

Carroll County United addresses health issues

BY ELISSA PAQUETTE
Staff Writer

TAMWORTH — The element of choice in staying healthy came up at the Carroll County United gathering in Chocorua's Runnells Hall on Saturday, Jan. 21. The organization, whose offices are in the Tri-County CAP building on Route 16 regularly brings together representatives from communities throughout the county to discuss how to achieve its established goal of "working together to make Carroll County a place where all generations can live, work & thrive."

That mission includes a broad range of topics, divided among five teams: Childhood Readiness and Success; Aligning Education to Careers; Individual and Family Economic Stability; Balancing Economic Development and Environmental Stewardship; and Health and Wellness.

On this occasion, the Health and Wellness team members, led by Regional Director Cyndi Paulin, came together for a conversation on community dynamics that can foster health.



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CYNDI PAULIN, Regional Director of Carroll County-Lakes Region United Way, led an afternoon discussion on health and wellness at Runnells Hall in Chocorua on Saturday, Jan. 21.



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SHERYL POWER, Kingswood High School social worker, writes down ideas from participants in the afternoon discussion on health and wellness at Runnells Hall in Chocorua on Jan. 21. Cyndi Paulin, Regional Director of Carroll County-Lakes Region United Way stands to the left.

The consensus that acquiring and maintaining health is a personal and community responsibility rather than an entitlement was easy to glean from among the 25 or so participants, who addressed questions such as: "How do we as a community support people to stay or become as healthy as they can?"; "What is the responsibility of individuals, the community and providers?"; and "How do we facilitate collaboration or alignment between them?"

Conversing in small groups and then sharing with the larger group, participants responded to the first question with reports of community efforts to create a healthy environment. Walking trails, safe sidewalks, exercise programs and community gardens were mentioned, as well as perhaps less obvious means to improved health, such as education as a means to information, informed choice, and ability to support oneself financially, for economic health and access to health care are intertwined.

Attention to food choices and regular exercise to boost

the immune system and reduce stress came up also, in conjunction with cooking classes and a move away from more expensive and less healthful processed food.

The larger question of collaboration between providers, insurers and individuals produced a sharing of various insurance companies' institutional incentives to exercise, practiced within the staff of school systems and large businesses.

Everyone agreed that good health equals fewer visits to

the doctor and lower expenses.

The next step is for the Health and Wellness team of Carroll County United to pick up where the conversation left off and develop action steps.

For more information on Carroll County United, call 323-8139 or visit the Web site: CarrollCountyUnited.org.

The initiative is supported by the Annette Schmitt Foundation and Lakes Region United Way.

Blood drive Feb. 21

TAMWORTH—The American Red Cross will hold a blood drive on Tuesday, Feb. 21, from 1 to 6 p.m. at K.A.Brett Elementary School in Tamworth.

Donors are needed every day to make sure there is an adequate blood supply for patients in need. All presenting donors during February will receive a \$10 EMS Gear Bucks Card, redeemable at participating Eastern Mountain Sports locations in Maine, New Hampshire, Ver-

mont and online at ems.com. Prizes are not redeemable for cash and are non-transferable.

The American Red Cross Donor Center, located at 425 Reservoir Ave. in Manchester, is open for donations Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Please visit redcross-blood.org or call (800) RED CROSS to find a blood drive near you.