

Activate

UNY Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church
Benefits Office Newsletter ~ Spring 2013



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Index:

Bike/Walk/Run for AU: Page 1

Healthy and Active at 91: Page 2

*2013 Wellness Incentives Time-
line:* Page 3

Affordable Care Act: Page 4

*Holistic Clergy Health and Well-
ness:* Page 5

How to Find a Support Group:
Page 5



Spring is Time for Renewal

Usually Vicki provides some insight into each issue of Activate; however, she has taken a much needed vacation. So we at the Benefits Office hope many will follow in her footsteps and remember after great effort and work, we all deserve time for rest and relaxation. Spring and Easter, which are just around the corner, usually represent a time of renewal, flowers blooming, baby birds flying, people going outside and taking strolls again. Hopefully, it also means eating healthier now that the string of holidays has passed. In part 3 of our series on holistic wellness, we are focusing on physical health. Check out page 5 for more encouragement in that area.

Our prayer for the Conference, as Easter comes and goes, is that you all will find that time to be alone with God, find peace in the quiet, and enjoy the nature around you, enabling you to start fresh again.

With Grace,

The Benefits Staff

Africa University Bike/Run/Walk to Annual Conference

One of the signs of community, as we continue to grow together as an Annual Conference and as people seeking to live healthy lives as those who serve the church, is to be open to the call to serve others.

To get to Annual Conference this year, there are some pastors and laity in our midst who will walk, bike or run to Syracuse, as a way to support Scholarships for Africa University.

Participants are asked to:

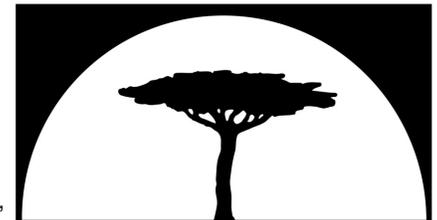
1. Register with the AU Bike/Run/Walk Team at bikealong2@nycap.rr.com
2. Determine their route and bring it to the planning meeting to be held later this month. We will look for churches to stay along each route, to allow us to stay for the night, and make a presentation to those who might gather for a time together.
3. Ask the membership of their church to financially support their ride, offering a set amount to be brought to Annual Conference this year.

There are other details which will be reviewed before the ride/walk/run. Others can also ride/walk/run the equivalent of the distance to Syracuse and ask for gifts accordingly.

There is still time to sign up for the event at the end of May!

We do this to support scholarships for Africa University, the United Methodist sponsored University in Old Mutare, Zimbabwe, Africa. What we share in mission with AU helps Africa and the world in so many ways!

Submitted by: *Rev. Bob Kolvik-Campbell*



**AFRICA
UNIVERSITY**
A United Methodist-Related Institution

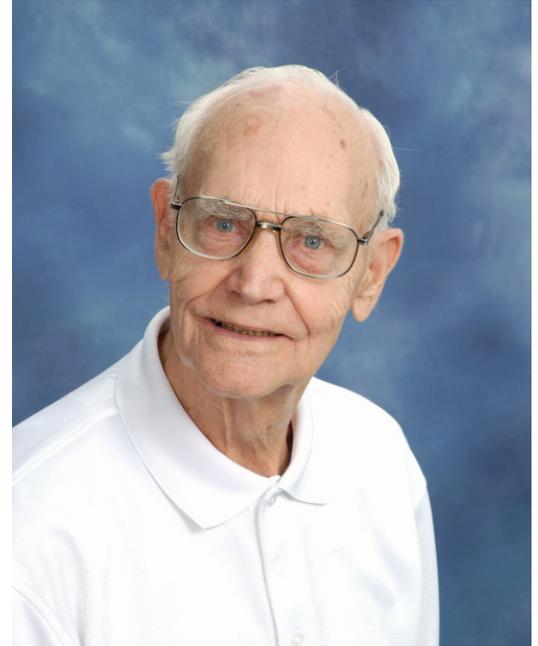
*Create in me a
pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast
spirit within me. Do not
cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit
from me. Restore to me the
joy of your salvation and
grant me a willing spirit
to sustain me.
Psalm 51: 10-12*

Healthy and Active at 91 Years Old

Allen Lum retired as a full member in 1984, and at 91 years old is still active, and happy to share information with others that has helped him. In the past two years, he's discovered several ways of preventing or conquering health problems.

