South Cove Manor encourages elders to practice tai chi

BY VEKONDA LUANGAPAHY

The monthly seminar includes breakfast and a featured guest speaker on health topics, such as Medicare, mental illness, the flu and depression. Seniors interested in the tai chi classes were screened for pain through exercises such as balancing on one leg and rising from a chair 30 times to test endurance.

As the South Cove Manor staff collected data from the screening, they looked for certain qualities. “We look for cognitive ability to be able to participate, and we look for functionality to make sure that people will be safe partaking in the program and can take advantage of it,” said Claire Wheeler, nurse consultant at South Cove Manor. The data also helped tai chi masters know each candidate’s physical fitness level.

After the tai chi classes end, the South Cove Manor staff will conduct another screening to see if the program is effective for elders mentally and physically.

The next breakfast seminars will take place Oct. 30, Nov. 20 and Dec. 18 at Mass Pike Towers in Quincy.

“We want to keep serving the Asian elderly population in Chinatown,” Yin said. “Potentially we’re going to do art classes as well to help them improve their hand gesture movement.”

Chinese-American elders attended tai chi classes hosted by South Cove Manor Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, which started on Oct. 2 and will be held each Thursday. The gentle physical activity improves muscle tone and body alignment, so seniors remain stable and prevent falls. The seniors were screened with a physical that measured their balance and endurance at a breakfast seminar on Sept. 25.

“[Elders] don’t want their kids to take care of them without having their own individual life,” said Terry Yin, community program leader at South Cove Manor. “To a lot of seniors, especially from China, tai chi is very popular there. That’s why we picked tai chi because we want to pick something that is low intensity but also potentially and effectively improve their low body movement balance.

South Cove Manor is one of eight community organizations funded by Tufts Medical Center’s Asian Health Initiative for a three-year cycle from 2014 to 2016. The nursing home hosts public health information sessions at monthly breakfast seminars and holds weekly tai chi classes for eight weeks at the Mass Pike Tower Community Room in Chinatown.

Quincy school teachers raise safety concerns at Chinatown meetings

BY VEKONDA LUANGAPAHY

Some of the Josiah Quincy Elementary School faculty shared concerns about child safety on school premises at the October Chinatown Safety Committee Meeting on Oct. 1 at the Doubletree Hotel.

“We have witnessed sexual activity and drinking and sleeping on benches during the school day, as well as smoking of marijuana, prostitution and drug use after school hours,” said Cheng I Inn Tam from a prepared statement. “This is the mother of a student at the elementary school.

Safety has been an ongoing problem, said Cynthia Soo Hoo, a lead teacher at the school for 15 years who attended the school as a child. Several incidents over the summer resulted in the School Site Council’s decision to take more aggressive action. One incident involved kindergarteners at the playground, who witnessed four men engaged in drug activity and armed with weapons.

The school custodial staff have had to address immediate concerns. “They go out and do a clean sweep every morning and they find at least marijuana pipes, crack pipes, lots of defection, which the custodial [staff] scoops up,” Soo Hoo said.

The Boston police told residents to call 911 if they see illegal activity on school premises.

Chinatown Resident Association

At East West Bank and the Mass. Asian American Commission presented an hour-long financial literacy workshop at the Chinatown Resident Association monthly meeting on Oct. 1 at the Josiah Quincy Elementary School. Attendees were informed on how to take advantage of bank services, such as efficient ways to manage checking and savings accounts, and understanding different types of consumer deposit products.

Yan Mei, assistant branch manager at East West Bank, suggested paying bills with checks rather than cash, to have transactions documented and to increase financial protection.

A senior resident asked what to do when one loses an ATM card, referring to her past unfortunate experience. Mei suggested calling the bank to deactivate the card until it is found or replaced.

After the presentation, Helen Wong, of Boston Students for Youth and Family demonstrated how to use an AutoMARK machine, a device for people with disabilities to vote and submit ballots independently and privately at the upcoming general election on Nov. 4. She gave out sample ballots for residents to practice filling out and enter into the machine.

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中文第八版
Chinese Historical Society of New England celebrates 22nd annual meeting
By ARICK WONG

Victor Liang from Northeastern University won the Noren Chung Scholarship at the Chinese Historical Society of New England annual meeting on Sept. 24. This annual tradition of excellence.

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Breakfast seminar updates seniors on Medicare
By RICHARD LEVINE

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A lot of these elders, because of the language barrier, don’t know how to talk to themselves, said Ms. Lai, an admissions coordinator at South Cove Manor.

Bilingual literature on Social Security and Medicare was available at the event. The breakfast seminars are free and will take place each month at the Mass Pike Towers community room.

The next one will take place Oct. 30 from 9:30 to 11 a.m.

