



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Free “Walk with a Doc” Events at Open Space District
Doctors to Lead Walks and Answer Health Questions**

East Palo Alto, Calif.—The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen) is partnering with the San Mateo County Medical Association Foundation to host six free “Walk with a Doc” events, beginning with a kickoff on March 7, 10:00 – 11:00 A.M. in the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve in East Palo Alto and running through the summer at various preserves.

Bilingual volunteer doctors will lead groups on comfortable 30-minute walks that are appropriate for people of ranging ages and fitness levels. Walkers will receive a free pedometer, water and T-shirt, while supplies last.

“Walk with a Doc” is an international initiative to improve community health by encouraging healthy outdoor activities. The program is hosted locally by the San Mateo County Medical Association, which started the program in 2014 and greatly expanded it in 2015.

“We are delighted to partner with Midpen and share the benefits of healthy outdoor exercise with the community, at the same time introducing participants to the beauty of our local open spaces,” said Alice Georgitso, director of the Community Service Foundation of the medical association.

“These walks are taking place in three wonderful preserves, where people can enjoy fresh air and the beauty of nature, practically in their backyards,” said Larry Hassett, Midpen director whose ward extends from Redwood City to Pescadero.

According to the American Heart Association, walking is an excellent form of exercise because it has the lowest dropout rate and regular 30-minute walks have been shown to reduce coronary disease, improve blood pressure, lower obesity levels and improve mental wellbeing.

The Walk with a Doc events will take place on open space preserves on:

March 7 and July 11, 10-11am
Ravenswood Open Space Preserve, East Palo Alto

March 21 and July 25, 10-11am
Windy Hill Open Space Preserve, Portola Valley

April 11 and August 8, 10-11am
Pulgas Ridge Open Space Preserve, Redwood City

People can sign up for as many walks as they want at www.smcma.org/walkwithadoc or by calling (650) 312-1623.

Created by voter initiative in 1972, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District has successfully protected more than 62,000 acres of open space in San Mateo, Santa Clara and a small portion of Santa Cruz counties. Midpen's mission is to acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space and agricultural land of regional significance in perpetuity, protect and restore the natural environment, and provide opportunities for ecologically-sensitive public enjoyment and education. Currently, Midpen protects 90 rare native species in 26 unique preserves with over 225 miles of publicly-accessible trails. Two million visits are made to Midpen preserves annually.

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