In terms of lifestyle, Allen planted a garden in his front yard with radishes and tomatoes and continues to keep up with it, watering it regularly. In 2012, Allen stopped using his chain saw in an effort to reduce his risk of having an accident. He makes sure to eat three good meals a day, engage in daily exercise, and uses vitamins and minerals. Through his dedication to his health, Allen no longer needs pain pills, even though he still uses a cane. At 5'8" he has maintained a healthy weight of 158 lbs.

Allen has also utilized some holistic therapies, including ingesting 1 oz of food grade H₂O₂ spray every day. This treatment is based on research done by Dr. Frank Shallenberger, documented in "Real Cures," which talks about how food grade hydrogen peroxide helps with 70 diseases and 20 fungus problems. Please note these processes have not approved by the FDA. Allen has also utilized household items, such as oregano, to assist with his health. These home based treatments are based on the material written by Dr. Cass Ingram, "The Cure is in the Cupboard."



Allen wants people to remember to speak with their doctors before trying out new treatments, as the effectiveness and possible side effects can vary for each individual. Allen, himself, said he had an allergic reaction to one of the pills he was taking and wants individuals to be safe in their journey to wellness.

Submitted by: Rev. Allen Lum
Retired

Revised Employment Verification (I-9) Form Available

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigrations Services (USCIS) issued a revised version of the I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification Form, effective 3/8/2013, after having employers use an expired form for over six months. It is the responsibility of the employer (in this case the local church) to ensure the I-9 form is completed by all new employees within three days of being hired, inspect the appropriate documents, record the information on the I-9 form, and maintain the form for the legally required amount of time so it is available for inspection by government officials. Acceptable documents are listed on the last page of the I-9 packet.

All churches should immediately update their new hire paperwork to include the revised I-9 form. Additional information on the employment eligibility verification process can be found on the USCIS website: www.uscis.gov. There is also a link on the Church Employers page of the Upper New York Annual Conference website.

If you have any questions, please contact Debi Marshall, Human Resources Assistant, in the Benefits Office

Featured Recipe: Spring Vegetable Tart

Ingredients:

- 1 (9-inch) unbaked piecrust
- 3 chopped scallion (white and light green parts)
- 2 Tbsp canola oil
- 1 cup sliced mushrooms
- 1 (10-oz) box frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
- 4 eggs
- 2 cups half and half
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 1 cup shredded Swiss cheese

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F
2. Fit crust into a 9-inch pie plate. Bake for 10 minutes or until golden. If crust bubbles, gently press down with spoon.
3. In a medium skillet, cook scallions in oil for 5 minutes or until soft. Add mushrooms and cook 2 minutes. Set aside.
4. In a large bowl, beat eggs with half-and-half, salt, and pepper. Spoon spinach mixture into crust. Sprinkle with cheese. Pour egg mixture over cheese.
5. Reduce oven temperature to 325 degrees F. Bake for 50 minutes or until a knife inserted into center of tart comes out clean.

As found on dashrecipes.com brunch

2013 Blueprint for Wellness Screening

It's almost that time again, for the Quest Diagnostic Blueprint for Wellness Screening. This extensive biometric screening is provided to individuals in the HealthFlex EPO-D plan at no cost to the participant or an enrolled spouse. HealthFlex participants who are enrolled in the Virgin HealthMiles program can earn \$100 in HealthCash by getting screened, however, you must be enrolled in VHM by the end of the day that you have the screening done.

There are several ways you can take the Blueprint for Wellness Screening. There will be two time periods allotted during annual conference that you can pre-register for, or you can make an appointment at a local Quest lab between April 1 and July 31. If you cannot make it to Annual Conference and the closest Quest lab is too far for you to travel to, you can bring a specified form to your own doctor and have them run the same tests as the biometric screening.

