

Flu Shot Season

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Now is the time to get a flu shot.

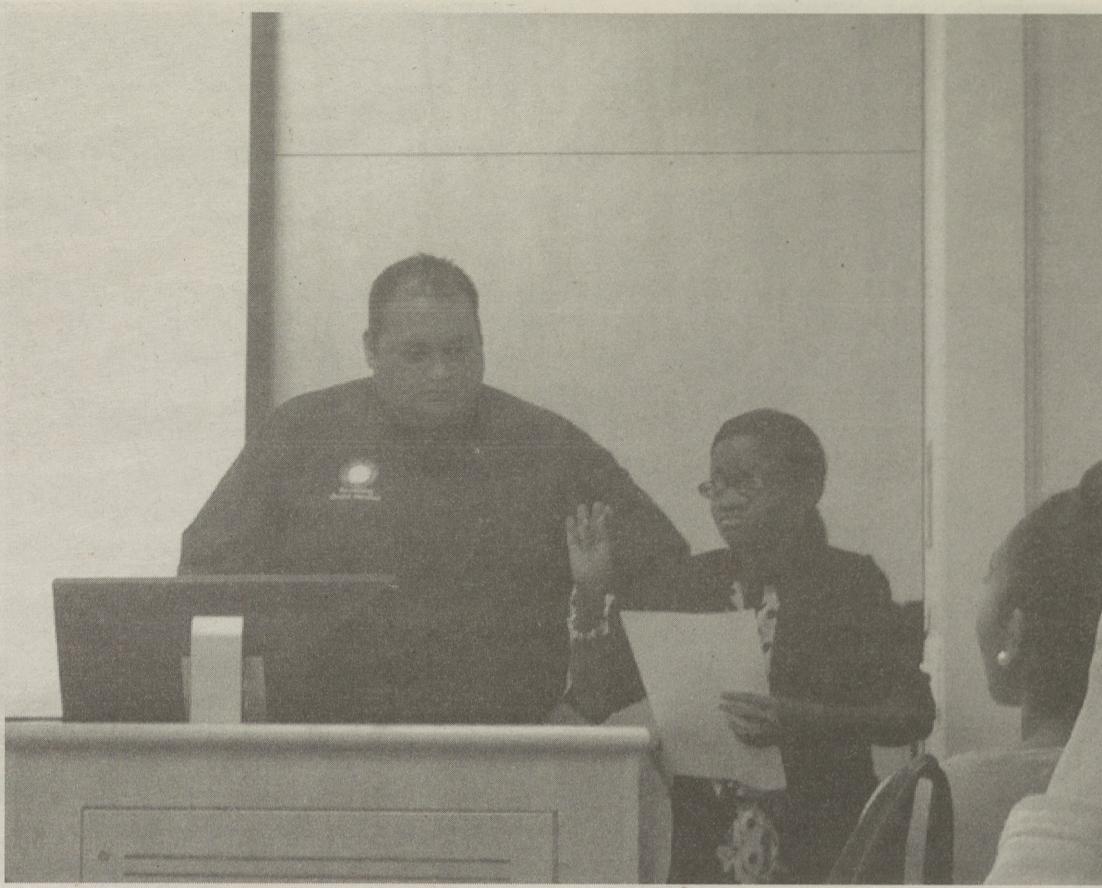
Each year there are stories about people catching the flu and getting sick; some people even die from it. According to the Centers for Disease Control, there are new strains of the flu coming out every year, which could make the epidemic worse. In 2010, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices advised that everyone, six months of age and older, get the annual flu vaccine.

Influenza (the medical name for the flu) is a respiratory infection that can cause serious complications, particularly to young children and to older adults. The CDC says getting the flu shot is important because it can protect you from catching the flu and any related complications.

Even healthy people and young adults can get very sick from the flu and spread it to others. It can be passed on to someone else, even before the person is aware that he or she has the flu, as well as while one is sick.

"For those who have asthma, bronchitis, diabetes, and other illnesses, without getting the vaccination, it can lead to pneumonia or make their illness worse," a local pharmacist, who didn't want her name used, said. "If one has a weak immune system, such as those with cancer and AIDS, it is important for them to get the flu shot."

The pharmacist recommended getting a flu shot as soon as possible to ensure protection from any known and unknown complications, before it's too late. The flu shot is available at most pharmacies, with or without insurance, for a reasonable price. One could also check with a doctor's office to see if flu shots are available.



Appearing in dark blue above, Daniel Hernandez speaks to Penn State Brandywine students.
Photo Courtesy of Paul Alberici

American Hero Visits Brandywine

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Daniel Hernandez, the intern who has been credited for saving the life of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, stopped by the campus on October 18 to speak to students about leading through adversity.

Hernandez began his conversation with the students by providing background about his life. He grew up in Arizona, and was born to a working class family. His mother was a Mexican immigrant who did not speak English well. His father was born in California.

Hernandez described his father as a, "Mexican redneck" because of his hardworking nature.

Hernandez knew from a young age that he wanted to help people; he originally thought he would do this by working in medicine, most likely as a doctor or a nurse.

After completing a high school nursing course, Hernandez thought that to get into a good medical school he would need to diversify his resume. This was during the Presidential primary races in 2008, so Hernandez joined the Hillary Clinton campaign, and made calls on the candidate's behalf.

This was Hernandez's first time working in politics and he enjoyed working on the campaign, but took the loss hard, swearing to never work in politics again.

Two days later, Hernandez was contacted by people who worked for Gabrielle Giffords; he was initially reluctant, but accepted an internship on her campaign. This time the campaign was a success.

Eventually, Hernandez became an intern for Giffords' office, and that is when Hernandez's life would change forever.

On January 8, 2011, Giffords planned to have an event in her Arizona district called Congress on Your Corner. The event was a chance for people who lived in her congressional district to come see their congresswoman in person, and get a chance to speak to her.

"[The event] was important to Gabby," Hernandez said.

January 8, 2011, however, would not be a normal Congress on Your Corner. Shortly after the event started, Jared Lee Loughner opened fire on the crowd. Loughner shot the congresswoman and 18 others before he was detained. Six of those people died.

After the shooting Hernandez ran over to the congresswoman, who had been shot in the head. He tried to get her to communicate, however, she couldn't. He asked her to squeeze his hand if she understood him. He did everything he knew to do to keep her conscious.

Hernandez even looked out for her publicity in this desperate time. When the EMTs got to Giffords, they had to cut away her clothes to properly treat her.

"I covered her up," Hernandez said. "I didn't want someone to take a picture of her like that."

After the shooting Hernandez became somewhat of a celebrity, and honored as a hero.

Hernandez told the students that the shooting did not change his political opinions, but it did change the way he handles certain situations. He said he has less animosity towards people who disagree with him now, and he approaches situations more calmly.

Hernandez's message to the students at Brandywine was an interesting one. He did not give out any direct advice, but rather, left it up to students to take what he said and apply it to their daily lives.

PENN STATE UNIVERSITY, BRANDYWINE

THE LION'S EYE



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