



News Release

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Caribou and Presque Isle Sesquicentennial projects launch “150 Days of Good Health”

Aroostook County – The year-long Sesquicentennial celebrations for both Caribou and Presque Isle are about to go global as the two central Aroostook communities jointly launch a special project to pay tribute to their respective milestones and promote community health and wellness, while at the same time taking participants on a “unique” world tour.

“150 Days of Good Health,” a project of both the Caribou and Presque Isle Sesquicentennial Committees – co-sponsored by Cary Medical Center and Northern Maine Community College in partnership with the Power of Prevention and Healthy Aroostook projects of the Healthy Maine Partnerships, involves a 150 day walking program where participants will walk a distance equivalent to walking around the world. The initiative is an undertaking of Cary’s Healthy You Program in partnership with NMCC’s nursing and allied health department.

The public is invited to attend special kick-off events in both communities during National Hospital Week. The first of the two launches will be held in Caribou on Wednesday, May 13, at 6:30 p.m. at the new Caribou Wellness Center. Presque Isle’s event will take place on Thursday, May 14, at 12:00 noon in the food court area at the Aroostook Center Mall.

Both events will feature an educational session on adding strength training to your exercise program presented by Jaynie Higgins, a nutritionist, wellness counselor, personal trainer and author of *The Ultimate Diabetes Meal Planner*. Higgins, who is also a motivational speaker, is a Type 1, insulin-dependent diabetic. She is a longtime practitioner of healthy eating and exercise, and travels throughout Maine and beyond to deliver her message.

In addition to the presentation by Higgins, the kick-off events will provide interested participants the opportunity to register for the walking program, which is set up in three categories, individuals, families and seniors. People must register for the program in order to be considered for prizes that will be awarded to the highest mile walkers in each category.

The event will continue through summer and early fall and end on Saturday, October 10. People can register to “Walk Around the World” at one of the special kick off events, or they may do so online at CaryMedicalCenter.org anytime after May 13. The first 150 to register will receive a free t-shirt and pedometer.

Bill Flagg, director of community relations and development at Cary Medical Center said that the idea of a 150th Anniversary event shared between Caribou and Presque Isle with a health and fitness twist will help get hundreds of people involved.

“We hope to get 150 people in each community to help us complete the ‘Walk Around the World’, said Flagg. “If we are successful it will mean that over 150 days we will have to average walking a little over a mile per day. We should cover the 25,000 mile distance with no problem. Walking is a great exercise and we hope people from both communities will get excited about the walk and join us.”

In addition to the walking exercise, the program will also provide three educational programs - one every 50 days. The programs will focus on the value of good nutrition and exercise. Participants in the “Walk Around the World” event will have the opportunity to complete a Body Mass Index assessment at the time of registration and to repeat the assessment by attending the educational sessions. The program will also provide on-line fitness and nutrition advice throughout the 150 day duration.

“This project provides a wonderful opportunity for us to engage the communities in our region in a health awareness and promotion activity. It not only serves as a unique way to mark the 150th anniversaries of Caribou and Presque Isle, but provides the nursing and allied health department – both faculty and students – an opportunity for outreach into the community,” said Betty Kent-Conant, chair of the NMCC nursing and allied health department. “Each day we instill in the future nurses, healthcare providers, emergency medical technicians, and medical assistants the importance of wellness and physical activity as critically important components of good health. This project will allow us to literally ‘walk that talk’.”

Participants will be asked to log their mileage daily and every 30 days to send the logs to Kim Parent at Cary Medical Center. Participants will also be able to post their mileage totals on the Cary Medical Center web site ‘Walk Around the World’ link. Tallies will be done and prizes will be awarded for the highest milers in each of the three categories, senior, family, and individual.

Flagg hopes the program will engage the entire family. “Walking is a great family activity. That is why we established a category just for families. Members of the immediate family can tally their combined miles of walking each month and qualify to win a special prize.”

For more information about the 150 Days of Good Health Sesquicentennial event, contact Kim Parent at Cary Medical Center 498-1112.

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