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Boni Frederick Remembered for Laughter, Generosity

By Anya Armes Weber

Co-workers of social service aide Boni Frederick remember her as a giving woman who was passionate about her work and protecting the children in her care.

Frederick, 67, of Morganfield, died Monday, Oct. 16, while on a work assignment. A Cabinet employee since 1991, she worked in Union County's protection and permanency office. Her duties included transporting children in state care to medical appointments and supervised visitations with birth parents.



Frederick had one daughter, Sandy Travis of Dixon, and two granddaughters.

Two Rivers Service Region Administrator Jim Toler said he recalls Frederick as "feisty" and "a friend and advocate to a lot of people, especially kids."

Frederick kept a stash of candy and little toys she would buy to make goodie bags for the children in her care to make them more comfortable during the time they spent together.

Frederick's daughter, Sandy Travis, told CHFS Secretary Mark D. Birdwhistell that when she went to her mother's home, she found several new toys on Frederick's bed.

"They were for the kids she cared for," Travis told the Secretary. "It wasn't just a 9-to-5 job for her. She looked out for those kids seven days a week."

After news spread of Frederick's death in the Morganfield community, Toler said the local office got several calls from former foster children who remembered being transported by Frederick years earlier.

"They said, 'We want to do something. We want to pay tribute,'" Toler said. "It shows she had an impact on a lot of lives -- a positive impact."

Jason Millikan worked with Frederick for 10 years in Union County's Department for Community Based Services office. He said he'll most remember Frederick's compassion and her healthy sense of humor.

"She was so caring," he said. "She was like a mother figure, but not in a motherly way."

Frederick was a bargain shopper who was always buying gifts for others, Millikan said.

Frederick clipped grocery coupons for Millikan every week. "I didn't have the heart to tell her I didn't need them," he said. "I must have 200 coupons stashed in my desk."

Millikan said Frederick was a petite woman. "She wasn't threatening at all, but she was tough. She would call out any problem that she saw."

One day not long after Sept. 11, 2001, a clearly marked fire safety truck was delivering fire extinguishers to the office. “Boni wouldn’t let the man in because he didn’t have his ID with him. She was strict about the rules.”

Roger Hamilton, a policy analyst for the Leased Property Branch in Frankfort, said a few years ago he worked with Frederick while she was the building manager for her office and he helped facilitate building contracts in the procurement office.

Being building manager – an extra duty assigned to staff in regional offices – is an important job, Hamilton said.

“These people are the first line to fix routine building problems like plumbing, roof leaks or janitorial service issues,” he said.

“She was someone who wanted things done the right way,” he said. “She was dedicated to her job, and that made things easier for me.”

Hamilton said Frederick often advocated for a new Union County office.

“She was determined to have a nice place so staff and clients could have a better environment to work in. She really stood up for her co-workers.”

Union County DCBS social worker Bethany Hayes befriended Frederick six months ago when she started her first full-time job after graduating from Murray State University.

“We sat side by side,” Hayes said. “She always had me laughing. She was constantly calling me to come see something she was working on.”

She’d sometimes bring gifts for Hayes’ 4-year-old daughter.

Hayes said Frederick was a “collector” whose office was packed full of materials.

One day Hayes was preparing for a presentation on kids and addiction, and Frederick came through by offering some brochures she had saved on the topic.

“She kept everything, and it really helped me out.”

Hayes said she and Frederick would often take lunch breaks together, and Frederick was one of the first people she told when she recently got engaged.

“I’ve never had a co-worker who was such a good friend,” she said.

Hayes said Frederick was an honest person who never felt above helping someone.

“She was very caring, she loved her job and the children she helped, and she always had us laughing.”

Millikan said he would often see Frederick in town at shops and restaurants. “So many people in the community considered her a friend,” he said. “You could always count on Boni.”

People across the state and country were touched by Frederick’s story as evidenced by the many messages posted in her honor on the CHFS Web site. Secretary Birdwhistell said he could understand why.

“Although I didn’t know Boni, I know thousands of Boni’s,” said Birdwhistell. “She typifies so many of our employees with her dedication and love for the families and children she cared for.”

150 Parents Attend Adoption Conference

By Anya Armes Weber

The Cabinet sponsored its inaugural adoptions conference -- “Fall in Love with Adoption” – on Oct. 13-14 in Louisville.

About 125 parents who receive adoption subsidies earned training credits for attending the conference’s several workshops. Topics included adoption subsidies, child-parent attachments and legal issues.

Portraits of foster children from the Bluegrass Heart Gallery and the Shining Stars Gallery were on display.

