

LIVE WELL KINGSTON

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2025



# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

**L**ive Well Kingston is in a dynamic place in its 13th year<sup>1</sup>. We just went through a strategic reflection exercise that has clarified our mission, vision, and goals and we are as motivated as ever to create a community where everyone has access to local and nourishing foods, safe active transportation systems, welcoming public spaces, and community connection.

We conduct this work through subcommittees known as focus teams. There are five active groups: Age Well, Eat Well, Grow Well, Play Well, and Travel Well. With clarified goals, each group will be working on strategies to increase access to healthy options.

We are gaining momentum with engaged and committed Commissioners. We will be testing out a new structure in 2026. Each Commissioner will lead a specific role. Five of the seats will be connected to the subcommittees, which we refer to as focus teams. Six of the seats will play specific board roles, including chair, vice-chair, secretary, assessment, engagement, and development. With this new structure, our hope is that members will provide leadership and guidance with a specific need in mind.



**EMILY FLYNN**

Director of Health and  
Wellness, City of Kingston

We have seen some staffing changes in the last few years and it's with joy that we wish Marsha Sebros and Kristin Kessler success on their journeys with other organizations.

We have accomplished a variety of projects in the past few years and are laying the foundation for new projects. Continue reading to learn more about all that we have accomplished in 2025 and a bit of preview of our plans for 2026.

<sup>1</sup> The Live Well Kingston Coalition started in June 2013 and was led by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County. It became a City Commission in February of 2017.

# OUR 2025 TEAM

The Live Well Kingston Commission is an advisory board to the City of Kingston's Mayor and Common Council. In addition, the Commission advances its goals with subcommittees called focus teams. Almost everyone that supports this work is volunteering their time or able to use their paid work to collaborate. The Department of Health and Wellness coordinates the program. We wouldn't be able to do this work without you all and we are deeply thankful.

## LIVE WELL KINGSTON COMMISSIONERS

Katrina Williams  
Katrina Light  
Anita Softness  
Nettie Morano  
Anthony Fitzpatrick  
Jillian Friedman  
Arlene Puentes  
Kyle Muther  
Sam Necrason

## CITY STAFF

Emily Flynn, Director of Health and Wellness  
Kristin Kessler, Project Manager  
(Transitioned October 2025)

## FOCUS TEAM MEMBERS

*These are folks in addition to Commissioners that joined two focus team meetings in 2025. Our sincere apologies if we missed anyone.*

Brent K., Bryn R., Chris C., Chrisso B., Cindy M., Cindy M., Diane D., Dianna S., Emily P., Hila K., Jack S., Jenny S., Joel Z., Judy R., Julianne S. O., Kailen W., Karri P., Kayla P., Laurie B., Liz B., Mary B., Meghan Y., Melissa M., Michael N., Ninette W., Pat P., Ravi S. B., Rob J., Sasha, Schara D., Shaniqua B., Sue K., Thandar A., Trish H.

## PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

*Organizations that partnered on a project or staff joined at least two meetings in 2025. We think it's likely we have missed a few partners, our sincere apologies.*

ARC Mid-Hudson; City of Kingston, Parks and Recreation Department; City of Kingston, Urban Forestry; Complete Streets Advisory Council; Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County; Hudson Valley Bee Habitat; Hudson Valley Care Coalition; Hudson Valley Farm Hub; KAN Landscape Design; Kingston YMCA Farm Project; Land to Learn; Nature Everywhere Kingston; People's Place; Scenic Hudson; Soil to Soul, Holistic Health Community; The Bee Conservancy; The Crop Shop; The Institute for Family Health; The Kingston Land Trust; Trust Up; Ulster County Department of Health; Ulster County Department of Planning; Ulster County Office for the Aging; Wild Earth; YMCA of Kingston and Ulster, Bicycle Program, and more!

The Post Office Park ribbon cutting on June 27, 2025 opened a new green space in the City of Kingston.



# 2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

## LIVE WELL KINGSTON COMMISSION

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### Commission Communications

The Live Well Kingston Commission completed a strategic reflection that revised the mission, vision, and goals. We envision a city where everyone has access to local and nourishing foods, safe active transportation systems, welcoming public spaces, and community connection. We do this by bringing partners and residents together in focus teams to facilitate programming, communications, policy and systems changes that increase access to healthy opportunities.

In addition to these specialized conversations, the Commission reviewed health data and communications and signed 10 letters of support or advocacy in 2025.

In 2026 we hope to update the rules of procedure, improve our welcoming process, and increase our communications.



Informal discussion after a Play Well Meeting.

## AGE WELL

17

**Community  
Events Attended**

Age Well focused on recruiting volunteers for the Office for Aging transportation programs

Neighbor to Neighbor Program and Go Go Grandparent at 17 community events! Next year, we're going to work on increasing communications about healthy opportunities.



**Meeting  
Times**

Every other month, Third Tuesdays, 2pm

## PLAY WELL

1

**New Park**

Play Well increased access to parks and nature by meeting 8 times, working with

Trust Up to create a list of physical activity opportunities and reviewing their "The Alternatives" app, supported the Nature Everywhere project hosted by Wild Earth, and supported a tree tour with the Urban Forestry Department. The Health and Wellness Department finished managing the construction of the new Post Office Park and held a ribbon cutting on June 27th. In 2026, Play Well will be conducting a survey of nature access in Kingston parks and facilities.



