

OAKLAND COUNTY HEALTHY LIVING

Reaching Higher

The spring session for Reaching Higher, a motivation and meditation course designed to help empower people to be the best they can be, will be held on Wednesdays beginning April 8.

Classes will run from 6:15 p.m.-10:15 p.m. at the Congregational Church of Birmingham, located at the corner of the Cranbrook Road and Woodward Avenue, spanning an eight-week period. A different topic will be covered each week, including Positive Life Choices, Overcoming Fears, and Forgiveness and Love.

For more information, call Sue Dahlmann or Linda Hanniford at (810) 220-8812.

Headaches forum

Effective help is available for the 60 million Americans who suffer from head pain, according to Joel R. Saper, M.D., F.A.C.P.

Saper will be in Troy on Tuesday, April 7, to speak at a forum entitled, "Migraine and Other Headaches," presented by the Head Pain Association of Michigan.

The program will run 7 p.m.-9 p.m. at the Northfield Hilton in Troy. The forum is free and open to the public. To register or for more information, call 1-800-612-5733.

Saper, a board-certified neurologist and internationally recognized speaker, author and educator, is director of the Ann Arbor-based Michigan Head Pain and Neurological Institute (MHNI), which is the only nationally accredited pain treatment facility in the United States.

At the upcoming forum, Saper will discuss the latest facts and myths about head pain causes and cures, including current treatments for adults and children, new research, the role of hormones and the impact of pain on families. His presentation will be followed by a panel of medical experts that will join Saper to answer questions from the audience. The panel will include Barbaranne Branca, Ph.D., Supervisor of Neuropsychology Services at MHNI; James R. Weintraub, D.O., Director of the Sleep Disorders Program at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital; and Steven B. Silverman, M.D., Director of the MHNI General Pain Division.

Also present at the forum will be members of the Head Pain Association of Michigan, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing information and support groups for those suffering from head pain.

Taoist Tai Chi classes

A spring session for Taoist Tai Chi classes will begin Monday, April 6 at various locations in the Metro Detroit area.

Learn wonderful, helpful, ancient movements that will provide improved health, strength and balance. Sessions are scheduled to be held in Bloomfield Hills, Farmington and Livonia.

Call (248) 332-1281 for specific meeting locations, dates and times, and fees.

Crittendon programs

Crittendon Hospital in Rochester is planning to offer a variety of health and wellness programs in April. All classes listed below will be held at Crittendon (1101 W. University Drive) unless noted.

■ **First Friday's Free Blood Pressure Checks:** Crittendon will offer free blood pressure checks from 9 a.m.-11 a.m. on Friday, April 3. To register, call Crittendon's Community Health Education Department at (248) 652-5269.

■ **CPR:** Learn techniques to save adults, infants and children. An American Heart Association card will be given at the end of the class, which is scheduled for 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, April 4. There is a \$20 fee. To register, call (248) 652-5269.

■ **Just Between Us:** Sponsored by the American Cancer Society, this free self-help support group is for women who have had breast cancer. A Tamoxifen presentation will be offered by a Zeneca Drug Representative Wednesday, April 8 from 7:30 p.m.-9 p.m. To register, call (248) 652-5269.

■ **House Calls:** Dr. Dennis Zikowski will lead a free lecture entitled, "Common Recurrence Syndrome: Migraine, Cluster and Tension," Wednesday, April 15 from 7:30 p.m.-9 p.m. To register, call Crittendon's Physician Referral at 1-888-904-HEALTH.

■ **Super Mom/Super Myth:** This class, scheduled for Monday, April 27, is designed to help moms with young families. Mothers will learn how to prioritize, share tips for finding guilt-free personal time, develop organizational skills and manage stress. The class will run from 7 p.m.-9 p.m. The fee is \$5. Call (248) 652-5269 to register.

(Healthy Living spotlights Oakland County-related health and medical news and information. To submit information, write: Healthy Living, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham MI, 48009. Or fax: (248) 644-1314.)

Popular state games canceled

■ **Citing budget constraints, organizers of the Great Lakes State Games recently announced this year's competition will not be conducted.**



The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports and the Michigan Fitness Foundation (MFF) announced last week they would be canceling the Great Lakes State Games, which were set to take place June 19-28 in the Greater Lansing area.

Foundation Executive Director Mark Terman regarding budget constraints in the Foundation and Governor's Council, which are funded in part by the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH), as reasons for the cuts.

The Games are a member of the National Congress of State Games and one of 45 states offering state games competitions. Michigan's Games promote physical fitness for all Michigan citizens regardless of age or

ability and are Michigan's largest multi-sport event. Created by the Governor's Council in 1996 and sanctioned by the United States Olympic Committee, the Games attracted about 2,000 athletes the first year and more than 8,000 in 1997, a 272 percent increase.

A follow-up survey conducted with participants indicated 80 percent were committed to returning in 1998. Despite the significant increases in participation, however, the Foundation could not sustain operating expenses for the Games and its three other programs. Terman pointed out the cuts are in no way reflective of the Games' performance. He and Games Director Doug Finley are confident the program has been successful since its inception.

