

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Healthbeat

Wake Forest Baptist receives funds for ALS research

The Blazeman Foundation for ALS has awarded a grant of \$11,300, with the possibility of providing an additional \$11,000, to support research into Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) being conducted at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center.

ALS is a debilitating and lethal disease characterized by muscle weakness, paralysis and ultimately respiratory failure. The research study, titled "Muscle Fiber Type Switch as a Potential Therapeutic Target for ALS," is being conducted by Dr. Carol Milligan, professor, and Dr. Ramon Jimenez-Moreno, research fellow, in the Department of Neurobiology and Anatomy.

The study will examine the use of the FDA-approved drug AICAR in inducing muscle-fiber type switch in the mouse model of ALS. Milligan said positive results in the study could provide the first step toward a clinical trial of AICAR for treating ALS symptoms.

"The Blazeman Foundation for ALS provides funds to explore new ideas," Milligan said. "They are, without a doubt, laying a foundation for large advancements in understanding the disease and the development of effective therapeutics."

Milligan said researchers working on ALS and other neurodegenerative diseases often lack the funding needed to obtain preliminary data. She said the grant addresses that need, which will make it easier to secure additional funding from other sources and promote further research.

The Blazeman Foundation honors Jonathan "Blazeman" Blais, who was a well-travelled elite athlete and multi-sport competitor, when he was diagnosed with ALS in 2005 at age 33. Blais became a major advocate for ALS research before he died in 2007.

Obesity risk high for nearly half of NC's kids

Nearly half of North Carolina's elementary and middle school aged children may be at risk for childhood obesity and its related diseases. Fitness testing results from more than 82,000 NC students found, according to body mass index (BMI) data, 43 percent are at risk for metabolic syndrome, a group of risk factors including a high BMI and poor physical fitness, that may lead to cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

"The warning signs were here years ago. This is the final wakeup call; 43 percent cannot be ignored. Today's overweight and obese youth are already a threat to national security - too few are physically fit enough to join the military. The problems are large scale and numerous. Every parent, policy maker, educator, and child must make physical education and fitness top priorities," said North Carolina Alliance for Athletics, Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (NCAAHPERD) Executive Director Dr. Ron Morrow.

The findings are a result of the In-School Prevention of Obesity and Disease (ISPOD) initiative, a \$4 million grant program supported by the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust. ISPOD combines SPARK, a standardized, evidence-based PE curriculum proven to reduce childhood obesity, with the nation's first fitness testing solution at a statewide level.

Campaign targets cigarette butt litter

With the cooperation of downtown businesses, Keep Winston-Salem Beautiful has placed cigarette butt receptacles along Fourth and Trade streets as part of a new campaign to fight cigarette litter.

The campaign also includes advertisements, free pocket ashtrays, a web site and a public service announcement, says George Stilphen, the executive director of Keep Winston-Salem Beautiful.

"In the past decade, cigarette smoking in America has decreased 28 percent, yet cigarette butts remain the most littered item in the United States and in our city," Stilphen said. "Cigarette butts contain artificial fibers that are not biodegradable and they harbor toxic chemicals. Every cigarette butt thrown on the ground stays there until someone picks it up."

Receptacles for cigarette butts have been placed on Fourth Street at Foothills Brewing, Separk Music, Noma, Mellow Mushroom, Rana Loca and the Nissen Building; and on Trade Street at The Other Half Gallery, Chelsea's, Sweet Potatoes, the Winston-Salem Urban League, Finnigan's Wake, the Silver Moon Saloon, Elliott's Revue and the Bubbling Well. Additional locations may be added.

A new web site, www.EveryButtHurts.com, has been created to promote the campaign, and drink coasters advertising the site have been distributed to restaurants and bars downtown.



Blais

Grief from job loss comparable to losing a loved one, says professor

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Today's economic times with wide-spread massive layoffs, home foreclosures, threats of global unrest and other personally stressful situations, are causing record numbers of people to experience grief that is comparable to the loss of a spouse or close family member, according to a Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) instructor and author.

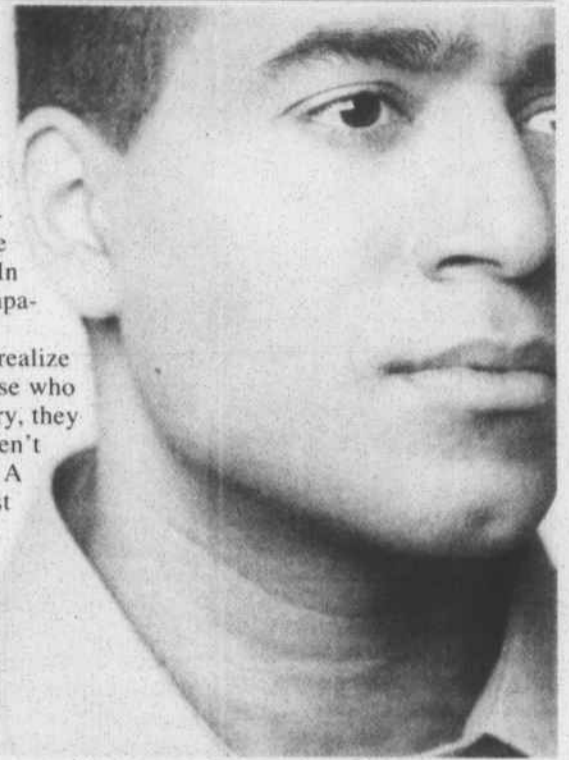
Similar to the loss of a relative, individuals who receive news of their layoff are likely to experience a series of painful and surprising emotions, which are the common symptoms of grief, which can be more debilitating because of its extensive impact. These include shock and denial, disbelief, sadness, guilt, anger and fear. In addition, they may even face physical affects such as weight loss or gain, fatigue, impatience, physical pain and insomnia.

