

For Immediate Release

## “STRESSBUSTERS FAIR” PROMISES FUN ACTIVITIES, COPING SKILLS

CUMBERLAND, Md. – “Stressbusters Fair,” which promises fun activities and useful coping skills for children in pre-k to grade 6, will be held Monday, April 2, at Allegany College of Maryland. The public is invited and transportation is available.

This community event, planned by second-year students in ACM’s Human Service Associate program, is intended to provide valuable tools to help youngsters and family members to minimize stress in a world that is placing ever more pressure on them.

The four-hour schedule, starting at 11 a.m. in the college library, features a wide range of fun activities, including art, music, story hour, crafts, movement and relaxation, all with the purpose of teaching mind-body skills that kids can use to reduce stress.

“The common element is that we’ll be presenting tools that will help distract us from what’s going on in our daily lives and redirecting us to a calmer place,” said Stefan Keiser, one of the 15 students who have organized the event.

“Rather than simply teaching, we’ll have hands-on activities for a physical experience.”

The students’ goal for their degree program’s capstone project is to generate interest and raise awareness in mind-body skills that the human service students themselves have found valuable for reducing stress.

“One of our goals is to get this into the public schools,” said Krysta Brown, another of the student organizers. “We also want to provide tools that students can use at home.”

The students were motivated to plan their “Stressbusters Fair” out of a growing recognition that many families face socio-economic challenges that have implications for mental health, including that of children. Increasing abuse of substances is adding to the burden.

The proven mind-body methods to be demonstrated, explained student Madison Chesnutt, “cope with all the hectic things going on in our lives.”

For their event the students have enlisted a large number of college and community partners, including ACM’s Library, Education program and Student Government Association as well as Allegany County’s two Judy Centers for early childhood development and school readiness and Archway Station, which supports children with emotional and behavioral problems.

The public agencies, non-profit organizations and individuals who are taking part in “Stressbusters Fair” are bringing many age-appropriate activities that kids will find useful as well as fun, according to the ACM students.

For example, they'll have the chance to make a "calm-down" bottle, whose colorful liquid visually soothes when shaken; create a maraca-like percussion instrument whose rhythmic sound releases negative thoughts; and learn breathing and simple yoga movements to center the mind and body in a positive way.

The kids will also get some treats, including lunch and healthy snacks, free books, prizes and a goody bag of trinkets.

"We want to deal with their stress and help them cope in healthy way," said Brown.

"We're starting at a young so that if they have a trauma or other incident, they know how to deal with it," Chesnutt said. "We practice these tools every day, so we know they work. We wish everyone had them."

Added Keiser: "There are few human service students who haven't encountered some obstacles in their lives. We wish we had learned those tools and had them for use at those times."

For more information about "Stressbusters Fair" and the Human Service Associate program contact Cherie Snyder, professor and program director, at 301-784-5557. Information is also available on ACM's website, [www.allegany.edu](http://www.allegany.edu).

More information about transportation to and from the event is available by calling the same number. Shuttle service will visit select schools and libraries in Cumberland, LaVale and Frostburg. April 2 is a holiday for Allegany County Public Schools students.