Our Heritage: The Root of What Sustains Us

Co-Sponsored by EAP and the Office of Environmental Sustainability

The annual UAlbany Earth and Wellness Day is just around the corner. And what sparked this year’s theme? The newly established campus Heritage Garden! The “Our Heritage: The Root of What Sustains Us” theme offers students, faculty, and staff the chance to explore how connecting to our roots, culture, environment, and community can help support our overall health and well-being. A unique collection of exhibitors highlighting local and New York history will be in attendance at this year’s event. Our hope is that you’ll gain some new insight into what heritage means to you as well as tap into your sense of history, community, and connection.

This year’s event will have a different feel to it. Due to the Campus Center renovations, the fair will take place on the Lecture Center Concourse. We’re looking forward to experiencing an alternative campus venue which will give us an opportunity to change things up a bit.

In addition to an array of exhibitors, several students and faculty from different departments will present projects on this year’s theme as it relates to sustainability and wellness. And, attendees will have the chance to vote on the winners of the photo contest. There will be one winner from each category: student/alumni and faculty/staff.

Since our theme is inspired by the campus Heritage Garden, the Albany County Cornell Cooperative Extension master gardeners have been invited and will be available to answer questions about gardening. Take advantage of the opportunity to have a free soil analysis*, too! Prior to the Earth and Wellness Day, on April 10th EAP will sponsor a lunchtime wellness program titled “Planting Your Vegetable Garden.” Growing your own vegetables is a great way to produce healthy food, and gardening can be a wonderful way to de-stress.

EAP has a lot planned for you in April to support your health and well-being. Check the calendar on the EAP website for more details about events. http://www.albany.edu/eap

*See page 4 for soil analysis instructions.
Be an "Active Listener" to Improve Relationships

“Active listening” is a critical skill for professional counselors. It’s used to help clients feel they are being truly heard. The term “active listening” actually originated in business literature to help managers communicate more effectively. You can benefit from these skills, too. Here’s how:

- When listening to another person, show your interest by changing your emotions appropriately to react to the speaker’s point, concern, or idea. Emotionally participate in the story.
- React to any good news like it is part of your own life.
- When a story gets lengthy or complicated, pause to paraphrase what you’ve heard in your own words to show interest. Retention is the highest form of flattery in conversation, so demonstrating recall rather than mindless listening can make a huge impact.

As humans we have the basic need of being understood. Working on our listening skills to enhance our ability to hear and understand one another can make all the difference in improving our relationships both on the job and off!

Supporting a Friend in Grief

Offering a heartfelt “I am sorry for your loss” and showing support can be meaningful gestures to those grieving the loss of a loved one. Grief is a unique, personal experience. It is not something to fix, but rather a journey to accept. This is why attempting to “make things better” might undermine your intent to be supportive. Some statements may make you feel like you are being empathetic, but they may be words that do not comfort the bereaved person. Such comments include the following:

- “I know how you feel.”
- “Don’t cry.”
- “God never gives us more than we can handle.”
- “At least she (he) is in a better place.”
- “You’re attractive, you can always remarry.”
- “Everything happens for a reason.”
- “At least he lived a long life.”
- “God has a plan.”
- “Try to find closure.”
- “Don’t worry - it gets easier after a year.”

For more information on how to support someone who is grieving, check out the Helpguide.org website under grief and loss and/or contact UAlbany EAP for information and resources.

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

If you are finding it difficult to be as productive as you used to be, perhaps a stressor in your life is impacting your ability to feel your best at work and/or at home. The Employee Assistance Program’s Assessment & Referral Service might be the answer. Take advantage of this free voluntary confidential employee benefit. Confidential support, information, and referrals are available to assist you in finding a way to address your concerns. Help is only a phone call or email away.

If you would like to schedule an appointment for an Assessment & Referral session with EAP Coordinator Brenda Seckerson, CALL 442-5483 or EMAIL bseckerson@albany.edu www.albany.edu/eap
Lower Stress by Decluttering Your Life

We human beings love to collect STUFF! From furniture and jewelry to kitchenware and tools, over time these items can start to accumulate into one big pile of stuff. Excessive clutter can cause stress and affect every facet of your life. However, tackling the clutter can seem like an insurmountable task if you don’t know where or how to start. By devoting a little time to getting rid of the clutter in your life and maintaining things relatively clutter-free, you’ll reap the rewards of pleasing living areas, reduced stress, and a more organized and productive existence.

