**HAEHL CREEK WALKING TRAIL GETS A PAR COURSE**

*Excerpts below are from articles that appeared in the Willits News; it gives some background on the Haehl Creek Trail and the newly added par course (for the complete articles go to* [*http://www.willitsnews.com/article/zz/20140711/NEWS/140716992*](http://www.willitsnews.com/article/zz/20140711/NEWS/140716992)*).*

*The idea for a par course arose when AH/HMH Executive Chef Kyle Evans became aware of innovative grants being offered by Adventist Health, Roseville. These grants were offered to hospitals within the Adventist Health System to provide services for hospital employees and community members alike. Chef Kyle felt it fit well with the other two innovative projects adjacent to the hospital that serve both the hospital and community, Commonwealth Garden and the Haehl Creek Trail.*

HAEHL CREEK TRAIL

The Haehl Creek Trail, located adjacent to the new Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital, has been open to the public for over a year.

The trail, open to all pedestrians and cyclists, winds along for 3,300 feet, passing by the Commonwealth Garden, under plenty of shaded locations, and is equipped with benches, tables, stepping stones and plaques to honor the project sponsors.

Larry Stropes, Willits Rotary Club President at the time the trail was created, was instrumental in rounding up volunteers and sponsors for the trail. The Haehl Creek project was strictly powered by volunteers and donations; hours of hard work was put into planning, cutting the trail back, laying weed resistant fabric, and forming the trail using gravel and concrete.

The trail is comprised of 600 tons of crushed concrete that had to be wetted and packed to form the solid trail surface. Northern Aggregate donated a total of 250 tons of the crushed concrete to the project and NorCal Recycled Rock and Aggregates donated 100 tons, said Stropes.

Volunteers came out of the woodwork as the trail, once a tiny footpath overtaken with poison oak and blackberries, inched closer to completion.

"It's a thing that builds community; a whole effort to make the community a better place and that's what it's all about," said project volunteer and sponsor Keith Johnson.

*Directions to Haehl Creek Trail: From town, take Main Street, left on Baechtel Road, left on East Hill Road to Haehl Creek Dr. If you're on Main Street coming from the south of town, turn right onto Baechtel Road at Brown's Corner, then right on East Hill Road to Haehl Creek Drive. Parking and the northern trailhead are located at Haehl Creek Court.*

20-STATION PARCOURSE ADDED ALONG THE HAEHL CREEK TRAIL

Several months ago the Willits City Council approved a measure allowing the installation of fitness equipment next to the Haehl Creek Trail, funded by an innovation grant awarded to Howard Memorial Hospital by Adventist Health.

The “Fit-Trail” includes 20 equipment stations to work nearly every muscle group for beginners to experienced fitness buffs, stretching between one half and two miles. Workouts vary from a basic calf stretch to a more ambitious reverse pull up. Each station comes with an instructional sign to guide people through each exercise.

Kyle Evans, Executive Chef and Director of Nutritional Services at Howard Memorial, shared that the grant not only funded the purchase and installation of the equipment, but will also fund future maintenance under a contract with Parlin Fork Conservation Camp.

The 20-station Fit-Trail, installed by Keith Johnson and Quintton Bowlds, is now complete and ready for exercise enthusiasts to utilize. The par course can be accessed from either East Hill Road or the pathway that runs south along Commonwealth Garden. Access from either location makes it convenient for hospital patients, employees, hospital visitors, and members of the community.

We thank Adventist Health Corporate for awarding this innovation grant to the Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital. And, we thank Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital for the gift of this par course to the community. It is a blessing.