

ptimal Health

Initiative

2005 Annual Report



Programs and Activities

Health Screening

The Optimal Health Initiative Committee made its grand entrance with a campus-wide health screening.

The screenings were conducted on five different days in May 2004. They included testing for total cholesterol, HDL ("good") cholesterol, blood pressure reading, cardiovascular risk assessment, body mass index (BMI) and a health and wellness consultation. We had a great response with 210 participants. Data results are included as an attachment to this report.

Massage Therapy

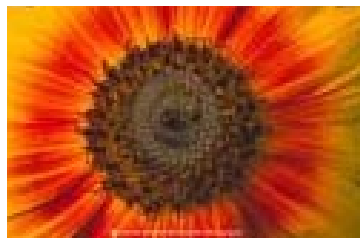
In July 2004, we introduced the 15-minute massage with local practitioners, Hanni Guinn and Sarah Stevens. With 3 days and about 12 time slots per day, it was amazing how fast those mini-massages booked. One staff member reserved a "surprise" session for his wife! July seemed to be a good time of year – perhaps because there is a slight lull in activity due to our undergraduate students being off campus for the summer. Although

vacations were in full swing, the OHIC was pleased at the level of participation.

We scheduled more massage sessions in October, although the response was not as strong. This was attributed to the busy work schedules, release time for staff and faculty, and cost. We are looking at ways to help alleviate the cost for employees.

Early Swim Time

Early swim time was arranged as a response to requests from staff to have the pool open earlier than the scheduled 7:30 am open swim. Employees found it difficult to complete a swim workout and be at their desk by 8:15 am. We were able to open the pool at 6:00am Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from October to March.



Stretching

A stretching program was introduced in September 2004 and continues today. Monday through Friday at 7:30am several employees gather in Mitchell Green for low impact stretching. The program's intent is to increase physical efficiency and performance of everyday tasks and decrease risk of injury. Some of our participants said: "When I'm driving, I find I can turn my head much better to see around me." "I used to have lower back problems - no more!" "I feel more flexible, more limber."



Yoga

Although jogging, aerobics, and team sports are excellent ways to achieve a healthy body, some people do better with other activities. One way the OHIC stirred up interest across campus was to offer introductory level yoga classes. This summer OHIC sponsored "yoga for beginners." Zubin Mistri '05 addressed physical health and taught various yoga postures. He also shared his yogic wisdom on how we might enhance our emotional and spiritual growth, which aligns with the true mission of the OHIC. Employees improve their health, become more whole, develop a brighter outlook on life ... and live longer!

Sinless Summer Sizzle BBQ

In June 2005 we sponsored the second annual Sinless Summer Sizzle BBQ. Limited to 30 participants, we had a full house again with many oohs, aahhs, and yumms! This is a great opportunity for people to not only learn how to grill healthy during the summer and enjoy a delicious meal, it is also a great opportunity for faculty and

OHIC Committee Members

April Tuck, Human Resources (Chair)

Eileen Fahey, Geology

Dee Gilbert, Human Resources

Patti McCaffrey, Dining Services

Michelle McCauley, Psychology

Cheryl Mullins, Human Resources

Gail D. Smith, Athletics

Gerry Tetrault, Facilities Management

staff to relax for an hour and enjoy great conversation.

Get Moving Middlebury

Throughout the day on September 1, 2004, over sixty employees walked to the Kenyon Lobby to register for the Get Moving Middlebury walking program. They were divided in teams of four and each team came up with a name for their group. Then the walking began. Armed with pedometers, the teams monitored their distance and time they walked around campus, on lunch hours and at home. At the end of September the results were tabulated and prizes such as smoothies from the Grille, gift certificates from CFA, and buckets of range balls courtesy of Ralph Myhre Golf Course, were given to the winners. If we combined all the miles we walked we could have made it to some exotic locations such as Reykjavik, Iceland, Portland Oregon, or Las Vegas, Nevada!

Deep Relaxation

With the ability to manage stress as a key health indicator, OHIC sponsored an introduction to deep relaxation session for interested employees. April Tuck successfully guided participants through the Alpha Relaxation technique. The method is designed to shift brain wave activity to the alpha, or waking sleep level. At this stage of consciousness, the individual is able to imprint relaxation suggestions that can be retrieved later. In the waking state, the practitioner can use a discrete physical prompt to trigger the original relaxation response.

Healthy Holiday Lunch

OHI sponsored a health holiday lunch on December 14, 2004. Thirty employees enjoyed tasty dishes



prepared by Assistant Banquet Chef (and OHI member), Patti McCaffrey. Cornish hens, sweet potatoes and apples, and spinach salad were just a few of the healthy foods that were served. Recipes were posted on the web site.

