

DESERT SUN ARTICLE

GET FIT INDIO 2016



[Anna Rumer](#), The Desert Sun 7:41 p.m. PST March 12, 2016

Dozens of families put aside their Saturday cartoon rituals and instead headed to Indio Community Center Park where they got active during the first Get Fit Indio event.

Designed to attract people outside where they could engage in physical activities at one of the city's many parks, the Get Fit event featured martial arts and dancing demonstrations, as well as opportunities to get something in exchange for breaking a sweat.

Those participants who made it through the Mayor's Mile trail were entered into a raffle to win tickets to Stagecoach: California's Country Music Festival, which is scheduled for April 29,30 and May 1.

The east valley doesn't have the same fitness and health resources as the rest of the Coachella Valley, Indio Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Josh Bonner said, making it even more important for the community to take advantage of events such as the Get Fit initiative.

"It's just not the focus it should be," he said. "But any time you do a fitness event in the community ... just having people out here getting active, it's a win."

Kevin Kalman, general manager of the Desert Recreation District, said he was happy to see kids running and playing outside rather than sitting behind their computers and tablets.

"There are a lot of people out here walking and that's the whole point," he said.

The park's pathways were lined with booths featuring everything from Planet Fitness memberships to cooking demonstrations by JFK Memorial Hospital.

Bonner said all it took was a phone call to get these companies and organizations out into their community.

"Everyone was super supportive," he said. "All of (the Chamber of Commerce) members, and even non-members said, 'We'll be there.' "

It might have been the sunshine or maybe the possibility of Stagecoach tickets, but the Mayor's Mile was by far the most popular event Saturday.

On a break from helping kids hit tennis balls at a target using golf clubs, Sandy Lounsbury, program director and lead instructor for The First Tee, decided to speed walk the mile herself.



The First Tee is a nonprofit group that helps kids learn life lessons and responsibility through golf. Some of these lessons include fitness and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, Lounsbury said.

"It's important to be in good shape to play golf," she said. "Today, I've probably picked up five new kids for our program."

Jason Kukas and Josué Arechiga, both College of the Desert nursing students, were still going strong midway through their mile.

The two were volunteering at the JFK Memorial Hospital booth, but got caught up in all the activity and decided to walk the course themselves.

"It's just a beautiful day for it," Kukas said. "It's all about informing the public about ways to get out and change their lifestyles."

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