All individuals who are eligible for this program will be contacted with details on how to register later this month.

If you have any questions, please contact Debi Marshall at DebiMarshall@unyumc.org, or ext. 302.

2013 Wellness Incentives Timeline

Virgin HealthMiles Goals

1/2/2013 - 3/30/2013	1st Qtr Challenge for \$25 HealthCash
4/3/2013 - 6/29/2013	2nd Qtr Challenge for \$25 HealthCash
7/3/2013 - 9/28/2013	3rd Qtr Challenge for \$25 HealthCash
10/2/2013 - 12/28/2013	4th Qtr Challenge for \$25 HealthCash
Reach all four quarterly goals	Earn additional \$50 HealthCash

Wellness Incentives

1/1/2013 - 12/31/2013	Earn 150 Wellness Points for \$150 HealthCash 100-149 Points earns you \$50 HealthCash
4/1/2013 - 7/31/2013	Blueprint for Wellness Screening for \$100 HealthCash
8/1/2013 - 9/30/2013	Take HealthQuotient to avoid higher in 2014

For more information on the 2013 wellness incentive programs, including eligibility requirements, go to the www.unyumc.org/benefits or www.gbophb.org and log in to your HealthFlex/WebMD account.

Give Health and HealthCoach Call Options

The Benefits Office loves to be able to help people with the wellness initiatives provided by HealthFlex, but we understand that certain individuals would prefer not to get a lot of mail or be contacted as much about their health care needs. Some of the HealthFlex programs have alternate contact options or opt-out procedures, including the following:

Evive Health: They send you those reminders for regular doctor's appointments, such as mammograms and prostate cancer screenings. If you would like to get reminders by text or email instead of regular mail, go online to www.ehealthreminders.com/HealthFlex. If you would like to opt out from reminders all together, choose "Here to unsubscribe?" in the right column.

HealthCoach Calls: If you have taken the HealthQuotient, Health Coaches are then asked to follow up with you to assist in continuing your path to wellness. If you would like to opt-out of receiving these calls, you can do so in one of three ways:

1. When the HealthCoach calls, tell them right then to remove you from their calling list.
2. Call the HealthCoach team at 1-866-302-5742, option 2 and ask to be removed.
3. Contact the Benefits Office and we will provide your name to the HealthTeam to remove you from the HealthCoach calling list.

Wanted: Health Champions

- Do you have an encouraging story about how you've made a lifestyle change?
- Have you made wellness a priority in your every day life?
- Have you started an exercise routine that has eliminated your diabetes?
- Have you lost weight and increased your life expectancy?
- Have you quit unhealthy habits?
- Have you started a health and wellness ministry at your church that is presenting results?

Tell us your story! Together we can motivate and encourage each other to be healthier physically and in turn emotionally, and spiritually.

Email your story of 250 words or less, with a headshot or activity photo (if possible) to BenefitsOffice@unyumc.org

A Little Bit About the Affordable Care Act (ACA)

Employee Notifications

The mandate for employers to notify employees of health insurance exchange eligibility has been postponed from March 31, 2013 to later this summer or fall.

Inclusion of health insurance value must be included on W2 for tax year 2013; churches paying into the Conference health program will be provided with this information.

Individual Mandate

Individuals must have minimum essential coverage or they will be subject to a penalty, assessed at the time of tax filing.

Plans that provide minimum essential coverage are: Government-sponsored programs [Medicare, Medicaid, CHIP, Tri-Care], Employer-sponsored coverage including HealthFlex, Individual market plans purchased on the health insurance exchanges.

No penalty to persons who lack access to affordable health care; affordable has been defined as when the premium for the lowest cost coverage exceeds 8% of household income.

Employer Mandate

Large employers with 50 or more full time equivalent employees must provide "affordable coverage" with "minimum value" or pay penalty

Most churches are not large employers.

