

## **Bethel Healthy Community Task Force** **September 2017**

The **Bethel Healthy Community Task Force** was created by the Bethel Town Board in August 2016. Since that time community volunteers have been with the Town and the BLDC to encourage health and wellness through access to healthy food, opportunities for physical activity and promoting a sense of purpose.

Monthly meetings are open to anyone who would like to participate in enhancing health and wellbeing in the Town of Bethel. They have been a forum for discussing community wide challenges that impact health and quality of life. Guests have joined to share information about existing programs and services; new ideas are being explored and several initiatives are underway.

### **Opportunities for Physical Activity**

The pilot Lakeside Yoga wrapped up the end of August. It was a tremendous success! The program was made possible with a Healthy Community Initiatives Grant from Sullivan Renaissance. The Task Force and the Town are exploring ways to continue the program. The Bethel Healthy Community Task Force and the BLDC have partnered with the County on a walkability study on how to allow for pedestrians and cyclists to travel safely between the hamlets of White Lake and Kauneonga Lake. The Town of Bethel continues to enhance outdoor recreation at the Town of Bethel Park and the Forest Reserve at Smallwood. There are a variety of parks and recreation activities for all ages offered throughout the year.

### **Improving Access to Healthy Food**

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Sullivan County has partnered with the Task Force to bring their convenience store initiative to town. They have begun discussions with the Ultra Power in White Lake to explore healthier food options and merchandising that would showcase these items more readily to customers. The committee is also working closely to bring attention and support to the Shepherd's Food Pantry and the Bethel Senior's Nutrition Site. In June the Town Board adopted a resolution that called for healthy food options at all town sponsored events. The Farmers Market wraps up on Saturday September 2. The new location in the center of Kauneonga Lake has brought more attention to the market and added a buzz to the center of town offering a variety of fresh food options and a gathering place each weekend.

### **Nurturing a Sense of Purpose**

The Bethel Healthy Community Task Force recognizes that a sense of purpose and opportunity to be engaged in one's community adds to individual and overall community health. The Task Force hopes to inspire community spirit and build connections with other town volunteer organizations whose efforts and activities contribute individually and collectively to the overall community health and wellbeing for the Town of Bethel and our residents. The Hour Exchange Program administered through the Sullivan County Human Rights Commission is an active part of the Task Force. The online platform is neighbors helping neighbors; exchanging skills and favors. Participants that have been screened and oriented can join the web-based community, post the skills they offer and the needs they request. To get started, apply on [www.hudsonvalleyhourexchange.org](http://www.hudsonvalleyhourexchange.org) Questions?

Email [sullivandialogue2change@gmail.com](mailto:sullivandialogue2change@gmail.com)

**You can participate!**

The work of the Bethel Healthy Community Task Force is guided by input from the community; all are invited to be part of improving overall community health. Specific initiatives are currently underway and there is always room for new ideas. **Join us at our next meeting on September 28 at 6pm at the Duggan Community Center in White Lake.** Our guest will be Wendy Brown from Public Health Services.

Stay connected with the Bethel newsletter for updates each month!