Holiday Spirit

The two departmental community service projects that are conducted each year during the holidays were both, once again, great successes!

- The holiday basket project, originally designed for Moms in homeless shelters, has expanded to outreach programs and community health center families. Thanks to Judy Savageau and her band of elves (Amy Green, Paula Yockel, Jennifer Masoud, Jenny Hazelton, Kate Sullivan, and Linda Hollis), we were able to collect donations of goods and money from 52 individuals (a total of over $2700) and fill/deliver 345 gift bags and baskets full of toiletries and other goodies – the highest number ever! Many of these were delivered to the shelters by 2nd year FMIG medical students (Kaleigh Timmins and Tiffany Chen). The medical students also had a learning communities house competition and collectively donated over 300 items to fill the baskets and holiday gift bags. Baskets went to 11 shelters and 8 community health centers. Thanks to one and all who donated to this project. For over 20 years, your support has made this community service project a huge success!

- The Coats for Kids campaign (in conjunction with the Worcester Public Schools and the Junior League of Women) was also very successful in outfitting children with a new coat, hat, and mittens. Coordinated by Judy Savageau, we outfitted 56 children this year – one of the highest numbers in over 12 years). Donations came from 49 individuals – totaling over $1950. Again, we couldn’t have done this without the generous support from so many of you through your dollars, coats, and good wishes! Thanks to all who contributed.
Presentations

- Hugh Silk was an invited speaker for a webinar on December 6. The talk was given to Maine stakeholders and was hosted by the Maine Oral Health Foundation and their HRSA grant – Before the First Tooth. His talk was on the topic: “Engaging Perinatal Providers and Patients to Promote Oral Health”.

- Bill Foley gave a two hour presentation on the Amygdala for the annual Berkshire Osteopathic Study Group and an hour presentation on the Limbic System for A Still Sutherland Study Group. Both lectures were presented in the Berkshires this past November.

The following Shriver faculty gave presentations at the Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association in Denver, CO in November:

- Emily Lauer presented “Perspectives from longitudinal mortality for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the U.S.”
- Susan Wolf-Fordham presented “Emergency Planning Toolkit for Community Health Centers”.

Publications


- Suzanne Cashman authored an editorial entitled: “Accountable Care Organizations: Embracing a New Population Health?” It appears in the November issue of the journal Medical Care.
Medical Student Education

- The first full day of the Military/Veterans’ Health Interstitial is happening today with the support of Amber Hewitt, Molly Rivest, and Tina Runyan who are presenting. Carolyn Langer, Beth Mazyck and Tina who are sharing their military experiences in small groups, and Linda Cragin and Janet Hale who co-coordinated the Interstitial. The objective is for the students to understand that they will care for members of the military and veterans, since they are 9% of the central MA population and less than a third of veterans seek care at the VA – but they will not know this unless they ask: Have you or a member of your family ever served in the military?

Appointment

- Elaine Gabovitch was appointed Director of the Division for Children & Youth with Special Health Care Needs at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

WELLNESS MOMENTS

The health benefits of tai chi

This gentle form of exercise can help maintain strength, flexibility and balance, and could be the perfect activity for the rest of your life.

Tai chi is often described as "meditation in motion," but it might well be called "medication in motion." There is growing evidence that this mind-body practice, which originated in China as a martial art, has value in treating or preventing many health problems. And you can get started even if you aren't in top shape or the best of health.

In this low-impact, slow-motion exercise, you go without pausing through a series of motions named for animal actions — for example, "white crane spreads its wings" — or martial arts moves, such as "box both ears." As you move, you breathe deeply and naturally, focusing your attention — as in some kinds of meditation — on your bodily sensations. Tai chi differs from
other types of exercise in several respects. The movements are usually circular and never forced, the muscles are relaxed rather than tensed, the joints are not fully extended or bent, and connective tissues are not stretched. Tai chi can be easily adapted for anyone, from the most fit to people confined to wheelchairs or recovering from surgery.

As the classics say, Tai Chi makes you *strong as oak, flexible as a willow and clear as still water*. Practice it daily for lifelong well being.


Resources for practice:

DVD

*Tai Chi: Exercise for Life Long Health and Well Being*
Cheng Man Ch’ing Yang Style Short Form DVD.