

BOOMERS, ELDERS & MORE

A Monthly Elder Care Newsletter of the Vanderbilt Child & Family Center



IN THIS ISSUE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE CORONOVIRUS

THE CHALLENGES OF BEING A SANDWICH GENERATION CAREGIVER

BEING YOURSELF AT ANY AGE IS PRICELESS

DE-STRESS WITH FOREST THERAPY

Caregiver Coaching Series Moving Forward!

VCFC Family Services has been privileged to forge a new and exciting partnership with the Council on Aging of Middle Tennessee. Our Caregiver Coaching Initiative has allowed for expansion and a greater opportunity to provide services and resources to caregivers in the Vanderbilt Community. We kicked off the program with a Lunch and Learn on January 22nd, with a focus on navigating elder care. We were pleasantly surprised by the turnout, reaching 40 attendees from various departments across our institution. Participants left feeling empowered as caregivers and were given resources and useful information to help along the journey.

JOIN US...

As we continue our partnership with the Council on Aging of Middle Tennessee and strive to provide essential services to the Vanderbilt Community!



ELDERCARE LUNCH & LEARN

How Can Team Leaders Support Employee Caregivers?

February 11, 2020

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Godchaux Nursing Annex - Room 160

Lunch will be provided.

RSVP: 615.353.4235 or rsvp@coamidtn.org



Caregiver Support Group

SPECIAL GUEST: PAM BROWN,
INSIGHT COUNSELING CENTERS

FEBRUARY 12, 2020
12-1 PM
THE LIVING ROOM
GODCHAUX NURSING ANNEX

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS

Get the latest on the spread of the illness, plus tips on staying healthy

By Rachel Nania, AARP



A respiratory illness caused by a new coronavirus has global health authorities on high alert. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. government have declared the coronavirus outbreak a public health emergency, and the U.S. heightened its travel advisory, warning Americans not to travel to China.

Since it was first identified in Wuhan, China, in December, the virus has spread to several countries, including the U.S., and has sickened thousands of people and claimed the lives of hundreds.

Here's everything you need to know about the coronavirus:

What, exactly, is the coronavirus?

Coronaviruses, named for their crownlike shape, are a large family of viruses that are common in many species of animals. There are also several coronaviruses that can infect people, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These strains mostly cause coldlike symptoms but can sometimes progress to more complicated lower respiratory tract illnesses, such as pneumonia or bronchitis. On rare occasion, animal coronaviruses can evolve and spread among humans, as seen with Middle Eastern respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) and severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV). The virus at the center of the latest outbreak is being referred to as a novel (new) coronavirus (or 2019-nCoV for short), since it's something that health officials have not seen before.

The cause of the latest outbreak is still under investigation. Health experts suspect that the virus originated from an animal source at a large seafood and animal market in Wuhan and is now spreading from person to person.

What are the symptoms?

Patients with 2019-nCoV have reported mild to severe symptoms of fever, cough and shortness of breath that typically begin two to 14 days after exposure, the CDC reports. Many patients with severe complications from the virus have pneumonia in both lungs; some have died as a result of the virus. The CDC is asking all those with symptoms and a recent travel history to China to call their health care provider. The agency also has tips for what to do if you become infected with 2019-nCoV.

How is the coronavirus spreading?

Health officials are still trying to better understand how 2019-nCoV is spreading among people. But when person-to-person transmission occurred with MERS and SARS, respiratory droplets from coughs and sneezes were the likely culprit, according to the CDC.

Do I need to be worried?

For the general U.S. population, the answer at this point is no. The risk to individuals is “dependent on exposure,” the CDC says. So unless you have recently taken care of someone with the virus or have recently returned from Wuhan, your chances of infection are low. That said, health officials are taking the situation seriously and are “closely monitoring” the outbreak. The CDC expects more cases in the U.S. and is working with global, state and local public health partners to respond to the threat.

Are older adults more at risk?

Older adults are being hit especially hard by the coronavirus, early data show. The majority of people who have died from the disease are over the age of 50, Bloomberg reports, citing information from China’s National Health Commission.

And a study in the New England Journal of Medicine that analyzed the first 425 people with the virus found the median age of patients was 59 years old.

