



# Still-Wellbeing Newsletter

Summer 2011

Vocational • Intellectual • Spiritual • Emotional • Physical • Environmental • Social

University Student  
Wellness Program

## Editorial Board

Janet Bunch  
Lynda Crossgrove  
Joni Newland  
Art Matthews

## Anxiety Interfering with Your Test Taking? **EXPRESS** yourself . . . in writing!

*By Art Matthews, M.A., LPC, Counselor and Emotional Team Leader, ATSU Arizona Campus*

Are you habitually nervous just before taking an exam? Feeling the effects of the Fight/Flight response? You know: sweaty hands, upset stomach, nausea, difficulty focusing? Do you “blank out” during an exam because of anxiety only to leave thinking, “I KNEW that answer!”? Then you might try taking time to express your anxious thoughts and feelings in writing just before taking a test.

In January psychologist Sian Beilock and Ph.D. student Gerardo Ramirez, both of the University of Chicago, published research in *Science Magazine* suggesting that students suffering from test anxiety could improve their scores by engaging in an expressive writing exercise prior to sitting down to take an exam.

In the exercise, students were asked to write for approximately 10 minutes about their “unspoken fears of failure” and other worries associated with their academic performance. The premise behind the writing assignment is that students will reevaluate

what is worrying them and avoid focusing on those thoughts and feelings during the exam, thus improving their performance.

Beilock is quoted in an article by Bruce Bower in the February 12 edition of *Science News* magazine, “One bout of writing about test anxiety can substantially increase students’ test scores and prevent the dreaded choke.”

This research also adds credence to the work of James Pennebaker of University of Texas at Austin that found students improved their physical health and final grades by writing about personal conflicts and past traumas for several days at the start of a new semester.

The jury is still out on whether the effect might lessen over time with repeated use; however, cognitive-behavioral therapists might suggest that the cumulative effect of this activity helps students to rewrite any irrational core beliefs that lead to feelings of distress and ineffective behaviors.

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# ATSU

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Excerpt from the article

## Spirituality and the College Student; A Search for Meaning and Purpose

By Alexander W. Astin and Helen S. Astin / *NASPA Leadership Exchange* / Spring 2011

Seven years ago we began a national study of college students' spiritual development that culminated in the recently published book, *Cultivating the Spirit: How College Can Enhance Students' Inner Lives* (Jossey Bass, 2010). The study was undertaken because we have come to believe that spirituality is fundamental to students' lives. The big questions that preoccupy students are essentially spiritual questions: Who am I? What are my most deeply felt values? Do I have a mission or purpose in my life? Why am I in college? What kind of person do I want to become? What sort of world do I want to help create?

How students deal with these questions has obvious implications for many practical decisions they will make, including their choices of courses, majors, and careers, not to mention whether they opt to stay in college, drop out, or pursue postgraduate study. Seeking answers to these questions is also directly relevant to developing personal qualities such as self-understanding, empathy, caring, and social responsibility.

Despite the extraordinary amount of research conducted on college students' growth and development—more than 5,000 studies in the past four

decades—very little systematic research has been conducted on students' spiritual development. The latest comprehensive review of the literature has no references to spirituality and only two references to religion.

In recent years, there has been a surge of interest in the topic of spirituality among some scholars and practitioners in higher education. Aside from a few studies of students' religious development conducted mainly at religiously affiliated colleges, very little empirical research has been conducted on students' spiritual development. This study was motivated, in part, to address this gap in the literature and to shed light on a little-understood but potentially important topic.

Go here to access the entire article, which discusses promoting spiritual development, a national study of students' spiritual development, how we define spirituality, and promoting spiritual development: [www.naspa.org/pubs/mags/lex.cfm](http://www.naspa.org/pubs/mags/lex.cfm).

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Beilock is the author of a professional blog on PsychologyToday.com appropriately titled "Choke." For more, go to: [www.psychologytoday.com/blog/choke](http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/choke).

