

"Go Red For Women" Raises Awareness



Tribal member & Community Health Nurse Shirley Walkhoff

By Toby McClary

Since February of 2004, the American Heart Association has put together a "Go Red For Women" campaign to raise awareness about heart disease and its connection to women. Heart disease is the leading cause of death among women and more than 480,000 women die from it each year. That is about one death every minute.

As for the Tribe's Wellness Department, they too are in the fight to raise awareness.

"I want people to be aware and take some initiative," said Tribal member and Community Health Nurse Shirley Walkhoff. "People need to take responsibility for themselves. I want to give them the tools that will help them."

Walkhoff has been coordinating the "Wear Red For Women" event on the Tribal campus for the last several years. This year she presented a Powerpoint slide show and

had a booth set up for taking blood pressures by Tribal Elder Darlene Aaron. Walkhoff also proposed a challenge to the Tribal departments to encourage them to wear red on Wednesday, February 7.

"Don't forget to wear Red!" said Walkhoff in an all-employee email. "There will be a prize for the department that wears the most red!"

The Finance Department went on to win the challenge and was awarded with two giant cookies hand-baked by Walkhoff herself.

According to the American Heart Association website, millions of people participate in the wear red event each year. The movement gives women tips and information on healthy eating, exercise and risk factor reduction.

Cardiovascular disease claims more lives than the next four most common causes of death combined which include cancer, respiratory diseases and accidents.

In an email to gain awareness in the community, Walkhoff stated that many women "and unfortunately doctors" still do not know that heart disease is the number one killer of women. With heart disease claiming the life of a woman every single minute, the question of how something like that could be overlooked needed to be asked.

"The symptoms are minimized by women because they don't have the same classic symptoms as men," said Walkhoff. "There are so many factors. Nobody wants to accept that they might have a heart disease at the age of 27. Therefore it is just simply overlooked," she said.

Here is a list of five simple ways to control cardiac risk factors posted on the American Heart Association website:

1. Celebrate with a checkup. Let each birthday remind you that it's time for your yearly checkup and a talk with your doctor about how you can reduce your risk for heart disease.
2. Get off the couch. Step, march or jog in place for at least 30 minutes most days of the week — you can even do it while watching TV.
3. Quit smoking in four steps. Can't go "cold turkey"? Cut the number of cigarettes you smoke each day in half; then cut that number in half; cut it in half again; finally, cut down to zero!
4. Drop a pound or two. Cutting out just 200 to 300 calories a day — about one candy bar's worth — can help you lose up to two pounds per week and gradually bring you closer to a heart-healthy weight.
5. Become a salt detective. Check out the Nutrition Facts panel on packaged foods to see how much sodium (salt) they contain. Aim

for a total intake of no more than 2,300 milligrams (about a teaspoon of salt) per day.

In addition to these five healthy tips, Walkhoff had some words of advice of her own.

"Don't forget to diet and exercise," she said. "Be proactive in your healthcare. People need to know what their risks are and how to minimize them or prevent them."

Since 2004, the month of February has been recognized as American Heart Month. Former First-Lady Barbara Bush has served as the spokeswoman for the movement and landmarks across the United States such as the Washington Monument, Niagra Falls and the Empire State Building have all been turned red through the month of February. ■



Photos by Toby McClary

Tribal Elder Peachie Hamm gets her blood pressure taken by Tribal Elder Darleen Aaron during the "Go Red For Women Day" on Wednesday, February 7. February is now recognized as American Heart Month.

Valentine's Day Has Long Been Known For Romance

By Toby McClary

Every February, loved ones across the country exchange gifts such as flowers, jewelry, cards and candy in a celebration known as St. Valentine's Day. This tradition has been carried on for hundreds of years but who is this "Saint Valentine" and why do we celebrate his name?

Although there are several theories that support who Valentine was and why we celebrate his name, only one seems most logical to me. Well, maybe it seems most logical or maybe it most represents the romance that we all seem to chase.

According to one legend on the www.history.com website, Valentine was the first to ever send a "valentine" greeting.

Valentine was sentenced to imprisonment by Emperor Claudius II for failing to follow a rule the Emperor made stating that single men made better soldiers and outlawed marriage among young men. Valentine defied Claudius and performed marriages for young lovers in secret anyway. While in prison, Valentine fell in love



Graphic created by George Valdez

with a young girl who visited him often and is suspected to have been his jailor's daughter.

Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter and signed it with a statement that is still used today,

"From your Valentine." While he never knew he'd become a legend, Valentine has been and will be looked upon as a very romantic figure. Valentine was sentenced to death on February 14, 270 A.D.

An estimated one billion valentine cards are sent each year, making Valentine's Day the second largest card-sending day of the year coming in second to only Christmas of which 2.6 billion cards are sent annually. In addition to the United States, Valentine's Day is also celebrated in several other countries such as Canada, Mexico, France and Australia. Written valentine cards did not begin to appear until 1400 and the oldest known valentine card is on display at the British Museum. The first commercial Valentine's Day greeting cards produced in the United States were created by Esther A. Howland (aka: "Mother of the Valentine") in the 1840's.

So, mid-February is just as good of time as any to show that "special someone" that you care. ■