



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, March 12, 2021

## **Wildwood Crest earns top-tier status in statewide Mayors Wellness Campaign**

WILDWOOD CREST – The Borough of Wildwood Crest is one of just eight municipalities across the state to earn top-tier status through its participation in the statewide Mayors Wellness Campaign for the 2020 calendar year.

Wildwood Crest has been designated as a “Healthy Town” by the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute, in partnership with the New Jersey State League of Municipalities.

A total of 22 municipalities were recognized by the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute. Wildwood Crest and seven others were awarded the top “Healthy Town” designation. A further nine municipalities were designated as a “Healthy Town to Watch.” Another five municipalities were recognized as 2018 “Healthy Town in the Making.”

Wildwood Crest and Evesham Township are the only two South Jersey municipalities to earn the top-tier “Healthy Town” status. The others from across the state include Asbury Park, Montclair, Paterson, Plainfield, Scotch Plains and Woodbridge Township.

“I would like to thank the Quality Institute for recognizing the Borough of Wildwood Crest as a New Jersey Healthy Town,” Wildwood Crest Mayor Don Cabrera said. “Since starting our program in 2019, our Mayors Wellness Campaign has received overwhelming participation and support from our residents, municipal staff, vacationers, and partners. I extend a heartfelt thank you to our wellness committee and recreation staff for helping to carry out the mission of wellness throughout our community, especially during a pandemic. We are just getting started.”

Wildwood Crest’s recognition as a “Healthy Town” represents improvement in the program for the second straight year. The borough was named a Healthy Town to Watch” in 2019 after being recognized as a “Healthy Town in the Making” in 2018.

Each year communities participating in the Mayors Wellness Campaign (MWC) complete a comprehensive application outlining the research they’ve done to identify their community health needs, explain how they have organized their local MWC committee, and highlight the actions they’ve taken to make their communities a healthier place to live, work, and play.

Wildwood Crest first promoted its Mayors Wellness Campaign initiatives in 2018 after establishing the Wildwood Crest Wellness Committee, made up of community volunteers as well as staff members from the Wildwood Crest Recreation Department. Programs in 2018 included a Wellness Weekend that included an employee basketball game and a wellness walk hosted by Wildwood Crest Mayor Don Cabrera. In addition, the borough also hosted a community bike ride hosted by Mayor Cabrera that included discussions on bicycle safety.

In addition to those programs, in 2019 Wildwood Crest hosted a free health and wellness lecture series led by local healthcare professionals and held a “Vision of Wellness in Wildwood Crest” poster contest through Crest Memorial School. The Wildwood Crest Mayors Wellness Campaign also installed walkway markers along the Wildwood Crest Bike Path and along Sunset Lake to help walkers, runners and bikers determine distances traveled. The borough further promoted wellness through its renovation of the Sunset Lake area, already a popular area for walkers, runners and cyclists, to include a state-of-the-art kayak and paddleboard launching area.

The Borough of Wildwood Crest also hosts numerous indoor and outdoor fitness classes throughout the year, including its popular outdoor fitness classes on the Beach Pier, outdoor Zumba and boot camp classes at Centennial Park and sunset yoga at Sunset Lake.

Wildwood Crest further developed its wellness initiatives in 2020 despite the ongoing health crisis. The borough focused on programming that helped reduce stress and build healthy bodies and minds. Programs included live stream exercise classes, and videos and monthly wellness challenges through the borough’s Mayors Wellness Campaign Facebook page. The wellness challenges encompassed all aspects of health including diet and nutrition, stress relief and meditation, exercise, hygiene and self-care and education. Participants earned points for engaging in wellness initiatives that supported a healthy overall lifestyle. These activities often prompted posts and group online discussions.

Additional wellness initiatives are planned for Wildwood Crest for 2021. The borough will host its wellness walk and its employee basketball game on dates to be determined. And the annual Wildwood Crest 5K Beach Run is scheduled for Saturday, July 31. In addition, improvements have been made to Sunrise Park, a beachfront park area, that include the installation of fitness stations, a walking path, water spraying feature and an additional children’s playground. Improvements are also planned for Scoop Taylor Park during this calendar year.

Now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year, 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.

-- 30 --