

# Put on your walking shoes

## *The new Bull City Cruisers Walking Club promotes a healthy lifestyle*

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Residents in Durham's Eastway Village may have noticed a new installment on the corner of Eastway Avenue and Taylor Street.

A table laden with balloons marks the site of the Bull City Cruisers Walking Club sign-up booth, which has recently set up camp at the intersection from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesdays. The Cruisers is the latest installment of Northeast Central Durham's Livability Initiative, and according to the city's Strategic Plan, the club will help make more thriving and community-centered neighborhoods.

### About the Cruisers

"It's just something we're doing to better our community," said James Chavis. Chavis is a co-facilitator of Partners Against Crime, District One. As a PAC volunteer, he said it's one of his responsibilities to try to empower the neighborhood and build community spirit.

The Cruisers launched on March 29. The club is being coordinated by Robin Dixon with Durham's Neighborhood Improvement Services Department alongside volunteers taking part in the Livability Initiative. According to the Cruisers' press release, the ultimate goal is to create a project that encompasses community needs and promotes healthy living – principles set forth by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

### Cruising Routes

After signing up, Cruisers participants receive a map and a walking number that they may later redeem for



Staff photo by Leah Campbell

Bull City Cruisers volunteers Melva Henry and James Chavis await walkers at the sign-up table on the corner of Eastway Avenue and Taylor Street.

a gift bag. Walkers may choose to take the highlighted 1.9K route that leads to the R. Kelly Bryant Jr. Pedestrian Bridge or the slightly shorter, 1.2K route that ends at the intersection of N. Driver Street and Angier Avenue before doubling back to the origin.

Along the way, participants are invited to stop in at the Holton Career and Resource center on the corner of Driver and Taylor Streets for a free routine blood pressure check, according to the Bull City Cruisers flier.

"We've been surprised at the number of people that have really come out," Melva Henry, the community engagement manager for Northeast Central Durham, said. "A lot have just been in the neighborhood passing by our table and stopped to ask who we were and then they ending up joining. It's really been great. Everyone is curious."

One woman who misinterpreted the time of the event decided to walk the

route on her own just for the exercise after the other groups had returned, Chavis said.

Jerome Smith walked with the Cruisers for the first time on April 5. He and his group took the longer route to the bridge.

"I had a great time. I'll definitely be back, regardless of the weather -- even if it stays cold and cloudy like this," Smith said. "The women I was with walked me to death!" he joked.

Smith said next time he walked with the Cruisers he would look into the free blood pressure screening.

### Get Involved

To get involved with the Bull City Cruisers, contact Robin Dixon with the city's Neighborhood Improvement Services Department at (919) 560-1647, Ext. 34245 or via email at [Robin.Dixon@DurhamNC.gov](mailto:Robin.Dixon@DurhamNC.gov).