Julie DeSimone at jdesimone@njhcqi.org.

About the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute

The New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute’s (Quality Institute) mission is to improve the safety, quality, and affordability of health care for everyone. Our membership comes from all stakeholders in health care. Together with our 100 plus members, we are working towards a world where all people receive safe, equitable, and affordable health care and live their healthiest lives.

About the Mayors Wellness Campaign

The Mayors Wellness Campaign is a program of the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute in partnership with the New Jersey State League of Municipalities. The program empowers mayors across New Jersey with evidence-based tools, strategies, and support to champion health and wellness in their communities.