



Photo by Dick Simmons

## Another Reason for Open Space at the Hawthorne-by-the Sea Property: Our Health

*Parks are emerging as important public health solutions in urban communities. Nearly 40 years of research evidence confirms that nearby nature, including parks, gardens, the urban forest and green spaces, support human health and wellness.* - National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). And it's not just large parks, says NRPA, "equally as important is the role of small parks and nature spaces for health."

This is just one more reason why the Hawthorne property should be designed and developed as open green space.

Numerous studies have shown that parks, by promoting physical activity and community engagement, provide physical and mental health benefits including, among others:

- Strengthening your heart and preventing heart diseases;
- Decreasing blood pressure and cholesterol;
- Reducing inflammation and boosting your immune system;
- Reducing stress, anxiety, sadness, and depression; and
- Improving concentration and focus.

In fact, the relation between being outdoors in green spaces has led to a growing number of physicians issuing so-called "park prescriptions" to patients, both young and old, to spend more time outside to improve their mental and physical health. [time.com/6171174/nature-stress-benefits-doctors/](https://time.com/6171174/nature-stress-benefits-doctors/)

Spending time outdoors is especially important for kids. In his book *Last Child in the Woods*, Richard Louv coined the term "nature deficit disorder" to describe the psychological and physical costs to children resulting from their alienation from nature. The obvious take-away being that kids should be spending more time playing outside in nature. But the opportunities for childhood outdoor experiences are getting harder and harder to find, especially in cities and suburbs, observes Jaime Gonzalez in his recent article *Nature Every Day* in the Nature Conservancy's magazine. That this is true, one just has look around our town with its lack of green open space.

For the health of ourselves and our children, the Hawthorne property is best utilized as green open space to be enjoyed by all.