

Tech Togetherness

Dr. LaNise Rosemond: Program Coordinator of Tech Togetherness

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Togetherness is defined as the state of being close to another person or other people. In all of my readings on workplace happiness, the one common theme always comes back to the importance of building, maintaining, and nurturing successful relationships in the workplace. These ideas are vital to our overall health, productivity, happiness, and success in the workplace. The goal of Tech Togetherness is to bridge the gaps and create stronger relationships between administrators, faculty, staff, and the Tech community at large. This will take time and effort to do; however, with everyone moving in the same direction we can all individually and collectively reach this goal. It starts with one simple paradigm shift called “change!” I know that the word change is common to throw around, but, contrary to popular belief, most of us do not like change. Change forces us out of complacency! Out of normality, it is creativity that leads to impacting community! We must embrace a new way of thinking in order to leave the past behaviors, which are no longer functioning for the betterment of the community. We get to choose what we want to think about, how we want to feel, how we produce here at Tech, and more importantly how we treat each one another. Change is a choice. It’s a choice that we make in our hearts that is geared to the overall betterment of others and ourselves. It is important to let go of past disappointments, misunderstandings, and offenses in order to embrace togetherness. After we embrace change, the next step is to implement change. Just picture a Tennessee Tech University as a place where everyone is supporting, encouraging, advocating, and cheering each other to succeed. I know that this does not happen overnight; however, it can happen when we ALL embrace the idea of growing together. I think it is important for each of us to examine our own hearts to determine if we can use a tune up in the area of community.

The Team Togetherness Committee would like to see you moving in the direction of change for the betterment of the Tech community. You can start by inviting a colleague to walk around the quad with you during your break. Change your conversation to positive dialogue, instead of gossip or negativity. Take time to speak and say hello to people that you do not get a chance to see on a regular basis. My challenge to you is to reach out to someone before the semester ends and let him or her know that you value them for being a part of this great Tennessee Tech community! Go visit and ask them how they are doing and what can you do to better assist them if it is in your power to do so. I believe that you will find out that we all have one thing in common although we each have unique differences. Everyone desires to know that they matter! Everyone desires to be significant!

The Team Tech Togetherness Committee wants you to know that you matter. It is for this reason, that we had a huge event that Provost Ghorashi mentioned in his newsletter, “Heating Up the Quad”! When I looked through all of the pictures one common denominator I saw was smiling people. Several people came up to me and said that they enjoyed visiting people from other departments that they had not seen in a long time. Remember, in order for us to make Tech a more unified campus, it starts with each one of us embracing the idea of community and moving towards building, maintaining, and nurturing good relationships on our campus.

PS. Get Moving and Go make someone else’s day brighter.

Remember WE ALL matter here on the campus of TTU!



Tech Togetherness Blog:

“Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"- Martin Luther King, Jr.

It was 2 months ago that we celebrated MLK Day, which is now a National Day of Service. As I reflect on the importance of service to others, quotes from amazing people, throughout history, come to mind. What are collected quotes in our memories, if we are not putting them to action? As educators, we are inadvertently role models, mentors, and leaders. With this knowledge comes great responsibility. It is just as important for us to produce community engaged students as to produce career-ready students. To do this, we must also be engaged in our communities. RESEARCH the social issues and concerns surrounding your communities. ASK what the current needs are, because the needs often change. USE your skills to make a difference or to facilitate a group that can make a difference. KNOW how to connect your students with opportunities to serve. ENCOURAGE them to also put their skills to use in great ways, ways that will change something, if even in a small way. One can never do too little or too much when it comes to serving others. One of my professional mentors, as well as life mentors, a dear friend, Executive Director of Upper Cumberland United Way, Melinda James, always says, “Do what you CAN with what you HAVE, where you ARE.” I’m sure it is a quote or something she read somewhere, but they have become words I believe everyone, no matter their walk in life, should live by. Every person has the ability to do something for someone else. Doesn’t it seem like a waste if we never use that ability?

The relationships you build when serving alongside one another are priceless. There is simply a connection you have with fellow volunteers with a common purpose that you will not find elsewhere. There is also a clear bond you form with your students when you serve alongside them. It is a mutual respect that cannot be captured by words.

