Wellness: Starting the Semester Right

By Diana Martinez-Campos

“Wellness is a balanced channeling of energy—energy received from the environment, transformed within you, and returned to affect the world around you.”
-Wellness Workbook: How to achieve enduring health and vitality

By the time you read this newsletter, we at the MCC hope that you have confirmed your classes and are fully ready to engage in a challenging Spring semester. Here at the MCC we focus on three pillars to guide our actions; wellness, leadership and social justice and diversity. To set the tone for a healthy 2010, we decided to share with you some thoughts on wellness.

But what is wellness? To me wellness is a process, never a static state. It’s the integration of body, mind and spirit; the idea that everything, from our thoughts to our physical activities and beliefs impact our performance in life.

Travis and Ryan, in the Wellness Workbook: How to achieve enduring health and vitality (2004) share that wellness involves taking care of our bodies, expressing our emotions, being involved with other people and paying attention to our psychological and spiritual environments. For example, you could feel great physically—with no pain—but if you have concerns and stress is accumulating in your head, you are probably not well.

In this sense, wellness is a practice that can take some time to understand. Because it is nearly impossible for me to explain the idea behind holistic wellness in this article, I hope you will use the resources of the Center to learn more about wellness so that you can incorporate it into your lifestyle.

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At the MCC we believe in the power of building community. We love to know what members think, so we ask! The “Question of the Week” is written on a white board in the center, where community members can speak their mind and share their responses.

What gives you strength?

- Family
- Friends
- Coffee
- Faith
- Love
- Family
- Cookies
- Love
- Memory
- Diversity
- Education
- Music
- Community

Do you identify as multi-racial or multi-ethnic? If so, what's your mix?

- Mexican-American
- Chicana
- Mestizo
- Italian
- German
- Japanese
- African American
- Mixed

How have the budget cuts affected you?

- Lost my job
- My landlord is a landlord
- Family income
- Education
- Pre-reqs
- Quality of instruction
- Black students
- Work
- Grades
- More work
- Less
- Harrison
- French
- English
- Family
- Work
- Money
- Small classes
- Family
- Money
- More
- Quality

What is your New Year resolution?

- Learn something new
- Achieve peace
- Be healthy
- Eat
- Drink less
- Work
- Study
- Balance
- Love
- Myself
Spotlight on: Women’s Resource Center

By Liz Redford

The Women’s Resource Center couldn’t run without the help of its student assistants, volunteers, and coordinators. To get a student’s point of view of the importance of the WRC, I interviewed Leva Ahmadi, a recent alumna (Fall ‘09) who worked as a Co-Coordinator for the WRC. She was an honors student and McNair Scholar and majored in Sociology, with minors in Religious Studies and Middle Eastern Studies.

What do you do for the WRC?

I’m a Student Co-Coordinator, planning for the whole semester. We used to have a large center and it was a resource and that was why students came. We had computers and printers and everything. Last semester we moved inside Student Activities.

We only have one office shared with the Pride Center, so our function has changed and now we can’t provide in-building services anymore. We shifted our focus to programming, workshops, and resources. We try to be a resourceful place so if visitors ask questions, we can at least refer them to the right place.

Last semester we had ten various workshops, mostly about sexuality: women and pornography, female body image, redefining beauty, media and body image, assertiveness training, where is my orgasm, movie afternoons (we showed 2 movies and we had discussion after that), math and science cafe, and single mom support group. So, basically, we try to cover many audiences and purposes.

What is the mission of the WRC?

Gender equality on campus. We have different programs and events to raise awareness about gender equality. Many of us are thinking that we have equality in this country, that everything is fine, but the fact is we still have lots of sexism, racism and homophobia. So we are trying to raise awareness and educate.

Has the WRC helped you to explore your own identity as a woman? If so, how?

A lot. In the WRC, I found out how we are far away from equality. We still have lots of gender issues going on. The WRC empowered me by helping me empower others.
We need more leadership in our community towards women’s issues, so first of all I try to empower myself to lead my colleagues and fellow students so they understand their roles as women. We need to have a belief in our powers and abilities, and we need to break some taboos and gender roles. WRC has given me the tools to fight against sexism.

How can other students get involved?

We are always looking for volunteers. They can volunteer for events, putting flyers out there, going to classes and inviting people. They can help program events; some students have great ideas, and lead class workshops or presentations. We can support them, we can provide them a space. We really believe in using resources on campus. We have great faculty, and we need to use. Outside speakers charge a lot, but last semester because of budget issues we decided to go to our faculty and students. We found 3 or 4 faculty who gave us presentations for free, and students too. Using internal resources is very important for us.

