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news BRIEFS

Construction to begin on low-income center

The Center for Housing and Urban Development in Texas A&M's College of Agriculture will begin construction on its sixth community center in a low-income unincorporated colonia. The new center will be built in the Sparks community near El Paso, Texas on May 11, and it will serve as a place where educational, medical and social services will be available to the residents. Centers are currently operating near Brownsville, Weslaco, Laredo and in Montana Vista near El Paso. Another contract is pending for a center in Sebastian south of Raymondville.

A&M leads state in graduating students

Texas A&M University leads all Texas public universities in the percentage of freshmen who earn baccalaureate degrees. The Legislative Budget Board's "Summary Assessment for Agency Performance" reported that during the six-year period covered by the report, 68 percent of A&M freshmen earned their degrees. The University of Texas at Dallas and the University of Texas at Austin followed A&M with 67 percent and 65 percent, respectively. A&M and the University of Texas tied at 87 percent for best retention after one academic year of full-time, first-time freshmen.

National Day of Prayer celebrated locally

National Day of Prayer was celebrated across the country Thursday night and activities extended to the Bryan/College Station area where members of all faiths and denominations gathered at the Brazos Center to offer prayers for the city and nation, for family and friends, and for government and schools. Local leaders and ministers led the service which was sponsored by Aldersgate United Methodist Church. This is the 45th consecutive year National Day of Prayer has been recognized in the area.

Counseling available as anxiety attacks students

By Marissa Alanis
THE BATTALION

Every day more than 28 million Americans experience some form of anxiety.

Anxiety can strike at any time — while on the job, stalled in rush hour traffic or preparing for a big exam.

However, high levels of anxiety can be a cause for concern when it affects an individual's productivity, personal relationships and social life.

Texas A&M's Employee Assistance Program in conjunction with National Anxiety Disorders Screening Day provided two seminars May 1 to educate faculty, staff and other employees about anxiety.

Last October, the Health Step Risk Assessment Program, which identifies and educates employees on health issues, found that more than 50 percent of A&M's employees were vulnerable to stress.

Dr. Anna Jenkins, a counseling psychologist and co-coordinator of the seminars, said the difference between stress and anxiety is that stress is a pressure or strain on the system that forces a person to adjust.

Anxiety is a fear that surrounds a specific event. Jenkins said a person would be experiencing anxiety if he or she failed a test and perceived it in such a catastrophic way that he or she would begin to consider the possibility of being jobless or homeless as a result of the test score.

At the seminars, employees watched a video that identified five common anxiety disorders, which included panic, obsessive-compulsive behaviors, generalized anxiety, social phobia and traumatic stress disorders.

Symptoms of a disorder such as social phobia would include the recurring fear of being visible to others because the person could

be scrutinized. These individuals are afraid of being subjects of humiliating or embarrassing acts, so they avoid social situations, which could interfere with their work.

After the video, the employees had the opportunity to take an anxiety disorders screening test, and a panel of psychologists and counselors discussed the implications of anxiety disorders.

the guide to self-examination and will formulate a diagnosis so the patient can grasp an understanding of the causes and effects of his or her disorder.

Dr. Barbara Sanford, a psychologist in the Bryan-College Station area, said more than one road of treatment exists for anxiety disorders.

"In dealing with anxiety, we



Debra A. Milburn, a licensed counselor, and Dr. Jack Bodden (background) conduct free anxiety disorder screening sessions in the MSC Wednesday.

Jenkins said the consequences of not treating disorders can include impaired job performance, lowered production, impaired relationships and being afraid to go out in public.

Graciela Leon, a professional counselor in the Bryan-College Station area, said people who know someone with an anxiety disorder feel frustrated by the person's behavior and will distance themselves from the person in the long run.

"It's very frustrating to go with someone to a restaurant who can't even read the menu and make a decision," Leon said.

Dr. DeWayne Taylor, a psychologist in Bryan and College Station, said that when patients come in for help, the counselor is

might change your behavior," Sanford said, "or change the way you think that triggers the response."

Jenkins said people might be afraid to admit that they are anxious or that they have an anxiety disorder, which might prevent them from seeking help.

Jenkins said in her past experience working at the Student Counseling Center, students suffered from anxiety because of performance pressures in their classes.

"I saw students who had future-oriented pressures," Jenkins said. "There is so much of their future based on their college performance."

With final exams approaching, Jenkins said that instead of waiting until the last minute, students should try to organize themselves and study systematically to eliminate anxiety.

JUNIOR FULBRIGHT

The Junior Fulbright provides graduating seniors and graduate students of U.S. citizenship the opportunity to develop a proposal for a specific research project to be undertaken in the country of their choice during the 1997-1998 academic year. Each applicant may apply once during the current year of competition.

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NEWS: The Battalion news department is managed by students at Texas A&M University in the Division of Student Publications, a unit of the Department of Journalism. News offices are in 013 Reed McDonald Building. Newsroom phone: 845-3313; Fax: 845-2647

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SUBSCRIPTIONS: A part of the Student Services Fee entitles each Texas A&M student to pick up a single copy of The Battalion. Mail subscriptions are \$20 per semester, \$40 per school year and \$50 per full year. To charge by VISA, MasterCard, Discover or American Express, call 845-2611.

The Battalion (ISSN #1055-4726) is published daily, Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters and Monday through Thursday during the summer sessions (except on University holidays and exam periods), at Texas A&M University. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77840.

Postmaster: Send address changes to The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.