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Staff Promotes Adoption at ‘Annie’ Premiere

Children from the state’s Special Needs Adoption Program were able to enjoy a classic Broadway musical earlier this month through a partnership with a Nelson County theater group.

SNAP staff and children from the program attended opening night of the musical “Annie,” presented by Stephen Foster Productions in Bardstown on Tuesday, July 1.

Program staff answered questions about adoption at their display outside the theater. Children had the opportunity to meet and greet the cast before the show.

“Annie” is an inspiring story of hope about a child who was in an orphanage in the 1930s. Adoption Services Branch Manager Mike Grimes said SNAP is grateful for the opportunity to spread awareness regarding the critical need for adoptive parents for Kentucky’s waiting children. Currently 500 children are waiting for safe, permanent and loving homes.

State employees are eligible for the Adoption Benefit Program, which provides financial assistance of up to \$5,000 per family for direct costs related to the adoption of a special needs child, and up to \$3,000 for any other child adoption. Log on to this personnel Web page for more information.

For more information on SNAP, visit the program [Web site](#) or call (800) 928-4303. Learn more about “Annie” and other Stephen Foster Productions shows at www.stephenfoster.com.

Foster Children’s Artwork on Display at Capitol

By Anya Armes Weber

Artwork designed by children awaiting adoption will be featured at the state Capitol this month.

The Special Needs Adoption Program’s “Art from the Heart Gallery” is on display through the end of July in the pedestrian tunnel between the Capitol and the annex.

The gallery features the artwork of many foster children in the state’s Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP), as well as their professional portraits. It raises awareness of the state’s need for foster parents.

“These children are as creative and imaginative as any others,” Adoption Services Branch Manager Mike Grimes said. “They enjoy expressing themselves through their artwork.”

Grimes said many of the children in the SNAP program might be harder to place in a home because they are teenagers, have specific treatment needs or are part of a sibling group.

“Some of these children may need special care, but what they need most is a permanent, loving family. Our gallery has helped us take that message to more and more people.”

The touring exhibit has been featured across central Kentucky and will be a part of the Cabinet’s Kentucky State Fair display this August.

To suggest a location for “Art from the Heart Gallery,” [e-mail](#) Grimes. Learn more about SNAP [online](#).

Henderson Social Services Clinician gets Award Honoring Boni Frederick

By Anya Armes Weber

A Henderson County social services clinician has won an award that honors the legacy of social services aide Boni Frederick.

Sasha Armstrong Rich received the “Spirit of Boni” award in May in Henderson.

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“This award makes me feel very honored,” Rich said. “I am not only appreciative of being recognized for the work I do in the community, but also am especially honored to be recognized in memory of Boni.”

Rich received the award at the second annual Collaborative Partners Awards program. The Spirit of Boni award is given to a DCBS employee who displays an unwavering commitment and dedication to positively impact the lives of children and families in the community. The recipient also demonstrates a passion to help others that goes beyond the usual job expectations and exemplifies true selflessness.

Frederick was a Morganfield social services aide who died in the line of duty in October 2006. Frederick, who worked in the Union County DCBS office, was responsible for transporting state foster children to medical appointments and visits with birth parents.

Rich has worked in the Henderson office for four years. She was a Public Child Welfare Certification Program (PCWCP) student through Murray State University and completed her practicum in the Hopkins County office before being hired in Henderson County. She also graduated from the University of Louisville as a master of social work stipend student.

Rich knew Frederick “very well,” she said. “She was such a wonderful woman, with a lot of spunk!”

Her favorite memory of Frederick was her festive holiday attire. “She wore holiday earrings, sweaters and socks.”

Growing up, Rich and her family faced poverty. She said she was subjected to unkind treatment from more fortunate members of her community.

“My family never sought public assistance to meet our needs, even though we would have qualified,” she said.

“I didn’t realize that my family was poor until I became a teenager,” she said. “At that time I became more aware of others’ thoughts and feelings about ‘poor people.’ ”

“I feel that my experience helps me set goals for myself and ensure that I achieve them,” she said. “I also think that growing up in poverty helped me to understand cultural differences and how to treat everyone with respect.”