“Obviously older people have less reserves, so they’re more at risk for any type of infection causing complications,” says Amesh Adalja, M.D., an infectious disease physician and senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins University Center for Health Security. This includes other respiratory illnesses, such as the flu and pneumonia. As for how older Americans should be protecting themselves, Adalja adds, “There’s nothing particularly that I would do other than the normal commonsense hand hygiene etiquette.”

How is it treated?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for 2019-nCoV, just relief from symptoms.

Is there a coronavirus vaccine?

No. There is no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV. Researchers are working on developing antiviral drugs to treat the Wuhan coronavirus, though medication is likely months away, at minimum, from becoming available.

What's the best way to protect myself?

The best way to prevent the spread of 2019-nCoV is to avoid exposure, which is why the CDC recommends that people avoid all nonessential trips to China. Travelers coming to the U.S. from China can expect enhanced health screenings at the airport upon arrival. Health officials also advise taking everyday steps that can prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. Wash your hands often with soap and water (scrub for at least 20 seconds), and use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap is not an option. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands, and steer clear of other sick people. Some other advice: Stay home when you are sick, and clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces. Also, get a flu shot if you haven't already. This will not protect you from the coronavirus, but it will increase your chances of staying healthy this winter.

What about those face masks?

Surgical masks offer some level of protection but only when worn properly. Experts recommend a snug-fitting N95 respirator, which blocks large-particle droplets and most small particles that are transmitted by coughs and sneezes, according to the Food & Drug Administration. These masks are available at most drugstores and home improvement outlets.

THE SANDWICH GENERATION FEELS THE CAREGIVING CRUNCH

Caring for two people is more than twice as hard

by Barry Jacobs



Carol had a big heart — sometimes too big, she thought. She was glad to run errands for her unmarried 82-year-old aunt who suffered from Parkinson's disease. But then her 85-year-old mother started complaining of worsening arthritic pain and needed help cleaning her apartment and buying groceries. Soon afterward, Carol's husband hurt his back and needed her attention, too. Carol felt like Swiss cheese — spread thin and with gaping holes from a lack of available time and energy to meet all her care receivers' expectations.

As the American population grows older, more families have more members with caregiving needs, and increasing numbers of caregivers have simultaneous obligations looking after multiple family members of various ages.

Think of the prototypical “sandwich generation” caregiver who's pressed by the demands of the generations above (aging parents) and below (children or grandchildren). I've recently heard about a caregiver in her 50s who's caring for her 70-something-year-old mother with moderate dementia and her 90-something-year-old grandmother with severe dementia.

I've also learned about another person who's caring for a father with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a husband with multiple sclerosis (MS) and an adult child with autism.

These caregivers typically juggle competing responsibilities, such as driving to one medical appointment or another, with conflicting emotions, including pride and guilt, joy and resentment, and self-assurance and anxiousness. Multiple loved ones rely on them, and their burden is especially heavy. They often feel overwhelmed by the sheer volume of daily tasks.

If all family caregivers need to balance caring for themselves and others, then that applies doubly or triply to these double and triple caregivers. But they frequently reject the pleas of friends and professionals to take care of themselves by saying, "Who has the time?" and "I can handle this for a while longer." It's as if they adapt to managing greater responsibility by embracing greater selflessness.

How can we better support them and convince them to better support themselves? Here are some ideas.

BEWARE OF THE SLOW CREEP OF RESPONSIBILITIES

No one plans to be the person who's caring for several family members at once. More likely, they tacitly commit to coming to the aid of any of their loved ones in need. They then slowly accrue more and more duties as their family members age and require more assistance. At no point do they realistically regard their helping abilities as a finite resource to be strategically deployed.

For instance, they rarely say to themselves: "Given all the things I have to do this week, I can spare 15 hours serving as a family caregiver.

"Instead, they expand their normal capacities to 20, 25 or 30 hours in order to fit others' needs. That may work well in the short term; most of us can push ourselves past our usual capabilities when necessary. In the long term, however, it means operating at a constant deficit and risking depletion and burnout.

PROVIDE CARE BY NEED, NOT 'FAIRNESS'

Double caregivers often feel compelled to give each care recipient equal time and effort, even if they don't have the same degree of need. They feel guilty that doing more for one than another will be perceived as playing favorites.