Minimum Value

A minimum value plan provides coverage at the bronze level or 60% of medical expense

Nursing Home and Assisted Living Notifications

The Benefits Office is looking for updated addresses on retired clergy living in nursing homes or assisted living homes, including full name and mailing address.

The Bishop's office has asked for this information, however, we do not have access to it in our office.

The information can come from anyone who knows of a clergy person living in a facility. Please email BenefitsOffice@unyumc.org if you have any information that can assist us.



Legal Status Reminders

Many of us don't like to think about what will happen to us if we get sick and cannot make decisions, or pass away; however, identifying people in your life to make decisions in your absence is important so that you are prepared if/when an unfortunate event takes place:

Beneficiary- If you recently got married, divorced or had a child, it is important to update your beneficiary on pension plans, wills etc.

Health Proxy- Identify this individual to your doctor and advise the proxy of his/her responsibility to act on your behalf should you not be able to make your own health care decisions.

Power of Attorney- You want to set this up before you need it, so it's in place before it becomes a necessity. A lot of individual are against this because they don't want people having access to their person information, so make sure you choose a family member you can trust and has your best interests at heart.

Name Change Procedure

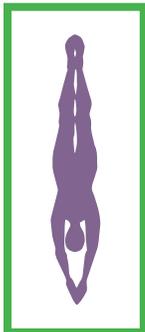
If you have recently gotten married or divorced, or changed your name legally for any reason, it is important that you contact the Benefits Office immediately to advise us of your name change so that all records are consistent with your current identification. We will need a copy of the legal name change (marriage license, divorce decree, court order, etc.) to officially change your name with the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits. Without the legal proof, we cannot make the change and it may affect how your name appears on your health insurance and pension information, including year-end tax documents. You can email your name change request and legal documentation to BenefitsOffice@unyumc.org.

Alternative Contacts Info for Retirees and Surviving Spouses

In order to be of better service to retirees and surviving spouses regarding Pension and Health Benefits concerns, as well as other issues, the Conference office would like to have the name of an alternate contact person of your choosing (other than your spouse) to keep on file. This person could make phone calls for you or explain changes in benefits, as well as be contacted by the Conference office in case of an emergency. Please send the following information to linda@unyumc.org, or mail it to Attn: Linda Houmiel, 324 University Ave, 3rd Floor, Syracuse, NY 13210. Please note if you are in health care facility.

Your Name:	Alt. contact name:
Alt. contact phone:	Alt. contact email:
Alt. contact mailing address:	Relationship of Alt. contact:

Holistic Clergy Health and Wellness Series, Part 3: Physical Health



When people say the word “health” we often automatically think of physical health: how our body feels, are we exercising, what we are eating, do we have chronic illness, or are we relatively “healthy.” The Bible talks about how our body is a temple and we responsible for being good stewards. Often, however, there are certain things we have no control over such as certain illnesses. However, it’s important to understand the things we do have control over.

Bodies were made with a formula for being healthy and whole, particularly when it comes to food and exercise. You take in certain types of calories for energy to get through the day, and then you use up that energy during the basic functioning of your body, including physical movement. If there is an imbalance in any respect (the type of foods you eat, or how many calories you take in or use) you may become sick. Often people focus on the number and are concerned more with how much they weigh. However, the numbers we focus on and whether they are “good” or not really depends on the individual, as God created us all differently. A healthy weight for one person may be unhealthy for another.

For many of us, all it takes to be physically healthy is eating a balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meat, and dairy, in conjunction with at least 30 minutes of exercise 3-5 times per week. However, some of us have other health issues or food intolerances/allergies that may prevent us from getting the types of calories or nutrients we need. Also, some of us have disabilities that may prevent us from getting physical exercise that’s essential to healthy living. It is because of all of these reasons that it is important to figure out the best nutrition and exercise regiment for your particular situation, in counsel with your primary care physician.

