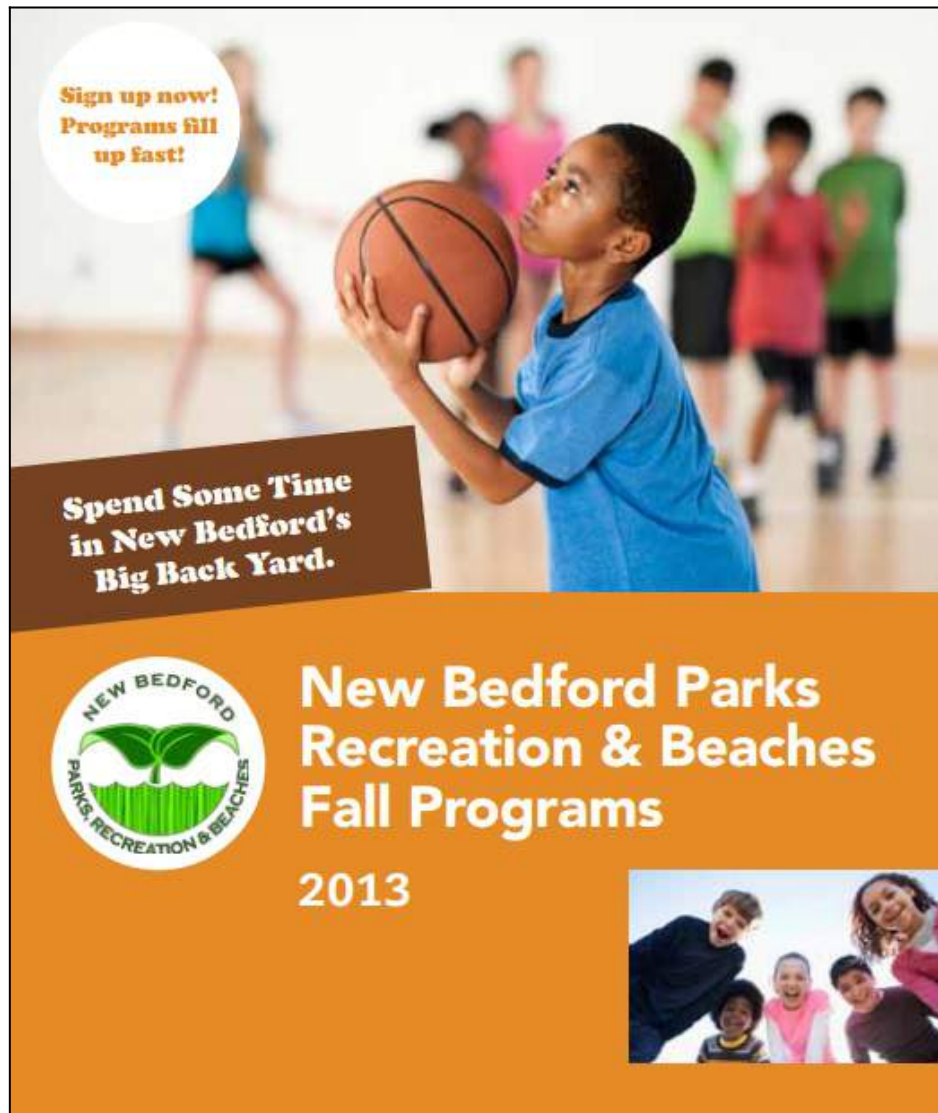


New Bedford Parks Recreation & Beaches Awarded Grant to Support Arthritis Intervention Programs



Funding will provide New Bedford with evidence-based walking and exercise programs

The New Bedford Parks Recreation & Beaches Department will soon offer locals a new way to stay fit, even if they suffer from arthritis. Thanks to a \$4,000 grant from the National

Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the Arthritis Foundation, with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, New Bedford Parks Recreation & Beaches in collaboration with the Council on Aging and Southcoast® Health System will offer the “Walk with Ease” Program to the New Bedford community.

Over the years, New Bedford Parks Recreation & Beaches and Southcoast Health System have been champions of health and wellness in the New Bedford community. The funding will help them to offer new support for city residents suffering from arthritis. Walking and exercise programs through the Arthritis Foundation have proven to help reduce pain and stiffness often associated with arthritis. Studies by the Thurston Arthritis Research Center and the Institute on Aging of the University of North Carolina have found that “Walk with Ease” reduced pain, increased balance and strengthened and improved overall health of participants with arthritis. Together, NRPA and the Arthritis Foundation aim to reach more people living with arthritis and improve their quality of life through these trusted and measurable programs administered by local parks and recreation. New Bedford is one of 24 other communities across the country to receive funding to offer these programs.

The Walk with Ease program will be lead by Brenda Larrivee, Physical Therapist with Southcoast Rehabilitation Services, part of Southcoast Health System. Larrivee will provide guided instruction and will encourage participants to practice what they learn during the program while they are at home.

“Arthritis affects more than 50 million Americans—including people who live right here in New Bedford,” said Mary Rapoza, Director Parks Recreation & Beaches. “This grant from NRPA and the Arthritis Foundation will allow us to help those who suffer from arthritis in our community and provide New Bedford residents a new opportunity to achieve a healthy lifestyle. ” The program will begin on Tuesday, October 8, and will take place at two different locations in the city. On Tuesdays it

will be held at the Buttonwood Senior Center starting at 9am and on Thursdays it will be held at the Ft. Taber Community Center at 9am. The program will be offered FREE of charge to all participants. Anyone interested in the program can obtain a registration form at any of the Senior Centers in the city or at the Andrea McCoy Recreation Center located at 181 Hillman St. Bldg #3.

For more information, call New Bedford Parks Recreation & Beaches at (508) 961-3015 or email infoPRB@newbedford-ma.gov.
