

WEATHER

TODAY

HIGH 102°
LOW 75°

TOMORROW

HIGH 97°
LOW 83°

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THE BATTALION

THURSDAY • JUNE 25 • 1998

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY • COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS

National HIV testing promotes awareness

By SARAH GOLDSTON
Staff Writer

As health education coordinator for sexual health at A.P. Beutel Health Center and a volunteer with AIDS Services of Brazos County, Margaret Griffith has seen many people suffering with AIDS.

"This is a field of work that grabs your heart," Griffith said.

Griffith got involved in educating people about HIV and AIDS in the late '80s when a woman shared her son's story one afternoon at lunch.

"This woman, whose son was a popular newscaster in another state, told me about the treatment her son had received from people," Griffith said. "When his mother couldn't care for him anymore she took him to the hospital. No one would touch him to take care of him. Nobody should be treated like that, and that made me get interested in helping."

At Beutel, Griffith talks to people about sexual responsibility and how to prevent HIV and AIDS.

"A vast majority of people get HIV through sex," Griffith said. "It only takes one encounter to get HIV."

AIDS is the sixth leading cause of death among 15- to 24-year-olds in the United States. A report from the Center of Disease Control and Prevention said the total number of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) cases reported among U.S.

Dispelling the fear of getting tested

By SARAH GOLDSTON
Staff Writer

Fear of the unknown often stops students from getting tested for HIV.

Margaret Griffith, Health Education Coordinator for HIV and Sexual Health at A.P. Beutel Health Center, said the process is confidential and personal.

The first step of the testing process is an informal counseling session.

"There is a confidentiality agreement between the counselor and the client," Griffith said. "Counselors will ask how the person is having sex and the gender of the partner. Students should be prepared to be candid and frank."

Counselors and clients also will discuss the possibility of the test being positive or negative.

"We present the different scenarios to the person," Griffith said. "Let's say the test comes back negative. We ask the person how they plan to keep it that way and what the person would do to protect themselves in the future."

Blood is then drawn out of the arm, however, if the person decides to not continue the test, he or she does not have to, Griffith said.

The whole process takes about 15 to 20 minutes, or however long the client needs to take, she said. The sample is then sent to the state lab where the blood goes through a series of tests.

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LIVING WITH AIDS

adolescents, 13 to 19 years old, has increased from one case in 1981 to 2,900 cases as of June 1997.

More than 22,000 persons ages 20 to 24 and over 85,000 persons ages 25 to 29 have AIDS, according to the Center for Disease Control.

Daniel Fowler, a test counselor for AIDS Services of Brazos County, said the majority of positive HIV tests in Brazos County are females between the ages of 14 and 25.

"Many females have tested HIV positive during prenatal testing," Fowler said. "HIV testing for pregnant mothers is now required by law."

Fowler also said heavy drinking and casual sex is common among college students.

Because these actions put students at risk, people of college age are getting screened, he said.

Suzanne Soriano, assistant volunteer coordinator for AIDS Services and a senior biomedical science major, said her volunteer experience has taught her to be open-minded about all kinds of issues.

"College students are not immune to HIV or AIDS," she said. "Anybody can get it. Most college students know the basic facts about HIV and AIDS. However, there are many people who aren't as educated."

Griffith encourages students to take advantage of the free testing being offered on Saturday, June 27, as part of National HIV Testing Day.

"National HIV Testing Day was designed to create awareness of testing opportunities and to remind people about testing," she said.

"Not knowing whether you have HIV doesn't mean you don't have it, it just means you don't know," Griffith said.

Heat exposure prompts animal-care protection

By SHATERA KENNEDY
Staff Writer

Dogs in the heat may be more serious than a few extra mouths to feed.

As meteorologists warn of the increasingly hot summer temperatures that rise past the 100 degree mark, many may forget that their pets also need protection.

Liane Brown of the Texas A&M Small Animal Clinic provided a few tips and warning signs to protect "man's best friend" from heat exhaustion.

