A Walk in the Woods
Evidence builds that time spent in the natural world benefits human health.
(Excerpted from American Scientist, Anna Lena Phillips)
For the month of April, I decided to visit the Haw River, which flows near where I live, every day. I would try, and I would observe, closely, how I felt. Some days I took leisurely walks with friends, leaning over the railing of the pedestrian bridge to watch the river, high from recent rains, and to smell the distinctive, muddy smell of the water mingled with that of the banks overrun with invasive honey-suckle. On others, coming home late at night, I drove straight down to the bridge and walked out to stare down at the dark water, a move that felt a bit like the natural-world equivalent of visiting a drive-through restaurant.

In Japan, researchers study the physiological effects of shinrin-yoku, “forest bathing,” or taking walks in the woods. Qing Li, a professor at Nippon Medical School, Tokyo, is involved with several studies. In one study, specific physiological markers were measured before and after study subjects took walks in a forest, and in an urban control environment. Effects were measured after a one day trip to the forest and one to the city. Subjects’ blood pressure measured in the forest was significantly lower when compared to measurements taken in the city. Levels of the stress hormone noradrenaline, were also significantly lower after the forest walk than after the urban walk. Blood levels of the adrenal hormone DHEA-S and of adiponectin, a hormone secreted by fat tissue, were higher after the forest walk but not the urban walk. The authors note that DHEA-S may contribute to heart health, among other benefits, and that lower levels of adiponectin are associated with obesity and type 2 diabetes.

“In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.”-John Muir

Forest Bathing in Kingston
Can you find the new Kiosks?

Hasbrouck Park, Forsyth Park and Kingston Point Parks will all be treated to brand new kiosks, due to appear in Springtime. The kiosks, funded by CHP, will post valuable City of Kingston Parks information on Parks and Rec sponsored events, classes and guided nature walks.
Put on your walking shoes and treat yourself to a healthy experience under the trees!

Research about the Japanese practice of forest bathing shows that time spent in nature lowers stress levels, and could even help fight cancer. It’s widely assumed that escaping the noise and stress of the city to spend some time in nature is good for us. In recent years scientists have been putting this assumption to the test, and evidence is mounting of the positive effects of contact with nature on our physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

Some of the most interesting evidence of the health benefits of nature is coming out of Japan, and revolves around the popular practice of ‘Shinrinyoku’ or ‘forest bathing’. The practice was introduced in 1982 in a prescient move by the Forest Agency of Japan to encourage a healthy lifestyle and decrease stress levels. Forest bathing has now become a recognised relaxation and stress management activity in Japan – but studies conducted in the last few years shows forest bathing is also increasing a component of the immune system that fights cancer.
http://www.hphpcentral.com/article/forest-bathing
The Health Benefits of Gardening

Growing your own vegetable garden can do more than provide tasty produce, gardening can improve health, save money and even boost mood.

“Michele Owens” is in good shape chiefly because she gardens. Although she runs for exercise in the winter, she finds the sport to be mind numbing and probably would have given up on it by now if she had to do it year-round. And Owens says she’d never go to the gym to lift weights. "I'm bored to tears at the gym, but I’m never bored gardening, and I’ve been doing it for twenty years," she says. "It's a really complete form of exercise attached to a huge sense of accomplishment." Every April, when Owens trades her running shoes for garden boots and starts mulching and planting, she inevitably drops 5 pounds, and the weight loss lasts all summer long. As her crops ripen, they require less work. But on April and May weekends, she's in her 1,900-square-foot garden for up to 5 hours a day - hauling more weight and doing more squats than she'd ever do at the gym. If space is an issue for you, try planting in pots. Read more: http://www.prevention.com/food/healthy-eating-tips/benefits-gardening-how-vegetable-garden-can-improve-health.

Are you short on space, and long on enthusiasm? Perhaps there is a community garden in your neighborhood that you can join? If not, how about starting a community garden in your neighborhood? Or with a neighbor? Or with a friend? Pooling resources, sharing the harvest!

Grow a Window Box Vegetable Garden

Grow your own lettuce, carrots and radishes at a low cost, with minimal effort. http://www.hgtvgardens.com/grow-a-window-box-vegetable-garden

Materials Needed:

- window box
- large bucket or tub (optional)
- potting soil
- water
- lettuce seeds (1 packet)
- radish seeds (1 packet)
- dwarf (ball-type) carrot seeds (1 packet)
- liquid organic fertilizer

Gardening is a labour full of tranquility and satisfaction; natural and instructive, and as such contributes to the most serious contemplation, experience, health and longevity. John Evelyn, 1666

NAPSACC Child Care Workers Attend Project Learning Tree Workshop for Early Childhood Educators on March 18th

Tom Shimalla, Environmental Educator from the NYS DEC, will facilitate the March 18th workshop. Attendees will be the child care staff from sites that have completed NAPSACC training, adopting healthy snack policies and increasing physical activities in their child care centers and homes. The NAPSACC training was delivered by the Community Heart Health Coalition of the Health Alliance and reached eight child care centers and over 200 pre-school children this year alone.

Project Learning Tree’s Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood is an early childhood education activity guide written for educators of children ages three through six. The collection of hands-on activities focuses on forest resources and integrates nature-based exploration, art, literature, math, music and movement into early childhood programs. Topics include exploring nature with five senses, meeting neighborhood trees and experiencing trees through the seasons. Participants will receive a free PLT Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood Activity Guide and accompanying CD of feature songs by children's musician Billy B. Brennan. Activities are correlated to the National Association for the Education of Young Children Standards and the Head Start Domains.

Visit these Healthy Markets for: fresh fruit, vegetables, whole grain products, nuts, beans, healthy snacks.

Food Tastings once each month:
Sunshine Market, Jansen Avenue, Kingston April 2, May 7, June 4
Quick Stop, 203 Flatbush Road, Kingston April 3, May 8, June 5

MISSION: Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work & Play works to combat obesity and type 2 diabetes by furthering policy, systems, and environmental changes in Ulster County.

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CHP PARTNERS: City of Kingston Parks and Recreation * Community Heart Health Coalition * Gilmour Planning
* Kingston Land Trust * Master Gardeners CCEUC * Ulster County Department of Health * YMCA Farm Project

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