**WHAT'S HAPPENING**

**Upcoming Events**

- **March 29-April 2**
  Plan4LasCruces! Neighborhood Workshops
  [http://www.las-cruces.org](http://www.las-cruces.org)

- **April 9**
  3rd Annual Color Dash
  Register Now at [Caasnm.org](http://caasnm.org)

- **April 9**
  Crop and Cuisine Workshop
  Saturday, at 11 am
  514 S. Main Street.
  Workshop is free.
  Registration required.
  575-541-2154

- **April 11-13th**
  New Mexico Public Health Association Conference
  [http://www.nmpha.org](http://www.nmpha.org)

- **April 30**
  Edible Ed New Mexico Capstone Presentations at the LC Farmers Market from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

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**Families and Communities Lead Moves on to the next PHASE…….**

Healthy Kids Las Cruces will miss the visionary direction of Mark Johnston as he prepares to retire at the end of April. Mark has been with HKLC since the early days and has played a key role in not only moving the collective work along, but in dreaming big for Las Cruces. We recently met with Mark to grasp as many of his future visions as possible. He joked that he would still have his same cell phone number…little does he know we will likely be using it. His mind is full of creative, monstrous plans for the future of Parks and Recreation and his impact on life as a Las Crucen can be seen all around. Like any great lead he has passed on the baton to Phil Catanach & Tim Fulton and in his words left us in capable hands. Thank you, Mark, for all you have done to make Healthy Kids Las Cruces successful. We will miss you!!!

**Community & Families**

**Lead: Mark Johnston**

mjohnston@las-cruces.org

City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Director

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[Go to https://www.facebook.com/HKLasCruces](https://www.facebook.com/HKLasCruces)
Health Department Releases Yearly Childhood Obesity Update

Numbers released today by the New Mexico Department of Health show childhood obesity has decreased over the past five years in both kindergartners and third graders. Between 2010 and 2015, there was a 16 percent reduction in childhood obesity among third graders, and a ten percent reduction in kindergarteners.

The New Mexico Department of Health releases its annual New Mexico Childhood Obesity Update each year in March to coincide with National Nutrition Month. There was a slight, but statistically insignificant increase in obesity among kindergartners and third graders between 2014 and 2015. In 2015, 11.8 percent of kindergartners were obese, compared to 11.6 percent in 2014. Among third graders, 18.9 percent were obese in 2015, compared to 18.1 percent the year before.

“Based on data this year, we may be seeing childhood obesity rates in New Mexico beginning to level off,” said Deputy Secretary of Health Lynn Gallagher. “We are proud of the progress our Healthy Kids Healthy Communities and partners throughout New Mexico have made to increase opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity.”

While New Mexico is making progress in the fight against childhood obesity, more than one in three third grade and one in four kindergarten students is overweight or obese. There is also a significant upward shift in obesity prevalence between kindergarten and third grade.

In 2010, the Department of Health established a statewide childhood obesity surveillance system, and it has been collecting and reporting childhood obesity prevalence data each year. It uses Body Mass Index (BMI) and a standardized measurement protocol to monitor childhood obesity over time. In 2015, more than 8,100 kindergarten and third grade students were measured in randomly-selected elementary schools throughout the state.

In addition to surveillance, the Department’s Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities (HKHC) program is committed to helping increase opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. HKHC builds collaborative state and local partnerships to expand opportunities for and exposure to healthy eating and physical activity for children and low-income adults where they live, learn, play, eat, work and shop. Because healthy eating and physical activity are the two major lifestyle choices that can help prevent obesity, HKHC focuses exclusively on policy, systems, and environmental changes to support these behaviors in a multi-sector community coalition-driven approach.

You can get the full Department of Health report here.
STATE HEALTH CONFERENCE SLATED FOR APRIL 11-13

Doña Ana County’s Health and Human Services Department is working with New Mexico State University and the New Mexico Public Health Association to host the 2016 New Mexico Public Health Association (NMPHA) Annual Conference.

The conference will run from April 11-13 at the Las Cruces Convention Center, bringing together researchers, practitioners, community members, legislators, advocates, service providers, policy makers and others from within the state, across the country, and beyond U.S. borders.

The conference will provide attendees the opportunity to share their work, partner and engage with others within and across disciplines, and develop strategies and solutions that are targeted to improve public health.

Among the workshops that will be offered are “Organizing for Environmental Justice in New Mexico” and “Public Health Challenges and Opportunities in New Mexico Colonias: Social, Economic, and Cultural Determinants of Disparities in Health and Well-Being.”

Keynote speakers include Maya Schenwar, journalist, author, and editor of Truthout.org, and Beti Thompson, PhD, with the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. Other noteworthy speakers include Dr. Inigo Garcia-Bryce, Director of the NMSU Center for Latin American and Border Studies, and journalists Dr. Molly Molloy and Diana Washington Valdez, who have covered a variety of public health issues in the US/Mexico region including Ciudad Juarez’s murder epidemic.

Topics on the agenda include immigration and migration along the US/Mexico border; integration of community health workers into health and social system of care through certification; engaging high-risk communities in formative research for sexual violence prevention; obesity and diabetes; media in public health practice; maternal and child health initiatives; teen pregnancy; food pantries, food insecurity and equitable access to healthy foods; criminal justice systems/policies; community-based participatory mapping; and mental health and substance use.

Visit [http://www.nmpha.org](http://www.nmpha.org) for the full conference agenda and registration form.

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HEALTHY EATING ACTIVE LIVING

HEAL U
Paso Del Norte

Save the date – Saturday April 23!

The Paso del Norte Institute for Healthy Living hosts HEAL U at the College of Health Sciences on the University of Texas at El Paso campus. A mini course geared towards professionals, with a focus on healthy eating, active living, and obesity will be held in the morning. Participants will be eligible for Continuing Medical Education (CME) credit.

Internationally recognized researchers and scholars are coming to El Paso to present cutting edge information on the causes and treatment of obesity, exercise as medicine, and creating a welcoming clinic for clients with obesity. The day will start with a myth buster presentation to set the facts straight about obesity. Morning presentations will focus on evidence-based approaches to address health needs.

Informational sessions and health screenings for the general public will be held in the afternoon, including “meet the professor” opportunities with experts in nutrition, physical activity, and obesity.

HEAL U is FREE and open to the public!

Save the date and plan to attend the HEAL U event Saturday April 23 at UTEP’s College of Health Sciences. Registration will open soon. More details to come!