Fair shows ECSU the path to wellness

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WILLIMANTIC — While there are several well-known narcotics, there are also many that are unfamiliar to people.

In an effort to educate the public, Eastern Connecticut State University police displayed several narcotics, as well as steroids, antidepressants, inhalants and other drugs.

Their aim was awareness, a similar goal of the annual Health, Wellness & Benefits Expo in the Betty Tipton Room in the ECSU Student Center Tuesday.

In fact, the student center became sort of a haven for wellness — with Reiki demonstrations, acupuncture and aromatherapy all being on display for students to participate.

A total of 50 or so groups and organizations participated in the wellness fair with community education — especially as it pertains to college students — the goal.

As for the drug component, Eastern police noted how harmless some of the narcotics look.

“It’s amazing how many of these look like candy,” said ECSU police officer Beverley Brown.

Some of the narcotics ECSU police displayed were Oxycodone, Methadone, Darvon, OxyContin, Tylenol and Demerol.

ECSU police officer Jennifer Murphy said she did not recall any recent overdoses of Eastern students on campus. “I think, for the most part, the students call us in time when they need some kind of assistance,” she said.

Murphy noted there are counseling services available at Eastern or students can be transported to the hospital if a certain level of medical care is needed.

While at the fair, representatives from the Unity Wing in the ECSU Student Center, which includes the Pride Center, Women’s Center and Intercultural Center, spoke about the services they provide.

Marcus Morales, a graduate student assistant who works at the Pride Center, but attends Central Connecticut State University, said the Pride Center supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, asexual and other individuals through various programs. He said the goal is to provide students “with the resources and supports they may not know they have.”

Services provided at the Pride Center include “Safe Zone Allies,” a group of people who have received special training to speak with LGBTQ students and others and several programs.

Morales is pursuing his masters degree in counseling education at CCSU, with a specialization in student development and higher education.

Another organization at the event was Planned Parenthood, which has an office at 1548 Main St. in Willimantic.

Planned Parenthood offers a variety of services, including annual exams, sexually transmitted disease testing, pap smears and pregnancy testing.

Beth Morano, a manager at Planned Parenthood, said Planned Parenthood doesn’t turn anyone away. “Everyone is welcome,” she said.
Here’s to your health

Rowanne Pandolfe photo

Eastern Connecticut State University Tuesday hosted its annual Health, Wellness & Benefits Expo in the Betty Ypton Room at the ECSU Student Center. TOP: Ansonia resident Conrnie Krasner, a senior, looks quite relaxed while taking part in a Reiki session with event exhibitor Cheere Mathews. MIDDLE: Yvonne Pineda, an ECSU senior from Bridgeport, gets acupuncture done by Traver Garrity of Traver Garrity Acupuncture of Storrs. She and her friend, Alexis Zepko, an ECSU junior from Shelton, were getting a seated acupuncture done on their wrists to relieve stress for midterm exams. ABOVE: Hannah Evans, an ECSU freshman from Manchester, and Jamie Malaterra, an ECSU freshman from Trumbull, fill up aromatherapy bags with lavender from the table for the ECSU organization Pre-Health Society.
Pet the pug

Luis Hernandez, an Eastern Connecticut State University senior from Stamford, pets Bella, a 9½-year-old therapy pug, at Eastern's Health, Wellness and Benefits Expo in the Student Center on Tuesday. See story, more photos on Page 2.