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When west meets east

BY VERONDA LUANGPAH

At the Academy of the Pacific Rim, the heart of it all is to make friends from across the world. “I’ve definitely seen the other side of things now,” said Polly Drooge, a 12th grade student at the Academy of the Pacific Rim. She was one of 12 students who went to Beijing this past summer as an exchange student. The Hyde Park charter public school for seventh to 12th graders has offered the China summer program for high schoolers for the past three years. Students stayed at the academy’s sister schoolers for the past three years. Students stayed at the academy’s sister school, Beijing Academy of the Pacific Rim. While the students prepared diligently for the China trip, they still encountered many surprises. “Beijing, China, is really in the process of transforming,” said Yong Li, director of the APB’s Chinese language and exchange program. Li said just 20 years ago, cleaning a urinal was rare in China. “It is a very different experience. We try to tell our students to anticipate those differences.” For Drooge, she found some cultural hiccups eye-opening. “It wasn’t until she was told diapers were too expensive for her to wear them.”

Halloween: Back to basics

By MassMutual

Halloween props are getting more elaborate and more expensive with each passing year. According to the National Retail Federation, around 75 million Americans currently celebrate Halloween, with the average person spending $80 on candy, costumes and decorations. Consider some cost-effective ways to celebrate Halloween this year. Most kids love the idea of making their own costumes, so if you let them help, you can probably avoid buying party-store costumes. Keep safety in mind — children should be able to see on their own and be easily visible to motorists while walking outside. Some simple costume ideas:

- A fairy tale: An old white sheet into strips and wrap around the child's body, tie ends together as you go. Leave eyes and mouth free. Use face paint to whitens face and draw dark circles around eyes for a spooky touch.
- Tomte: Two large tombstone shapes cut out of cardboard and wear back to back. Glue on the sides with cord or rope. Use brown or gray poster paint and markers to color realistically and to add inscriptions (funny or scary).
- Pumpkin: Cut holes for arms and legs in a large orange leaf bag. Stuff with crumpled-up newspapers. Wear green or orange clothes underneath.
- Harpy of gorgons: Tape two dozen purple or green balloons all over child's body. Purple or green clothes should be worn underneath as possible.
- Roman senator: Wear sandals and a bed sheet. Look online for patterns to help you wrap the sheet effectively. A "laurel wreath" crown of real or fake leaves adds a nice touch.

Plan a party with spooky, kid-friendly food! Some ideas:

- Spiced wort soup: Ladle tomato paste into bowls. Top a thin line of sour cream in a spiral on top of each (using a cake decorating bag or a plastic bag with a tiny corner cut out). With a toothpick or plastic knife, cut off the center of the spiral to form the web shape.
- Mummeys: Cut a package biscuit mix into strips and wrap around hot dogs. Bake according to biscuit mix instructions.
- Bloody fingers: Cut sticks of celery and string cheese in half to form “fingers,” running off one end with a knife and using the slit end of the knife to make knuckle marks for fingers. On each "finger" end, stick a slivered almond for a fingernail. Serve with marinara sauce for the “blood.”
- Glow-in-the-dark punch: Add tonic water to pineapple juice or a combination of juices. Under black light, this will glow (because of the quinine in the tonic water). The more tonic water you use, the more it will glow, but experiment a bit because this can have a slightly bitter taste which may not appeal to your children.

For Halloween, consider some cultural hiccups eye-opening. It wasn't until she was told diapers were too expensive for her to wear them. For Drooge, she found some cultural hiccups eye-opening. It wasn't until she was told diapers were too expensive for her to wear them.

A Whole Foods hiring agreement for Chinatown and the South End will be discussed at community meetings at the Josiah Quincy School on Sept. 29. The new Whole Foods located at Ink Block, or the former Boston Herald headquarters, will open January 2015. It will be the largest Whole Foods store in Boston, employing about 250 individuals with a starting salary of $11 an hour. Karen Chen, organizing director of the Chinese Progressive Association, hosted the meeting in Cantonese with English and Mandarin translation.

Before the meeting, more than 400 signatures were collected to support Whole Foods hiring locally and increasing access to the Chinatown community.

“There’s a lot of development going on in Chinatown, and the silver lining of development is job opportunities,” Chen said.

The average Whole Foods employee makes roughly $13 an hour, and the new Whole Foods will offer opportunities for job growth and career development.

Local Chinatown organizations partnered with the South End to implement a hiring program, which includes bilingual application assistance and informational sessions. Whole Foods will submit feedback to the Chinatown community throughout the hiring process about the program efficacy.

For individuals interested in working at the South End Whole Foods, informational sessions will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, October 13, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. at the Castle Square Tenants Organization on 464 Tremont Street on the second floor. Another day of sessions will take place at 9 a.m. on November 8th at 6:30 p.m.

“We hope that Whole Foods will hire,” said Doogue. “Having the work there will give people a better chance.”

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Avoiding eye complications of diabetes

BY DR. JENNIFER K. SUN AND KA HEI KAREN LAU, MS, RD, LDN, CDE

Hearing poorly controlled blood sugar for a long time may cause complications related to diabetes. Eye complications are the most common preventable complications in patients with diabetes. Changes in the eyes from diabetes usually affect the retina, the thin layer of tissue that lines the back of the eye and contains the light sensing cells which transmit visual signals back to the brain.