**Meeting  
Times**

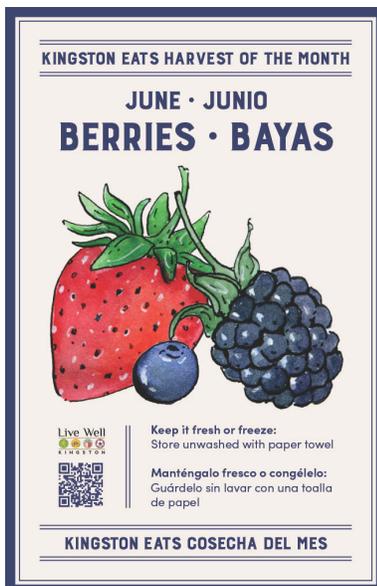
Fourth Fridays, 11am



The Food Systems Plan Public Meeting at Kingston City Hall on December 3, 2025.



The Food Systems Plan focus groups.



Harvest of the Month posters.

## EAT WELL

1

### Food System Plan Completed

Eat Well had a fantastic year thanks to leadership from Ninette Warner and Kristin Kessler. The Kingston Eats and Kingston Cooks programs continued with the Harvest of the Month awareness campaign and six cooking workshops. Three presentations about school nutrition, Hudson Valley farming, and the Hudson Valley Social Care Network were hosted. Those recordings can be viewed [here](#). Kristin authored two food policy newsletters and created a resource hub. In addition, the Food Systems Plan wrapped up. We'll use this plan to inspire work for 2025.



### Meeting Times

Every other month, Third Tuesdays, 2pm.



A Grow Well meeting at the Kingston YMCA Farm Project in May.

# GROW WELL



## Gardens Supported

Grow Well supports community garden stewards with meetings and supportive projects.

They met 19 times at nine different gardens and via Zoom in 2025. They hosted the third annual garden tour, delivered compost, fixed a garden fence, hosted a co-meeting and cooking workshop with Eat Well, tabled at the Earth Fair, and Cindy hosted a seedling workshop at the Library. See the Grow Well Garden map at [www.livewellkingston.org/grow-well/](http://www.livewellkingston.org/grow-well/)



Grow Well meeting sign.



## Meeting Times

Met first Tuesdays and third Mondays during the 2025 growing season. This may change in 2026.



The South Pine Street garden stewards.



The Bicycle Valet sign at the Earth Fair and a section of the Greenline.

## TRAVEL WELL

Although Travel Well only met once in 2025, lots of great work increased access to walking and bicycling. The Kingston Parks and Recreation Department led seven Thursday evening community bicycle rides and installed 15 bicycle racks in 2025 (38 total for the program started in 2023). The Complete Streets Advisory Council met 12 times. The Health and Wellness Department co-led, with the Ulster County Planning Department, the Greenline Leadership Team and is developing a trail stewardship program. Thanks to NYSERDA, a Clean Mobility Plan was created that envisioned how a rentable bicycle system could be implemented in Kingston and a demonstration grant was applied for. In addition, a request for proposals for a sidewalk funding plan was published. Much of this work will continue in 2026!

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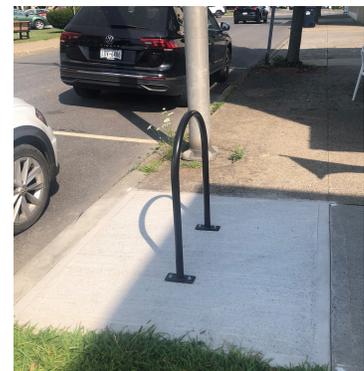
**Bicycle Racks Installed In 2025**



**Meeting Times**

No standing meeting at this time

Bike rack installed on Hurley Ave.



# HEALTH CHAMPION

## MEET CINDY MURO

Hi! Cindy Muro here! I am a career horticulturist who has been living in Ulster County for the past 41 years. I have worked in many different facets of the industry, including managing the greenhouses at the Mohonk Mountain House for 18 years, landscape & vegetable gardening, interior plant maintenance and wholesale nursery production to name a few. I loved and learned a lot from each experience.

I have been a garden steward for the George Washington school since 2008 when a community garden was created and have been gardening with the students there ever since.

Since my retirement from Mohonk in 2017, and my own children grown and husband still working I started searching for my “tribe” to continue sharing my knowledge and interest with other gardeners. When the pandemic struck in 2020 a group of like minded gardening folk convened to see how we could help our community gain access to fresh food. This is when Grow Well Kingston was formed. I was excited to be able to contribute to helping others have access to gardening and share my knowledge.

I love that Grow Well has opened up a dialogue with many different groups in the community. We share resources, knowledge, support and capabilities, which makes all of us more successful in our aim at having people grow their own food. My own personal contribution is “boots on the ground” assistance in getting gardens going and ongoing advice for growing better plants.

I am proud of the community of garden stewards in Kingston and that each community garden is unique. I'm also proud of gardening with the children at the Boys and Girls Club since around 2021. It is rewarding to experience the enthusiasm of young people when they get time in a garden.

I look forward to supporting new community gardens in Kingston and also to meeting new enthusiastic gardeners who want to join in the fun.



# CONTACT US



## **LIVE WELL KINGSTON**

The City of Kingston New York's  
Health Commission

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