Health and Wellness Fair

Over 50 exhibitors formed the foundation of the January 2005 Health and Wellness Fair. Exhibitors represented traditional as well as alternative health practices, nutrition tips and demonstrations, and a variety of physical and mental wellness boosters. The flu mist vaccine was offered free of charge to employees, as were screenings for blood pressure, total cholesterol, and glucose. Educational booths pertaining to onsite resources were displayed such as the Human Relations and Counseling Center, The Parton Health Center, Environmental Council, ADA Office, Environmental Safety Department, and Ergonomics. Several short programs were offered including Healthy Cooking, Dealing with Drug and Alcohol Issues, Healthy Hands, Self-Massage, Stress Management, Yoga, the Psycho-social Aspects of Retirement, and Relaxation Techniques. The 2005 fair increased its participation levels from those of previous years. In order to attract more College community participants, the next Health and Wellness Fair will be held on October 11, 2005 and will feature week-long programming.

Tai Chi

T'ai chi with Dana Yeaton was an OHIC spring 2005 highlight. Reserved spaces were filled in one day! For 4 consecutive Mondays up to 15 faculty and staff members learned the basics of t'ai chi under Dana's skilled guidance. By popular demand he conducted another introductory class in October. He

has also granted our request for one-hour "refresher" workshops to support those who wish to continue with this practice ... and an independent group of participants has made the decision to move forward with t'ai chi on their own. Tai Chi is a Chinese exercise system which uses slow, smooth body movements to achieve a state of relaxation of both body and mind. It has both physical and mental benefits. If done regularly, it improves muscle tone, flexibility, balance, and coordination.

Weight Watchers at Work

Weight Watchers at Work held its first meeting on campus February 17th. So far, there have been three sessions of twelve weeks each, and a full class each time. We've had a positive response from the members and plans are already underway to continue the program this fall. The cost to join for 12 weeks is \$144 paid by the employee. As of this date, the participants have lost a total of 500 pounds.

Faculty/Staff Group Golf Lessons with Pro Jim Dayton

In the Fall of 2004 ten employees took advantage of this great program. Lessons were offered at only \$5 per person on Wednesdays from noon to 1:00pm. The lessons attracted new golfers, as well as current and returning folks to the sport. The individual motivation and fitness development was evident in this OHIC event.



The Governor's Wellness Worksite Award

First time entrants, Middlebury College won the silver plaque for its health and wellness strategies. Thirty-one organizations participated in the Wellness Worksite Awards competition. The College was singled out for its Middlebury Get Moving program in which teams of employees were encouraged to walk together, setting a distance or time target. More than 75 employees on 25 teams become involved, and several of these teams have continued to walk together. The college also implemented a daily morning stretch program, for which all participating employees are paid. Twice yearly, the college conducts a Healthy Cooking and Eating program, open to employees, where College chefs create and demonstrate how to make healthy, delicious, easy meals for employees to sample. Employees are also offered reduced rate massage therapy, Hatha yoga and deep relaxation classes.

Outreach and Moving to the Future

While the OHIC initiatives have served to inform and involve an ever-increasing number of Middlebury College staff, there is more to be done. Faculty involvement has been minimal and there are more staff who can benefit from the mission of the OHIC.

To address the former, it is important that the committee examine the unique challenges that may prevent faculty members from participating in health and wellness programs and other related opportunities. Faculty focus is upon student academic development and advancing intellectual prowess within the academy. Responsibilities are significant both in terms of breadth and scope. To craft programs that not only meet the health and wellness needs of faculty but within the dictates of their competing duties will be an area of emphasis for the OHIC over the next year.

Increasing staff participation in and

benefit from OHIC initiatives will serve as the second point of focus. Nicotine addiction, inadequate nutrition, and sedentary lifestyles remain the top three issues that compromise overall health and wellbeing. The OHIC will examine ways to partner with supervisors and managers to garner their support of staff participation in health risk reduction opportunities.

The next year offers the OHIC greater challenges in terms of health and wellness outreach and education for all members of the College community. In order to move the Middlebury College community toward a future of decreasing insurance premiums through improved health, the OHIC will expand its partnership with other organizations on campus. Therefore, its third initiative concerns forging stronger relationships with the Faculty and Staff Councils. The OHIC looks forward to realizing its mission and goals over the next year and inculcating healthy practices and choices well into the future.



More To Come

Health Screening

Activities at the Snow Bowl

Memory Basics

College Lectures

Budget Basics and Financial Planning

The Artist's Way

Social Aspects of Retirement

Learn how to "shop" healthy

Mission Statement: The Optimal Health Initiative Committee seeks to empower the Middlebury College community to achieve optimum health and well-being by creating a culture of wellness, health awareness, and participation in the available College resources. Because we believe that optimal health is a collective endeavor, we seek to engage employees, retirees, and their families in this ongoing process.