One of my staff members and our families assisted an elderly 90 year old lady with firewood. After assisting the elderly lady, my staff member stated, “I think every office should do this stuff together as team building exercises”. Since she is my *only* staff member, I can *safely* say, she really became my favorite after that remark. *“We make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give.” –Winston Churchill*

Michelle Huddleston
Service Coordinator, University Service Center

Encouragement to Become Physically Active

Most of us can think fondly back to childhood days when getting up and out of the house for a day of play was what made the weekend so desirable. I remember coming home for Saturday lunch, eating quickly and running back into the neighborhood to reconnect with whatever game or activity was happening.

Then....I grew up, got a job and family and the fun and frolic was over. Unfortunately, this scenario is all too familiar, not just for me but for many folks. Physical activity is ultimately important for good health and for overall wellness. Study after study shows that we need to be active as we develop into adulthood, but we also need to stay active throughout life to be and feel the best. All too often ‘things’ or ‘responsibilities’ get in the way....or at least we use them as an excuse to skip the physical activity piece.

There are great benefits for individuals who are even minimally active! Examples include lower stress levels, better bone and joint health, lower blood pressure, better heart health, and the list goes on. The really good news is that you don’t have to schedule an hour per day or even every other day to go to the gym, nor do you have to secure a personal trainer or spend a lot of money on fancy equipment. A good pair of shoes is all you need to get on your way to physical activity. Walking is a really good way to get started, and to stay moving. You can start slow and get faster, take short walks and work up to longer distances. You can walk alone or with a friend. Locations are endless and so are the benefits.

Let me encourage you to get moving. Take the first step – out the door and to becoming a better, healthier you!

Dr. Christy Killman

Motivation Article

January is the month when motivation is high: the parking lot to the gym is always full, people have to wait in line for certain fitness machines, and people are still committed to New Year's resolutions. But what happens when that motivation starts to wane?

Eric Barker, psychologist columnist for Time Magazine online, gives three steps on how to motive yourself:

Get Positive. Barker states the obvious:

"When do we procrastinate the most? When we are in a bad mood."

Easy enough, right? Maybe easier said than done. My favorite way to get happy is gratitude. Making sure to say thank you when people do me a favor, and go out of my way to thank people in writing that go out of their way for me. Reminding myself that I have a great position, working for an organization that I care about and helping young people and coaches achieve their goals. Checking out pictures of my beautiful family and remembering how lucky I am to have them in my life.

Even on days when my job stresses me out, my kids are driving me up a wall and the world has been getting in my way, it's in my perception of these things that I can change my attitude and get positive.

Get Rewarded. Barker comes again with the easy answer: Rewards feel good. Penalties feel bad.

When it comes to getting healthy, what's your reward? A friend mentioned an idea she heard the other day, and I like it because it isn't related to weight loss or dropping pant sizes. She told me that whenever she completed a workout, whether it was weights, walking, or taking a fitness class she was going to tuck away one dollar. When she had one hundred dollars, she was going to do something special for her and her husband. I love that idea! I've started doing that too, and I'm motivating myself with an awesome pair of shoes after my 100 workouts.

Get Peer Pressure. In Barker's article, it states that research shows peer pressure helps kids more than it hurts them. Since we are all pretty much big kids, it will help us too!

Peer pressure is my biggest motivator. I have an amazing friend, Dr. Nancy Greene, who holds me accountable for doing something fitness related almost every day. She doesn't buy my "I'm too tired" or "I'm too busy" excuses, she calls me and makes me do it anyway. She inspires me, since she is a bit older than me, and still shows up every day, rain or shine, to get me moving. We're a good team, since she gets me started and then I make her keep up with me.

Working in Athletics, I have heard about and met coaches that were "great motivators". But in my experience, the best motivation comes from inside yourself. I hope you can take Barker's three keys to motivation to keep January going all year!

