

Azusa Connects



Connect with **Azusa Pacific**

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Calendar of Events

JUNE

10–14 MO–FR **Cougar Baseball Camp** | Cougar Baseball Field
 and 17–21
 APU's baseball team hosts its annual Youth Summer Camp for local kids. The five-day program, open to boys ages 7–12, teaches Little Leaguers the fundamentals of baseball, including how to field ground balls and catch fly balls, as well as base-running, pitching, and hitting. www.apu.edu/athletics/baseball/camps

12–July 3 MO–FR **G.A.T.E. Summer School** | West Campus
 Azusa Pacific University hosts Azusa Unified School District's (AUSD) annual Gifted and Talented Education (G.A.T.E.) summer school for 3rd–12th grade participants. These students spend four weeks on campus taking classes taught by APU professors and AUSD teachers.

JULY

Start Dates Vary
Azusa Conservatory of Music | East Campus
 Azusa Pacific University's Azusa Conservatory of Music summer program gives local youth a chance to engage in their love of music as they improve their skills. Music instructors from APU and the Azusa Unified School District provide musical training to more than 100 Azusa students over the summer months. www.azusaconservatory.org

SEPTEMBER

9 MO **Azusa Reads/Writes/Counts** | Azusa City Library
 The Azusa Reads/Writes/Counts programs, APU's free tutoring options for local elementary school students, begin their fall session. The programs run Mondays through Thursdays and offer K–5 students individual tutoring in reading, writing, and math. www.apu.edu/casl

21, 28, Oct. 5 SA **City Links** | Across Local Cities
 City Links, held three Saturdays in the fall, is a service experience within the local community for all first-year students at Azusa Pacific University. Working with faith communities, schools, parks, and nonprofit organizations, students and community members take action to promote care for their neighborhoods. www.apu.edu/mas/ministries/citylinks

Centering on Health and Wellness by Kimberly Rios

Every Tuesday and Thursday, a group of Azusa residents gather outside a small building on Dalton Avenue. Teeming with energy, these individuals anticipate a three-mile walk or jog looping through upper Azusa. Not all are seasoned, but everyone holds two things in common: They are committed to maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle, and they use the resources afforded by Azusa Pacific University's Neighborhood Wellness Center (NWC).

For almost 15 years, the NWC has provided city residents with a place where they can learn more about their health and how to achieve a quality life. A joint effort between Azusa Pacific University and the city of Azusa, the NWC enables the APU School of Nursing to give back to the local community. APU nursing students employ their knowledge and training to help educate individuals. Julie Pusztai, MSN, RN, NWC director, and Juanita Rivera, athletic trainer for the Azusa Walks program, partner to run the center and implement new programs that assist residents with their health concerns and wellness goals.

"The wellness center is a very unique community program that provides our guests with education and the necessary support to make decisions that promote a long and healthy life," said Pusztai.

With two Azusa locations, the center champions programs suited to the varied needs of the city's diverse population, including routine health screenings. To date, more than 1,800 Azusa residents have taken advantage of this service. Since 1998, the NWC has recorded more than 8,200 visits, including appointments and walk-ins. From providing tips on diabetes prevention to explaining nutrition guidelines, APU nursing students and faculty members help transform lives as neighbors seize the opportunity to change poor health behaviors and improve outcomes.

To complement the health screenings, the NWC implemented fitness programs to encourage physical activity. The biweekly Azusa Walks program, held Tuesdays and Thursdays, remains the center's most popular option. Each week, 6 to 15 participants gather at the NWC to begin the three-mile walk

across North Azusa. Individuals travel at their own pace, whether they prefer running or walking, and use a pedometer to measure progress on the walk and at home. The NWC also runs the Neighbor-to-Neighbor (N2N) program, which emphasizes diabetes and obesity prevention services at the center, schools, churches, and other community groups.

"I like the Azusa Walks program because when I walk, I feel better," said Alicia Albarran, a program participant. "Plus, the pedometer I received through the program motivates me. It tells me if I haven't walked enough and keeps me accountable."

For a second year, the NWC received a \$5,000 community grant from the Kaiser Permanente Baldwin Park Medical Center to continue Let's Start at the Very Beginning, a program for mothers and their families that seeks to reduce obesity and prevent chronic disease. The no-cost program combines nutrition counseling and physical activity education, and participants are encouraged to join a walking class led by a certified athletic trainer.

Local women, including those who are pregnant and have permission from their doctors, can enroll anytime.

Through these foundational programs, the NWC affirms its commitment to helping Azusans be healthy.

Kimberly Rios '13 received a Celebrate Azusa Nancy Moore Scholarship, is a C.H.A.M.P. alumna, and graduated in May from Azusa Pacific University. She begins the Master of Arts in Management program at APU this summer.

