Did you take time for yourself on April 23 to attend the Earth and Wellness Day? This year’s event introduced ways in which we can “unplug” and take a break from being connected to our smart phones, laptops, tablets, etc. Attendees had the opportunity to try out hula fitness, chair yoga, tai chi, and drumming. In addition to general wellness resources related to elder care, nutrition, and green cleaning, information was available about hiking in the Adirondacks, geocaching, knitting, and gardening. And of course, the inviting therapy dogs were on hand for some stress-reducing petting!

EAP coordinates events such as the Earth and Wellness Day and Lunchtime Wellness Programs to provide opportunities for faculty and staff to unplug during the middle of the work day. These offerings present health and wellness education and provide a unique break during the day to replenish and rejuvenate one’s self. If you aren’t taking advantage of your EAP benefit in this way, make a “note to self” to do so when full programming kicks in again during the fall semester. You’ll be glad you did!

Asian Arts Group facilitated tai chi movements and had people going with the flow!
Left: EAP Committee member Maryann Murray-Wygel, UA Foundation Representative.

Drumming demonstration facilitated by Kate Rogers. They had the beat!
Photo: Merissa Mabee, EAP Committee Member, M/C Representative.
Hoarding Is Serious Stuff

Hoarding disorder is a treatable condition affecting about 3% of the population. Hoarders collect possessions and do not discard them when they become worthless or are no longer needed. Clutter grows because of a distorted definition of what is needed or valued. Possessions may be perceived as being useful someday, having sentimental value, being one of a kind, providing a solution to a future problem, or possessing valuable information, such as with magazines and newspapers. The key decision characterizing hoarders is “It’s better to keep it.” If you’re embarrassed to have visitors to your home, burdened by debt from frivolous purchases, feeling guilty about the loss of control, misplacing things despite putting them down in special locations so they don’t get lost, or finding that family or loved ones point out these frustrations, then learn more about hoarding disorder. Speak with a professional counselor so you can break free of the toxic level of clutter and the health and safety issues that accompany it.

Learn more at:

Available in the EAP Lending Library: Buried in Treasures: Help for Compulsive Acquiring, Saving, and Hoarding by David F. Tolin, Randy O. Frost, and Gail Steketee To discover what materials are available from the EAP Lending Library, go to the EAP website. Contact the EAP Office to make arrangements to stop by to browse, or you may request materials be sent to you via campus mail.

Your Credit Score... Tips for Keeping It High

Creditors use your credit score to decide if you’re likely to repay a loan. Paying your bills in full helps the most. But consider these tips as well.

⇒ Do not use all the credit you have available. A maximum of 30% of the credit card limit is best.
⇒ Avoid maxing out credit cards or having a lot of cards with available credit.
⇒ Consider paying off several cards faster rather than consolidating them all into one account. It can lower your score.
⇒ Avoid department store temptations of instant 15% discounts for opening a charge account. They show up on your credit report and can lower your score.

Source: USA.gov (search: keeping good credit)
Sometimes an issue at home or work can have an effect on your ability to be as productive as you need to be. You don’t have to deal with it alone. Support is available through UAlbany’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The mission of UAlbany EAP is to provide services to support a healthy, productive workforce. Available to all employees is the voluntary, confidential **Information, Assessment, and Referral Service** provided by UAlbany EAP Coordinator, Brenda Seckerson. Take advantage of this confidential assistance available as an employee benefit.

Here are just a few of the concerns or stressors that might prompt an employee to reach out to EAP for information and support:

- Family, parenting, and relationship issues
- Work stress and conflict
- Substance abuse or dependency
- Elder Care
- Psychological Concerns (e.g., **depression**, **anxiety**)
- Legal and/or financial concerns
- Grief and loss
- Therapist referrals

**Early intervention is the key! Contact EAP.**

To schedule an appointment for an **Information, Assessment & Referral** session, contact

Brenda Seckerson,  
**UAlbany EAP Coordinator**  
Call 442-5483  
or email  
**bseckerson@albany.edu**

Employee Assistance Program-sponsored events and services are open to UAlbany and Research Foundation faculty, staff, family members, UAS employees, GSEU members, and retirees.