Because heat exhaustion affects an animal suddenly, Brown said owners should pay particular attention to the eating and drinking habits of their pets.

If your pet doesn't follow usual eating cycles or shies away from drinking water, be concerned.

Listlessness or no desire to play also is a sign of heat exhaustion.

Brown said if your pet appears to have no energy, or pants heavily, watch it closely.

If you have noticed any of these signs, you should first get the animal out of the sun. Next, try to lower their body temperature with cool water for drinking and cold compresses.

Keep observing the animal's behavior, and if its temperature doesn't lower, contact a veterinarian.

"It's possible that we may see an increase in heat exhaustion cases with this extremely hot weather," Brown said, "but I am hoping people will protect their pets as they would protect themselves."

If your pet is unable to stay inside, a continuous water supply and an open, shaded area are essential to prevent heat exhaustion.

Dog houses should not be used to protect animals from heat because they prevent air circulation.

Brown has worked in animal clinics since 1987 and came to College Station to supervise the Small Animal Admissions department last January.

The Small Animal Clinic is located on University Drive, just past Wellborn Road.

Tappin' the wire

Students receive help in form of Ethernet connections

By PATRICK PEABODY
Staff Writer

Beginning in the fall semester, WireFest will once again kick off, helping students hook up their computers to ResNet.

The program is sponsored by Residence Life and allows students to help other students in their Ethernet problems.

Raymond McCauley, a coordinator of the program, said it is a great program because the students have hands-on help.

"Instead of just calling for support over the phone," he said, "students, called WireTechs, will come by and help students."

The WireTechs actually are other students who set up shop in their own dorm rooms and help the students who need assistance.

At the beginning of the fall semester, the WireTechs, carrying laptop computers, will go to certain residence halls on weekday afternoons and provide technical support for the residents.

They will answer questions and go with residents to their rooms with hardware and software problems related to connecting to ResNet.

WireTechs will primarily assist residents with ResNet connections. They also may help students with modems as time permits, but residents with Ethernet cards will be helped first.

WireFest teams will visit halls during the first three weeks of Fall 1998 classes, Monday through Thursday, from 4 to 9 p.m.

McCauley said the ResNet is much better than regular modems.

"There will be over 10,000 network connections," he said. "They will run at 300 times faster than regular modems. There will also be two connection per room, so if you have two computers you can both hook up at the same time instead of waiting for a phone line."

McCauley said that they are looking for people with a proficiency with computer hardware and software, particularly those with experience installing network cards and configuring

networking software on a variety of platforms and operating systems.

Knowledge of computing resources on campus as well as Internet resources also is needed. Experience consulting, tutoring, team skills and strong written and verbal communication skills also are looked for.

Aspiring WireTechs must be enrolled for the fall semester, must remain in good academic standing and attend technical training work about 15 hours each week (minimum 10 hours, maximum 25 hours).

WireTechs will be paid a biweekly rate of \$5 to \$7. McCauley also said that there are about 20 people working with WireFest right now, but they would like around 50.

"If people are interested," he said, "they can go to our Web site and get more information and also get an application. We don't have any paper applications because if they can't get on the Web then they probably aren't going to be the best WireTechs."

The Web site for WireFest is <http://Reslife.tamu.edu/rescomp>.

FOURTH ANNUAL HIV TESTING DAY

Saturday, June 27

Testing Locations:

AIDS Services of Brazos Valley
1702 B South Texas Ave.
Sunnyland Center, Bryan
Free Testing
260-AIDS

Brazos County Health Department
Corner of Texas Ave. and W.J. Bryan Pkwy.
Downtown Bryan
Free testing
361-4450

Planned Parenthood
4001 East 29th St.
Winn-Dixie Center in Bryan
\$5 fee for testing
260-1061

For more information on HIV and testing, students can call Margaret Griffith, Health Education Coordinator for HIV/Sexual health, Student Health Services at 847-9242.