The Great Lakes State Games were initiated by the Governor's Council in 1995 to give Michigan residents a fun reason to get active and stay active.

The Games, which last year featured 25 sports ranging from bowling and golf to hockey and swimming, were popular with area organizations and individuals.

The Oakland Fitness Council and Farmington Family YMCA both took

an active role in the statewide Michigan Athletes' Relay, which was a prelude to the Games. In addition, a number of local athletes made the trip to Lansing the last two years with many bringing back medals.

This year's event was also supposed to mark the debut of women's ice hockey.

"The impact this will have on people and families is the hardest part of all this," Terman said.

Terman said Thursday the possibility of the Games returning in the future isn't entirely out of the question.

"In order to return the Games for next year, we would have to raise significant dollars in corporate support," he said. "But it's too soon to tell right now what may happen. There's a lot of regret and sorrow and grieving over the loss of this project which was one of the most visible that we did as the Governor's Council and Michigan Fitness Foundation."

Two other programs funded by the Governor's Council also suffered cuts last week.

Twelve regional fitness councils, which promote health and fitness around the state, had to cut an in-

active funding program in which corporate donations would be matched with MFF funding.

The Michigan Exemplary Physical Education Curriculum (MI-EPEC) program, which researches, creates and evaluates elementary physical education curricula, had to reduce its staff significantly.

■ **'The Impact this will have on people and families is the hardest part of all this.'**

Mark Terman
—Michigan Fitness Foundation executive director

The Governor's Council was formed in 1992 to combat the high rates of preventable disease among Michigan residents. For example, lack of physical activity and poor diet result in more deaths than alcohol, firearms, infectious toxic agents, sexually transmitted disease, motor vehicles and illicit drug use combined. Furthermore, 29 percent of adults are significantly overweight.

It's clear: Attitudes can affect our health



TO YOUR HEALTH
DR. KEITH LEVICK

Imagine a 61-year-old diagnosed with throat cancer. His prognosis was so dismal, doctors gave him a five percent chance to survive. He was unable to swallow, his weight dropped to 98 pounds.

Within two months of utilizing mental visualization as a treatment technique, the tumor was gone. He then used the same visualization techniques for arthritis and had the same success. Sound like a story for Ripley's Believe It or Not? Well, believe it.

This is the famous case of radiologist Dr. O. Carl Simonton which began a major shift in thinking regarding the importance of "psychology" and disease. Since the 17th century, scientists have separated body and mind. Physical diseases were explained and treated independent of the mind. Today scientists agree there is a body-mind connection. From Dr. Simonton to Dr. Dean Ornish (reversing heart disease), this body of research has reshaped the field of behavioral medicine — the mind-body connection.

Cancer, heart disease and other non-infectious illnesses are related to how we think and feel. Thoughts, moods and attitudes have a significant impact on which chemical messengers (neurotransmitters) are sent through the body. These hormones affect messages to the cells in the body, using the same pathways as viruses. The amount of protective hormones (peptide) surrounding the cell determines the ease in which the virus permeates the cell. It's as if the body functions as a large communication network. How we choose to react to a given stressor, therefore, can and does affect our health.

Does attitude affect our health? Study after study clearly supports that it does. As difficult as it is to believe, we are what we think. An interesting study conducted by Dr. Deepak Chopra illustrated the power of beliefs. Patients were able to end their nausea when given a pill they thought relieved nausea, but actually the pill was a placebo. In fact, the study showed that 300

business executives who were transferred to a new city. A high percentage of these men became ill after the move (because of the stress from change). The significant findings concerned the men who remained healthy. They all possessed a "hardy personality." Their attitudes and beliefs included a sense of control over the move, a commitment to their work, strong social support and regular exercise. The quality of our life certainly appears linked to the quality of our attitude. Let's look at some ways to enhance our attitude:

Humor
Laughter is shown to reduce stress because it causes chemical changes in our body. When we laugh, stress hormones that decrease immune functioning are reduced. Laughter also increases production of antibodies that are shown to help fight tumors and viruses.

Friendships and Social Connection
As society continues to become more privatized, social networks and systems deteriorate. We are becoming more isolated, alienated and lonely. This fragmentation contributes to health problems and to heart disease in particular. Studies indicate that lonely and isolated people are at three to five times greater risk for premature death compared with those who have a sense of connection and community.

Spirituality and prayer
In an attempt to reconnect, people are returning to religion and other ways to rejuvenate spirituality. Prayer appears to stimulate our self-healing mechanism. The reason remains unclear, but evidence suggests that while negative thoughts suppress the immune system, positive thoughts stimulate it.

Living life with an attitude of gratitude begins in our mind. The way in which we appraise and react to everyday stressors affects our mental and physical health. Let's try to quiet our mind and bodies and open up our hearts so we experience a sense of inner joy and well being that exists in all of us.

