

ACCENT

www.thejournalnet.com

TO YOUR HEALTH

Daily Journal staff report

Wellness assessments available for \$15

Wellness assessments will be offered at a minimal cost Wednesday and Friday beginning at 7 a.m. at Franklin Cultural Arts and Recreation Center, 396 Branigin Blvd.

Cost is \$15.

Residents can have their blood pressure taken and have blood drawn to assess total cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein and low-density lipoprotein, triglycerides and glucose.

Participants must fast at least eight hours prior to testing. Lab results will be mailed to each person.

Participants must preregister at the recreation center. Information: 736-3689

Free session offers information on Medicare

Southport Heights Christian Church is offering a free presentation on the new Medicare Part D prescription drug program.

The hourlong informational meeting will be 6:15 p.m. today. Jim Poole, director of Senior Promise of St. Francis Hospital, will explain the program.

The church is at 7154 S. McFarland Road on the south side of Indianapolis.

Information: 783-7714

Church organizes training for mini-marathon

Mount Pleasant Christian Church will offer a 16-week training program for the annual Indianapolis 500 Festival mini-marathon, set for May 6.

Advanced registration costs \$50 and includes weekly training clinics, scheduled group runs/walks and a pasta dinner May 5.

Training begins Jan. 17.

Information: 881-6727, Ext. 238, or www.mount.org

Flu, pneumonia shots available in Indianapolis

Flu and pneumonia shot clinics will be available from 4 to 6 p.m. Wednesday and 10 a.m. to noon Thursday at Visiting Nurse Service, 4701 N. Keystone Ave. in Indianapolis.

The cost of a flu shot is \$25, and pneumonia shots are available for \$35.

Medicare Part-B recipients who present their card can receive both shots at no charge. The nurse service will submit the claim to Medicare.

The FluMist vaccine will also be available for \$35 to healthy people age 5 to 49.

Information: 722-8200 or www.vnsi.org

Martial arts-style activity includes aerobic exercises

Neuromuscular integrative action, an exercise program that includes dance, martial and healing arts with aerobic, nonimpact activities, is offered at St. Francis Hospital's Carson Square office, 31435 E. Thompson Road in Indianapolis.

Classes are at 6 p.m. Wednesdays and 9 a.m. Saturdays. Participants can join any time.

Cost is \$5 per class or \$50 for 13 classes.

Information: 865-5864

Quit smoking with help of lung association class

St. Francis Hospital & Health Centers will offer the Freedom from Smoking class developed by the American Lung Association beginning Jan. 17.

The program offers individuals a step-by-step plan to break the habit of smoking.

The seven-week class will meet from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays at St. Francis Community Relations, 3145 E. Thompson Road.

Cost is \$50, which may be reimbursed by insurance.

Information: 782-7999

Speakers help women live life to fullest potential

St. Francis Hospital's Spirit of Women program presents "Your Best Self Now," a four-part series celebrating a woman's approach to better living and more vitality.

The first seminar will take place at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 24 at Primo Banquet & Conference Center, 2415 National Ave. in Indianapolis.

The cost is \$10 for the public and \$5 for Spirit of Women and Senior Promise members.

Information and registration: 865-5865

Risks stacked against Hispanic babies

Organization encouraging women to fill bellies with fruits, veggies

By ANNETTE JONES

DAILY JOURNAL FEATURES EDITOR
ajones@thejournalnet.com

Greenwood organization is working to reduce the number of Hispanic babies born with birth defects.

Esperanza en Jesucristo (Hope in Jesus Christ) is joining national groups in educating women of childbearing age about the importance of folic acid for a fetus.

Hispanic women in the United States have a higher risk of delivering babies with defects of the brain and spine than white mothers, according to the National Council on Folic Acid.

A key to preventing birth defects is consuming folic acid before conception and during the earliest weeks of pregnancy, when the neural tube is formed. The tube develops into the brain and spinal column.

Margarita Hart, founder of Esperanza en Jesucristo, says Hispanic women new to the United States often don't know folic acid is important during pregnancy.

Many Hispanics in the Greenwood area are from small villages in Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras, where prenatal care isn't part of the culture. They distrust the U.S. medical community, and a language barrier can impede communication.

Families also can't afford to buy many foods high in folic acid in this country.

"In their natural habitat, they would have eaten a lot more fruits and vegetables than they do here," she says. "They grow them in their back yards."

Hindering educational opportunities is the lack of affordable health care for some

PRENATAL PREP

Health experts recommend 400 micrograms of folic acid daily. Besides multivitamins, the nutrient is found in foods such as:

- Whole wheat cereals
- Iceberg lettuce
- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Spinach
- Sunflower seeds
- Orange juice, especially juice from concentrate
- Dried beans
- Avocados
- Lentils, such as green peas
- Romaine lettuce
- Whole wheat pastas and breads
- Peanuts

HELP FOR HISPANICS

Esperanza en Jesucristo

(Hope in Jesus Christ)

What: Community resource for Latinos offering educational, medical and legal services

Where: 435 E. Main St. Building G, on the west side of the building, in Greenwood

Information: call 881-4673, Ext. 1, or e-mail margarita@esperanzanjesus.org

Prenatal 101

Esperanza will offer prenatal clinics from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the organization's office on the third Monday of the every month beginning Monday.

Other programs

- Spanish-language classes for social service groups
- Cultural enrichment and appreciation events
- Literacy assistance resources
- Classes in parenting and assisting in school/parent relationships
- Homework assistance
- English as a second language courses
- Nutrition education
- Coordinating health-care services
- Health awareness workshops
- Education on legal rights and responsibilities
- Job fairs
- Educating community on Hispanic culture



STAFF PHOTO BY SCOTT ROBERSON/sroberson@thejournalnet.com
Margarita Hart, center, works with Franklin College seniors Jodi Rodriguez, left, and Laura Young to help Hispanic families.

women, says Dr. Rob Sanchez, medical director at the Edinburg Family Health Center. The facility offers services on a sliding price scale, but even reduced-cost care is out of reach for many Hispanics.