Here are some basic decluttering tips:

- According to Mindful.org, take manageable bites of a big project. Let’s say you have a huge project that you need to work on, such as renovating a part of your house like the kitchen. Don’t tear everything out all at once, but rather do it piece by piece. Start with the cupboards, make your way to the counters, then to the under sink cabinet, etc. Starting a big project without having a strategy can be overwhelming and might prevent you from finishing the task. Going area by area gives you some breathing room and offers you a clearer picture of how to tackle your project.
- Follow the “Three Year Rule.” If you haven’t used something in three years or more, throw it away or donate it! This applies to clothes, jewelry, make up, furniture, tools, pieces of art collecting dust in the garage, etc.
- Follow a three box rule, too. Gather three boxes and label them “Keep,” “Throw Away,” and “Donate.” This strategy keeps the flow of your cleaning and organizing going. Putting your items in each box helps you to determine what you really need, what you don’t need anymore, and what you think someone could benefit from.

Check out this helpful listing provided by Habitat for Humanity which outlines where specific items can be donated right here in the Capital Region. [http://www.habitatcd.org/wp-content/uploads/Donations-Article-Final-Version.pdf](http://www.habitatcd.org/wp-content/uploads/Donations-Article-Final-Version.pdf)

The EAP Lending Library has several books that addresses the topic of organizing. Make arrangements to stop by the EAP Office to browse, or you may request materials be sent to you via campus mail. Your “spring cleaning” effort can be a great way to release the clutter in your life to gain a sense of renewal. You’ll be glad you did it!


The Mindfulness Movement

April is Stress Awareness Month

Have you seen the term “mindfulness” online, off-line, and in the health news? Mindfulness is an approach to well-being and health that entails learning how to pay attention in the moment and gain improved self-awareness. Using techniques like slow breathing, focused concentration, and meditation to relax, you can gain control over anxiety and depression, deal with fears, reduce stress and pain, and improve concentration. Mindfulness helps you feel centered, helps you slow down, makes you less reactive to the stresses of life, and can assist in making you more productive in a healthy way. Mindfulness is gaining mainstream acceptance in medical school training to help professionals understand its use in supporting the treatment of many medical conditions. Contact the EAP Office to borrow books, CDs, and DVDs on mindfulness and learn how to integrate this technique into your daily life. bseckerson@albany.edu 442-5483

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

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.
When a Nap Comes Knocking

New research suggests a 30-minute nap is all it takes to reverse the hormonal impact of a night of poor sleep. This is the first study that found napping could “restore biomarkers of neuroendocrine and immune health to normal levels.” Lack of sleep is recognized as a public health problem. Insufficient sleep can contribute to reduced productivity as well as increased vehicle and industrial accidents, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. People who sleep too little are more likely to develop chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, and depression. The findings support the development of practical strategies for addressing chronically sleep-deprived employees. Talk to your primary care physician to see if your sleep hygiene is what it should be or if there is a possibility of a sleep disorder. Quality sleep is vital to our overall health and well-being and needs to be a priority in our lives.

Research source: www.endocrine.org (search “napping”)

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“Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.

The important thing is to not stop questioning.”

~ Albert Einstein

Soil Sample Instructions

Free Soil Analysis at UAlbany Earth and Wellness Day provided by Cornell Cooperative Extension

Dig down about four (4) inches and take a few tablespoons of dry soil and place it in a Ziploc-type bag. This can be done in a few areas and blended together to form one sample from a garden or the front lawn. The sample should be labeled with contact information and location, such as vegetable garden or rose bed, etc. At the UAlbany Earth and Wellness Day event on the Lecture Center Concourse, take your sample to the Cornell Cooperative Extension table. There you will fill out a form and submit your soil. The Cooperative will test the soil at their lab and mail you your soil’s pH level along with any recommendations for amendments. First sample is free of charge. There is a $3.00 fee for each additional sample submitted for analysis.