Stress Busters

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Final exams can induce stress and the outreach event, “Stress Busters” organized by the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) through the Reach/Peer program, hopes to bring awareness of ways stress can be combatted.

Activities at the event include raffle prizes, snacks, information on mindfulness, interactions with therapy dogs, and various other stress-reducing activities.

The American College Health Association’s National College Health Assessment for Spring 2019 showed that 20.4% of students at Utah State University had been diagnosed or treated by a professional for anxiety in the last 12 months. There was also 49.2% of students that reported academics were traumatic or very difficult to handle.

“The goal of Stress Busters is to create a setting where students can take some time to reduce their stress,” said Monique Frazier, Coordinator of the Reach/Peer program. “The feedback that we have received is that it is a nice break from studying for finals.”

There were different stations set-up in which a student could choose how they would like to reduce their stress, as well as learn some techniques to combat stress in the future.

Many students took the opportunity to pet and enjoy the therapy dogs that were brought by the Therapy Dogs of Utah as well as some therapy dogs within the campus community. Therapy Dogs of Utah volunteer their services at hospitals, juvenile court, different colleges in Utah, for the Fallen Heroes organization, Primary Children’s Hospital and other venues.

“It is really nice to be able to come here and relax and forget about studying and stress about finals. I am a big animal lover and am glad they brought animals for us to pet,” student Teagan Perry said. “I enjoy sitting down and talking to people and petting animals.”

According to UCLA Health, in regards to the Animal-People Connection, petting animals releases an automatic relaxation response which releases serotonin, prolactin and oxytocin. These hormones can play a part in elevating moods. It has also been shown to lower anxiety and can help people relax as well as providing an escape or distraction.

Stress Busters is an event planned for future “Final Weeks” at USU and will take place in the Taggart Student Center.