"Tens of millions of people are suffering from various forms of grief and don't realize it," said Elizabeth Fain, WSSU instructor of occupational therapy. "And even those who may recognize the symptoms may not know how to get help because when they try, they find themselves dealing with the many health care professionals and friends who aren't equipped to help," says Fain, who is also author of the new book, "Good Grief: A Care Map for the Grief Journey," by Jebiare publishing. The book is a guide to assist those going through grief, whether it is as the bereaved or a friend of the bereaved.

There are five stages of grief people should expect to experience on the road to recovery: denial, anger, bargaining such as "if this is fixed, I promise I will . . ." depression and finally, acceptance. In that final stage, individuals accept that the loss is real and begin making decisions to move forward dealing with the loss.

"Understanding the journey and when you arrive at

See Grief on A8



Official White House Photo by Chuck Kennedy
First Lady Michelle Obama joins students for a "Let's Move!" Salad Bars to Schools launch event at Riverside Elementary School in Miami on Nov. 22.

NCSU to play part in pushing First Lady's fitness initiative

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Deputy Agriculture Secretary Kathleen A. Merrigan was at N.C. State University (NCSU) in Raleigh last week to announce a grant to develop an obesity prevention program that aims to increase access to healthy food and safe places that offer physical activity. The announcement was delivered as part of the first anniversary of First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move!" initiative.

"One year ago, First Lady Michelle Obama launched the Let's Move! initiative with a goal of solving childhood obesity within a generation so that kids born today will grow up healthier and better able to pursue their dreams," Merrigan said. "Today, we build on that commitment with an investment in research that will help prevent obesity, which can help create healthier communities and families in North Carolina and across the country."

USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) awarded \$3,026,939 to

NCSU researcher Sarah Bowen, who will work to gain a better understanding of how the "food environment" - which includes social, cultural, political, economic and environmental factors - affects patterns of childhood obesity.

Most of the recent research on obesity has focused on individual eating behaviors. While this research is important, the USDA says that it often ignores the sociological challenges behind childhood obesity. NCSU's research project will address the wider structural factors that contribute to the drastic increases in obesity, particularly among low-income populations. Looking at all environmental factors will help drive community-led proposals for concrete environmental and policy changes to address these challenges.

The project will interview low-income mothers about their food practices and perceptions to understand how they promote childhood obesity. The research will then be incorporated into the Faithful Families project, a special project of the

See NCSU on A8



Merrigan

Settlement dollars will help state's food banks

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

N.C. Attorney General Roy Cooper was in Winston-Salem last week to announce \$740,000 in grant funds to help fight hunger across the state.

Cooper made the announcement at the headquarters of Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina, which serves more than a dozen counties.

Second Harvest says that the money comes at a time when the state's food banks are working harder than ever to meet the needs of North Carolina families hit by the economic downturn. North Carolina food banks have seen a 30 percent increase in need since 2006, according to the NC Association of Feeding America Food Banks. The demand is even higher in the Second Harvest Food Bank of



Attorney General Roy Cooper speak as Clyde Fitzgerald listens.

NWNC service area, which, in the last two years, has experienced a 100 percent increase in the amount of people needing help.

"Many people who've never needed their local food bank before suddenly do. Meanwhile, many of the families and com-

See Food Banks on A8

Treatments for Heart Disease

The People's Clinic:
A North Carolina Minority
Health Education Collaborative

The Maya Angelou Center for Health Equity
www.wfubmc.edu/mache

WAKE FOREST
UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

For the past two weeks, we have been discussing what heart disease is and how you can reduce your risk of developing heart disease. As we talked about last week, quitting smoking and getting to a healthy weight are also great steps to treating hypertension (high blood pressure), or high cholesterol, and heart disease, but sometimes, even those people who do live a healthy lifestyle develop these conditions. Medications and surgical procedures are sometimes needed to control heart disease and its risk factors. Having regular, yearly checkups with your doctor helps monitor your health and allows you and your doctor to determine the right treatment regimen for you.

How is Heart Disease Diagnosed?

Your doctor may perform several tests, some noninvasive (which do not involve inserting instruments or fluids into the body) and some invasive. Examples of noninvasive tests are: resting or non-resting electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG), chest X-ray, exercise stress test, computed tomography (CT) scan, and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). The CT and MRT scans allow the doctor to see a 3-D image of your heart. The most common invasive procedure is a cardiac catheterization, during which a doctor inserts a thin plastic tube (catheter) into an artery or vein in the arm or leg. From there, it can be sent into the chambers of the heart or into the coronary arteries, allowing the doctor to see what areas are blocked or affected by disease.

Medications

There are a variety of heart medications you can take to treat or prevent heart disease. These drugs lower your blood pressure, reduce the level of cholesterol in your blood, or help your body get rid of excess fluids that affect your heart's ability to pump blood. Medication needs vary for each person. According to the American Heart Association, some guidelines to keep in mind when you're taking heart disease medications are:

- Know the name of your medications and how they work.

- Take your medications as scheduled, at the same time every day. If you forget a dose, call your doctor or pharmacist

See Treatment on A10