For more on the research of Ramirez and Beilock, go to the full-text article: [www.sciencemag.org/content/331/6014/211.full?ijkey=ZhuhjSecPGAdM&keytype=ref&siteid=sci](http://www.sciencemag.org/content/331/6014/211.full?ijkey=ZhuhjSecPGAdM&keytype=ref&siteid=sci).

If you would like to explore interventions to help you with testing anxiety or other behavioral health concerns, contact:

**Missouri Campus Learning Resources**  
Thom Van Vleck, M.A., LPC, Counselor  
[tvanvleck@atsu.edu](mailto:tvanvleck@atsu.edu) or 660.626.2424

**Arizona Campus Learning Resources**  
Art Matthews, M.A., LPC, Counselor  
[amatthews@atsu.edu](mailto:amatthews@atsu.edu) or 480.219.6170

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## Community Impact

### ATSU-KCOM students, Joplin tornado victims set aside personal losses to assist victims

Two fourth-year ATSU-Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine (KCOM) students, Katie Davenport and Michael Kabonic, were featured in the KSPR-TV News story about true heroism in Joplin, Mo., in the wake of the tornado that struck on May 22. Katie and Mike, who are doing their clinical training at Freeman Hospital in Joplin, weathered the storm in the bathtub in their home located close to the hospital. Although their home was lost, they immediately went to the hospital to treat the injured coming in after the storm. It's reported over 900 patients were treated there. To see the video of the news story, which includes interviews with Katie and Michael, go to ATSU's *iconnect*: [iconnect.atsu.edu/?p=4135](http://iconnect.atsu.edu/?p=4135).

### ATSU-SOMA students volunteer in tornado-ravaged Alabama town

On May 7, third-year ATSU-School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona (SOMA) students Jennifer Rosemore and Andrew Tonini volunteered with the American Red Cross (ARC) in Hackleburg, Ala., a town hit recently by tornadoes. Rosemore is currently completing her clinical rotation in an Alabama Community Health Center and Tonini is doing a visiting rotation in Alabama.



Hackleburg is a small town with a population of approximately 1,400 people in northwest Alabama (about two hours from Birmingham). The town was hit by the tornadoes on April 27. "Because it is such a small town, it took about two days after the tornadoes for anyone to even realize that the town had suffered such catastrophic damage," said Rosemore. "A tornado passed very close to my apartment, but fortunately I did not have any damage."

After seeing the devastation, Rosemore and Tonini decided to volunteer with the ARC. "I have always wanted to work in rural areas and medically-under-served countries," said Tonini. "This situation provided me with the experience closer to home. Also, I am currently working on obtaining my Masters of Public Health through ATSU. I realized that this was a public health emergency, and I wanted to get involved."

Read more in *iconnect*: [iconnect.atsu.edu/?p=3986](http://iconnect.atsu.edu/?p=3986).

### Downtown Kirksville gets a facelift

More than 90 ATSU-KCOM students, faculty, and staff made their way through downtown Kirksville May 2 to beautify Kirksville during Operation Osteopathic Service. The program, which is in its third year, is organized by ATSU-KCOM students who wish to give back to the Kirksville community.



Go here to see the local television station's news report of the effort: [www.heartlandconnection.com/news/story.aspx?id=612929](http://www.heartlandconnection.com/news/story.aspx?id=612929).

### ATSU-ASDOH students and faculty attend Kids & Critters event in Jerome, Ariz.

At the event, students of ATSU-Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health (ASDOH) Elif Aksoylu, D2; Dariene Lazore, D3; Mark Rehorst, D4; and Ky Le, D3; along with Jack Dillenberg, D.D.S, M.P.H., dean of ASDOH, and Roger Cooper, Ph.D., co-director, ASDOH, provided dental screenings, fluoride varnish, and referrals to children and their pets in the community. More than 20 people and 25 pets were screened at the event.