The WRC is located in Lassen Hall 3005. Call (916) 278-7388 or email wrc@csus.edu.

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Yell-Oh Girls! By Bauj Chang

“I’m not Chinese…I’m KOREAN. I remember feeling a confused hurt, realizing that I looked different and not understanding why being different was bad.” —Yell-Oh Girls!

Yell-Oh Girls!: Emerging Voices Explore Culture, Identity, and Growing Up Asian American, edited by Vickie Nam, reveals the personal stories of young Asian American women who share their fears and triumphs as they search for belonging, identity, and happiness. Through emails, essays, poems, and other various pieces, these women battle the difficult, uncomfortable, but true realizations that make up who they are. They try to find their own voices amidst the negative stereotypes and discrimination (“Go back to your country!”) and cultural pressures.

Author Vickie Nam, motivated to find common experiences, compiled the stories uniquely to for the reader. These young women come from many different cultural backgrounds (Korean, Hmong, Indian, Chinese, etc), socio-economic backgrounds, and areas of the United States. An 18-year-old woman recalls questioning when she was asked to introduce herself during a university orientation, “How do I summarize, in thirty seconds, everything, which adds up and equals a neat little bundle called, Me?” It is a great question and many have faced, often a pleasant struggle to decide which information sums up who we are without appearing “uncool”.

Some stories are funny or serious, some are somber and some may surprise the reader. Each one is unique, yet many of them share common experiences such as body image issues, internalized racism, and the desire to embrace their whole identity and love one’s self. These are some emotions which one cannot guess just by looking at an Asian American woman.

You do not have to be Asian American to read this book and you do not have to know anything about Asians to read this book. It tells of the deep and genuine experiences which anyone can identify with such as wanting to belong, to be confident, and to be loved. Reading this book and being able to relate to many of these writers reminds me that a person’s clothes, body image, and language will not tell you his or her real story.
Vegetarianism for Justice

By Liz Redford

Animals, despite being living creatures similar to humans, have historically been excluded by humans from the dialogue of justice and oppression. As humans, we have had the power to define them as a separate category. But I see both animals and humans as sharing the features of being living creatures capable of emotions and empathy. Like humans, animals grieve their dead, nurture their young, and have a will to live. As a social justice advocate, my vegetarianism supports my feminism and vice versa. After all, I can’t argue against the objectification and exploitation of women’s bodies if I’m willing to exploit and objectify animals.

Stop and think for a moment... What comes to mind when you think about the way we treat animals raised for food? Horrific images of the way we slaughter animals might come to mind. However, what you might not think about is how our direct and indirect daily decisions about what to eat have power. Our everyday actions either reinforce or combat the oppression of creatures who, like us, are sensitive to emotions, pain, and suffering. As social reformer Jeremy Bentham said of animals way back in 1789: “the question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?”

Various authors such as Carol Adams, Peter Singer, and Alice Walker have discussed humans’ oppression of animals. As a Holocaust survivor, Singer argues that having the power to exploit and oppress is not an excuse to actually do it: “the smugness with which man could do with other species as he pleased exemplified the most extreme racist theories, the principle that might is right” (Enemies, A Love Story). In The Sexual Politics of Meat, Adams argues that “as much as white people determine what is normative and important while ignoring the culture and experience of people of color, so have meat eaters of all races, sexes and classes presumed the normative-ness and centrality of their activity” (p. 153). Similarly, Alice Walker has stated that “the animals of the world exist for their own reasons. They were not made for humans any more than black people were made for white, or women created for men.”

While I am not arguing that the oppression of animals is the same as the oppression of people, I do believe that there are some important lessons to be learned from understanding human oppression of other creatures. You and I both must question our roles and actions or inactions in this society.

The Personal as Political

As humans with systematic power over animals, we have the moral responsibility to avoid causing unnecessary pain and suffering. By refusing to take part in the factory-farming system that oppresses animals, you can do just that. I understand that to some, the idea of vegetarianism may be a health concern or seem like a set of prohibitive rules. But cutting back on meat—in a way that makes sense for you personally—is simply a way to reduce suffering. After all, making small change is better than making no change, just as recycling one bottle is better than not recycling at all.

