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MEDICAL NEWS

Edison College holding World AIDS Day events

Edison College's Division of Health Professions invites the public to participate in a variety of activities to commemorate World AIDS Day 2007. All events will be held at the Lee Campus on Friday, Nov. 30 in Walker Hall, located at the College Parkway entrance.

This year's theme is "Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise." Three lectures will be presented:

- 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. - Kris Thompson, HIV Education Supervisor, Lee County Health Department, and Stephan Philippi, RN-C, HIV Certified Registered Nurse will discuss HIV/AIDS Prevention.

- 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. - The film, "A Closer Walk," will be introduced by Cheryl Black, Edison College Professor of Biology, and hosted by Melissa Thomas, Nursing Student.

- Noon - individuals who are HIV positive will discuss living with HIV/AIDS.

- 1 p.m. - Dr. Robert Schwartz, a specialist in infectious diseases and director of the AIDS Treatment Center will update new treatment and medicines.

Edison College's Nursing Department, Lee County Health Department, AIDS Treatment Center, and McGregor Clinic, are sponsoring the day-long event. Free HIV testing, Hepatitis A and B vaccinations and blood pressure screenings will be available throughout the day.

The public is invited to create a panel for the Edison College AIDS quilt. Fabric squares and markers will be available in Walker Hall. For more information, call 489-9255. ■

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Volunteers needed to help during local disasters

Healthcare workers especially in need

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

The Southwest Florida Citizen Medical Reserve Corp wants to increase its volunteer group of health care workers to help treat victims of hurricanes, deadly flu outbreaks and other disasters.

To prepare to meet the natural and man-made threats that can overwhelm a public health and emergency response system. Dr. Patricia Santucci, medical director of the Southwest Florida Citizen Medical Reserve Corps, is looking to organize and train current and former health care providers. Physicians and nurses are needed, but so are pharmacists, dentists, paramedics, clinical social workers, mental health counselors, lab techs, case managers, and veterinarians.

Non-clinical volunteers are also needed to assist the medical teams with everything from greeting people and distributing information to communications and data entry.

"We fill in the gap and get the help where it's needed most," said Santucci. "If there's a crisis and we need two more radiologists and a file clerk at a specific hospital, we can get them there."

The MRC was created in 2002 by the office of the U.S. Surgeon General in response to the outpouring of support for emergency relief efforts after the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. People wanted to volunteer, but had no identification as members of an emergency response system, no proof of cre-

dentials or training to deal with disasters.

The local MRC is sponsored by the Lee County Health Department and includes Lee, Charlotte, Glades, Hendry, DeSoto and Okeechobee Counties. When deployed by the Health Department, medical volunteers' malpractice liability and workman's comp are covered.

"Being under the Health Department allows us to be part of the bigger picture," said Santucci. "They can send us to other areas of the country to help, like New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, however, most of our activities are of a local nature."

Currently there are 714 units and 147,000 volunteers in local units scattered across the country. These MRC units are community based and function as a way to locally organize and utilize volunteers for healthcare. It provides the structure necessary to pre-identify, train, credential and deploy personnel that are available and ready to respond and enables communities to become self-reliant, particularly in the first 12-72 hours, when outside help may not be available.

Orientation classes are scheduled Dec. 12 at Cape Coral Hospital, Jan. 7 at Lee Memorial Hospital and Feb. 13 at HealthPark Medical Center. If you are interested in volunteering, go to www.swflorida.org and complete the on-line registration, or call Steve Fettner, SW Florida Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator at (239) 461-6109. ■

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Classes to help caregivers

If you are the full-time caregiver for a loved one, you are invited to attend caregiver training and education classes in Lee County during the month of December.

The Caregiver Assistance and Regional Education Program is a collaborative outreach effort between the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida, Inc., Lee Memorial Health System, Hope of Southwest Florida, Alvin A. Dubin Alzheimer's Resource Center and Faith in Action. Personal care, caregiver feelings, roles and responsibilities, end of life issues and com-

munity resources are just a few of the topics to be discussed.

Classes are twice a week for two consecutive weeks, with each class lasting three hours. Chapel By The Sea, Fort Myers Beach, will host classes. Don't miss this opportunity to come together and learn with other caregivers how to better care for your loved one, as well as how to better care for yourself!

Call (866) 231-0921 to register. Class dates and times: Dec. 4, 6, 11 and 13 from 1 p.m. until 4 p.m. Chapel By The Sea is located at 100 Chapel Street, Fort Myers Beach. ■