

On Campus: Take Back Your Time Day at Central Missouri

Contributed by Cassandra Hoernig

As Americans, we value hard work. In fact, we believe the harder and longer one works, the better it is for our personal lives, our business, and our nation as a whole. Unfortunately, we have been working—and continue to work—those long, hard hours without seeing the benefits we were promised. We are in an epidemic of overwork, over-scheduling, and time famine.

Take Back Your Time Day (TBYTD) is a national movement to counter this epidemic because of the negative effects it has on our health, our families, our communities, and our environment. Today, Americans are working longer hours than they did in the 1950s, have high levels of mandatory overtime, and work almost nine weeks longer than Western Europeans. TBYTD is an initiative to reduce this stress by ensuring paid sick leave, at least three weeks of paid vacation time, and overtime as a choice, not a requirement.

Take Back Your Time Day is not anti-work. The movement calls attention to our culture's obsession with production and consumption in relation to the way it is negatively affecting other values such as: our marriages, families, and relationships, our ability to engage in community or service work, our concern for the environment, care for our pets, and our personal health. Time stress prevents time for leisure, self development, and spiritual growth.

The social work department at the University of Central Missouri celebrated and promoted Take Back Your Time Day on October 23, 2006. It was presented as a fun day about a serious issue. The activities included a Jeopardy game composed of TBYTD information, conducting surveys about time famine among those on campus, giving "citations" to those who were recognized as overworked, and distributing awards to those who are currently "taking back their time." In addition, a drawing was held for prizes such as two nights in Las Vegas, two free rounds of golf, and a free massage. Approximately \$200 was donated for the drawings. All proceeds were donated to BitterSweet Place, a local agency that provides support for children who have lost a loved one.

For more information on Take Back Your Time Day, visit <http://www.timeday.org>.

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