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Colby library holds Ellis Island program

Pippa White (above) gave her performance "Voices from Ellis Island" Thursday night in the basement of the Pioneer Memorial Library. White had an overhead projector and a series of different hats and accents (right) to portray immigrants from various countries coming to Ellis Island in New York. An audience of about 40 watched the performance, including several kids (below).

SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press



College prepares for learning commission

By Crystal Pounds

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Colby Community College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association. In its review of institutions, the Higher Learning Commission looks for a culture of aspiration and continual improvement rather than satisfaction of minimum standards.

Accreditation by the Higher



Learning Commission is granted for a 10-year period. The college's last 10-year re-accreditation was awarded in 2004, so during the 2012-2013 academic year, we will again be completing the re-accreditation process.

Re-accreditation is essential to the college's future, and requires assessing the institution's overall progress for the last 10 years by completing a self-study. The goal is to highlight the college's strengths, identify weaknesses and present ways to turn weaknesses into strengths.

The administrative staff chose Linda Nelson and me to lead the

re-accreditation process. In addition to selecting a theme, "You're an Essential Piece," the coordinators selected a steering committee. Members were selected based on their leadership skills as well as their ability to follow through on assigned tasks.

At the fall in service training session, all employees were presented with a colored puzzle piece with their name on it. The color of the puzzle piece indicated which team or committee they would be an essential piece of. Along with all college employees, board members and some community members were selected to serve

on one of the five committees. Each committee is responsible for responding to a specific component or criterion identified by the commission.

To take advantage of the four-day class schedule, work days have been scheduled one Friday every other month. The first all-campus workday was Oct. 5 from 8:30 a.m. to noon.

The self-study is scheduled for completion by June 2014, and the commission's site visit for September of that year. We will keep you informed as we put the pieces together.

Groups join to promote health here

By Christina Beringer

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To help people turn their New Year's fitness resolutions into reality, Thomas County organizations have teamed up to offer affordable blood work, screenings and an eight-week wellness program that will lead straight into Walk Kansas.

The program, the Thomas County Wellness Challenge, will challenge people to get healthy and live better, said Pat Erickson, Wellness committee treasurer and Colby Community College physical therapy director.

Low-priced blood tests will be offered from 6 to 9 a.m. from Wednesday to Saturday, Jan. 9 to 12, at Citizens Medical Center, 100 E. College Dr. The Thomas County Healthy Communities Coalition and the county Wellness Committee, sponsors of the reduced-rate lab work, encourage everyone to take advantage of this affordable opportunity.

Erickson said event coordinators expect more than 300 people to sign up for the blood work, and many businesses are offering to pay for their employees' tests as

part of their company wellness programs.

People may pay for their screenings with cash or check when tested, but not with a credit card.

For \$30, anyone can sign up for the blood screening, which will measure glucose, electrolyte and fluid balance, and kidney and liver function, cholesterol and white-cell count. Anyone who wants to have the blood work done should fast – eating and drinking nothing but water – for 10 to 12 hours beforehand.

"This is a good screening for everyone," said Erickson. "It can pick up infections, checks for cholesterol and gives a lot of good information about a person's general health."

People who have a problem with their thyroid or may be having symptoms can get a screening to test their thyroid-stimulating hormone for \$20.

A hemoglobin A1C screening, used to measure blood-sugar levels, will be available for \$20. People who will get the most out of this screening are those who have been diagnosed with diabetes and those with family history of the

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Professor gives lecture on Islam

By Sam Dieter

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Common perceptions of Islam are not always accurate, a University of Denver expert told a crowd of about 100 at Colby Community College on Tuesday, and out of more than a billion believers, not that many are radical extremists.

Dr. Andrea Stanton was the second speaker in the college's Dr. Max Pickerill Lecture Series this year. She spoke at the Cultural Arts Center on campus.

Stanton talked for about 40 minutes with the help of images on an overhead projector before taking questions. A native of Iowa, she is an assistant professor of Islam at the university. She lived in the Middle East for several years, in Syria, Lebanon, Kuwait and Qatar.

"I obviously knew a lot of Mus-

lims when I was there," she said. "I worked with a lot of them, I was friends with a lot of them."

Her lecture focused on four key points, two about the Muslim religion and two about the Muslim world. The culture of people in Muslim countries is easy to generalize, she said, because so few of them live in the U.S.

"We sometimes have an artificially small sense of how many Muslims there are in the world," she added, pointing out that the total is about 1.6 billion Muslims. "That means almost one of every four people on this earth is Muslim. One in every four people in the world is not a fanatical extremist."

Her first point was that most Muslims do not live in the Middle East. That number is only about 20 percent, and about 15 percent

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Blood drive set for next week

People in Thomas County will get a chance to donate blood to the American Red Cross as the need for blood continues during the holiday season during a blood drive from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday at Colby Community College.

The agency notes that blood supplies may be tight, especially during the holidays, when regular donors travel and spend time with family and friends and may forget to schedule an appointment.

The only way to provide life-saving blood and platelets for patients is by donating blood. Make an appointment to donate at www.redcrossblood.org or

calling (800) 733-2767.

Bring a blood donor card, driver's license or two other forms of identification. Anyone who is at least 17, weighs at least 110 pounds and is in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood.

High school students and other donors 18 and younger have to meet height and weight requirements.

Join the Holiday Giving Campaign, which runs through the end of the year, by making a financial donation, giving blood or signing a holiday card for a member of the armed forces. Go to www.redcross.org/holiday.