For example, Carol won't deliver dinner to her aunt's house if she isn't doing the same for her mother. If she spends several hours with her mother and aunt, then she will do the same for her husband. But that extra pressure to perform to some imagined standard of fairness makes her job infinitely harder.

Instead, she should pick and choose by judging the amount of urgency. She should be able to enjoy an evening with her husband without worrying the whole time that she's letting down her aunt and mother. And she should also be able to step away from her husband on occasion to give more of herself to her mother and aunt.

LEARN TO DELEGATE RESPONSIBILITIES

Double caregivers should be extra sensitive to people's vulnerabilities and limitations, including their own. It means accepting that their efforts are never going to be perfect; they are going to be humanly and perfectly flawed. They will have to delegate certain responsibilities to other family members and professionals, even if the person being cared for objects to the plan.

They are going to have to depend on community resources and care managers at times, even if they don't completely trust them. Double caregiving is twice as complex, after all, and half as efficient. These caregivers should double-credit themselves for daring to juggle at all.



*Barry J. Jacobs, a clinical psychologist, family therapist and healthcare consultant, is the co-author of the book *AARP Meditations for Caregivers* (Da Capo, 2016). Follow him on Twitter and Facebook.*

‘BEING YOURSELF AT ANY AGE IS PRICELESS’

Silver Disobedience influencer Dian Griesel on aging, priorities and surprise selfies

By Julie Pfitzinger



Model and 50+ influencer Dian Griesel

If you are on Instagram, chances are good that you’ve come across Silver Disobedience (@SilverDisobedience) blog posts featuring model and 50+ influencer Dian Griesel. In fact, you may be one of her 167,000 followers. In images shot in multiple locations around New York City, where she lives, Griesel, 59, always looks casually chic, wearing a confident smile telegraphing the impression that her moment is now.

And that’s true: beginning this month, Griesel, a Wilhelmina Icon model, will be featured in a new Lancôme campaign. Last year, she released *The Silver Disobedience Playbook: 365 Inspirations for Living and Loving Agelessly*. And her website, launched in 2017, offers her personal insights on creativity, health, philosophy, spirituality and more, in addition to featuring her daily blog post, read by more than 2 million followers.

Griesel, who is married with two teenagers, is also a certified counselor, president of DGI Companies, and serves as a consultant to multiple companies as a perception analyst, offering expertise on marketing to an older demographic. She's been a panelist at SxSW (South by SouthWest), and was selected by AARP as one of its Age Disruptors.

“*Everything you've done at every stage of life adds up to your total big picture.*”

In a recent phone conversation, Griesel, whose friendly voice brims with enthusiasm, talked about life both behind and in front of the camera. And she's quick to note that it's not just her moment, but a moment for all women over 50, because perceptions are slowly changing about what an older woman “looks like.”

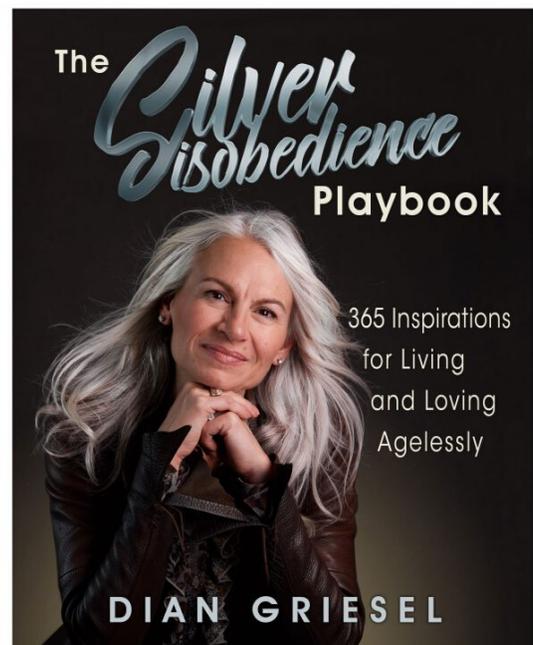
“At the same time, Griesel prefers to call herself “a guide, not a guru” when it comes to embracing aging. “We're all going through the same emotions,” she says. “We all have the same insecurities. It's universal.”

Julie Pfitzinger: How did you arrive at the moniker Silver Disobedience?

