

Rx

**Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Prescribe-a-Trail Handbook**



rails-to-trails
conservancy

“There are many benefits of walking everyday. It strengthens your heart, helps control your weight, prevents dementia [and] gives you energy, but most of all it releases endorphins to make you happy.”

*Charlene A. Burkholder, MSN, CRNP
Orthopedic Service Line Director, Joint Replacement Coordinator
Phoenixville Hospital*

“Walking is a simple way to bring joy into your day. Spending time with others who go out of their way to walk in a group is a way to receive and spread happiness. For some reason, it's contagious and brings me back week after week.”

*Jen DiLella, PA-C, MPH, PAPHS
Radnor Steps Founder*

Introduction

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a nationwide network of trails from former rail lines and connecting corridors to build healthier places for healthier people.

All over America, hospitals and regional healthcare systems are beginning to tap into the enormous potential of trails to address local health problems. Trails are now recognized as being vital pieces of public health infrastructure. Importantly, they are also free to use, and can be used by almost everyone regardless of their current state of health and fitness.

The Circuit Trails is greater Philadelphia's regional trail network. A vast network with a vision of 750 miles of multi use trails that is growing in size each year, the Circuit Trails connects our local communities, providing endless opportunities for recreating and commuting. For more information, go to circuittrails.org.

Because RTC understands the connection between trails and health, it recently created Prescribe-a-Trail (PAT) in the Circuit Trails region as a way to get hospitals and community members out on trails. RTC is working hand in hand with the Circuit Trails Coalition to offer PAT to hospitals at no cost. Throughout southeastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey, we are working with hospitals and community/trail groups to improve health and strengthen the trail community.

What is Prescribe-a-Trail?

“Prescribe-a-Trail” programs vary, but essentially, they are hour-or-so-long trail walks led by doctors or other clinicians. Before the walk, participants gather at a meeting spot on the trail and listen to a short talk by a clinician. During the walk, they have additional time to speak with the clinician. Even though some people walk quickly and others walk slowly, everyone seems to find a few walking partners, and the clinician makes himself available to everyone throughout the course of the walk.

PAT is a partnership between the health-care organization and a trail/community group. When a hospital is involved, various departments take the lead. Examples are: marketing, senior services, human resources, community outreach and wellness. The most successful programs integrate the efforts of several departments. The marketing department is key. The blessing of upper management also strengthens the program.

Sometimes independent medical providers participate. For example, Premier Orthopaedics has locations throughout the Philadelphia area and has participated in Prescribe-a-Trail walks in various locations.

It's important to note that a walk does not have to be led by a doctor. Walks led by nurses, nutritionists, physical therapists and technicians can be equally or even more informative and interesting.



Radnor Steps walkers and their dogs enjoy a brisk social walk after hearing a brief talk by a doctor.

Who does What?

While each program evolves depending on the capability of the groups involved, generally here's who does what. The bottom line is that this is a partnership, and the partners agree beforehand on the division of tasks.

The hospital:

- Provides a doctor, nurse, dietitian, physical therapist or other clinician who wants to reach out to the community in a whole new way.
- Creates the marketing material (usually a flyer or brochure) and advertises the walk(s) through its marketing department.

The trail/community group:

- Publicizes the event to its members/supporters and the local community.
- Helps to advise on and coordinate the trail-specific aspects of the program, such as mapping walking routes and providing parking directions.
- Distributes trail information and answers trail-related questions so that the walkers will return to walk on their own and discover other local trails as they build confidence!

Issues affecting the ability to serve as an effective partner include:

- **Capacity:** Is the trail group all volunteer and/or spread too thin?
- **Buy In:** Will a hospital support the program so that staff can spend time developing and implementing this project?
- **Marketing savvy and connections:** Do each of the partners have the ability to effectively promote the program? While one might think that a trail group is the best partner, this is not always the case, as sometimes there is a stronger community partner. In this situation, in the absence of a local trail group, RTC can step in to provide local and Circuit Trails materials (maps, handouts) for the community partner to distribute to the participants.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy:

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) is the nation's largest trails organization dedicated to connecting people and communities by creating a nationwide network of public trails, many from former rail lines. Our work engages a diverse audience of trail users, trail developers, retailers, nonprofit partners, grassroots organizations, and local and federal decision makers. Through our multi-channel

outreach initiatives, RTC serves as the national voice for the trail movement, representing more than 30,000 miles of rail-trails and multi use trails, and more than 8,000 miles of potential trails waiting to be built.