The conference is the Cabinet’s latest effort to emphasize the importance of adoption. The state’s Blue Ribbon Panel on Adoption meets monthly to review the adoption process and to identify opportunities for improvement.

Several awards were given to staff and parents. Here is a list of winners:

Adoptive Social Worker of the Year: Jennifer Pelphrey, Eastern Mountain Region

Adoptive Family of the Year: Lisa and James Banks, Northern Bluegrass Region

Award of Excellence: Carrie Saunders, Adoption Support and Training Center (University of Kentucky)

Adoptive Parent Leaders for Adoption Support for Kentucky (ASK):

Theresa Daly, Jefferson Region

Karla Groschelle, Cumberland Region

Susan Samples, Salt River Trail

Kay Upton, Salt River Trail



DCBS Deputy Commissioner Mark Washington speaks at the “Fall in Love with Adoption” Conference on Oct 13. About 150 parents attended the conference.

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DPH Employee Awards Set

The Department for Public Health will have its annual employee awards ceremony from 2 to 4 p.m. Oct. 26 in the DPH auditorium. Outstanding performance awards for support, implementation, leadership, teamwork within a division and teamwork across divisions will be given. A reception will follow in the lobby.

Partnership Works to Reduce Obesity

Regional Meetings Scheduled

The Partnership for a Fit Kentucky is a public/private partnership that supports the Kentucky Department for Public Health's CDC Obesity Prevention Grant. The focus of this group is on building healthy nutrition and physical environments in five venues: schools, family and communities, worksites, built (or manmade) environments and health care. The partnership, which continues to grow, has a wide range of members to help represent each of the five venues.

The mission of the partnership is to foster healthy weight and fitness to prevent related chronic diseases among Kentuckians by developing and supporting policy and environmental changes that promote healthy eating and active lifestyles.

In August 2004, the Partnership for a Fit Kentucky held nine regional obesity forums. More than 1,300 participants gave input on what their community was doing to combat obesity and what they would like to see in the future. Each community developed its top five priorities, which were used to develop Kentucky's Nutrition and Physical Activity State Action Plan. The plan can be viewed at www.fitky.org.

To build on the success of the obesity forums, the Partnership for a Fit Kentucky is working with communities to coordinate local grassroots efforts to address the obesity issue. The strategies presented in the state action plan are intended to help create healthy environments in dealing with:

- Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption
- Increasing breastfeeding initiation and duration
- Increasing physical activity
- Reducing TV viewing time
- Increasing parental involvement
- Other dietary concerns

With childhood obesity rates on the rise, schools have received a great amount of interest. The Partnership for a Fit Kentucky is proud to partner with Kentucky's Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK). AFHK is an integrated national and state effort that addresses the epidemic of overweight, undernourished and sedentary youth by focusing on changes in the school environment.

In an effort to reduce duplication and to maximize resources, Kentucky's AFHK will lead the school venue of the Partnership for a Fit Kentucky.

The Partnership for a Fit Kentucky is also partnering with the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce to encourage the commonwealth's business community to promote wellness among employees. This team of

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business leaders and health leaders will provide more avenues to promote comprehensive worksite wellness programs across the state.

The CDC Obesity Prevention grant has hired a worksite wellness coordinator with more than 10 years of experience in worksite wellness and employee health management to lead this effort. The initiative will include a training system to increase the number of comprehensive worksite wellness programs and a recognition system for worksites offering comprehensive worksite wellness programs.

The partnership is developing regional coalitions using the state action plan. Each region will build its own plan to address the needs of the community.

The partnership aims to share resources throughout the state to increase communication. This collaboration will reduce duplication and identify regional success to share across the commonwealth. Additionally, we are in the process of developing Web sites for each region.

If you would like information on how to get involved with the Partnership for a Fit Kentucky in your region, contact Elaine Russell at Elaine.Russell@ky.gov or (502) 564-3827, ext. 3843.

Partnership meeting dates and times can be viewed [here](#). Other dates are as follows:

Owensboro

Nov. 3

2 p.m. CST

Green River District Health Department

1501 Breckenridge St.

Louisville

December

Date and location TBA

Lincoln Trail

Time TBA

March 8, 2007

Hardin Memorial Hospital

913 N. Dixie Highway

Elizabethtown

Bowling Green and Somerset

TBA

Folic Acid Can Prevent Birth Defects

By Mary S. Flora

Department for Public Health

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Though Kentucky's instances of neural tube defects (NTD) have decreased in recent years, state health officials are continuing with an awareness campaign aimed at lowering the numbers of defects such as spina bifida.