Dian Griesel: I love double entendres and wordplay. I have silvery white hair, of course, but I also wanted the name to represent a philosophical rebellion. Or a peaceful movement that would refuse the notion that anyone becomes irrelevant or obsolete.

Adults worry about becoming irrelevant in the workplace and in the larger world, but I have two teenagers, and they say that the worst insult teens can use against each other is to accuse someone of being irrelevant.

Nobody wants that, and it doesn't matter what age you are.



You've had many successful careers so far, and something you believe is of primary importance is challenging ourselves and staying engaged. In what ways?

We have to prioritize our health because we need strong, healthy bodies. This means eating well, managing our stress, staying hydrated. We need to stay social and spend time with others — that's also a priority.

I also want people to challenge themselves to find out what really makes them happy. What do you do that you enjoy so much that you lose track of time while you're doing it? Is it knitting? Writing? Painting? I believe it's something you discover that you have such a great passion for that you really go into your own world while you're doing it.

A line from one of your blog posts reads: 'Being young is great. Being yourself at any age is priceless.' Tell me more about this.

From the moment we were born, our physical being has been aging. And we need to honor it all the way through and not be afraid to be ourselves, exactly as we are.

Everything you've done at every stage of life adds up to your total big picture. We're never 'just' anything; it's part of a whole. We don't give ourselves credit for what we have learned. We've all collected so many different skills and experiences.

As a working model and an Instagram influencer, your days must be very busy. Can you talk a little about your workflow?

I'm an early riser and up way ahead of everyone in the house; it's a really peaceful time to get a lot of work done. I send emails to my staff, and then I write my blog for the day. I choose the photo, post on Facebook and Pinterest and then post to Instagram. By that time, everyone in my house is awake!

Modeling puts a big twist in the day. Typically, you don't get your schedule for the next day until 5:30 or 6 p.m. the night before — and then I might find out I have to be on set by 6 a.m. the next morning.

With a daily Instagram presence, it would seem like you have to participate in a lot of photo shoots. How do those work? And where do you get the clothes?

Many of those photos are taken by professional photographers I've worked with, but I'll often have young photographers reach out and ask to work with me because they are trying to diversify their portfolios. I never thought a fifty-nine-year-old woman with silver hair could be a face of diversity! (Laughs)

So, I tell them: 'I'll give you my iPhone and we can shoot for two hours.' I bring a bunch of different outfits, we find a location and go. I pay everyone for their work, and I retain ownership of the photos. In a day, we might shoot eight hundred pictures, so I rotate a lot of clothes.

People might think I have a huge closet, but it's just the opposite. This is pretty much what I have: jeans, black leather pants, white blouse and a black leather jacket. I've had the same dress suit for twenty years. I do a lot of shopping at Goodwill, the Salvation Army and local thrift shops. I'm always on the lookout for cool jackets and scarves.

Are you frequently recognized in public?

It does happen. I walk for exercise all over the streets of New York City, and invariably somebody will say something to me. Sometimes I'll get tagged in someone else's Instagram post.

Not long ago, I was tagged in a selfie that was taken at a thrift shop; I was concentrating on something on a rack, and I was in the background of the photo. The young girl had drawn a heart around my head and the caption read, 'I hate myself, but my mom will love me forever!' (Laughs)

DE-STRESS WITH FOREST THERAPY

Spending time outdoors offers a break from daily life and plenty of fresh air

By Megy Karydes



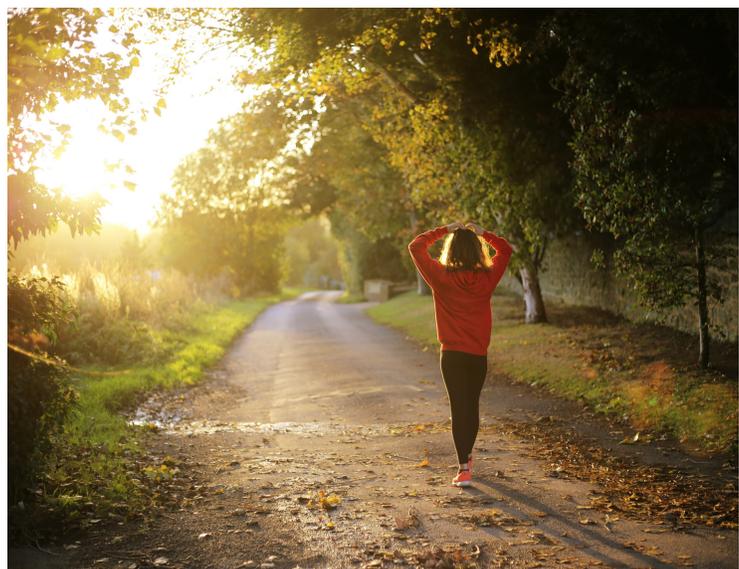
The trail can be as short as a quarter of a mile but take three hours to cover. Earthy undertones are strong. Some participants have been moved to hug a tree in the process. They're not climbing a mountain or traversing treacherous territory.