- Helps hospitals to connect to a local trail/community group and get the program up and running.
- Provides this "how-to" handbook with sample documents from actual walks.
- Advertises the walk to all of its members within a 10-mile radius of the hospital through email and social media.
- Sends RTC and Circuit Trails swag that can be used to attract participants and give away at the walk (e.g. hats, T-shirts, pedometers, trail maps, bike stickers).
- Can send a speaker to talk about trails.
- Publicizes the events on the Circuit Trails website events page and social media (reaches Greater Philadelphia area).

RTC's Reach:

- A community of 150,000+ on social media platforms Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Pinterest (@railstotrails)
- Email audience of 1 million+
- TrailLink.com, RTC's trail-finding database (web and app), with traffic totaling more than 800,000 monthly users and more than 7 million annually seeking maps and information about trails
- Railstotrails.org, RTC's parent website, with traffic totaling more than 90,000 monthly users responding to social media, advocacy and general trail-oriented outreach
- *Rails to Trails*, RTC's quarterly magazine, with circulation of 112,000+, with trail- and destination-based features, trail user interviews and featured maps

Many hospitals offer existing community programs that can easily morph into PAT. For example, Main Line Health offers "Wellness Wednesdays," which feature presentations on various topics. One of their hospitals, Lankenau, also offers "Trail Tuesdays." Instead of sitting in a meeting room at the hospital, the speaker and the audience meet on the trail and walk together after the presentation.

Why do hospitals participate?

Hospitals take part in PAT for a wide variety of great reasons. They include:

- Implementing community health needs assessment findings
- Meeting wellness goals
- Modeling preventive care
- Brand recognition through community engagement
- Walker-to-patient conversion
- Provider-patient relationship enhancer
- Walking treats/prevents over 40 diseases
- Pairing of clinician with community members outside the traditional setting helps participants feel empowered in their interactions with healthcare providers
- Employee engagement

There is no cost to participate in PAT. The staffing commitment need not be high. It's an easy way to make an impact and get out into the community. Some hospitals join existing community walking programs. Others plan walks at existing community events like farmers' markets and community days. These existing events ensure that there will be participants. All sorts of purposeful destinations can be walked to, and sometimes a loop can be created for longer walks.

Some ways to market Prescribe-a-Trail walks

Newspapers
Senior centers
Over 55 communities
RTC website/social media/emails to local members
Circuit Trails website-events page
Twitter
Facebook
Instagram
Hospital mailing list
Trail organization mailing list

**“Remember to
prioritize YOU!! Give
yourself the gift of
health---EXERCISE!”**

*Dr. Rashna Staid
Brind Marcus Center for
Integrative Medicine at Jefferson*



Prescribe-a-Trail walkers enjoy the social aspect of meeting new people and walking with a group outdoors on a local trail.

Potential hurdles and solutions:

Fear of low turnout: Pair up with a strong local trail/community group. Some groups have existing walking groups. These built-in audiences enjoy adding a PAT component to their walks. Don't do it just once or twice and quit; sometimes it takes a while.

Hospital bureaucracy: It's easier for small independent hospitals to participate, but big hospital systems can make a big impact. Have a strategy for getting the leaders to say yes.

Lack of buy-in from hospital decision-makers:

The right people at the hospital need to buy in to the program in order for it to succeed (to bring in clinicians, to market effectively). Seek them out early in the process.

A few existing programs:

Phoenixville Hospital and Activate Phoenixville began a Prescribe-a-Trail program in Fall 2015. Activate Phoenixville has taken the lead in the program. Many of the doctors are not affiliated with Phoenixville Hospital.

