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Millburn gets no-smoking signs for municipal parks

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Millburn has been a smoke-free park municipality since 2014, but now it has signs to prove it.

The Township Committee passed an ordinance last autumn maintaining that all municipal parks are smoke-free zones, in response to an educational initiative advanced by a local nonprofit organization, Global Advisors Smokefree Policy (GASP).

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on June 3 in Taylor Park to recognize the new signs.

The objective of the initiative was to educate the township on the health, environmental and economic benefits of smoke-free parks, GASP Executive Director Karen Blumenfeld said.

Millburn is one of the 13 towns in Essex County with a smoke-free parks policy.

The initiative was funded by the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey, an organization which exists to improve the health and wellness of the people in the community and Essex County, according to Executive Director Marcia Atkind.

"People understand dangers of smoke in an indoor environment, but not as much in an outdoor environment," Atkind said. "We want to make sure our kids and ourselves are as healthy as can be, and keeping the parks free of secondhand smoke is really important."

Millburn Municipal Alliance Committee (MMAC) for Alcohol and Drug Awareness Coordinator Gail Barry said building a safe and healthy community is an important part

of her organization's mission.

"It was important to us to be sure that the ordinance reflected not only the risks posed by smoking tobacco, but included illegal substances such as marijuana and the use of electronic cigarettes commonly used to inhale synthetic drugs," Barry said. "We aim to educate and build awareness of the dangers of smoking anything to keep our children and families drug free and living a healthy lifestyle."

The metal signs were donated to Millburn by state Department of Health and Barry said they will soon display a sticker stating the prohibition of all types of smoke.

Acting Police Chief Brian Gilfedder said the department will enforce the ordinance by giving warnings and issuing summonses "as we would with any other ordinance."

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