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Resource Market Honored

The United States Agency on Aging recently honored the Kentucky Resource Market, a one-stop shop for information on aging and disability programs and services, as a 2007 Choices for Independence Program Champion.

The Kentucky Resource Market is an initiative of the state Department for Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) in the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

Assistant Secretary for Aging Josefina G. Carbonell said independence program champions reflect on the state level the federal agency's efforts to modernize health and long-term care for older people and those with disabilities.

DAIL developed the Kentucky Resource Market in response to Kentuckians' need for a centralized, virtual system to address the needs of elders and people with disabilities. Resource Market information can be accessed on the Internet and by phone. When fully deployed, a central Resource Market for statewide inquiries and individual markets in each of the state's 15 Area Agencies on Aging will also offer face-to-face information.

Clients of the Kentucky Resource Market may receive counseling and recommendations covering all locally available care and support options as well as help accessing benefits and assistance programs for which they may be eligible.

"The ultimate goal of the Kentucky Resource Market is to help individuals at risk of being admitted to a nursing home and their families make the most informed decisions possible," said CHFS Secretary Mark D. Birdwhistell. "In many cases, individuals and families may not be aware of available alternatives to nursing home care. We hope the Resource Market can help people remain as independent as possible for as

long as possible and, when long-term care is needed, help families make the best decisions based on all available information."

The Resource Market provides fact sheets and other materials on care and service options, in-home assessments and referrals to supports to help prevent, treat and mitigate symptoms of chronic disease.

Partners with DAIL in the Kentucky Resource Market include the state departments for Medicaid Services, Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services and Community Based Services; Area Agencies on Aging; service providers; aging and disabilities advocates; and consumers.

For more information about the Kentucky Resource Market, call toll-free 1-877-293-7447.

Health Fair is a Success

By Beth Crace

On May 9, CHFS employees had a chance to peruse a number of health stations assembled in and outside the cafeteria as part of the health fair sponsored by the CHFS Worksite Wellness Committee.

Throughout the morning and afternoon, employees could receive free health screenings, such as cholesterol tests and blood pressure readings; dine on health snacks prepared by Chef Nancy; engage in a friendly game of dance revolution; or simply learn more about chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease. Fair-goers also could familiarize themselves with the Get Healthy Kentucky program and were treated to an assortment of health-related freebies.

Participants said the event gave them a chance to learn more about living well.

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“Basically, (I’m here) to look at different ways to promote healthy living and to get information, like the brochures, which are very helpful,” said Donna Simpson, who works in Medicaid. “It’s very educational.”

Simpson said she was interested in learning more about topics like osteoporosis and nutrition so she and her daughter could incorporate the knowledge into their home lives.

“We’re trying to eat healthy too,” she said. “Everything we’re trying to do is here.”

Wellness Committee Thanks Vendors

The committee would like to thank the following vendors for participating in the fair:

American Cancer Society
Department for Aging and Independent Living
Chef Nancy
Chronic Disease Branch in the Department for Public Health
Diabetes Prevention and Control Program
Environmental Management Branch
Frankfort Regional Medical Center
Get Healthy Kentucky
Humana
Lexington Clinic
Nutrition Services Branch
Office of Information Technology- Special Projects
Osteoporosis program
Kentucky’s Quit Line
Transportation Cabinet

We hope the health fair provided employees with helpful information about healthier behaviors and lifestyles. It’s our mission to promote and sustain a workplace environment that encourages healthy lifestyles and improves our overall health.

CHFS Pacesetters

Congratulations to the 52 participants who joined our pacesetters for a daily morning walk at 10 a.m. over the past four weeks. Walking at breaks promotes more productive employees, decreases stress, decreases absenteeism and reduces the risk of disease or other serious health conditions.

Thank you to our CHFS pacesetters for leading us toward healthier lifestyles.

- Lonna Fraine
- John Harris
- Reita Jones
- Linda Leber
- Jim Terry
- Denise Weider
- Gayle Yocum

Living Well

Mental Health and Fitness

By Kris Hayslett

According to healthypeople.gov, approximately 20 percent of the United States population is affected by some form of mental illness. Depression is the most common mental illness, with more than 19 million adults suffering from the disorder. Major depression ranks as the leading cause of disability and is the cause of more than two-thirds of suicides each year. Mental health is defined as: a state of successful mental functioning, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships, and the ability to adapt to change and cope with adversity.

Those who suffer from depression often are unable to fulfill their daily roles and responsibilities of being a spouse, partner, parent or employee. The common misunderstanding of mental illness and its associated stigmatization causes many Americans to go untreated. Also, depression is associated with other medical conditions such as heart disease, cancer,

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diabetes, anxiety and eating disorders. Depression has also been associated with alcohol and drug abuse.

Depression can potentially affect all of us regardless of age, gender, ethnicity and economic status. However, research has shown that some groups of people have a higher risk:

- Adults and older adults have the highest rate of depression.
- Major depression affects twice as many women as men.
- Women who are poor, on welfare, less educated, unemployed, and from certain racial or ethnic populations are more likely to experience depression.
- Depression is higher among older adults with more than one medical condition.

