

Campus fire safety begins with awareness and collaboration

National Fire Prevention Week is October 7-13

Over the summer some local schools and parks experienced fires that destroyed playgrounds and buildings. School and classroom fires can be emotionally and financially devastating, wrecking expensive equipment and teaching materials that may have been gathered for years. Helping to make schools more fire-safe requires awareness and a collaborative effort. Here are some good places to start:

- **Keep** combustibles away from lights, machinery and other heat sources.
- **Don't** chain extension cords together.
- **Never** plug refrigerators and microwaves (if allowed on campus) into extension cords or power taps. These appliances must be plugged directly into outlets.
- **Never** use candles on campus.
- **Ensure** that space heaters (if allowed) are in well-ventilated areas and a minimum of three feet away from all combustibles. They must be on secure surfaces to prevent tipping and must be turned off each day. Do not use in classrooms.
- **Don't** block smoke detectors with storage or decorations.
- **Limit** decorative non-fire-retardant paper to less than 25 percent of the total wall area. Keep paper and decorations away from electrical outlets.
- **Don't** post paper on outside walls unless placed under protective coverings.
- **Know** the location of the closest fire extinguishers and learn how to use them.

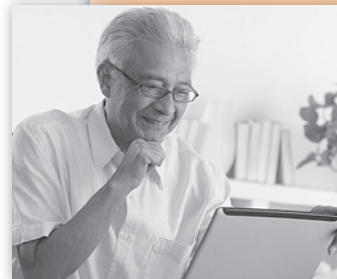
To assist member districts with fire prevention, SIA has **free** *Stay Fire-Safe in the Classroom* brochures. To request brochures, contact Cyndy Rettig at crettig@sia-jpa.org. Also, view SIA's *30 Ways to Prevent School Arson* video at www.sia-jpa.org. For ideas on how to promote fire safety to students and families, visit www.nfpa.org.

Use it or lose it

Retain a sharp, active mind at every age

*Deborah R. Camacho, MS
SIA Prevention Services*

Understanding memory loss becomes more meaningful as we age. We all have moments when we can't remember where we put the car keys or the name of the person we met moments ago. Temporary memory lapses can occur at any age and aging alone generally is not a cause of cognitive decline. Current



studies have shown that while memory loss can be frustrating, there are various strategies that can be used to continually protect and sharpen our minds and improve memory. Here are some of them:

1. Keep learning

Being mentally active helps keep memory strong. Those with higher levels of education often have better mental functioning. However, this doesn't mean that those who didn't go to college are doomed. The point is to continue to challenge your brain, especially as you age. Learning a new skill or language, volunteering, practicing crossword puzzles or pursuing a favorite hobby will help give you a mental edge by keeping your brain active.

2. Use all your senses

We remember more when we use a combination of senses during the learning process. For example, one study asked a group of adults

(Continued on page 2)



- Balance the challenges of life's changes
- Retain a sharp, active mind at every age

Balance the challenges and rewards of life's changes

By Marshall Shimmon, SIA Prevention Services

Life's changes bring challenges and rewards. What rewards are you seeking? If your mind jumped to a large stack of cash, it's safe to say that you don't want just strips of paper with green ink but rather what the paper signifies. You want the feeling you'll have when you use it to pay off debt or take a well-earned vacation. People seek feelings and emotions from the changes they make.

Is your reward a better body? Even a personal trainer can't help you fulfill that goal unless effort is applied to improving a function of health that matters to you. Invariably, those who want perfect bodies also want recognition for the sacrifice and commitment involved with achieving them.

You can appreciate the hard work and discipline needed to achieve a goal if it's intrinsically motivated. However, we often seek extrinsic motivation by receiving attention for our chiseled abs or by outperforming our competition. Motivation may also come from negative reinforcement from a physician, professional or loved one who suggests that if changes aren't made, unfortunate consequences will likely ensue.

Are you living the life that you dreamed for yourself? Evaluate the changes you want to make and determine what you will pursue. Over a 30-day period take small steps toward reaching your goal. Thirty days is recommended because most habits can be changed or learned over a three-week period. The fourth week gives you the opportunity to evaluate what worked and if you feel that change is moving you in a positive direction.

If you would like a presentation on positive changes at your worksite, contact Marshall Shimmon, SIA Prevention Services Coordinator and licensed ACSM Wellcoach, at mshimmon@sia-jpa.org. His presentation, *Life Balance*, will help you determine what potential you would like to tap into, how to include SMART goals in your planning to help avoid roadblocks, and more.



