February Updates

* SIT is full speed ahead with intern recruitment for the 2016-2017 school year! Current interns interested in continuing with SIT next year should email siteam@sfusd.edu by **March 4th**.

* Future informational interview sessions will be held at School Health Programs (1515 Quintara St.) on:

  ⇒ **Wednesday, February 3rd, 1:30-3:30 pm**
  ⇒ **Friday, February 26th, 9-11 am**
  ⇒ **Thursday, March 10th, 10 am—12 pm**

* Please help us get the word out...SIT provides a wonderful school-based internship opportunity for those interested in working with children and families!

Appreciations

* A special thanks to Sharon Stephan, Ph.D., Associate Professor/Co-Director of the National Center for School Mental Health, University of Maryland School of Medicine and Erika Irby, Mentor School Social Worker, for delivering a two day training to our interns and staff in January on **CBITS (Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Trauma in Schools)**.

Upcoming Trainings...

SFUSD Trainings:

February 2016

- **BIS (Brief Intervention Training)**, February 3rd, 8:30AM-3:00PM, 1515 Quintara St.

March 2016

- **Spring Institute for SFUSD Interns**, March 16th and 17th, 8:15am-12:45pm, 1515 Quintara St. Interns are required to attend one of these days.

RAMS Trainings:

- Friday, February 5th, 9:00AM-10:45AM, **Working with Black Youth**.
- Friday, February 19th 9:00AM-10:45AM, **Using Positive Psychology with Teens**.

If interested in attending a RAMS training, please register by emailing: Kristin Chun, Director, Behavioral Health Services/RAMS Wellness Program kristinchun@ramsinc.org or calling (415) 309-4434.

Mark your Calendar!

* **Monday, February 8th** is Lunar New Year...schools are closed!
* **Monday, February 15th** is President’s Day observed...schools are closed!
Current research has shown that exercise has many benefits and may even be considered vital for mental health (Anxiety and Depression Association of America, 2014). Scientists have found that regular participation in aerobic exercise has been shown to decrease overall levels of tension, elevate and stabilize mood, improve sleep, and improve self-esteem (Otto and Smits, 2011). Further research has found that exercise alleviates symptoms such as low self-esteem and social withdrawal (Sharma et al., 2006). According to the ADAA (2014), even just five minutes of aerobic exercise can begin to stimulate anti-anxiety effects.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), people with mental illness often have a higher risk for medical illnesses and vice versa. Therefore, they suggest that by improving one’s general physical health, an individual is less at risk of developing mental illness (NAMI, 2014).

The positive effects of aerobic exercise on mood are proposed to be caused by exercise-induced increase in blood circulation to the brain by an influence on the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA), which is directly related to the stress we experience physiologically. Other hypotheses explaining the benefits of exercise are related to the fact that exercise is a distraction, involves social interaction and self-efficacy (Sharman et al., 2006).

Studies show that exercise is also very effective at reducing fatigue, improving alertness, and at enhancing overall cognitive function (ADAA, 2014). Finally, studies suggest that exercise helps to improve energy, concentration and sleep (NAMI, 2014).

All of this research has tremendous implications to not only our mental health community, but the general student population with whom we work in the schools.

By having a deeper understanding of the positive effects of exercise on mood, energy, and cognition we can begin to educate our students and parents about the importance of integrating exercise into daily routines.

References
http://www.adaa.org
http://www.nami.org


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**Intern Spotlight**

Mike MacLafferty is a second year MFTI with the Student Intervention Team, working at Buena Vista Horace Mann (BVHM). Mike discovered SIT at the CIIS practicum/internship fair. He had also heard about the program from his colleagues who interned with SIT.

When asked what brought Mike to the field, he replied, “I’ve always been interested in the way things work, and as an adult, why people do what they do.”

Mike originally studied biology at UC Berkeley, then went on to be a student teacher at Berkeley High School. He enjoyed the school environment, but not the pressures of being an instructor. After a lot more life and therapy, he decided to attend CIIS and become an MFT. He loves that this is a profession that challenges and rewards him for growing and learning to be a better person, and allows him to pass on his experience and wisdom.

Mike has made some special connections with the staff and students at BVHM, and will leave at the end of the year with some good stories from the experience.

According to Mike, his time with SIT has helped him build faith in himself as a clinician. After his internship, he plans to focus on developing his private practice in Berkeley. He loves working with people who struggle with self-criticism and relational issues. He is also a student of astrology and uses it in his practice as a tool for self-discovery. You can check out Mike’s blog at: http://www.michaelmaclafferty.com.

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**Resource Corner**

- [www.health.gov](http://www.health.gov)
- [www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/physicalactivity/facts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/physicalactivity/facts.htm)
- [www.fitness.gov/](http://www.fitness.gov/)
- [www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov)
- [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)

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February is **Physical Activities Awareness month**. See your site supervisor and www.healthiersf.org for information and resources.