In terms of fitness, the general concept is that people who are physically active or have higher levels of cardiovascular fitness have enhanced mood, higher self-esteem and greater confidence in their ability to perform tasks requiring physical activity and better cognitive functioning than a person who is not active.

The more scientific explanation is that exercise fights depression by activating neurotransmitters (chemicals used by your nerve cells to communicate with one another – associated with avoiding depression) serotonin and norepinephrine. The levels of these transmitters and their balance play a key role in how we react to daily events. When you have feelings of depression, it has been documented that levels of either serotonin, norepinephrine or both are out of sync. Exercise helps keep those two transmitters synchronized. Also, exercise stimulates the production of endorphins that causes feelings of well-being, and provides natural pain relief.

Regular physical activity may not be the cure-all for different types of mental health issues, but research has shown that it's helpful in maintaining a mental balance in your life. If you become depressed and can no longer maintain your daily responsibilities, avoid the temptation to retreat and hide your feelings.

Depression is something that affects all of us at some time during our lives, and it should not be viewed negatively. Mild stressors at home or at the office may very well be fixed with a session at the gym or a brisk walk during break time. However, not everyone is going to have the same result. Exercise may work for some and for others it may be escaping into a good book, scrapbooking, knitting, painting, writing a letter to a friend or talking to a friend or family member that helps. No one perfect prescription works for everyone. But try incorporating some type of physical activity into your daily routine to see if it elevates your mood and helps you relax.

If you feel you're suffering from serious depression, talk to your primary health care provider about steps you can take to feel better.

May is Toxic Injury Awareness and Education Month

May has been designated Toxic Injury Awareness and Education Month in Kentucky for the past three years.

How do toxic chemicals typically get into your body?

Air, food, skin and water.

How can you lessen your body's total toxic burden of daily exposures?

Air – People average 6 to 8 hours per day sleeping. Remove and avoid using chemical products in your bedroom. Use a HEPA (High

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Efficiency Particulate Air) filter in your bedroom. In general, the larger the HEPA filter, the better job it can do at filtering the air. If you know you're going to be using a volatile chemical product in your home, use an approved respirator and/or provide adequate ventilation to the area. It's even becoming more popular to use respirators while doing housework or mowing.

Food – Eating organic foods can help you avoid pesticides. Organic food is becoming more available in supermarkets, in addition to health food stores. For example, research implicates certain pesticides as endocrine disrupting hormone mimickers. Use fewer plastics. Examples include: metal or glass canisters, metal or glass cookware, microwave-safe cookware, real glasses, stoneware dishes or metal silverware.

Skin – Wear protective clothing when using dangerous chemicals. Consider that transdermal skin patches are available for drugs such as birth control, Ritalin, nicotine, etc. These products work so well because the drugs pass through the skin and into the bloodstream so quickly. The same could happen during skin contact with dangerous chemicals.

Water – To avoid common contaminants, use filtered water. A wide variety of filters is readily available ranging from: sports bottles with built-in filters, water pitchers with built-in filters, faucet-mounted filters, under-the-sink filters and whole-house filters. It's possible that on average, more chlorine could be absorbed through the skin from showering than from drinking tap water. Many types of shower filters are also available.

The simple mechanics of cleaning are often an effective alternative to ineffective (and in many cases toxic) chemicals found in typical household products. Try cleaning more the way your grandmother did. For example, white vinegar has absolutely no warnings or

precautions on the label and could be mixed with a vegetable oil to make a salad dressing! When mixed with water, white vinegar makes a good cleanser. Would you be willing to mix your favorite cleanser with vegetable oil and eat it on a salad? If not, how safe is it? Have you really looked at the labels on the products you purchase?

Look for signal words on product labels.

Signal Words:

- **Danger:** The product is extremely flammable, extremely corrosive or highly toxic.
- **Poison:** The product is highly toxic.
- **Warning or Caution:** Indicates products with lesser hazards
- **No Signal Word:** The product is probably not hazardous.

The word “non-toxic” is an advertising word and lacks a federal regulatory definition.

Look for other label warnings such as “May be harmful if swallowed,” “Use with adequate ventilation,” “Avoid skin contact,” and “Avoid eye contact.” Take these precautions seriously by using adequate protection such as an approved respirator or ventilation, and wearing gloves or goggles as appropriate.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

If getting compliments makes you uncomfortable or you have trouble responding to them without disparaging yourself, you are snubbing the person who gave it and short-changing yourself. To accept praise graciously, consider the advice of Kathy Chamberlin and Debby Hoffman from their book, “Find Something Nice to Say – The Power of Compliments.”

Chamberlin and Hoffman write that it really only takes two words to express your acceptance and gratitude: “Thank you.” You can elaborate, but only with positive language like, “I put a lot of effort into that,” or “The whole team had a lot of good ideas that got me started.”

You may need to recondition yourself to be comfortable with praise. If someone sincerely gives you a compliment, you deserve it. You also owe it to the person giving the compliment to accept it. Let someone know when his or her praise means a lot to you.