The best way to prevent diabetic eye disease and to avoid vision loss is to keep blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels as normal as possible. There are also highly effective treatments for diabetic retinopathy and diabetic macular edema that can help patients maintain excellent vision despite many decades of living with diabetes.

Therefore for diabetic eye disease have improved dramatically over time, so the chance of losing successfully with good vision for diabetic patients is very high if patients follow these simple recommendations:

1. Reduce high blood sugars, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol as much as possible.
2. Realize that diabetic eye complications can be present even when the vision is good, so it is important to see an eye doctor for a dilated eye examination at least once a year to follow up for additional treatments or evaluation.
3. Follow-up is needed in between regularly scheduled eye appointments if new vision symptoms develop. In the new book, Diabetes Quest (coming out in fall 2015) by Dr. George L. King, the Research Director and Chief Scientific Officer at Joslin Diabetes Center, he shared strategies that can be used to reduce the risks of developing complications.

BY DR. HANTING LIN

I recently received an obituary from a former patient of mine in Boston. He was 88 and the obituary detailed his life, along with his contributions to the community and the nation. It spoke of the wisdom he passed on to his level ones and his treasured memories together. I attended my first American funeral many years ago for a 50-something cancer patient. His children played his favorite song “Body Sails” on the guitar during a solemn ceremony that had no walking or sobbing. Instead, the deceased was honored with tributes that made everyone smile. This desire to “celebrate” instead of being “shocked” gives us the living the strength. While the deceased has passed on, their memory remains in us as we continue our lives.

I had several conversations with medical colleagues on how we wanted to die. As aging is inevitable, many doctors and nurses shared a quick death, such as massive heart failure. Their greatest fear was the prolonged suffering of cancer. For me, I cannot imagine leaving my family with no warning. When I die, I hope cancer takes me, as I would like to be prepared and say my goodbyes. I want to have the opportunity and time to be with my family and friends. Parents and family plan so many milestones in life for us, from birth, college, marriage and children. I hope my final milestone is in taken care of by me, to read the children and bid my farewells, so I can die with no regret.

This sentiment may upset cancer patients and their relatives. But I honestly encourage everyone — include those who are cancer-free — to positively, even optimistically, consider the prospect of death.

Advance directive is a document spelling out how one would like to die. It has a brief history of 20 to 30 years, sprouting from the realization that some medical life-saving procedures only increase and prolong suffering, with little real benefit to patients and their families. Legislation began to be passed, as individuals want to hospitals to acknowledge a terminal patient’s desire to die with dignity.

My father passed away when I was 14, due to a fatal liver operation. He suffered severe blood loss three days after the surgery and passed away in an operating room after an unsuccessful surgery to save his life. I remember counting him after the first surgery, the sight of him hooked up to so many tubes made my world uncolorfully. I knew he was ill, but I had no idea he would be dead in two days. I regret never had the chance to say goodbye to us.

We could be taken at any time, without warning or time to prepare an advance directive. Writing an advance directive considers how to leave this world. There is no formula and no lighter freedom. It is more than a “Do not resuscitate” form. Let us all want to live on our own terms.

Dr. Hanting Lin is an investigator specializing in breast cancer at the Kao Foundation Sun Tan-Sun Cancer Center in Taiwan.

Goodbye: Understanding advance directive

BY DR. HANTING LIN

Physical activity may not be the first thing parents or teachers think about when they want to boost a child’s academic performance, but evidence supports the notion that a bit of exercise for the body is beneficial to the brain as well.

In fact, kindergartners who participated in Build Our Kids’ Success (BOKS), a free before-school program involving physical activity and nutrition education, had significantly improved memory skills and math teachers, compared to their peers who did not participate. A study of the children’s performance also concluded that those who participated in the program exhibited good behavior in the classroom.

“A sedentary life and poor eating habi- its can lower kids’ performances in the classroom and start a cycle of health problems later in life,” said Kathleen Talledo, founder and executive director of BOKS and director of social responsibility for Reebok. “Simply stated, a healthy body and healthy brain go hand in hand.”

So how can you incorporate more healthy habits into your family’s routine?

1. Active weekends: Instead of a lazy Saturday or Sunday, get outside and get moving. Take a soccer ball to the park for a pick-up game or hike a local trail. Make exercise on the weekends a regular habit for your family, and those habits will last you in the rest of your life.

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Healthy habits will not only reduce your child’s risk for such problems as obesity, diabetes and heart disease, they can help prime children for more success inside the classroom and beyond. So give your children a leg up and encourage them to get moving.

BY STATEPOINT

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**Location:** Room 130, 3rd Floor, McCormack Building, UMass Boston

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**Contact:** shuhong.wang@umb.edu, 617-287-7761 (Chinese); mikemei88@yahoo.com, 617-818-2973 (Art)

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