**Feeling stressed?** One way to address stress is to unplug from your electronics and take a break from the screen. Check out this **list of suggestions** and “take the pledge” to connect with other things in life to replenish your body and mind.

Jessica Healy, EAP Committee Co-Chair and Research Foundation Representative oversees the “Take the Pledge” table at the Earth and Wellness Day on April 23.  
*Photo: Merissa Mabee, EAP Committee Member, M/C Representative.*
Teens are about 33 percent more stressed than adults, according to an American Psychological Association “Stress in America Survey” that compared 1,000 teens to 2,000 adults. Teen complaints include a broad mix of school, work, family, and issues with friends. These issues aren’t new, but how teens cope with stress has changed. Unlike 30 years ago, fewer teens exercise regularly; they pick more unhealthy food choices, skip meals more often, and get less sleep. To de-stress, many are drawn to technology, video gaming, and the Internet. Adults practice these less healthy behaviors too, but poor coping skills are showing up earlier. Drugs of abuse are stronger and perceived prohibitions are fewer, adding to the problems teens face. Help your teen by offering coping strategies at an earlier age, when he or she may be more receptive. Invest time in your child regularly, early, and often, and participate in “process communication” so he or she learns and discovers the value of supportive quality relationships, which can help manage stress and solve problems.


Any Risk Using E-Cigarettes?

By now, you have probably seen or heard of electronic cigarettes. A heating element in the device atomizes a liquid, transforming it into a vapor that looks like smoke. The vapor usually contains flavoring and nicotine. The smoker can get the benefit of smoking without the risk of carcinogens from tobacco smoke. E-cigarettes are receiving closer scrutiny because they are unregulated; adolescent use has doubled in the past year, and nicotine addiction can still occur. No research shows that e-cigarettes aid in smoking cessation or that the chemicals used in them are without risk. The FDA has no regulations governing e-cigarettes but intends to regulate them. Source: www.fda.gov (Search bar: “e-cigarettes”).

Resource for Articles: Frontline—Employee Wellness, Productivity & You! Frontline newsletter is courtesy of the New York State Employee Assistance Program.

“The harder you fight to hold on to specific assumptions, the more likely there’s gold in letting go of them.”

~ John Seely Brown
Alcoholism and Family Recovery

If you are a loved one of a newly recovering alcoholic, you’ll experience just as much stress as your family member, spouse, or partner who is attempting to maintain abstinence and sobriety. The anger, resentment, and guilt that you might be feeling are not your fault, but these states of mind are a barrier to your own recovery. Alcoholism is a wrecking ball, and you haven’t been spared. This is why Al-Anon is by far the most recommended peer support group to help people like you who’ve been traumatized by a loved one’s alcoholism. To find a meeting in your area, check the Al-anon website or call 1-888-4AL-ANON. There’s a lot to know about family recovery once it begins. Your support is important, but you are not responsible for your loved one’s recovery. This is a tough challenge—it’s the alcoholic’s willingness to follow instructions that determines success. The answers to your most puzzling questions are found in self-help groups like Al-Anon. This is the foundation of the maxim, “The answer is in the group.”

For additional information, contact UAlbany EAP. bseckerson@albany.edu

442-5483

Resource: Frontline—Employee Wellness, Productivity & You! Frontline newsletter is courtesy of the New York State Employee Assistance Program.

Spring Celebrations

Alcohol and Driving While Impaired

With spring arriving and many celebrations occurring like graduations, keep safety in mind along with these joyful times. According to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, an estimated 32% of fatal car accidents involved an intoxicated driver or pedestrian.

“All states in the U.S. have adopted .08% BAC (blood alcohol concentration) as the legal limit for operating a motor vehicle for drivers aged 21 years or older.” Want to know about the effects of alcohol on your body and your response time? Click here and find out!