Rich said that DCBS staff can face negative perceptions because of the special nature of their work. But, “I do my best to treat all people with respect, while taking necessary action to keep children safe and healthy.”

Living Well: Share the Road

Have you noticed that as the gas prices increase, so do the number of cyclists and pedestrians on the roads? Millions of Americans are dusting off their bikes and walking shoes in exchange for their gas guzzling vehicles. However, many of us do not know the rules of the road, which can make even a recreational spin around the neighborhood dangerous. Drivers, cyclists, walkers and runners should follow these simple rules of the roads:

Cyclists:

Cyclists should always ride with traffic, not against it.

Always wear a helmet.

Follow the same rules of the road as you would in your vehicle.

Signal turns with the proper hand signs and remain alert at all times.

Look for alternative routes that have less traffic or designated bike lanes.

Walkers/Runners:

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Face oncoming traffic while walking, especially if there is not a bike path or sidewalk.

Wear bright-colored clothing or reflective clothing if walking in the evening.

Leave valuables behind to avoid any potential threat.

Vary your routes so that others do not know your routine and to make your trip more interesting.

Carry some type of self-defense such as a hand-held mace or a whistle to alert others if you get in a difficult situation.

Keep to the right so that others can pass you and if you are with others go single file when passing. Use common courtesy when out with a group.

Walkers, runners and cyclists should always carry identification in case of an accident and leave the iPod or mp3 player at home so you stay alert to potential dangers (a dog, fast-approaching car, emergency vehicle or another person). Also, avoid altercations with others on the road. As a runner, I get plenty of mean looks, comments and horn-honking from drivers who think they own the road. Just the other day a man slowed down to let me know that I should use the sidewalk, but what he did not know is that the sidewalk is sometimes uneven and that asphalt is preferred by runners because it is easier on our joints than concrete. Against my initial instincts, I did not respond. I obey the rules and conserve my energy for my runs. With high gas prices, I predict you will see more and more people on the road using several different modes of transportation. So lighten up; follow the rules and share the roads.

Healthy Options in the CHR Snack Shop

If you are a regular customer of the snack shop located in the CHR Building in Frankfort, you might be surprised at the number of healthy options available there.

Willa Thomas and Elizabeth Fiehler are both registered dietitians and active members of the

wellness committee. They put their backgrounds to work searching the shelves, reading labels, rearranging items and offering suggestions. Look for the new Wellness Committee Healthy Snacks Rack that offers healthier choices and lower calorie snacks. The new rack currently consists of:

- 100 Calorie packs (Oreos, Chips Ahoy, etc.)
- Snackwells Cookies (chocolate and crème)
- Fig Newtons
- Animal crackers
- Dole canned peaches
- Cereal
- Almonds (whole natural and roasted/salted varieties)
- Light popcorn
- Peppermint patties and junior mints (yes, these are really on the rack)

In addition to the healthier options rack, the team found several other things they identified as better choices:

- Baked Lays
- Jenny's Old Fashioned Caramel Dittos
- Chex Mix
- Pretzels
- 100 percent fruit juices
- V-8 Juice (this has 3 servings of vegetable, but is high in sodium)
- Apples and oranges
- Diet Lipton Green Tea
- Low-fat chocolate milk
- Skim milk
- Weight Watchers ice cream bar (140 calories)

On your next trip to the snack shop, check out the new healthier options rack where you might find a new favorite snack that's also better for you.

Fiscal War: Stylish Savings

By Beth Fisher

Unless you're criminally inclined, I don't have much advice on how to cut your gasoline expenses. Quite frankly, I've gotten to the point where I can't stomach the sound of the words, "we need to stop for gas."

Like my husband and me, I know there are hundreds – if not thousands - of you making lengthy commutes to work each day and it's eating up most of what used to be your expendable income. Undoubtedly, this is a time for sacrifice, for paring down, for biting the proverbial bullet. So does this really mean the end of retail therapy? I say no!

