



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Sharon Town Connector Trail Addresses Obesity Epidemic

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SHARON – A half-mile long, three-foot-wide trail that will link the Sharon Elementary School to Fay Brook Road through the woods, up a hill and down to the White River, is being hailed by state officials as a three-tiered, obesity prevention strategy.

The Town Connector Trail, planned to become five miles long and connect Sharon to South Royalton, will improve the built environment, increase physical activity, and improve nutrition options with the start of the season's first farmer's market. The farmer's market will bring fresh produce directly into the school throughout the year.

"This is an excellent project that addresses the obesity epidemic by creating healthy places for Vermonters to be active," said Health Commissioner Harry Chen. MD. "The community expects more than 1,000 trail visits each year, and our hope is that all 103 students at the school and their families will be walking more than previous years. This could have a lasting impact on the health of the entire community."

Obesity rates in 2009, in grades 8-12 for both Windsor County and Vermont were 12 percent. Overall, 24 percent of Vermont adults were obese, and 25 percent in Windsor County.

The trail, initiated by the Town of Sharon and Health Connections of the Upper Valley, is funded by the Health Department (Fit & Healthy Vermonters), the Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation (Recreational Trails Program), and the Office of the Attorney General. The work to clear the path was done by the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps.

The inaugural "Sprouty 5K Walk/Run" organized by Health Connections of the Upper Valley, will be held on September 10. The run will become a yearly event that raises money to support the purchase of locally grown food for the Sharon Elementary School, and to develop recreation programs for the community.

"I've always been proud of Vermont's trails and how we all work together," said Sherry Winnie, recreational trails administrator for the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation. "Trails provide Vermont with significant recreation infrastructure while conserving Vermont's natural landscape."

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