If you are concerned about your use of alcohol, or that of a loved one, contact EAP Coordinator Brenda Seckerson to explore resources and referrals to address these concerns. 442-5483 bseckerson@albany.edu

Disclaimer: Material presented in this newsletter is intended for educational or informational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your qualified health professional.
As I surfed the web in search of an interesting gardening article to share with you, I came across one that actually gives tips to follow for every month of the year. Naturally, I focused on May for inclusion in this newsletter, and if you're interested in reading more helpful and useful advice for the remaining 11 months of the year, I encourage you to visit the Lane Forest Products website at [http://www.laneforestproducts.com/articles/GardenTip32.php](http://www.laneforestproducts.com/articles/GardenTip32.php) for a wealth of gardening information. They even have a link within the article for questions. To get you started, here’s what they have to offer for efficient gardening in the very merry month of **May**:

- **Local garden centers are in full swing by now.** Go there to get good ideas, advice, and inspiration. Warm weather brings aphids. Keep a watch on roses and vegetable crops. Wash with soapy water first, monitor, and use sprays if needed. Ladybugs are available in garden centers.
- **Azaleas and rhododendrons need attention.** Fertilize with an acid fertilizer, prune azaleas if leggy or sparse after bloom, prune rhododendrons if necessary as blooms fade. Otherwise, gently pluck spent blooms.
- **It is usually safe to plant annual flowers like petunias, marigolds, and impatiens.** Watch the weather and protect if frost is predicted.
- **Fertilize roses early this month and watch for black spots and mildew.** Early detection and prevention is the key. Avoid overhead water practices.
- **Good garden month for warm season vegetables, such as tomatoes, squash, and peppers in late May.** Also a good time for cool season starts, such as potatoes and onions if these have not been planted yet.
- **New plantings deserve protection from slug damage.** Options include barriers, physical removal, trappings with beer or use bait. Always be sure to protect pets from baits!
- **This is a good month for soil improvements in the garden, landscape, or flower beds.** It should be dry enough for tilling and moving organic material across established lawns.
- **Best month for lawn aeration.** This opens the soil for oxygen, irrigation, and fertilizer. This is much more effective than thatching, which often does more harm than good.

Now that you may be thinking about actually getting started gardening after reading the above article (and perhaps the rest of the article from the link, too), below is a list of ten easy care, low maintenance perennial plants that you may want to consider, recommended by Marie Iannotti in her newsletter, *About.com Gardening*. She emphasizes that these low maintenance perennials are undemanding plants that will provide interest and bloom to the border of your garden, while allowing you time to enjoy gardening.

Since flowers are so visually appealing, in an effort to conserve space, I have posted a photo of each one with their names above; however, for important details about each plant, please access the full article at [http://gardening.about.com/od/perennials/tp/Low-Maintenance-Plants.htm](http://gardening.about.com/od/perennials/tp/Low-Maintenance-Plants.htm). Happy Gardening!

1. **Blazing Star**; 2. **Coneflowers**; 3. **Coral Bells**; 4. **Foam Flower**; 5. **Globe Thistle**;

Calling all walkers, joggers, and runners to participate in the annual Workforce Team Challenge!

Or, calling all people who WANT to become walkers, joggers, or runners! These are the last days of recruitment for the UAlbany Workforce Challenge Team. The Challenge – sponsored by CDPHP – will be held on Thursday, May 15.  [http://www.cdphpwtc.com/](http://www.cdphpwtc.com/)

This event is for ALL levels of participants.

For more information and to register, contact Cathy Probst, UAlbany Team Coordinator, at 442-2562.  [cprobst@albany.edu](mailto:cprobst@albany.edu)

2014 Theme is “Mind Your Health”

Sixty-five years ago, [Mental Health America](http://www.mhanational.org) designates May as [Mental Health Month](http://www.mhanational.org/) to raise awareness about mental illnesses and the importance of mental wellness for all. Mental health is integral to our overall health. The mind and body are intricately connected; there can be no good health without mental health. When a person has “good” mental health, they deal better with what comes their way. Stress has a huge impact on our lives and can make even day-to-day life difficult. Research shows that stress is closely linked to high blood pressure, heart disease, and obesity. It also shows that people who feel depressed or chronically stressed may have a greater risk of physical illnesses.

The good news is there are many healthy choices and steps that individuals can adopt to promote and strengthen mental health—and overall health and well-being. A healthy lifestyle can help to prevent the onset or worsening of depression, anxiety and other mental health conditions, as well as heart disease, diabetes, obesity and other chronic health problems. It can also help people recover from these conditions. Everyone can take steps to protect and strengthen their minds and bodies. Living a healthy lifestyle may not be easy, but can be achieved by gradually making small changes and building on those successes.