They're partaking of what the Japanese call Shinrin-yoku, or immersing oneself in the forest, and opting to rekindle their connection with the natural world, leaving behind the ever-constant pings of their smartphones, toxicity of Twitter threads and demands by others for their time and energy.

"We move very slowly along those trails, using all of our senses to just bring us into the moment," says Brenda Spitzer, a certified forest therapy guide and mentor who guides forest bathing experiences at The Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Ill. "A forest therapy walk gives participants an opportunity to take a break from the stresses of daily life, to slow down and appreciate things that can only be noticed when moving slowly," she adds. "The key to forest therapy is not to cover a lot of miles, but to walk through nature with intention and just take it all in."

Walking With Intention

Forest therapy, sometimes called forest bathing, is a slow and mindful way of walking that almost forces us (in a good way) to engage the senses and allows for reflection. We cannot overdose on forest therapy and it's an easy and low-cost way to train ourselves to be more fully present in the moment.



“It opens up your eyes to what is out there and what is around you,” says Lillian Potter. The 75-year-old loves the outdoors, so when the opportunity to participate in this new experience not far from her Chicagoland home presented itself, she was willing to try it with Spitzer.

“The key to forest therapy is not to cover a lot of miles, but to walk through nature with intention and just take it all in.”

Potter was surprised by the short distance and with how much time Spitzer spent at each stop. What she didn’t expect was that the reflection time reminded her of other things she loved doing, such as sketching.

“As we move along the trail, I offer my participants a series of invitations, which are simple suggestions of ways to use their senses to connect with nature,” Spitzer explains.

She’s noticed that the first 20 minutes might be hard for some people to unplug. “This is because most of us are used to moving at a fast pace and multitasking during our daily lives,” Spitzer says. “After twenty to thirty minutes, I can actually notice a general slowing down among participants.” She encourages everyone to turn off their phones or silence them, but doesn’t object to them using their phones for photography, if they wish.

When Spitzer encouraged participants to bring a notepad to write or draw, Potter didn’t hesitate to carry her sketchpad the next time she took a walk with Spitzer.

“I did some sketching while I was there,” Potter adds. “I have enjoyed that. And I haven’t really had time lately to do that.”



Participants in a forest therapy walk

Create Your Own Forest Therapy Walk: A DIY Version

What if you don't live near a forest or are stuck in the concrete jungle of the city and can't take advantage of a certified guide-led forest therapy walk? Any green space will work, according to M. Amos Clifford, founder of the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy Guides and Programs.

JUST HEAD TO THE NEAREST GREEN AREA, WHETHER IT'S A CITY PARK OR A BACKYARD.

If the opportunity to participate in a guided walk presents itself, though, he highly recommends it. Clifford compares the experience to yoga because you can practice the poses by watching a YouTube session. But it's another thing to take a class with a certified yoga instructor. "The guide will slow you down and introduce you to the methods that really lead to the kinds of benefits that people report," Clifford explains.

Potter also recommends heading to the library to find a book about Shinrin-yoku to learn more about the practice and its history and how to create your own experience. Clifford's book on the subject, *Your Guide to Forest Bathing*, can serve as a starting point. The Association of Nature and Forest Therapy Guides and Programs features a map to help find one closest to you. Currently, there are 700 guides in 44 countries.

Regardless where these walks occur, the benefits — whether physical, mental or both — cannot be discounted. They include becoming calmer, your head becoming clear to think more creatively or experiencing less depression or lower blood pressure. More importantly, though, Clifford says people who've participated in guided walks tell him they feel more connected to themselves, to the world and others.