I realize not everyone gets the same kind of other-wordly high that I do from, say, the purchase of a new pair of slippers. But, for those of you who cherish a good trip to the mall, some hope remains. Look for sales (with the sluggish economy, lots of retailers are getting creative with their promotions); plan ahead by making lists of things you need and sticking to it; avoid impulse buys; and carefully think through your purchases.

Lastly, I think it's important to view things with a different perspective. For example, let's say you have a major event coming up and had planned to purchase a new dress or suit. Instead of spending a ton of money on a new outfit, why not spend a little money on new accessories to wear with something you already own? At first it may not seem like as much fun, but you'd be surprised how a new pair of earrings can change your outlook.

And isn't that what therapy is all about?

Focus Money Saving Tip of the Week: These tips come from Jeanne Maggard, a resident of Paintsville and a co-worker of my mother's, and

CHFS' Cindy Stoops, who works in the Office of Contract Oversight.

Maggard recommends surfing the Internet for coupons before going to the mall. She says stores like JC Penney, AC Moore and Borders offer deals at printablecoupons.blogspot.com. Stoops uses coupons for online shopping. She advises consumers to search Google for coupon codes for the particular store before making an online purchase. According to Stoops, numerous sites such as www.retailmenot.com and www.couponmountain.com feature a variety of excellent deals.

"I have used this method for a number of items and have received discounts from various places including Blue Nile, Coldwater Creek, 1800Flowers.com, etc.," said Stoops. "You will not find coupons for every online store, but will find them for many. At the very least you can usually find an offer code for free shipping."

CHFS Health Tip

Know the Signs of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

You're working at your desk, but you're distracted by a tingling or numbness in your hand and wrist. Then a sharp, piercing pain shoots from your palm through your arm. If you've had symptoms like these for several days — or worse, weeks — or if they keep you up at night, you may have carpal tunnel syndrome.

Carpal tunnel syndrome is caused by a nerve getting pinched inside a narrow passageway — called the carpal tunnel — in your wrist. The rigid tunnel is made of bones and ligament. It surrounds several tendons and an important nerve, called the median nerve, that detects feelings in your thumb and fingers (except for the little finger). The median nerve also helps control certain hand movements.

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People who work on assembly lines, such as meat packers, seamstresses and cleaners, seem more likely to get carpal tunnel syndrome. But although people often blame repetitive hand or wrist movements for the disorder, there's little solid evidence that they're the root cause. They may simply make symptoms worse.

If you suspect you have carpal tunnel syndrome, see your doctor as soon as possible. Early treatment is important to avoid permanent damage to the median nerve. Treatments for carpal tunnel syndrome should begin as soon as possible. Your doctor will treat underlying causes like diabetes or arthritis first. You may be advised to use splints or a hand brace to keep your wrist from twisting or bending. Nonprescription pain relievers may help ease pain and swelling. Once symptoms improve, stretching and strengthening exercises may help prevent future trouble.

Severe cases, with symptoms lasting for six months or more, may require surgery. Surgery involves cutting the band of ligament that surrounds the carpal tunnel to reduce pressure. Symptoms often improve immediately after surgery, but full recovery may take months.

If you have carpal tunnel syndrome, be sure to talk with your doctor about your treatment options.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Managers or team leaders who want to build their group unity and performance levels can start by asking for staff input, suggests small business expert Denise O'Berry.

O'Berry, who writes for askteamdoc.com, says that managers should ask staff, "What changes would you like to see happen here at work?" This can be an anonymous process. The answers

will help supervisors note consistency in thought and determine their next course of action.

After giving all staff a chance to respond, managers should share survey results with the team for a group discussion. Develop an action plan for the items the team agrees on and track your progress along the way.

An employee who makes a suggestion and sees change happen will feel proud and appreciated. Action can't be taken on every suggestion, but just allowing staff a chance to be heard lets them know their views are respected. Staff will want to contribute more to work if they feel they are a valued part of the team.