

First Lady Helps Recognize Sexual Assault Awareness Month

By Anya Armes Weber

First Lady Jane Beshear spoke at the Capitol Rotunda last week to honor the sexual violence prevention and education efforts of several Kentuckians.

Jane Beshear helped kick off Sexual Assault Awareness Month at the event, which was cosponsored by CHFS and the Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs (KASAP). Gov. Steve Beshear has signed a proclamation marking March as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Kentucky, and Jane Beshear presented the proclamation at the event.

“Your taking a stand today brings the Commonwealth's attention to the prevalence and devastation of this crime,” she said. “This event spotlights the innovative projects that are helping so many Kentuckians through the healing process.”

The work of several individuals and programs was recognized at the kickoff. See the [list of winners online](#).

In Kentucky, one in nine adult females – more than 175,000 women -- has been forcibly raped. This conservative estimate does not include rape facilitated by alcohol or drugs, attempted rape, statutory rape (sex with someone under age 16 without explicit force) or other forms of sexual violence.

“Sexual assault affects every member of our community,” said Phyllis Millspaugh, a program administrator for the CHFS Division of Violence Prevention Resources. “The effort to end sexual abuse is making a difference, and all individuals need to do is decide to be a part of the solution.”

Millspaugh said prevention can be as simple as having a conversation with a young adult about recognizing and ending violence within their circle of friends.

Learn more about sexual assault prevention programs and services and Sexual Assault Awareness Month, please visit <http://chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dvpr/> or www.kasap.org.

If you or someone you know is in danger, please call 911, your local hotline or call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at: (800) 656-HOPE.

CHFS staff is also eligible for counseling through the Kentucky Employee Assistance Program. For more information, call (502) 564-5788 or (800) 445-KEAP. Or visit the [KEAP Web page](#).

Adoption Advocacy Group Wins \$10,000 Award

A nonprofit adoption advocacy group and one of the Cabinet's primary partners has won \$10,000 by garnering a majority of votes in a national Internet contest.

Ashland-based For Jamie's Sake was one of five winners in the “Clorox Power a Bright Future Grant for Kids” national contest. Representatives from Clorox, community partners, Department for Community Based Services staff and children from the Special Needs Adoption Program attended a check presentation last month.

The top five organizations that received the most votes on the “Clorox Clean-Up” Facebook page were awarded the grant, and FJS, which was nominated by staff of Sunrise Children’s Services, got the second-most votes.

For Jamie’s Sake offers many services to children in foster care, including providing clothing, luggage and “pillow pals,” facilitating visits between birth and foster families and hosting monthly birthday parties.

FJS Executive Director LeaAnn Gollihue said she was overwhelmed by the award and will use it for future projects.

“It’s all about the kids, not me; it’s always been about them,” she said.

FJS also will be featured in the April 30 edition of People magazine.

Adoption Services Branch Manager Mike Grimes said the group deserves this honor.

“For Jamie’s Sake has done so much for the well-being of foster children and to educate families about adoption,” he said. “With an award like this and a feature in a national magazine, they can make an even greater difference.”

Visit the [For Jamie’s Sake Web site](#) for more information about the group.

For more information about adoption and foster care, call the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) at (800) 928-4303. Or log on to the [SNAP home page](#).

Weight Watchers at Work to Host Open House at CHR Building

By Anya Armes Weber

CHFS Frankfort staff who want to learn about making healthier food choices is invited to join weekly Weight Watchers at Work meetings and attend an open house for the program later this month.

The open house is set for 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. on Tuesday, March 30, in the cafeteria conference room. Guests can bring their lunches and also enjoy healthy snacks and recipes. Meetings are led by trained instructors who teach individuals to make healthy, smart choices while eating normal everyday foods.

The regular Weight Watchers at Work meetings are from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. on Tuesdays in the fourth floor Bluegrass Conference Room of the CHR Building, and a new 12-week session will begin on April 6.

For more information about Weight Watchers at Work, contact Kris Hayslett at Kris.Hayslett@ky.gov.