Center Facts

740 N. Dalton Ave.; open on a walk-in basis Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8 a.m.–2 p.m.

5355 N. Enid Ave.; open on a walk-in basis Mondays and Wednesdays, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.

Both offices are open year-round, with the exception of August.

For more information, call (626) 812-5191.



Up Close: California State Senator Ed Hernandez (D-West Covina)

A native Californian, Senator Hernandez grew up in La Puente, where he returned after college to set up his optometrist practice. As a doctor and local business owner intent on improving access to health care, he ran for office and was elected to the Assembly in 2006, re-elected in 2008, and won a seat in the California State Senate in 2010.

APU: What does your role as chair of the senate health committee entail?

HERNANDEZ: Along with other committee members, I oversee every piece of health care legislation that relates to public health, alcohol and drug abuse, mental health, health insurance, managed care, and the institutions that provide this care.

APU: How will the Affordable Care Act (ACA) impact Californians?

HERNANDEZ: Once the ACA goes into full effect next year, up to five million more Californians will be eligible for health care and have access to doctors. No one will be denied coverage regardless of his or her age or pre-existing conditions. This news, however, comes with a catch—there will be a serious shortage of primary care physicians to meet the needs of this influx of patients. Adding to that, 45 percent of the current physician workforce is 65 or older and will be retiring soon. The dwindling pool of providers poses a serious challenge for lawmakers.

APU: How do we bridge the gap?

HERNANDEZ: I have proposed legislation to expand the scope of practice that would increase the services optometrists, nurse practitioners, and pharmacists can administer. This way, we would use our existing workforce of medically trained professionals, as other states have done, to alleviate the problem.

APU: Would this compromise patient safety?

HERNANDEZ: Not at all. I chose these three professions because they have rigorous training standards, are evenly distributed across the state, and are regulated by independent boards to ensure the integrity of their practice. These health care providers currently practice well below their level of training and could be the ideal solution to the problem. Under this proposal, optometrists and pharmacists could manage care and diagnose chronic illnesses, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, and nurse practitioners would be permitted to set up their own practices to help relieve the shortages in dozens of California communities.

APU: What other resources offer health care to Californians?

HERNANDEZ: Nonprofit and volunteer programs represent an integral part of the California health care system. Programs that bring together the skills and expertise of professionals for the good of the community provide an important access point for many people. APU's Neighborhood Wellness Center, which provides health screenings, nutrition counseling, weight control, diabetes prevention, and exercises programs, as well as Girls on the Move, Kids on the Move, and BOKS, which promote physical activity for kids, are excellent examples of this collaborative spirit at work. The goal is to ensure that every Californian can access affordable, quality health care, and we can do this by utilizing already-trained professionals to their fullest capabilities in every community.

Visit sd24.senate.ca.gov to learn more about Senator Hernandez and his work.

Keeping Emotionally Fit by Reducing Stress

by Scott Bledsoe

We all experience some stress as part of our normal, everyday lives. As we mature, we learn to cope with stress by participating in sports, drama, book clubs, church groups, etc. However, stress can periodically sneak in, build up, and keep us from reaching our goals. It may impact us physiologically through increased heart rate, reddening of the skin, or muscle tension; and on a cognitive level, affecting our memory and problem-solving skills. To successfully manage your stress, keep these four things in mind:

- 1. Stress can be a good thing.** It is our body's way of telling us to slow down and ease up. Stress acts like the warning light in a car that indicates a problem. If you heed the warning, you can return to normal levels of operation. If not, negative things may happen not only to your body, but also to your emotions, and possibly your outlook on life.
- 2. Stressful thoughts and physical complaints (e.g., stomachaches, muscle tension) often work together as part of a vicious cycle.** You can interrupt the cycle by taking a few long, deep breaths—literally breathing out the stress—whenever a stressful thought occurs. Try it for a while and you may be able to reduce your negative thoughts and physical problems.
- 3. If you suffer from stress on a daily basis, take a holiday from your stress.** Plan a special day that does not include typical stress-related activities. For example, if you often have arguments about television programs and control of the remote, consider implementing a TV-free day.

- 4. It may be helpful to create an emotional toolkit out of a shopping bag or shoe box in which you keep specific items to maintain psychological wellness.** Examples follow.

Coping skills list: What do you do to reduce your stress level? Do you listen to music or take a walk? Make a list of your coping skills and keep it in your toolkit for stressful times.

Favorite CDs, books, and relaxation tapes: Include CDs and books that promote relaxation and well-being.

Time management: A big part of psychological fitness involves knowing how to manage your time. A daily planner or hand-made calendar can provide a visual way of planning ahead effectively.

Spiritual tools: Feeling overwhelmed can sometimes have a negative impact on your relationship with God. Your toolkit can include your Bible and a list of favorite Scriptures.

Important phone numbers: Know who to call for support when you need it. Phoning a friend or family member can be just the thing you need when feeling low.

