

UNC ambassadors provide free screenings

Program targets minorities' health

BY SAM WINEKA
STAFF WRITER

About 80 people received free health care screenings and information Saturday in Chapel Hill — along with some free food.

The N.C. Health Careers Access Program Ambassadors held its third annual Health on the Block at Hargraves Community Center.

The NC-HCAP works to encourage students to enter health professions. At UNC, students participate as NC-HCAP ambassadors, holding events including Health on the Block, working with the Ronald McDonald House and tutoring.

Saturday's Health on the Block provided free health care screenings to residents who might have limited access to health care otherwise.

"Health disparities affect minorities more, and they usually are the underserved communities," said senior LaVonne Hairston, NC-HCAP Ambassadors president.

"We think this park's location is

good because it's right across the street from the community we're trying to reach," she said.

NC-HCAP Ambassadors provided blood pressure checks, vision screenings and hearing screenings — all free of charge.

"Lots of people are reluctant to go to the doctor and sometimes lack insurance," Hairston said. "That's why everything is free, and if they don't have transportation, we bring it to them."

The event was open to anyone, but it focused on the predominantly black Northside neighborhood around the community center.

"This is part of our primary service area," said A.J. Brooks, a UNC graduate and former president of the NC-HCAP Ambassadors. "We're trying to provide some basic health care to the population and have some family fun."

The program's main visitors were children and students.

"I came out of curiosity," said James E. Williams, a UNC junior who heard about the event on Facebook.com.

Williams said he learned new health habits at the event.

"I learned to make sure I'm not

overworking myself when I work out, and I found my target heart rate," he said. "I also learned to reduce my salt intake."

Groups represented at the event included the Orange County Rape Crisis Center and student groups such as the UNC Association of Nursing Students, who performed the blood pressure checks.

"Part of nursing is going out in the community and spreading information," said Kristina Brown, a UNC senior and fundraising chairwoman of UNC Association of Nursing Students. "People are walking around with high blood pressure, and they don't even know it."

One of those people was Carrboro resident April Coan. "I just found out I'm prehypertensive," she said. This means she is at risk for hypertension.

Coan said residents should take advantage of programs such as the health fair to stay healthy.

"If you haven't been to the doctor in a while it's a good way to get screened."

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.



Kristina Brown, a School of Nursing student, takes sophomore Latorya Hill's blood pressure at Health on the Block at Hargraves Community Center. UNC students participated in the annual event, providing free health screenings.

FIREY HOOP-LA



DTH/ELI SINKUS

Julia Hartsell, a local hula hoop instructor and performer, performs a fire dance in Carrboro Town Commons on Saturday at an event she organized to raise money for orphanages in Haiti. "Hoops for Haiti" attracted hundreds of hula hoopers who hooped while enjoying live music.

Schools take part in music month

BY JEN SHURNEY
STAFF WRITER

This month, music and cultural art educators are encouraged to inspire students nationwide to participate in music and art programs in light of Music in Our Schools Month.

Music in Our Schools Month is strongly supported by MENC: The National Association for Music Education, a 100-year-old organization that serves to alert teachers and students of the purpose and necessity of music programs.

It encourages music programs to work with the media and community leaders to hold concerts, invite parents to school programs and raise the awareness of how great music can be for kids, said Elizabeth Lasko, director of public relations for MENC.

MENC constitutes about 130,000 members nationwide and has been supporting Music in Our Schools Month for about 30 years.

Orange County Schools' Cedar Ridge High School partners with MENC in a program called Tri-M, which stands for Modern Music Masters, in which high-school students of great music and academic caliber are recognized, similar to the National Honor Society.

There are about 60 students in this program at Cedar Ridge High.

Other schools in Orange County

also have successful music programs for students at the elementary-, middle- and high-school levels.

Chapel Hill-Carrboro schools require that all elementary students have music as a "special," a weekly extracurricular.

Middle-school students also are encouraged to enroll in music and art classes, and high-school students must have at least a year of art, music or technical education, said Pam Hemminger, vice chairwoman of the school board.

"(Music programs) have a lot of community support, and they're very highly encouraged," she said.

Budget issues typically determine the strength and abilities of music programs and extracurriculars, Lasko said.

In both the Orange County and Chapel Hill-Carrboro school systems, cultural arts are funded by the districts, but schools have the ability to reallocate their money into and out of the arts as needed.

Anne D'Annunzio, spokeswoman for Orange County Schools, said that in addition to teachers' salaries for the arts, the county pays for an arts coordinator, who works with the schools to align the cultural arts programs, supplies and materials, trips to music shows and concerts, and instruments.

Chapel Hill High band director Drew Carter said that local music programs have needs but that they



DTH/AMY HOLTZER

Fran Shelton conducts a group of high-school students in the Cedar Ridge High School auditorium. The performance ended in a standing ovation.

are much better equipped than some others around the state.

"We have needs that the school does not provide us with, but we do lots and lots of fundraising."

Patricia Quigley, band director at Cedar Ridge, said she has never turned a child away because of a lack of instruments or equipment.

This support is not matched nationwide, as many students are

unable to afford or are not presented with available band or music programs.

"We believe anecdotally that probably half of all students are getting a full, high-quality music education," Lasko said.

"We are working to try and change that."

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