Living Well: The Pursuit of Happiness and Your Health

News stories continue to focus on the gloom and doom impacting Americans. Do these reports leave you in a desperate search for things that make you happy? For some, the pursuit of happiness is found easily, and for others it is a constant struggle. Research suggests people can take charge of their own happiness by boosting certain practices.

A psychologist at the University of California - Riverside recently published findings about the connection between positive thinking and feelings of well-being. "Despite the finding that happiness is partially genetically determined, and despite the finding that life situations have a smaller influence on our happiness than we think they do, we argue that still a large portion of happiness is in our power to change," the researcher said.

Research has shown the following acts can increase happiness in your daily life:

Be grateful: Study participants were asked to write letters of gratitude to people who had helped them in some way. Results showed that participants reported an increase in happiness, lasting over weeks and even months. Studies also found that just writing the letter increased the happiness and that sending it was not always necessary.

Be optimistic: Study participants were asked to visualize and describe, through journal entries, an ideal future. Some participants described living with a loving and supportive partner, or finding a job that was fulfilling. After several weeks of entries, participants reported an increased feeling of well-being.

Count your blessings: Focusing on the positive helps remind people to be happy. For an increased boost in happiness, each week write down three good things that have happened to you.

Use your strengths: Identify your greatest strengths and then try to use those strengths in new ways. An example would be someone who has a good sense of humor could use that to lighten up business meetings or cheer up a friend.

Commit acts of kindness: Studies have found that helping others also helps us. Those who donate time or money to charity, or who assist those in times of need report improvements in their own happiness.

Consider how you can work positive actions and thinking into your daily or weekly routine. Doing so could help you overcome the doldrums of the remaining weeks of winter and yes, even the nightly news.

CHFS Health News

March is National Nutrition Month

It's common knowledge that a healthful diet is an important part of a healthful lifestyle, but most people have trouble figuring out what to do when planning a complete diet overhaul. During National Nutrition Month, the American Dietetic Association reminds everyone that an easy way to focus on eating better is to start with the basics: build your nutritional health from the ground up.

Consider these ways to improve your nutrition from the ground up:

Focus on fruits and veggies: Take a good look at your current diet and you'll probably realize you're not eating enough fruits or vegetables. Add a serving each day to one meal and increase it every few weeks. Adding more of these foods into your diet is important whether you buy frozen, fresh or organic.

Look locally: From farmers markets to community-supported agriculture, you have many options to find new, fresh foods in your area.

Make calories count: Too often, people think of foods as good or bad and that only those on the “good foods” list are okay to eat. When you’re choosing between options, focus instead on the one with more of the vitamins and nutrients that you need. Sometimes, foods with fewer calories aren’t always the healthiest options. To figure out how many calories you need to achieve a healthy weight, visit www.mypyramid.gov.

Test your taste buds: A healthy eating plan emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or fat-free dairy and includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans and nuts. Expand your horizons. Try a fish you’ve never eaten before or find a new vegetable recipe. By testing yourself, you might find new healthy favorites to add to your regular grocery list.

Trick yourself with treats: A healthful diet doesn’t mean deprivation. If you have a sweet tooth, have fruit and yogurt for dessert. If you want a snack in the afternoon, have some trail mix or nuts. There is no reason to go hungry just because you’re making healthful changes.

For more tips on building your healthful diet from the ground up, during National Nutrition Month and all year long, visit www.eatright.org and click on “For the Public.”

Adapted from information provided by the American Dietetic Association.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Are you a shy or nervous speaker? If you feel you lack confidence when you have to speak before a group, try following these tips from Toastmasters, an international group that promotes better communication and leadership.

Remember, you feel more nervous than you look. If you don’t call attention to your fears and anxieties, chances are no one else will notice them. Act confidently and, with practice, soon enough you will feel confident.

Think about your audience. Finding a single person in the audience to make eye contact with will help you gauge if your listeners understand your message. It will also keep your mind off your nervousness.

Don’t focus on yourself. Focus on your ideas and how they can benefit your audience. Make your delivery enthusiastic and concise. Talk about your plan’s value and you’ll be well received.