Keep your mind sharp

(Continued from page 1)

to view a set of images accompanied by certain smells and a second group was asked to view a set of images without any smells. The group that viewed the images with the smells did much better at recalling their images than did the group without the smells. When we use multiple senses, different areas of our brains become more active, helping with memory recall.

3. Downplay "senior moments"

Negative stereotypes of aging and poor recollection can contribute to failing memory. When people believe that a poor memory is just a function of aging, they are less likely to work at maintaining or improving their memory skills. Those who have more confidence in their memory, regardless of any proven memory skills, often do better at memory tasks. Be careful when kidding about those "senior moments," as this may increase your risk of cognitive decline.

4. Challenge your brain (don't bog it down)

Your brain likes to concentrate on learning and remembering new things, not grapple with the mundane things that should be habit. Take advantage of calendars and planners, maps, shopping lists, file folders and address books to keep routine information accessible. Designate places at home for glasses, purse, keys and other often-used items, and keep your brain ready for those challenging tasks.

5. Repeat what you want to retain

When you want to remember something you've just heard, read or thought about, repeat it out loud or write it down to reinforce the memory connection. For example, if you've just been told someone's name, use it when you speak with him or her: "Hi, Tammy, how are you and James doing?"

6. Space it out

Repetition is most potent as a learning tool when it's properly timed. It's best not to repeat something many times in a short period, as if cramming for an exam. Instead, re-study the essentials after increasingly longer periods of time – once an hour, then every few hours, then every day. Spacing out periods of study is extremely valuable when trying to master complicated information, such as learning a new job assignment.

Have you visited SIA's website?
Check out www.sia-jpa.org for useful information, tools and services.

- 10 good reasons to practice yoga
- Eat more veggies



10 good reasons to practice yoga

September is Yoga Month

1. **Stress Relief** – Yoga reduces the physical effects of stress on the body. By encouraging relaxation, yoga helps lower the levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Related benefits include decreasing blood pressure and heart rate, improving digestion, boosting the immune system, and easing symptoms of conditions such as anxiety, depression, fatigue, asthma and insomnia.
2. **Pain relief** – Yoga can ease pain. Studies have demonstrated that practicing yoga asanas (postures), meditation or a combination of the two reduced pain for people with conditions such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, auto-immune diseases, hypertension, arthritis, back and neck pain, and other chronic conditions. Some practitioners report that even emotional pain can be eased through the practice of yoga.
3. **Better breathing** – Yoga teaches people to take slower, deeper breaths. This helps improve lung function, trigger the body's relaxation response and increase the amount of oxygen available to the body.
4. **Flexibility** – Yoga helps improve flexibility and mobility, increasing range of movement and reducing aches and pains. Many people can't touch their toes during their first yoga class. Gradually, however, they begin to use the correct muscles. Over time, the ligaments, tendons and muscles lengthen, increasing elasticity and making more moves possible. Yoga also helps improve body alignment, resulting in better posture that, in turn, helps relieve back, neck, joint and muscle problems.
5. **Increased strength** – Yoga asanas use every muscle in the body, helping to increase strength literally from head to toe. While these postures strengthen the body, they also provide an additional benefit of helping to relieve muscular tension.
6. **Weight management** – Yoga (even less-vigorous styles) can aid weight-control efforts by reducing cortisol levels, burning excess calories and reducing stress. Yoga also encourages healthy eating habits and provides a heightened sense of well-being and self-esteem.
7. **Improved circulation** – Yoga helps improve circulation and, by utilizing a variety of positions, moves oxygenated blood more efficiently to the body's cells.
8. **Cardiovascular conditioning** – Even gentle yoga practice can provide cardiovascular benefits by lowering resting heart rate, increasing endurance and improving oxygen uptake during exercise.
9. **Present-moment focus** – Yoga helps us focus on the present, become more aware and create mind-body health. It opens the way to improved concentration, coordination, reaction time and memory.
10. **Inner peace** – The meditative aspects of yoga can foster a deeper, more spiritual and more satisfying internal peace. Many who begin to practice yoga for other reasons report that the inner tranquility they feel becomes an essential part of their daily lives.



A pinch of imagination, a dash of creativity can help us eat more veggies

It's easy for most of us to get enough fruit in our diets. Add bananas, berries or dried fruit to breakfast cereal, slice a juicy melon for dessert or crunch on an apple for a quick snack and you'll probably meet the daily nutritional guidelines of 2 cups.