Main Line Health (MLH), a regional health system with six hospitals, four health centers and a brand new Fitness and Wellness Center, has explored trail programming on a systemwide basis as part of senior programming. Paoli, Bryn Mawr Rehab and Lankenau, which already holds Trail Tuesdays, are MLH hospitals. MLH runs a "Wellness Wednesdays" program that could easily expand to "Trail Tuesdays" systemwide.

Thomas Jefferson's Brind Marcus Center for Integrative Medicine has set up a model program with leadership from their marketing/business development staff. Their leadership in terms of choosing high-quality doctors and producing great marketing materials, and their ability to work well with their equally strong trail partners (Radnor Conservancy and Radnor Steps) have made this a very strong program.

Premier Orthopaedics, which has offices in several counties and relationships with various hospitals, participates with the Radnor Trail groups and is eager to plan events on other trails throughout the region.

What next?

After your Prescribe-a-Trail program is up and running, and people want more, what can you offer?

Range of Options for Hospital Participation

Although RTC's focus has been starting Prescribe-a-Trail (PAT) walks, there are many other ways for hospitals to get involved on trails. They include:

- Prescribe-a-walk/bike prescription pads
- Bike share for employees, visitors
- Comprehensive programs for patients, employees and the community similar to those at Seattle Children's Hospital and Cleveland Clinic
- Running a shuttle from closest trailhead for employees who commute by bike
- Cycling Without Age—seniors on rickshaws
- Trail building at or around the hospital. Lankenau is on its way with the Lankenau Walking Trail and planned extensions.
- Developing a long-term, comprehensive strategy to incorporate trails as integral to preventive health care and services provided to patients
- Expanding trail-programming partnership opportunities to other organizations with a health-care focus. These organizations include more than 55 communities, health insurance companies, large pharmacies like CVS, corporate wellness programs and possibly pharmaceutical companies.
- Advocating for trails at the local level because they are an investment in public health
- Conduct a walking audit
- Mileage programs/competitions



Before Stephen Olex, MD of the Brind Marcus Center for Integrative Medicine leads a 1-mile walk on the Radnor Trail, he offers advice on achieving optimum heart health through exercise and lifestyle.

To learn more, please contact:
Molly Duffy, Rails-to-Trails Consultant
484.886.5853 or mduffy@earthsmartconsulting.com

Appendix:



Prescribe-A-Trail

Get fit. Get rejuvenated. Get your healthcare questions answered!

Join Paoli Hospital's healthcare professionals for a brief talk. Check-in at Paoli Hospital's event table, followed by a short walk on a local trail.

Saturday, 4/16 – 10 am & 11 am

Trail Opening Day
Chester Valley Trail
East Whiteland Township Building
Conestoga Road, Malvern, PA

Thursday, 6/30 – 6 pm

Tredyffrin Summer Concert
Wilson Park
Chesterbrook, PA

Thursday, 7/21 – 6 pm

Tredyffrin Summer Concert
Wilson Park
Chesterbrook, PA

Thursday, 7/28 – 6 pm

East Goshen Farmers Market
East Goshen Park
Paoli Pike, West Chester, PA

Saturday, 8/27 – 6 pm

East Goshen Community Day
East Goshen Park
Paoli Pike, West Chester, PA



Here's How:

- No registration required
- Wear comfortable, sturdy shoes. All fitness levels welcome!
- Meet at Paoli Hospital's Event Table
- Brief, leisurely walk on the trail ... Dogs and strollers are welcome
- Enjoy the multiple give-a-ways!
- **In case of inclement weather, the walk will be cancelled**

For more information on these walks and other events, please contact:

Molly Duffy

mduffy@earthsmartconsulting.com / 484-886-5853

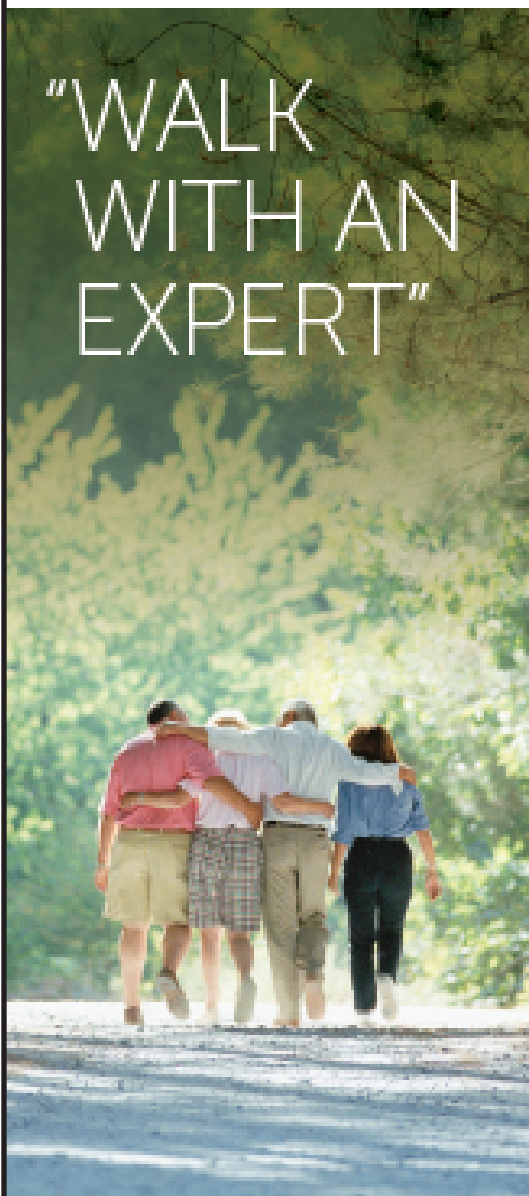


**Brind-Marcus Center
of Integrative Medicine.**
at Jefferson

9-10:30 a.m.
Friday, November 4, 2016

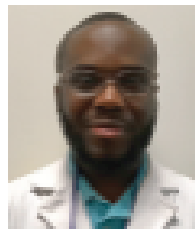
Radnor Trail

West Wayne Avenue Entrance
Wayne, PA



CS 06-1200

Prescribe-A-Trail



George Adjin-Tettey
Nuclear Medicine Technologist
CNMT, RT, MR, N

Join Jefferson's Integrative Medicine's George Adjin-Tettey on Friday, November 4, for a one-mile walk on the Radnor Trail. George is one of the few nuclear medicine technologists in the country certified as a PET MR technologist. Walk with us and learn how this new technology offers better diagnostic results and is being used for cutting-edge research.

Here's How:

- No registration required.
- Wear comfortable, sturdy shoes. All fitness levels welcome!
- Meet at Radnor Trail, West Wayne Avenue Entrance.
- Enjoy a brief, leisurely walk on the Trail. Dogs and strollers are welcome.
- In case of inclement weather, the walk will be cancelled.

Radnor Trails opened in 2006 and provides residents a year-round, safe location to perform some of their favorite outdoor recreational activities. Radnor Trail is part of The Circuit, a 750-mile network of bicycle and pedestrian trails connecting the Greater Philly Region. The Radnor Conservancy engages Radnor Township residents in the conservation of natural, cultural and historic assets through environmental stewardship. RadnorConservancy.org

Directions and Parking:

Park at the West Wayne Avenue Trail Lot. Meet on the trail at the parking lot access point. See below for parking and trail access directions: To reach the trailhead from Interstate 476, take Exit 13 onto Route 30 West. Continue and turn left onto Radnor-Chester Road. Continue and turn right onto Conestoga Road. Proceed on Conestoga Road and turn left on West Wayne Avenue to parking lot.

Registration is appreciated, but not required.

To register, please visit: Jefferson.edu/WalkWithDoc





Prescribe-A-Trail

Get fit. Get rejuvenated. Get your healthcare questions answered!

Join our inspirational Phoenixville healthcare professionals for a brief, brisk walk on the beautiful Schuylkill River Trail.