(Dr. Keith Levick is a health psychologist and the director of The Center for Childhood Weight Management in Farmington Hills. You can reach him at 248-687-6625 or send him an e-mail at levick@aol.com.)

Henry Ford first to offer new test

Women diagnosed with breast cancer can learn more about their risk for cancer recurrence as the result of a new test now offered only at Henry Ford Hospital.

The breast cancer gene test was only recently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. More than 206,000 American women are diagnosed with breast cancer each year. Although many of them will remain disease-free after their initial treatment for breast cancer, about 40,000 of them will eventually experience a recurrence of the disease.

Harold Thromb, Ph.D., the director of Henry Ford Health System's Molecular Oncology Laboratories, said the new test, known as the Oncor Inform HER-2/neu test, should prove valuable to all women who are diagnosed with breast cancer. The test will help physicians decide which women are more likely to have a recurrence and spread of their breast cancer.

This information helps determine which patients should get additional treatment.

Specifically, the HER-2/neu gene prompts the production of a protein that is believed to help cancer cells reproduce. The test measures how many copies of the gene are located in the cell. Most people have two copies of the gene. In clinical trials, the HER-2/neu test found that women who had five or more copies of the gene per cell were at greater risk for breast cancer recurrence. The test is currently being offered at a cost of about \$300, which is often covered by insurance. The test uses material already obtained in a tissue sample such as that obtained from a biopsy, so no further invasive testing is required.

The laboratory is only accepting referrals from physicians. For more information on the new gene test, call the Pathology Laboratory Service Center at (313) 876-2301.

Proper nutrition, healthy lifestyles learned at home

Are you the type to step on the scale every day and count fat grams or do you not even own a scale? Either way, you are probably aware of how being overweight or eating an unhealthy diet can adversely affect your health.

But have you stopped to think about how your children may be affected? Nutrition and healthy lifestyles are learned at home. It's never too early to start your kids on the right track toward a lifetime of healthy habits.

Contrary to what many people think, children ages two and older can consume a low-fat diet while still getting all the nutrients they need in order to grow. In fact, a recent study reported from the *Medical Tribune* found that children might even get better nutrition when restricting their fat intake to less than 30 percent of calories from fat.

Why? Because the children ended up replacing those calories with more healthy, low-fat foods for the fatty ones while getting a similar amount of nutrients. As a result, the lower-fat diet means a lowered risk of heart disease for these children.

It's hard to imagine that our children could be at risk for heart disease or any other diseases simply because of their age. Sadly, though, children are no exception to the rule. Childhood obesity is all too common these days and it's a major risk factor for many diseases that could lead to premature death.

Good nutrition starts with you. Parents need to set a good example by eating a variety of healthy foods, not smoking, and exercising. Here are some tips to help your children learn to get into the habit of leading a healthy lifestyle:

■ **Buy plenty of healthy "finger foods" that are easily accessible in the refrigerator, on the counters, and in the pantry.** That way, no matter where they turn, your children will be able to grab healthy snacks.

For example, leave a bowl of washed grapes on the counter to munch on while doing homework. Have fresh-chopped veggies on hand with a small container of low-fat "dip" beside them. Keep dried banana chips or low-fat wheat crackers on the pantry shelves for a crunchy snack anytime.

■ **Exercise regularly and make sure your kids do, too.** There are plenty of ways to get fit together — take a family bike ride, play tennis or go for a swim at a nearby pool with your children.

■ **Limit television and computer use so that they do not spend too much time involved with sedentary activities.** Hopefully, it will force them to seek out more entertaining activities.

■ **Cook healthy meals and pack lunches.** If you make the meal, you have the control over your child's choices. If you leave it up to the school cafeteria, the child may end up eating fried chicken nuggets and pizza every day.

■ **Do not make desserts, except on special occasions.** Kids can substitute those extra calories with a second helping of vegetables, fruit or lean meat.

■ **Keep only low-fat dairy products in the house.** Milk, cheese and yogurt all have low- and non-fat options and your kids probably won't even notice the difference.

■ **Keep fast-food meals to a minimum.** For the most part, your kids will probably end up ordering the high-fat, high-sodium sandwiches with french fries, which will probably exceed their recommended fat intake for an entire day!

■ **Do not let children munch on leftovers or snacks after a meal.** That teaches unhealthy habits that stay with us for life and are difficult to break.

When healthy eating habits begin at a young age, children will gravitate toward healthier foods as they grow older and start to make their food decisions independently.

That's why it's vital that you help protect your child's health by setting a good example yourself. You will do yourself and your children a whole lot of good.

I read every one of your letters and I love your commentaries. Please keep writing me with any questions, inspirational stories or suggestions for upcoming articles to: "Talk to the Mirror," Weight Watchers Corporate Communications, P/O Box 9072, Farmington Hills MI 48334-2974. For more information on Weight Watchers, call 1-888-3-FLOWINE.

(Florine Mark is an appointee to the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and the Michigan Fitness Foundation.)