"One of the principles we teach is that this is a practice," adds Clifford. "It's much more about getting here than it is about getting there. And one thing that always enters us here, to this place in this moment, is paying attention to our senses."



Forest therapy can happen no matter the season

Take a Step Towards Leadership

It sounds so simple and yet many people find it hard to slow down. Many of us can go through entire days feeling really busy and never noticing feelings beyond anger or loneliness or disconnection, according to Clifford. “When we do this practice and we start showing up, a lot of other feelings come forward, like feelings of appreciation and of gratitude,” he adds.

Since she’s been leading certified forest therapy walks, Spitzer has inspired at least a dozen participants to secure their own certifications. “To become certified, one must attend an intensive eight-day training program,” says Spitzer. “After this intensive, each trainee returns home to complete a six-month mentored practicum. During their practicum, they guide four walks that they review with their mentor. They earn a certification in Wilderness First Aid, and they complete a number of research assignments.” Spitzer insists hugging a tree isn’t a requirement to become certified or during their walks. But she has had participants hug one and they’re always welcome to do so.



Megy Karydes is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in Politico, Forbes, Fortune, USA Today and elsewhere. She is also an adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins University, where she teaches graduate-level communications courses.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Single Parent Group

Thursday, February 6, 2020

12-1 PM

Buttrick Hall, Room 162

Brown Bag Lunch

Parenting Group

Kids and Emotions

Featuring Dr. Mary Louise Hemmeter,

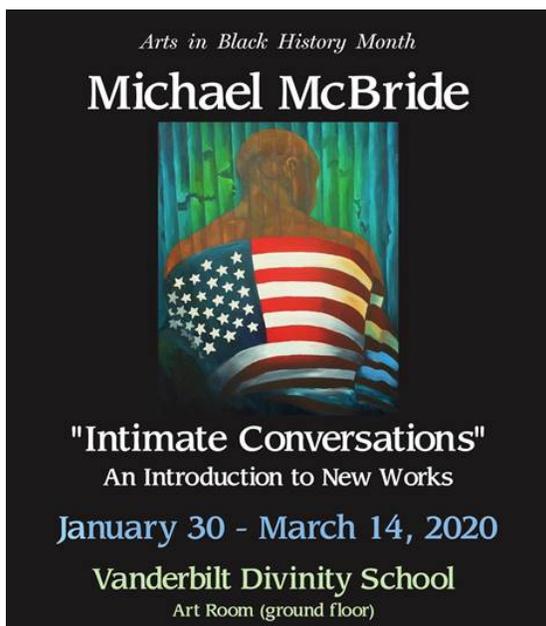
Professor of Special Education

Thursday, February 13, 2020

12-1 PM

Buttrick 123

Lunch will be served on a first-come basis.



Vanderbilt Divinity School will display work from artist Michael McBride as part of “**Arts in Black History Month.**” **Intimate Conversations:**

An Introduction to New Works will be in the Art Room at the Divinity School through March 14th.

The exhibit is sponsored by Religion in the Arts and Contemporary Culture and the Kelly Miller Smith Institute on Black Church Studies.

Vanderbilt Child & Family Center Presents

SUMMER CAMP FAIR 2020

FEBRUARY 20, 2020

5:00-6:30 PM

VANDERBILT MEMORIAL GYM

301 25TH AVENUE SOUTH

It's time to get excited about Summer Camp Fair 2020! VCFC's Summer Camp Fair is a free event featuring day & over-night camps, Vanderbilt sponsored camps, and programs from the Nashville Metro area. This year we are partnering with Employee Appreciation to host the expo during Vanderbilt Family Fest prior to the Women's Basketball game! Come meet camp representatives, gather information and ask your questions! There will be a DJ, food tastings, face painting, inflatables, games and activities galore! The Summer Camp Fair and Family Fest will take place on Thursday, February 20th, 5:00-6:30 PM in the Memorial Gym. Basketball game tipoff is at 7:00 PM.

Participating Camps Include:

- Adventure Science Center
- Cheekwood Estate & Gardens
- Camp Vandy
- Belle Meade Plantation
- Vanderbilt Programs for Talented Youth

AND MORE!

Registration is open until
February 14th.

Register online at vu.edu/bball

For questions contact
toya.y.cobb@vanderbilt.edu



VANDERBILT
Child and Family
Center