Being physically healthy not only means feeling better on a regular basis, but it can decrease your chances of chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and high cholesterol. This in turn can lengthen your life, providing you more valuable time with your family. In the end, being physically healthy can help you become a role model to those in your life who are looking to be physically healthy as well.

If you are a participant in the HealthFlex insurance plan, there are many initiatives to help individuals stay physically healthy, including Virgin HealthMiles, Weight Watchers, and the Blueprint for Wellness Screening. Taking advantage of these programs can be the first step you need to a healthier life. Check out the Benefits Office web page for more information: www.unyumc.org/benefits.

How to Find a Support Groups

Support groups have been an essential component to the recovery process for alcoholics, drug addicts, and their families for decades. In recent years, support groups for all types of issues have been cropping up, providing people with the opportunity to connect with individuals who understand what they are going through, and gain emotional and moral support. Support groups can be found for many different topics, everything from grieving the loss of a loved one, to divorce care, eating disorders, depression, anxiety, chronic illness, pre-post surgery care, to cancer survivors, etc.

There are many benefits to attending a support group, including feeling less lonely and not judged, being able to talk openly about your feelings, reducing stress and anxiety, getting practical advice about treatment options, comparing resources including alternative options, and developing coping skills. Often it’s difficult to know where to start to find support groups for the issues you may be struggling with. Here are some tips on where to go for more information:

- Ask your physician or counselor for a referral
- Churches, community centers, and libraries often advertise for support groups being held in their facilities
- Ask friends dealing with the same issue for recommendations
- Newspapers, such as the Pennysaver or the “local” or “health” section in your city paper, often advertise local support groups
- Check hospital websites or bulletin boards
- Search the internet for a national organization that focuses on the issue you are dealing with as they often list support groups by state
- <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net> has a listing of specialized support groups

Soda and Fruit Drinks May Increase Risk of Depression

New research by the American Academy of Neurology reveals that people who drink more than four cups of soda per day were 30 percent more likely to develop depression than people who don't drink soda. The same held true for people who drank four cans of fruit punch, where they are 38 percent more likely to become depressed than individuals who don't drink sweetened drinks. However, people who drank four cups of coffee a day appeared to be making the right decision for their emotional health, making them 10 percent less likely to develop depression than individuals who don't drink coffee.

Interestingly enough, diet soda and diet fruit juices had a higher correlation with developing depression than regular soda and fruit juice.

The study looked at over 200,000 people and their beverage consumption over a two year time period, and then followed up with those individuals 10 years later to see if they had been diagnosed with depression.

Sustainable Living Stories Wanted

Recently, the Upper New York Annual Conference website showcased a new program "Cook from Scratch," led by Anna Dawson of Hometown Foods, LLC. Dawson demonstrated her program at Grace United Methodist Church in Nassau, NY, in an effort to teach families how to be frugal and how to best use resources. The entire article can be found on the UNY website: <http://www.unyumc.org/news/detail/1476>.

We thought this would be a good opportunity to get churches thinking about how you can incorporate healthy living, reducing waste, and good stewardship practices into your own ministries. Has your church started a garden or a food co-op? Have you offered classes on how to eat healthier and live more simply? Have you led canning workshops? We would love to hear your stories.

Email BenefitsOffice@unyumc.org to let us know what you are doing to live healthy, sustainable, and responsible lives within your communities.

Walking Maps for Annual Conference

Annual Conference is just two months away, and in order to encourage healthy activities while visiting the City of Syracuse, we are again highlighting three different walking maps that you can use during your off time in Syracuse.

In order to accommodate people at a variety of activity levels, we have created a one mile map, a mile and a half map, and a two mile map. If you want to walk more than that, feel free to just double or triple up on the maps. We hope you will find these maps provide easy walking paths, as well as some interesting Syracuse landmarks along the way, including the Everson Museum, Fayette Park, The Museum of Science and Technology (MOST), Armory Square, and Clinton Square.

To access the walking maps, go to:
<http://www.unyumc.org/walkingmaps>.



"He is Risen!"

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him: Now I have told you.'"

So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshipped him.

Happy Easter!