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March 22, 1999

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Mind . . . Body . . . Spirit

Wellness Fair '99 Offers New Approaches; More than 50 Health-Related Vendors Expected

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.?Can you do more for your health than going to the doctor, taking pills, and keeping a wary eye out for the food police?

New and innovative strategies aimed at bringing a better quality of life to people?physically and mentally?are the focus of the third annual Illinois Wesleyan University Wellness Fair slated for April 15 (Thursday) from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. in the Performance Gym, Shirk Center, 302 E. Emerson.

Wellness Fair '99 is open to the public, free-of-charge.

More than 50 vendors are expected to attend the fair, which has the theme: Freeing the Spirit, Liberating the Mind, Celebrating the Body.

The fair, a community service, is sponsored by IWU's Wellness Program and the School of Nursing.

In past years, the Wellness Fair has attracted about 500 people from across the community.

Wellness Fair programming features medical specialists (chiropractic, podiatry, ophthalmology, and other fields), complimentary therapies (acupuncture, spiritual opportunities, healing arts network practitioners, ergonomic work station set ups, and other therapies), free health screenings, financial and occupational planning, new nutrition ideas, sample massage therapy and other body work, local activity and recreational resources, organizations celebrating diversity, and various human service organizations.

Among vendors expected to attend Wellness Fair '99 are:

- Arthritis Foundation, which will have information on more than 100 forms of the disease.
- Options Center for Health & Education, a multidisciplinary holistic clinic, which will offer three free health screenings.
- Bloomington Parks & Recreation, which will have information on Constitution Trail and summer programs.

- Alexander Technique, which will give hands-on demonstrations of ways to deal with pain, poor body alignment, and overuse of muscle groups.
- Eastland Chiropractic Center, which will offer spinal health screenings, posture analysis, and minute massage.
- Chestnut Health Systems, which will have information on chemical dependency, mental health, and other programs.
- Grand Prairie . . . families and farms, which have examples of certified organic food.
- Bloomington Public Library, which will have information and materials on health and wellness.
- Bloomington Fire Department, which will focus on emergency medical services.
- Corn Belt Chapter, Alzheimer's Association, which will have information on the memory-robbing disease.
- Softview Ergonomic Products, which will set up an ergonomic work station, including a keyboard platform, document holder, eye protection filter, and other items.
- Main Street Yoga Studio, which will provide two teachers who will answer questions.

Missy Smock, director of IWU's wellness program, says she has been involved in such programming "for half my life in some capacity" and has seen sweeping changes in the field.

Smock says that if people have questions about complimentary therapies, the Wellness Fair is the right place to get their queries answered.

"There has been a huge shift" in the wellness field, Smock said. "It's moving away from an authoritarian model?I'm going to tell you how to eat and exercise?to a model where people explore the wellness process more on their own and find out what's best for them."

Smock also says that philosophical changes in wellness encompass diet and exercise.

"Science has moved away from saying that bodies need to exercise three times a week. That approach has taken on a negative view. Now, we're talking more about how people can build activity into their lives."

Wellness today, according to Smock, is sending a more pleasure-based message.

"The food police are no longer mainstream," she explains. "Today people are encouraged to honor their hunger and stop eating when they are full. Foods have different nutritional values, but there are no forbidden foods. Some fear that people will eat uncontrollably, but there are excellent studies that show that people do stop eating?they know what their bodies need for growth."

At the heart of this new wellness philosophy, according to Smock, is the notion that people want to be at the center of their care?they want to be a partner in their care.

Smock concedes that science has yet to discover why some complimentary wellness techniques like acupuncture work. "Some of them work," she explains, "in conjunction with the body's energy. However, exciting research is going on to help explain the effectiveness of these techniques."

Dana Stinson, a sophomore nursing major from New Lenox, Ill., says IWU sponsors the Wellness Fair to help "educate the community on different issues concerning wellness things people can do to improve their health. The fair also has information about different resources out in the community that can help make their health better."

Vanessa Puma, a sophomore nursing major from Chicago, points out that "wellness is not just medication and surgery. There are other ways to make the body feel better and these include the mind and your spirit and home remedies that are culturally based."

Stinson and Puma are working on Wellness Fair '99 as part of a nursing and health promotions course. Other course experiences include observing on a hospital obstetrics floor with new moms and babies and at Westminster Village, a facility for senior citizens. The course is team taught by Susan Swanlund, visiting instructor in nursing (gerontology), and Sheila Jesek-Hale (obstetrics).

Stinson and Puma are 1997 high school graduates from Lincoln-Way High School in New Lenox and Francis W. Parker in Chicago, respectively.

Raffle drawings will take place hourly at Wellness Fair '99.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,000 students in a College of Liberal Arts, and individual schools of Music, Theatre Arts, Art, and Nursing. Since 1994, these facilities have been added to the IWU campus: a \$15 million athletics and recreation center, a \$25 million science center, a \$6.8 million residence hall, and a \$5.1 million Center for Liberal Arts.