Spina bifida is a NTD that occurs in the first 28 days of pregnancy - often before a woman knows she's pregnant. The defect leads to the failure of the spinal column to properly close, so the nerves controlling the legs, bladder and bowel might be incompletely developed or damaged.

According to information from the Kentucky Department for Public Health, NTDs have decreased 34 percent in Kentucky since the mid-1990s. Specifically, the Kentucky Birth Surveillance Registry shows that in 1996, the rate of spina bifida in Kentucky was 7.9 per 10,000 live births and fetal deaths. That number decreased to 3.6 per 10,000 in 2004.

Diet and vitamin intake are believed to be key in the prevention of NTDs due to high folic acid content. Health officials say women who are pregnant or are of childbearing age should look for foods and supplements rich in folic acid to include in their daily diets. Evidence suggests between 50 to 70 percent of neural tube defects such as spina bifida could be prevented if women got enough folic acid before conception and during pregnancy.

As of July, the Kentucky Folic Acid Partnership has 91 members representing 78 agencies, organizations and businesses. From Jan. 1 through Sept. 11, the partnership participated in 193 events relating to folic acid that reached almost 850,000 people across the state.

Folic acid is a water-soluble B vitamin that can prevent birth defects and is necessary for proper cell growth. Because it is water-soluble, it doesn't stay in the body long, so it is important to take it every day.

The percentage of Kentucky women ages 18 to 44 reporting knowledge of folic acid aiding in the prevention of birth defects increased from 32.3 percent in 1997 to 53.6 percent in 2004, according to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey.

The percentage of Kentucky women ages 18 to 44 who reported taking a multivitamin or supplement containing folic acid on a daily basis increased from 29 percent in 1997 to 45.6 percent in 2004, according to the BRFSS. The national figure is 33 percent, estimated by the March of Dimes 2005 survey.

Because half of all pregnancies in the United States are unplanned, women should take 400 micrograms of folic acid daily, even if they are not planning to get pregnant. Women who have a higher risk of having a child with spina bifida should take a higher dose of folic acid every day. In fact, these women should take a dose that is 10 times greater when planning a pregnancy. This amount is 4,000 micrograms and is available by prescription from a health care provider.

In the past fiscal year, nearly 82,000 women of childbearing age in Kentucky received folic acid counseling and supplementation through the efforts of the local health departments and their contract services. In addition, the Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs reported the provision of folic acid services to 973 women in the last fiscal year.

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Support groups throughout the state offer different types of assistance and support activities. If you would like more information about spina bifida or folic acid, visit the Spina Bifida Association of Kentucky's Web site at <http://www.sbak.org/> or call (866)340-SBAK (7225). Visit the Kentucky Folic Acid Partnership's Web site at <http://www.kfap.org/>.

CHFS Focus Health Tip

Halloween Safety Month

Parents of kids who will be trick-or-treating can get so caught up in the fun themselves that they might forget some simple safety ideas that could save everyone some trouble. Having a fun and safe Halloween will make it all worthwhile.

Remember these safety tips to make your Halloween fun for the whole family:

Know the route your kids will be taking if you aren't going with them.

The best bet is to make sure that an adult is going with them. If you can't take them, see if another parent or an older sibling can go along.

Know what other activities a child may be attending, such as parties, school or community functions.

Set a time for kids to come home. Make sure they know how important it is for them to be home on time.

Explain to children the difference between tricks and vandalism. Throwing eggs at a house may seem like fun, but they need to know the other side of the coin as well. Clean-up and damages can ruin Halloween. If kids are caught vandalizing, make them clean up the mess they've made.

Explain to your kids that animal cruelty is not acceptable. Kids may already know this, but peer pressure can be a bad thing. Make sure they know harming animals is not only morally wrong, but also punishable by law and will not be tolerated.

Make Halloween a fun, safe and happy time for your kids.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better focus on team building, customer service and personal development.

Grieving for a colleague who has died is healthy. Whether the death was sudden or came after a long illness, staff struggle with their bereavement and need time to cope with their



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loss, according to the National Employee Assistance Providers, Inc. The NEAP suggests that supervisors can facilitate the grieving process by allowing staff to participate in several ways:

Attend the funeral, visitation or memorial service.

Put together an office memorial at the worker's desk or in a central location.

Create a book of memories to give to the deceased person's family.

Organize or participate in a fundraiser for co-worker's family or favorite charity.

Talk about it. Relating to a colleague, a friend or a counselor can relieve some of the emotional toll of a loss.