

October 28, 2014

CHAMP Senior Wellness Fair draws nearly 800 visitors

On Oct. 23, Leticia Medrano walked through the gymnasium at the Timpany Center, visiting vendor booths at the fourth annual Senior Wellness Fair.

With a bag full of pamphlets about community resources for seniors and free giveaways she had collected throughout the morning, she sat down to have her blood pressure taken by one of the many student volunteers from San José State University's College of Applied Sciences and Arts Valley Foundation School of Nursing.

Medrano said she was having a great time at the Timpany Center, where she takes water classes and a better bones and balance class.

Nursing student Heather Bishop noted that the blood pressure booth was one of the few with a line.

"The seniors are usually on top of their blood pressure, but they like to check it," said Jonathan Dinson, who took Medrano's readings and said his class has been volunteering at the Timpany Center all semester. "She's one of the regulars."

The students said they do not diagnosis high blood pressure, but they can write a reading down for visitors that they can share with a doctor who can decide what they need.



Jonathan Dinson, left, takes Leticia Medrano's blood pressure at the Senior Wellness Fair on Oct. 23. Dinson, a student in SJSU's Valley Foundation School of Nursing, was just one of dozens of students to volunteer at the wellness fair from the College of Applied Sciences and Arts.

Bishop noted that in addition to giving the nursing students a chance to practice a skill, they also learned about resources in the community.

“We are working with seniors a lot this semester so there are a lot of resources we can share with patients,” she said.

The Senior Wellness Fair hosted at the Timpany Center on Oct. 23 brought in more than 789 attendees this year, with many students from SJSU’s College of Applied Sciences and Arts volunteering to interact with the population.

The Senior Wellness Fair is a partnership between SJSU’s Center for Healthy Aging in Multicultural Populations, the Santa Clara County Department of Aging and Adult Services and the Timpany Center, now in its fourth year. CHAMP is an interdisciplinary effort that includes faculty from the College of Applied Sciences and Arts’ School of Social Work, the Valley Foundation School of Nursing, Nutrition and Food Science, Kinesiology, Occupational Therapy as well as the departments of Psychology and Communicative Disorders and Sciences.

Sadhna Diwan, a professor of Social Work and the director of CHAMP, said the goals for students at the event are to practice implementing health promotion education with seniors; engage in interprofessional learning through exposure to the work of other disciplines or professions and learn about vital community resources that can be helpful to older adults and their families.

Martha Ortiz, a recreation therapy major, said she and her fellow students were giving a survey to seniors to find out if they are feeling unfilled in any part of their lives – physical, mental, social, spiritual or cognitive.

“We help them realize which area they should focus on and give them resources,” she said.

Ortiz said they were trying to help seniors understand that they can define their leisure time to help them feel more fulfilled, such as getting outdoors for a hike or a picnic.

Danelle Willey, a Nutrition and Food Science major, said she and the students at her booth were working with seniors to educate them on the sodium in different food products.

They had printed out labels of several condiments and popular food items, such as fish sauce and a frozen meal.

“We want to bring to light the high amount of sodium we can eat without realizing it,” Willey said. “It can put people at risk for high blood pressure, osteoporosis and other chronic diseases. By lower intake now, they can lessen the effects or not have them get them as early in life.”

One of the surprise items with a high level of sodium was the fish sauce, which contains 99 percent of the daily recommended amount of sodium. The students handed out free samples of a salt-free Mrs. Dash seasoning.

“They’ve been very receptive,” Willey said, of the seniors visiting the booth.



Veronica Cavillo, a student in the School of Social Work, interviews a senior about his mood at the Senior Wellness Fair Oct. 23. The event is a collaboration between San Jose State University Center for Healthy Aging in Multicultural Populations (CHAMP,) the Santa Clara County Department of Aging and Adult Services and the Timpany Center.

Students in the School of Social Work did a short survey with seniors to determine their mood to see if they might be in need of services to deal with a depressed mood.

“It can be a sensitive topic if they have a low mood,” said Lindsay Lytle. “We can tell them where to go for help and how to talk about it.”

The students had a sheet with community resources to share with seniors. Lytle said if anyone had a low mood they recommended the person speaking with a primary doctor to follow up.



College of Applied Sciences and Arts Interim Dean Alice Hines, from left, meets with Occupational Therapy Professor Megan Chang along with OT students Julie Rahan and Ashley Dawson at the Senior Wellness Fair.

Ashley Dawson and Julie Rahan, two Occupational Therapy students, worked with seniors to assess their risk of falls. At their booth, they first surveyed seniors to get their perception of their risk of falling and then did an assessment with the seniors.

“Depending on how they do physically, we make some recommendations,” Rahan said, of how they can prevent falls.

At the event, they offered a Falls Prevention workshop.

“Their perception is usually similar to the assessment,” Dawson said, noting that the seniors they had encountered in the morning were happy to do the assessment.

For more on CHAMP, visit: <http://www.sjsu.edu/champ/>