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College helps students, community discover a 'Healthier U'

By: Donna Wick , Villager staff

Emily Blackwell, a physician and author in the late 1800s wrote: "Health has its science as well as disease." Perhaps it was the evolution of the science of health that has maintained the vigor of Montgomery College's "Healthier U" health fair and expo, now in its eighth year. Quite simply, the college, through its presentation of the health fair and expo, asks the community the thought-provoking question, "What's more important than a healthier you?" The most likely predominant answer would be "nothing"; nothing could be more important than having one's health and the faculties of their mind and body. "Attendees of all ages will enjoy health-related exhibits, food, screenings and demonstrations," said Mary Hoff, coordinator of Healthier U, and division operations manager for the college. "In addition to promoting wellness education, this event raises money for scholarships. Last year, Healthier U was able to present 26 students with \$500 scholarships.

The health fair and expo is a free event and open to the community that begins March 30 and concludes Friday, April 1. Proceeds from optional paid events go toward student scholarships in the college's health-related programs. "We are looking forward to participating at the health fair and expo as a health care provider in the community so as to enhance awareness for the overall well-being of our community," said Dr. John W. Cassidy, CEO of Nexus Health Systems in The Woodlands and surrounding areas. "Some of the services we will be providing are hypertension screenings and body mass calculations. Along with our screenings we will be able to follow up with counseling to the individual so as to better direct them for future monitoring, control or treatment." Education and information in the form of screenings and visual aids are numerous among those participating. "Healthier U is a community event that Sadler Clinic looks forward to participating in each year. All the proceeds to this event go toward scholarships for students enrolled in health care programs," said Cyndi Alvarado, executive marketing coordinator for Sadler Clinic. Our own Dr. Wesley Walker will be participating in the health fair on Friday, April 1. We will have nurses on hand to conduct cholesterol and glucose screenings, height/weight, BMI (Body Mass Index) and blood pressure checks. Dr. Walker will be discussing each participant's results with them and giving them tips on ways to stay healthy."

The Healthier U activities will begin on March 30 with a book fair in the Library (Building F) from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Books for all ages and interests will be featured. At noon, there will be a presentation, "Finding Your Passion," by Paulette Norman. Lunch will be provided to those in attendance. On March 31 the book fair will continue in the Library from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. A Chili Cook-off and Cookie Bake-off contest will be held in the Commons (Building A) from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The cost is just \$3 for a lunch of homemade chili and cookies. Attendees can also visit the silent auction and place their bid on themed baskets (such as baby, car, kitchen, junior scientist, personal pampering, etc) and art items provided by area sponsors and faculty. On April 1 there will be a 5k fun run/walk at 8:30 a.m. Registration will be held by the tennis courts (just north of Building B) at 8 a.m. for \$10 (T-shirt included). The book fair will continue in the Library from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and bids will continue to be taken on the silent auction items. In addition, gift certificates for food, entertainment and discounts provided by area sponsors will be raffled in the Commons (Building A). Tickets are only \$1, or 6 for \$5. Final bids for the silent auction are due by 2 p.m. The "grand finale" of Healthier U will be the health fair booths and exhibits, which will open at 10 a.m. on Friday, April 1. This year's health fair expo will include over 40 booths providing information, demonstrations, and screening by corporate sponsors and non-profit groups.

Sponsors include Women's Health Affiliates, Jennine Huet, DDS, PA, The Forum/Edenbrook, Woodlands Integrative Medicine, Nexus Health Systems, Kelsey-Seybold, Sadler Clinic and Life Line Screening. Volunteer groups such as the Susan G. Koman Breast Cancer Center, American Red Cross, AA, Alanon, Planned Parenthood, Pregnancy Assistance Center, Montgomery County Women's Center, Tri County Mental Health, Therapy Pet Pals, and Fibromyalgia Association of Houston will provide information and answer questions at the "Wellness Walk" and "Student Alley" area on the second floor of the Commons. Life Flight helicopter, fire safety demonstrations by The Woodlands Fire Department, child safety seat inspections and the Blood Mobile will be featured in the campus parking areas. Individuals visiting all booths will receive a 2005 Healthy U T-shirt. "We are going to be there as a service to our community with cancer screenings, denture-wear kits and visual aids that focus on good dental/oral health. We want to do our part to insure the health and well-being of our community and appreciate that the college is providing this forum for all health care providers to participate," Dr. Huet said, who's office is located in the new College Park Medical Plaza across the street from the Montgomery College campus. Montgomery College is located at 3200 College Park Drive, one-half mile west of Interstate 45, between Conroe and The Woodlands. For more information about the college, call (936) 273-7000 or visit www.montgomery-college.com.