Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Town of Lee, Lee Public Schools and National Fitness Campaign Make Fitness Free for Everyone in Lee

First Outdoor Fitness Court® for Berkshire County Coming to Lee, MA

(LEE, MASSACHUSETTS – JUNE 30, 2023) — Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (Blue Cross), the Town of Lee, Lee Public Schools and National Fitness Campaign (NFC) today announced a partnership to bring an outdoor Fitness Court® and community wellness programming to Lee, MA. The Fitness Court, located at 300 Greylock Street will open on July 12, 2023 at 10 a.m. with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and will mark the first Fitness Court to open in Berkshire County.

The Fitness Court is located a half a mile from the center of town, right behind Lee Middle & High School with two adjacent parking lots for the community to use when they visit.

This Fitness Court was developed by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, the Town of Lee, Lee Public Schools and NFC to expand free access to high quality workouts and create equitable access to exercise for students, local residents and visitors. This partnership will provide free outdoor fitness within walking and cycling distance of approximately 1,000 Lee residents. The Fitness Court is the world's best outdoor gym that lets people use their own body weight to get a complete workout using seven exercise stations.

Created with people aged 14 and over and with all abilities in mind, the workouts are adaptable for all fitness levels, allowing participants to move at their own pace. Users also may download the free Fitness Court App which acts as a coach-in-your-pocket and enhances the outdoor gym into a digitally supported wellness experience.

"Blue Cross is committed to helping people live healthy lives and eliminating the physical and social barriers that lead to health disparities," said Jeff Bellows, vice president of corporate citizenship and public affairs at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. "We're proud to partner with NFC, Town of Lee and Lee Public Schools to launch a Fitness Court that will provide Lee residents with a communal gathering space and access to premiere free outdoor fitness opportunities."

Lee is one of 15 outdoor Fitness Courts in a series of Blue Cross Fitness Courts that are currently open or will be constructed in easily accessible public spaces this year. Blue Cross' sponsorship of NFC is part of the company's strengthened corporate citizenship commitment to promote health justice in communities across the Commonwealth. Over the next five years, Blue Cross will provide $16 million in grants and volunteer support to not-for-profits working to address food, environmental and racial justice in Massachusetts communities. This work supports the company's overall pledge to be a leader in addressing health inequities across the Commonwealth.

With 2,100 active users in 2022, it's estimated that over 13 million calories and 3,750 pounds are burned in one year on the Blue Cross Fitness Court network.

Lee, MA's Town Administrator, Christopher Brittain, said "the Town of Lee is very excited to offer this great resource to our school and community. As the first of its kind in the Berkshires, Lee hopes to lead the way in new efforts for the health and wellbeing of our residents."

"The Lee Public Schools are delighted to have the new Fitness Court located on the school grounds" said Superintendent, Michael Richard. "The Fitness Court represents an amazing opportunity for all members of the schools' community to engage in healthy practices that will have a positive impact on our minds and bodies. It has been exciting to see so many people taking advantage of the Fitness Court; I know that it will have a lasting impact on those who use it. A huge thank you is in order to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts and the Town of Lee for making this a reality!"

"National Fitness Campaign is proud to welcome the Town of Lee and Lee Public Schools to the campaign as leaders in Massachusetts, championing health and wellness for their residents and students alike" said Mitch Menaged, founder of NFC. "We are proud to continue our mission of getting people moving outdoors and helping communities and schools combat the fiscal and humanitarian costs of inactivity."

Residents are invited to attend the launch event on **July 12, 2023 at 10 a.m.** to try the Fitness Court. For more information, visit www.lee.ma.us or contact the Select Board Office at (413) 409-5975.

For more information on Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts' support of NFC, please visit https://nationalfitnesscampaign.com/massachusetts.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (bluecrossma.org) is a community-focused, tax-paying, not-for-profit health plan headquartered in Boston. We are committed to the relentless pursuit of quality, affordable and equitable health care with an unparalleled consumer experience. Consistent with our promise to always put our members first, we are rated among the nation's best health plans for member satisfaction and quality. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

About the Town of Lee

Lee, MA is located in Western Massachusetts and is known as the “Gateway to the Berkshires”. It is nearly equidistant to Boston and New York City and has a population of 5,788. The town occupies land which was originally territory of the Mahican Indians. The first non-native settlement in the area was known as Dodgetown as early as 1760. Dodgetown was named after its founding settler, Asahel Dodge, who immigrated to the area from Cape Cod. Lee was incorporated in 1777 from parts of Great Barrington and Washington. It is named after Revolutionary War General Charles Lee. Lee, MA is known for its history of papermaking mills and marble quarry. The town’s marble is famous for its quality and was used in construction of buildings such as a wing of the Capitol in Washington, and St. Patrick’s Cathedral in NYC. The town is a popular tourist destination, noted for its New England charm, scenic vibrancy, and cultural arts. Lee, MA was also voted as one of ten of the best northeastern small towns in 2023 by USA Today readers.

About Lee Public Schools
The Lee Public Schools are located in the Berkshire Hills of Western Massachusetts just minutes from the Massachusetts Turnpike and numerous world class tourist and cultural destinations. Lee Public Schools educate students from the towns of Lee and Tyringham, and other neighboring communities through school choice and tuition agreements. The mission of the Lee Public Schools is to ensure students have the opportunities to develop the social, civil, and critical thinking skills to thrive in an ever-changing world.

About NFC
Founded in San Francisco in 1979, National Fitness Campaign (NFC) is a wellness consulting firm that provides programs and services to cities, schools and sponsors with the mission to build healthy communities. NFC delivers an integrated wellness initiative, centered on the world’s best outdoor gym: The Fitness Court®. The Campaign is planning its 500th Healthy Community, uniting the country’s largest public-private partnership in support of wellness with the goal of building a Fitness Court within a 10-minute bike ride of every American. Follow us on social media @NatFitCampaign and #FitnessCourt.

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