Read more in *iconnect*: [iconnect.atsu.edu/?p=3862](http://iconnect.atsu.edu/?p=3862).

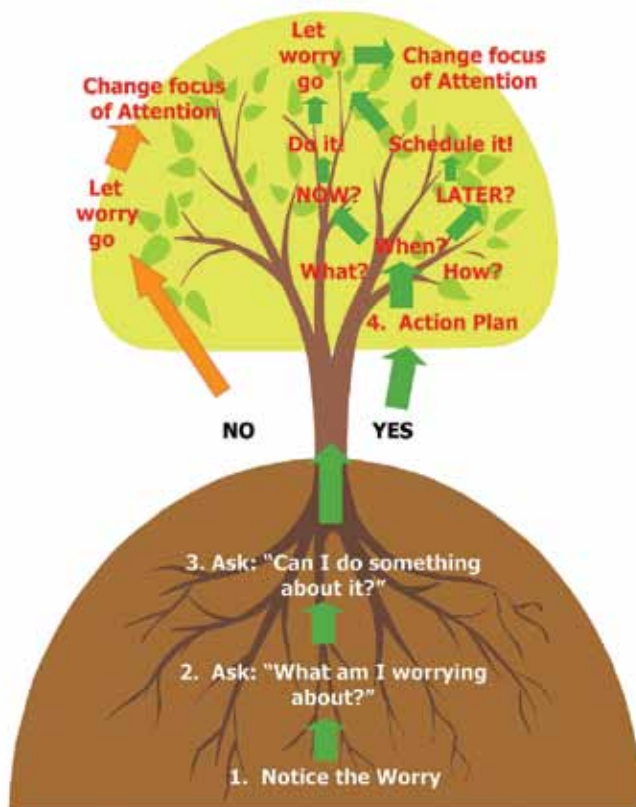
### United We Run for CASA

On April 30, the Kirksville community participated in the 5K race, United We Run for CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates). Many ATSU students each year serve as Advocates.



CASA volunteers are appointed by judges to watch over and advocate for abused and neglected children, to make sure they don't get lost in the overburdened legal and social service system or languish in inappropriate group or foster homes. Volunteers stay with each case until it is closed and the child is placed in a safe, permanent home.

How to Harvest the Best Fruit  
From the Worry Tree



www.getselfhelp.co.uk  
Adapted from Butler & Hope 2007 www.get.gg

## National Health Observances

### September

1-7

National Childhood Injury Prevention Week  
The American Academy of Pediatrics  
[www.aap.org/healthtopics/safety.cfm](http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/safety.cfm)

4-10

Suicide Prevention Week  
American Association of Suicidology  
[www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)

7-13

National Assisted Living Week  
National Center of Assisted Living  
[www.nalw.org](http://www.nalw.org)

21

International Day of Peace  
United Nations  
[www.un.org/events/peaceday](http://www.un.org/events/peaceday)

24

Family Health and Fitness Day USA  
Health Information Resource Center  
[www.fitnessday.com/family/index.htm](http://www.fitnessday.com/family/index.htm)

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National Women's Health & Fitness Day  
Health Information Resource Center  
[www.fitnessday.com](http://www.fitnessday.com)

## University Still-Wellbeing Steering Committee

Jeff Alexander  
Janet Bunch  
Lynda Crossgrove  
Jim Farris  
Ron Gaber  
Mary Greer  
Kelly Halma  
Tom Hotvedt  
Cynthia Kaye  
Daniel Martin  
Arthur Matthews

Michelle Panico  
Fred Peterson  
Wendy Pinkerton  
Beth Poppre  
Dustin Smith  
Eric Snider  
Jeff Suzewits  
Tim Tucker  
Thomas Van Vleck  
Tonya Watson  
Margaret Wilson

"I really believe the only way to stay healthy is to eat properly, get your rest, and exercise. If you don't exercise and do the other two, I still don't think it's going to help you that much."

Mike Ditka