Some people are intimidated by the thought of being consistently careful about food, but many vegetarians find that they become more aware of the way they eat. You may find it surprisingly easy to eat “accidentally vegetarian” foods that are traditionally meatless for vegetarians and meat-eaters like. These are foods like peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, spaghetti with tomato sauce, or vegetable fried rice: foods many omnivores often eat and enjoy without feeling that anything is missing. Taking inventory of the foods you eat will allow you to find and eat more plant-based meals that are healthier in the long run.
Eating Animals is Inefficient

Animal farming is an incredibly inefficient use of resources like water and energy, as well as one of the major contributors to carbon dioxide emissions in the U.S. If everyone were to cut back on its meat consumption, we could grow efficient foods like grains that could feed more of the world’s population. In fact, according to the U.N.’s Food and Agriculture Organization, only 3.16 billion people can be supported on a diet with 25% of its calories from animals. Compare that to an almost animal-free diet, which could support 6.26 billion! Even to those who scoff at the prospect of animals’ rights, the wasteful use of our resources is a compelling, undeniable argument for cutting back on meat production and consumption. In other words, eating more vegetarian food means less harm done to the environment and more benefit to people. In times when we’re becoming more concerned about greenhouse gases and world hunger, it’s especially important to start looking at our options and what we can do as individuals and as a collective to help the environment, animals, and other humans.

Resources on Social Justice & Vegetarianism

Find out more about the intersections between meatless eating and social justice, as well as the detailed how’s and why’s of vegetarianism.

vegansofcolor.wordpress.com: “Because we don’t have the luxury of being single-issue”.

veganoutreach.org/guide/free_guide.html: Request a free guide to cruelty-free eating, or read it online

veganideal.org: Modeling practical ideas for an oppression-free world

thevegetariansite.com/ethics_phil.htm: A discussion of the philosophy of animal rights

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The MCC’s library has many books dedicated to your well being such as the “Wellness workbook” (2004), “The Relaxation & Stress Reduction workbook” (2008) and many others. To explore the resources in the MCC library, you can search all available titles at http://www.librarything.com/catalog/sacstatemcc.

In addition, we hope that you also utilize the resources provided by the University such as the FIT HELP program at the Union, Psychological and Counseling service, and the free massages you can get with your ONE card. The Health Center website is at http://www.csus.edu/hlth/, or you can call at (916) 278-6011 to find out more about what services are available. Should you have any questions about this or other resources, come to the Center and we will do our best to assist you, because we care about you and we want you to be well.

“Wellness is a process— a developing awareness that there is no end point, but that health and happiness are possible in each moment, here and now”-

-Wellness Workbook How to Achieve Enduring Health and Vitality 3rd edition
Come by the center...

Art Exhibit by Mahader Tesfai
February 24 – April 15, 2010
Presented in partnership with the Habesha Student Union

create.art.believe.inspire.dream.empower.relate.decolonize.remember.

Event Recap: Workshop with Mahader Tesfai held on February 24, 2010

What participants said about this event:

A lot of fun. Excellent Job

It made me feel relaxed and I didn’t have to think that I was going to get graded.

I love interactive stuff

I loved it. Thank you for having this event.

more art/music/theater/poetry events like this

I am an awesome artist.
MCC Hiring Interns for 2010-2011!

Positions Available

Media Intern
Social Justice Art Intern
Program Intern
Grad Assistant

How to apply:

• Decide which position(s) you would like to apply for.
• Fill out an intern application. Applications must be typed.
• Write a one page cover letter detailing why you are interested in being an intern and what skills you would bring to the position.
• Turn in a completed application to the MCC front desk by March 26 at 4:00 pm. The MCC is located in front of the library, next to Java City.

For applications and full job descriptions, stop by the MCC front desk, visit us online at www.csus.edu/mcc, or email Jeanette Plascencia at jplascenc@saclink.csus.edu.

What have others said about the internship?

“Incredibly transforming experience”! - Intern 08-10’

“Definitely gave me the leadership, organizational and community building skills that have influenced my personal and professional development” - Intern 08-09’

It’s just fun. You get to learn and have a lot of fun at the same time. It’s the ideal learning experience”. - Intern 09-10’

Community Updates

✦ To help visitors better utilize the library, MCC interns have created library cards that serve as placeholders while looking at a book. This will help us keep the Center’s wonderful library organized!

Many community members have been asking if we have a place to recycle bottles. There is not one inside the Center, so please be green by going through the front doors and to the right to recycle bottles in the nearby container.

✦ Please remember that if you eat inside the Center, to keep your space clean and leave it the way you found it. Please throw away food or food containers outside so that we can keep the Center bug-free.