For information about ten tools that can help you live well and mind your health, check out Mental Health America’s [Live Your Life Well](http://www.mhanational.org/) information. Additionally, the website provides [3-Minute Tests](http://www.mhanational.org/) which are mental health screenings for Depression, Anxiety, Bipolar Disorder and PTSD. These are serious conditions that affect not only your quality of life but your physical health as well.

For more information, contact UAlbany EAP.
EAP Outdoor Art Break
Nature Photo Walk

Friday, May 9
12:00 – 12:45 pm
Indian Pond Walking Trail
(Meet behind Liberty Terrace at walking trail entrance.)

Bring your camera and join us at the next EAP “Art Break” as Roger Lipera shares his nature photography tips. Roger has been a Training Specialist in the Interactive Media Center of the University Library for about 14 years. He has snapped many thousands of photographs that range from documenting theatrical productions to auto-restoration how-to. Roger’s current preferences are for scenery views and nature, including flowers and animals.

Photo Date: Tuesday, May 13
To Register Contact:
Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
bseckerson@albany.edu
CALL 442-5483 or Register Online
http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm

*Program Coordinated by Pamela Moniz, EAP Committee Member, M/C Representative*
Some sites in the landscape are very difficult and demanding – such as places with poor soil or very dry conditions. For the best chances of success, it makes sense to choose plants which can tolerate the site conditions. Master Gardener David Chinery from the Rensselaer County Cornell Cooperative Extension will discuss what trees, shrubs and perennials can survive and actually look good when planted in tough places in the landscape.

**Wednesday, May 7**
12:00 - 1:00 pm
Room 110A

Registration Deadline: Monday, May 5

To Register Contact:
Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
bseckerson@albany.edu
CALL 442-5483 OR REGISTER ONLINE

http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
LUNCHTIME WELLNESS PROGRAM

is back this summer for UAlbany employees!

This fitness class fuses Latin dance rhythms and easy-to-follow moves to create a dynamic fitness program that provides body sculpting and toning, while giving an effective and FUN cardio workout. The music alone will get your heart pumping! Zumba’s goal is simple - “To want you to want to work out, to love to work out, and to get hooked!” Instructor: Paula Harrington, certified Zumba instructor. Paula also teaches Zumba for NYS employees at the Corning Tower.

*TWO Summer Classes*

Mondays (8 weeks), June 9 – July 28
Class fee $48.00

and

Wednesdays (8 weeks), June 11 – July 30
Class fee $48.00

12 noon – 12:45 pm
Location: PAC Lab Theatre - 2nd floor

You must register online for each class separately. Make check payable to:
Paula Harrington
Registration deadline: Thursday, June 5
Space is Limited. Register Early!

NOTE: If you are registering for both classes, you only need to write one check.

To Register Contact: Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
bseckerson@albany.edu 442-5483

Or, register online: http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm

Employee Assistance Program-sponsored events are open to UAlbany and Research Foundation faculty, staff, family members, UAS employees, GSEU members, and retirees.
Earth & Wellness Day...

EAP and the Office of Environmental Sustainability wish to thank the many employees who attended and/or volunteered at the UAlbany Earth and Wellness Day events on April 23. You helped to make it a worthwhile, fun, festive and educational experience for the campus community!

Special acknowledgement to the following for their support and contributions to this year’s fair...

- University Auxiliary Services
- Earth & Wellness Day Planning Committee
- Student and Employee Event Volunteers
- EAP Committee
- Faculty/Staff Sustainability Coordinators
- Student Sustainability Council
- Campus Center & Facilities Staff
- UAlbany Dining Services/Sodexo
- Parking Management

Unplug to Reconnect

For tips on how you and your family can “take the pledge” to incorporate breaks from technology, check out this article titled “8 Easy Ways to ‘Unplug’ From Technology” from the website Everyday Health.

Earth & Wellness Day Attendee’s Comment...

“I had a great time. I bought 2 hula hoops, got a free book, dropped off my soil sample, and petted the doggies. What’s not to like!” ~ Cathy Parker, Associate Director, Career Services