Women often don't see a doctor until late in pregnancy, Sanchez says.

"They don't understand the importance of prenatal care to prevent things that are preventable," he says.

Beginning this month, Esperanza en Jesucristo, is offering a prenatal clinic with volunteer doctors the third Monday of every month at its office at 435 E. Main St. Building G in Greenwood.

Hart is also working to produce Spanish educational material for young mothers.

Research shows that consuming folic acid before and during early pregnancy can lower the rate of neural tube defects by up to 70 percent.

The U.S. Public Health Service recommends women of childbearing age consume at least 400 micrograms of folic acid daily by taking a multivitamin and eating foods high in the acid, like citrus fruits and beans.

To accelerate the awareness of prenatal care in the Hispanic community, Hart reaches out to women on a personal level.

"As soon as I know someone is pregnant, I go to visit them in their home and try to connect with them so they will trust me enough to take them to the doctor," she says.

Folic acid is important to help prevent birth defects in the first few weeks of pregnancy. Citrus fruits are high in the natural form of folic acid, called folate.

STAFF PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT ROBERSON/sroberson@thejournalnet.com



AP PHOTO
Television veteran Dick Clark gets a hug from singer Mariah Carey on Dec. 31. Clark made his first TV appearance on New Year's Eve since a stroke in late 2004.

Clark inspires stroke patients

New Year's Eve host wasn't rockin', but he was there

By JOCELYN NOVECK
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK

He sat stiffly behind a desk, one hand in front of him, one down at his side.

His words had the slurred sound of a stroke victim. But his cadence was brisk, he made himself clear, and most of all, he had a national TV audience.

Stroke survivors and their advocates say they were cheered and inspired by Dick Clark's New Year's Eve appearance, ringing in 2006 a year after his debilitating stroke.

"It was a tremendously courageous thing to do," said Leanne Hendrix, who was 26 when she had a stroke three years ago.

Hendrix, a former Miss Arizona who lives in Phoenix, echoed a hope common among stroke survivors interviewed: that the public might begin to treat them with the respect and admiration given those who've overcome cancer or heart attacks.

"Survivors of those other diseases seem to wear a badge of honor," Hendrix said.

But a stroke, with its obvious impairment, "maybe isn't a pretty thing to look at. It's definitely not a sexy disease," she said. "So for him to get up on national TV and say, 'This is what I am now,' I have nothing but respect for him."

Diane Mulligan-Fairfield of the National Stroke Association, a public education organization, called Clark a hero for showing the world his condition.

"Hero is not normally a word we associate with stroke survivors," she said. "We are trying to change that."

Clark's appearance on "New Year's Rockin' Eve" came a year after the December 2004 stroke that forced him to miss last year's show.

On New Year's Eve, seated inside a studio at Times Square, the 76-year-old entertainer began by acknowledging his condition, saying learning to walk and talk again had been a long, hard fight.

But, he said, "I wouldn't have missed this for the world."

His words were muffled, but he kept a quick pace during his brief appearances sprinkled through the telecast. At midnight, he counted down the seconds as the ball dropped, then kissed his wife, Kari, sitting next to him at his desk.

While some found the appearance moving, others seemed to find it inappropriate.

"Viewers ... may well have been hoping the famous giant ball was the only thing that would drop before the night was over," wrote Washington Post TV critic Tom Shales.

In the New York Times, reviewer Virginia Heffernan called Clark's description of his speech ("not perfect") an understatement.

Negative comments angered Karl Guerra of Annapolis, Md., who has been recovering from a stroke for the past five years. He called Clark's recovery remarkable.



Ill dog requires constant care after pet-food poisoning

By JOHN C. DRAKE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA, S.C.

Caring for her ailing 9-year-old chow has taken over Shanika Stewart's life.

Cocoa must be force-fed with a syringe six times a day since suffering permanent liver damage after eating contaminated dog food.

"I haven't had any time to do anything but take care of her," said Stewart, a 19-year-old nursing student at the University of South Carolina. "She's the No. 1 priority. ... I get maybe four hours of sleep before she wakes me up."

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration reports at least 76 dogs are believed to have died as a result of eating contaminated Diamond Pet Foods.

Diamond officials say they are doing what they can to help affected pet owners.

"It's going to take some time to take care of all these customers, and we're going to do it," said the company's chief operating officer, Mark Brinkmann.

The company has recalled 19 varieties of dog and cat food because tests showed high levels of aflatoxin, a naturally occurring toxic chemical that comes from a fungus found on corn and other grains that causes severe liver damage in animals.

The company recalled products manufactured at its Gaston, S.C., plant from around September to November. Based on sample testing, Diamond has narrowed down the exposure to food produced on Oct. 11, Brinkmann said recently.

The FDA and the South Carol-

ina Department of Agriculture have launched investigations.

Stewart's other dog, a 2-year-old pit bull named Chulo, died last month just hours after being diagnosed with liver failure. It was only then that the family learned of the recall.

Steve Shrum, president of the South Carolina Association of Veterinarians, said vets around the state were confused when puppies began showing signs of liver problems usually seen in older dogs.

"It takes such a small amount, and there's pretty much nothing you can do with the process that will inactivate that toxin once it gets in the food supply," he said.

Diamond has promised to reimburse pet owners for vet bills and other costs associated with the aflatoxin poisoning.



AP PHOTO
Shanika Stewart force-feeds Ensure to her chow, "Cocoa," at her home in Columbia, S.C. The dog can't eat solid foods since suffering permanent liver damage.