-Many Thatcher

Sitting Disease": Yes, It's a Real Thing

By Sarah Smith, BSN, RN

Lab Coordinator at Whitson-Hester School of Nursing

"Many people who sit at a desk for the majority of their work day may already be aware of some of the health issues that can arise from their sedentary roles, but it goes much further than just simply aches and pains. There has been more and more research done about sedentary lifestyles and "sitting disease" to identify complications that arise from excessive sitting. These include increased risk of cancer, diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease, and even death. Martha Grogan, Cardiologist at the Mayo Clinic, is quoted on JustStand.org stating that "for people who sit most of the day, their risk of heart attack is about the same as smoking." Sitting is not only happening at work. After we get home, many of us sit to watch television, eat dinner, and unwind. While it can be relaxing, the time spent sitting outside of work is also contributing to the problem.

So how do we treat "sitting disease"? Get up and get moving as often as you can. Two or more hours of uninterrupted sitting can further increase your health risks, so any breaks in sitting will be helpful. There are countless ways to increase activity throughout your day. At work, set a timer for every 30 minutes to an hour to remind you to get out of your chair and stretch or walk. Take the stairs, not the elevator. Take the long way to the restroom or workroom. Park further away, so when you leave for lunch, you get in twice as many steps. Stand up when you talk on the phone. Walk over to someone's office instead of sending an email. If you have a break, go for a brisk walk. This will also help you re-energize in the afternoons. At home, stretch or walk around the house on commercial breaks. Better yet, exercise or tidy up while you are watching television. The Mayo Clinic suggests using a pedometer to track your steps and increase from your baseline (mayoclinic.org), and set a goal of a number of steps to take each day.

To find out how high your risk of "sitting disease" is, sitting calculators can be found online to help identify your risk, or just keep track of how often you sit during your daily activities. Just remember, it doesn't matter what you do, as long as you get out of your chair. <http://www.juststand.org/tabid/816/language/en-US/default.aspx>

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/expert-blog/sitting-disease/bgp-20056238>

FITNESS AND HEALTHIER LIFESTYLES IN THE COOKEVILLE COMMUNITY

Tech Togetherness - James Greeson

HEALTHY TECH INITIATIVE

The level of interest in fitness and healthier lifestyles has increased consistently in the Cookeville/Tennessee Tech community over the past 25 years. Evidence of this, is the number of people you see walking, running or bicycling as you drive through the town or across the Tennessee Tech campus. Dogwood Park in the center of town is an active place when weather permits. A state of the art community playground is in the active planning stage and will be located on the edge of Dogwood Park. The number of fitness centers that have opened up in just the last few years has more than doubled and they are almost always full of people of all ages. The Tennessee Tech Fitness Center is always busy and you will find not only students there but also current Tech employees, alumni, retired faculty and retired alumni participating in a variety of activities. Many other people venture out into the beautiful state and national parks in this area for hiking. Even the local restaurants are involved by offering healthier menu choices. The opportunities are limitless in Cookeville, Putnam County and the Upper Cumberland area. Even though the level of interest has picked up the number of people actually participating represents only a small percentage of the area's population.

Starting a healthy lifestyle program is one of the best things you can do for your health. The benefits include the following: weight loss, feeling better, improving self-esteem, reducing the risk of chronic disease, improving balance and coordination, improving sleep habits and reducing stress. Exercise rewards come from many different types and levels of exercise. Exercise options can include walking, hiking, running, swimming, dancing, biking, gardening, household chores, fitness center programs and personal trainers. The American Heart Association recommends at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity most days of the week.

Suggestions for getting started:

1. Start slowly and moderately. Don't overdo it. Build up gradually. When people go about it too aggressively early they tend not to stick to it.
2. Set realistic goals. Keep written records and monitor your progress. Watching your weight decrease or your blood pressure or heart rate go down can be some of your best motivation.
3. Build your activity into a daily routine.
4. It is important to warm up and stretch. Stretch before the activity with more emphasis on stretching after the activity.
5. For some people it is motivational to join a group interested in the same fitness activity. It is easy to find a walking group, running group, hiking group or a fitness class in this area.

Making a decision to become more active is sometimes the hardest part. Take advantage of the numerous programs and activities available to you in the Cookeville and Tennessee Tech community. You'll never regret

Submitted by Jim Greeson as part of the Tech Togetherness "Healthy Tech Initiative" to help bridge gaps and create stronger relationships between administrators, faculty, staff and the community at large.