Wednesday, 4/13— 12 pm

Dr. Charlene Burkholder, MSN, CRNP
Director of Orthopaedic Service Line

Saturday, 4/16— 11 am

Dr. BJ Smith, Sports Medicine Physician at
Smith Medicine, PC

Wednesday, 4/20—12 pm

Dr. Christine Kalicki
Optometrist at Visual Edge LLC

Saturday, 4/30— 11 am

Dr. Jason Elvin PT, DPT, OCS. Physical
Therapist at Kinetic Physical Therapy



Here's how:

- Wear comfortable, sturdy shoes. All fitness levels welcome!
- Meet at the covered bridge next to the Phoenixville Foundry
- Parking available at the municipal lot next to the Farmer's Market
- Walk out a half mile on the trail, turn around and loop back.
- Finish with a free snack, and enjoy give-a-ways to provide motivation for healthy habits.
- In case of inclement weather, the walk will be cancelled.

A growing body of research states that exposure to nature and outdoor exercise has significant health benefits such as improved wellness and mental health, reduced stress, and lower blood pressure.

For more information on these walks and other events, follow "Activate Phoenixville Area" on Facebook.

Questions? Contact us: Kim@ActivatePhoenixvilleArea.org or 610-917-9890 ext. 25

Originally posted on the Circuit Trails Blog, August 2016

Prescribe-a-Trail: Join a Hospital/Community-Led Walk on a Trail Near You

Featured Walk: Jefferson Brind-Marcus Center for Integrative Medicine Hits the Radnor Trail

While everyone knows that walking is one of the easiest ways to stay healthy, some hospitals are making it even easier for their patients and community neighbors.

Across the Circuit Trails, hospitals are partnering with trail and community groups to start Prescribe-a-Trail walks. These planned walks are simply group walks with a doctor, nurse or other clinician who begins the walk with a short talk on a topic like heart health. During the walk, the participants have an opportunity to talk to the doctor informally while walking together on the trail.

In June, Jefferson's Brind-Marcus Center for Integrative Medicine embarked upon a monthly Prescribe-a-Trail program on the Radnor Trail. In partnership with the Radnor Conservancy and Radnor Steps—a weekly community walking group—Jefferson is walking the walk. At the July walk, Rashna Staid, M.D., offered advice on achieving optimum heart health through the mind-body connection to an attentive group of 20 or so walkers, young and old, and a few four-footed friends. Information about the upcoming Aug. 12 walk can be found [here](#).

“Jefferson's Brind-Marcus Integrative Medicine doctors enjoy sharing their expertise in a ‘natural’ environment. The walkers are more receptive to the medical and lifestyle information because they are relaxed and are able to initiate informal conversations with the doctor as they walk one on one,” says Bobbie Lane, Brind-Marcus Center for Integrative Medicine business development consultant.

Radnor Conservancy is a strong leader in advancing the township's recently adopted Greenways and Open Space Network Plan, which includes expansion of the very popular Radnor Trail. According to Radnor Conservancy President Laura Luker, “Radnor Township is in the preliminary stages of approving the construction plans to extend the Radnor trail another mile under Radnor Chester Road and ending at the Blue Route. The hope is in the future to bridge the on and off ramps of the Blue Route and connect to the SEPTA 100 Trail.”

With an initial push and support from Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and the Circuit Trails, this local partnership is doing a great job of getting people healthy, introducing them to local trails and ultimately helping to complete the Circuit Trails network.

To see all upcoming Prescribe-a-Trail walks, go to circuittrails.org/events.

***To inquire about starting a Prescribe-a-Trail program on a trail near you,
contact Molly Duffy at mduffy@earthsmartconsulting.com.***

“Jefferson's Brind-Marcus Integrative Medicine doctors enjoy sharing their expertise in a ‘natural’ environment. The walkers are more receptive to the medical and lifestyle information because they are relaxed and are able to initiate informal conversations with the doctor as they walk one on one.”

*Bobbie Lane
Brind-Marcus Center for Integrative Medicine former Business Development Consultant*

“How better to learn about healthcare professionals as people than on a walk? I was lucky enough to meet one of my favorite physicians that way.”

*Jen DiLella, PA-C, MPH, PAPHS
Radnor Steps Founder*

“Prescribe-a-Trail allows our doctors to interact with people in a rare way; without an appointment, without a confined time, without the dreaded co-pay. Being able to have a conversation in such a relaxed setting is a game changer for our doctor-patient relationships.”

*Kathleen Rantz
Marketing Representative
Premier Orthopaedics*

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conservancy

railstotrails.org @railstotrails