

Hannigan walks on the mild side



CHRIS RILEY — TIMES-HERALD County Supervisor Erin Hannigan walks with a group along the waterfront in Vallejo during her first “Walk with Hannigan” event on Friday.

By [Richard Freedman](#), *Vallejo Times-Herald*

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Gordon Keiser was 70, had a 44-inch waist, and didn’t need a psychic to realize his future looked bleak.

He had a doctor to tell him that.

“He said, ‘You are at the end of your pharmaceutical rope,’” said Keiser.

At the time he was on meds for cholesterol, diabetes, acid reflux, joint pain “and my brain was gone,” Keiser said.

Drugs he’s on today?

“Nothing, thank you very much,” said Keiser.

Instead of pushing up daisies, Keiser smells the roses — during his daily walks. He got off the couch and started exercising. And eating better. He lost 40 pounds and 10 inches on his waist. And gained a life — and wrote two paperbacks to help others, “Silly Things That Make Us Sick, Fat and Old” and “A.I.M. — Activity is Medicine.”

Keiser, with the help of a cell phone app, walks 5,000 steps a day. On Friday, he joined 14 others in the first “Walk with Hannigan” on the Vallejo waterfront, an effort by Solano County Supervisor Erin Hannigan to get people active and healthy.

“We encourage people to exercise every day,” said Hannigan, minutes after the 9 a.m. stroll started between the ferry building and Vik’s Wheelhouse.

The Friday walk is now a regular gathering, Hannigan said, thrilled with the turnout.

“Let’s walk, let’s get some fresh air and enjoy the view,” she said.

Vallejo Councilmember Phippen Dew-Costa, who normally rises daily at 4:30 a.m. to run six or seven miles, took in the walk with her 13-month-old daughter in a stroller.

“Hopefully, she picks up those good habits (of exercise),” Dew-Costa said, understanding why people ignore the benefits of exercise.

“It’s easy to make excuses,” she said. “It’s like anything. It has to become habit. For me, when I run, the first month was so painful. Now when the alarm goes off, I don’t think twice.”

Sitting all those hours at work or home “is the worst thing we can do,” Keiser said. “People watch television seven hours a day. Take 1 1/2 hours of that and go walking. We can improve our health,” Keiser said.

Hannigan said she’s committed to walking the waterfront and welcoming others as long as she’s in town “and it won’t cost you anything.”

Hannigan endorsed two Vallejo organizations — the Florence Douglas Senior Center and the Greater Vallejo Recreation District — that encourage group walking.

The GVRD sponsors a family walk at 9 a.m., Sat., Oct. 3, at Children’s Wonderland Park. Participants can “learn about the benefits of healthy living and active lifestyles,” said Emily Long of the GVRD.

Children will be given information on healthy snacking and food choices by a registered dietician. After a few laps around the park, children will be allowed to play before the park opens to the public.

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On the other end of the age spectrum, the Vallejo Senior Center hosts free walking groups Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m., at the center, 333 Amador St. For information about the Children’s Wonderland walk, call (707) 648-5317. For the senior center, call (707) 643-1044.