In short, stress involves a complex process that impacts both our bodies and minds. No single solution works for everyone and no solution will work without motivation and planning. Don't allow the pressures of the moment to keep you from realizing the joyful person you can be. Remember that Christ is there for you even during the hardest of times, as stated in Matthew 11:28: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

T. Scott Bledsoe, Psy.D., a psychologist, is an assistant professor in APU's Department of Graduate Psychology and serves on the Azusa Homeless Voucher Task Force and board of Homework House.



Moving to Change

by Becky Keife

Seven middle school girls stood awkwardly in the center of a linoleum-floored rec room, glancing from their reflections in the mirrored wall to the unfamiliar college student standing before them. Five weeks later, these same adolescents danced in rhythmic synchronization to their favorite new hip-hop aerobics routine, wishing the session didn't have to end. Two years later, the city of Azusa continues to garner support for such programs that promote a healthy lifestyle.

Moving Children Toward Healthy Living

As director of community relations, Ginny Dadaian loves discovering new ways to help Azusa Pacific University serve its surrounding community. So when Julie Pusztai, MSN, RN, APU's director of the Neighborhood Wellness Center, shared that moms attending the center's walking program voiced concern about their daughters' inactivity and expressed interest in some type of fitness program for them, too, Dadaian began brainstorming options. She came up with the idea of educating middle school girls about the importance of health through an aerobics program taught by an APU student.

Dadaian teamed up with Sharon Lehman, Ed.D., chair of APU's Department of Exercise and Sport Science and associate athletics director, to implement the program. Lehman enlisted

Diana Rudulph '03, M.A. '05, assistant professor. "Her expertise as a certified personal trainer, combined with her passion for community health, made her perfect for the task. She is a multitaled and inspirational young faculty member. I knew she would inspire kids in Azusa to get fit," said Lehman.

A collaboration between several APU offices and Azusa Recreation & Family Services launched the first Girls on the Move session in October 2009. This initiative received the heartfelt support of Azusa Mayor Joseph Rocha. An advocate for health and wellness in his city, Mayor Rocha praises the Girls on the Move endeavor for encouraging students to achieve their fitness goals.

Hip-Hop, Health, and Positivity

Girls on the Move links teens' love of hip-hop music with what program organizers hope they grow to love—exercise. "Incorporating what the girls think is cool into a workout teaches them that exercise is not just about sports or running, but it can also be something that you really enjoy," said Rudulph.

Feedback from Girls on the Move proved so positive that Kids on the Move followed shortly thereafter, targeting first- through fifth-grade girls and boys. The program energizes elementary kids with a variety of activities such as cardio stations, obstacle courses,

and the ever-popular game of tag, and provides students with at-home fitness challenges aimed at keeping the kids and their families moving throughout the week.

Reversing the Obesity Epidemic One Child at a Time

Kids on the Move arrived at an ideal time for the children of Azusa. An assessment conducted by the district nurse found that 34 percent of second graders in Azusa Unified schools are obese, according to Centers for Disease Control guidelines. Currently, Kids on the Move draws 34 participants and Girls on the Move has 8.

How to Get Involved

- Attend sessions at the North Recreation Center at Memorial Park.
- Participate in two 5-week sessions in the fall and three 5-week sessions in the spring.
- The fall session of Kids on the Move begins September 10, 3:30–4:30 p.m.

For more information, contact Diana Rudulph at drudulph@apu.edu or call (626) 815-6000, Ext. 5193.

Becky Keife is a freelance writer living in Glendora whose three young boys keep her on the move.

Community News

Building Our Kids' Success (BOKS), one of APU's newest fitness programs held at local elementary schools, received praise from First Lady Michelle Obama and New York Giants quarterback Eli Manning for keeping children healthy and active. The program, which combines play and physical activity to create healthier habits for children, takes place at Powell and Gladstone Street elementary schools.

The Neighborhood Wellness Center continues to host its biweekly walking program, Azusa Walks. The activity, which is held at two locations within the city, involves residents in a group walk session led by a certified athletic trainer. The program takes place Tuesdays and Thursdays at the center's Dalton Avenue location at 8:15 a.m., and Mondays and Wednesdays at 8:15 a.m. at the Valleydale location on Enid Avenue. Participants who agree to return for five weeks receive a free seven-day memory pedometer and an Azusa Walks T-shirt.

APU's Azusa Literacy program, sponsored by the Neighborhood Wellness Center, continues to educate adults in the community on the topic of health literacy, while improving their English language skills. The program, which began last fall, takes place at local high schools in the spring and fall. The 8–10-week sessions are open to all Azusa residents.

Azusa Pacific University's Community Counseling Center (CCC) provides quality-counseling services at a low cost to the Azusa community. Open Monday through Saturday, the center offers four main services: counseling/psychotherapy, school-based consultation, the Victims of Crime program, and group therapy. Call (626) 815-5421 or visit www.apu.edu/ccc to learn more.