On the other hand, getting enough vegetables into our daily food intake can be more challenging. Here are some easy ways to work the recommended 2½ cups of vegetables into everyday menus:

- Start the day with ½ cup of vegetable juice.
- Enjoy a spinach salad or other main dish salad for lunch.
- Add vegetables instead of meat to pasta dishes, pizza, soups and stews.
- Spoon salsa onto baked potatoes.
- Keep bags of pre-cut, pre-washed carrots, snap peas and cherry tomatoes on hand for quick snacking.
- Make vegetable stir-fry with small amounts of chicken, lean beef or fish.
- Whip up some refreshing fruit and vegetable smoothies.
- Top off salads with apples and pear slices, cranberries and pomegranate seeds.



Source: Hope Health and the U.S. Department of Agriculture



wellness & safety



- WeTip protects campuses
- Safetyville's fall family events

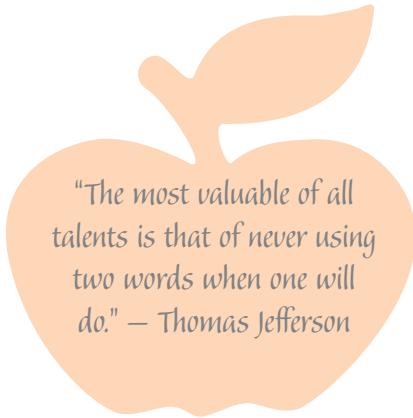
Chili, helicopters and magic slated for Safetyville's fall family events

Firefighter Chili Cook-off – On Saturday, October 6, Safetyville USA will present the annual Firefighters Chili Cook-off. Fire districts throughout the Sacramento region will come together to compete for top chili-cooking honors. The event also will feature interactive learning stations/demonstrations, a helicopter landing, raffles, bounce house and more. The cook-off is from noon to 4 p.m. and tickets are \$5 per person. No charge for children up to age 5.



Halloween Haunt – Safetyville USA will celebrate its 21st annual Halloween Haunt on Saturday, October 20. A magic show, games, crafts, face painting, food and more are on tap and costumes are encouraged. The event is from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and admission is \$6 per person. Admission also includes \$2 food/game tickets. Children under 2 will be admitted free.

Both of these events support youth safety and health-education programs at Safetyville USA. Safetyville is at 3909 Bradshaw Road, Sacramento, 95827. For more information visit www.safetyvilleUSA.org or call 916-438-3351.



"The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do." – Thomas Jefferson

Help protect campuses with WeTip in the new school year

Take an active role in protecting campuses from vandalism and crime during the new school year by taking advantage of the WeTip anonymous crime-reporting hotline. The service is free and available to all SIA member districts. Promote the program to students, staff, families and neighbors, and encourage them to keep an eye on campuses and report any information they may have about crimes or possible crimes on school premises.

The hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, all year round. Callers who report crimes remain unidentified and they can receive rewards of up to \$1,000 per reported crime. A system has been established to pay all rewards anonymously.

Each district has a WeTip program liaison who can supply materials and arrange presentations about the program. For your liaison contact or for general information, e-mail Teresa Franco at tfranco@sia-jpa.org or call 916-364-1281, ext. 256.



The material in this newsletter should be part of your Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP).

Keep a copy of this newsletter in your IIPP binder and be sure all employees receive a copy.

Wellness & Safety is published by the Schools Insurance Authority, P.O. Box 276710, Sacramento, CA 95827-6710, (916) 364-1281, 1-877-SIA-KIDS. The SIA is a joint powers authority, composed of 34 members, that collectively provides workers' compensation, liability, property, and health benefit insurance coverage on behalf of its member districts. The SIA school districts are: Arcohe, Atwater, Buckeye, Camino, Center, Central Sierra ROP, El Dorado Co. Off. Ed., El Dorado High, Elk Grove, Elverta, Folsom-Cordova, Galt Elem., Galt High, Gold Oak, Gold Trail, Hayward, Indian Diggings, Latrobe, Merced City, Mother Lode, Natomas, North Bay SIA, Pioneer, Placerville, Pollock Pines, Rescue, River Delta, Robla, Sac. City, Sac. Co. Off. Ed., San Juan, Silver Fork, Twin Rivers, and Woodland. SIA Officers: Executive Director — Martin Brady; President — Robert Ball, Twin Rivers USD; Vice President — Marlon Robbins, Elk Grove USD; Secretary — Tamara Sanchez, Sacramento COE; Prevention Services Manager/Communications — Lisa Tremewan-Konarski; Newsletter: Vitali-Gage Communications, Inc.

www.sia-jpa.org ©2012