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DCBS Office has Party for Foster Families

The Hopkins County Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) office hosted a Halloween party for its staff and area foster families on Saturday, Oct. 27. About 30 children attended.

The party included a costume contest, bobbing for apples, bowling, fortune telling, musical chairs and a cake walk.

“The kids seemed to enjoy bobbing for apples and musical chairs the most,” said Melanie Rose, of the Hopkins County office. “I think that they had never done that before. We made sure that everyone won something for the costume contest since the majority of the kids at the party were 12 and younger.”

Rose said staff decided to host the party for families.

“We all had a great time,” she said. “It gave the staff a chance to have fun with the kids and get to know the foster parents a little better. We even had foster parents from other counties show up we'd never met before.”

Avian Influenza Workshop Brings Agencies Together

Successful workshop important for planning, discussion

By Barbara Fox

Approximately 200 participants attended an avian influenza (bird flu) responder workshop Oct. 29-30 at the Marriott Griffin Gate Resort in Lexington. Attendees discussed how agencies would respond to an outbreak of the disease in birds, with the potential to spread to humans.

The Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) and the Lexington-Fayette County Health Department hosted the two-day workshop.

“This workshop was an ideal opportunity for public health officials to learn how the poultry industry handles infection control and containment, and to integrate our respective response plans should bird flu jump from poultry into the human population,” said William D. Hacker, M.D., commissioner for public health and acting undersecretary for health at the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

The invitation-only workshop brought together people from a variety of public health fields, including epidemiology, laboratory, communicable disease, preparedness, surveillance, environmental health and infection control. Other agencies and groups participating include the Kentucky Poultry Federation and commercial poultry producers, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Resources, Kentucky Emergency Management, U.S. Department of Agriculture, hospital infection control practitioners and county agriculture/natural resources extension agents.

Sara Robeson, epidemiologist at DPH's Division of Epidemiology and Health Planning, was instrumental in planning and coordinating the conference.

“We received many positive comments from all agencies involved. They appreciated the opportunity to share their avian influenza response plans with others,” said Robeson. “Participants felt that the breakout groups and exercises gave them the opportunity to make contacts with other responders in their regions.”

The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) initially created the workshop. Six DPH staff attended CSTE train-the-trainer workshops to bring the valuable

planning workshops to Kentucky. CSTE awarded a grant to DPH to assist with implementing the training.

**Employee Profile: Sara Robeson,
Epidemiologist**

Sara Robeson is an epidemiologist who has worked for the Division of Epidemiology and Health Planning for 12 years.

How does your job allow you to impact the lives of your fellow Kentuckians? What's the best part of your job?

As an epidemiologist, I am regularly asked to analyze public health data and provide that information to state programs, the media and the general public. These data are used to evaluate and guide the development of programs designed to improve the health and well-being of Kentuckians. I also serve as a liaison to the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center (KIPRC) at the University of Kentucky. In that role, I strive to keep KIPRC linked to the activities here at the Department for Public Health (DPH) while at the same time promoting KIPRC prevention and research initiatives at DPH and throughout the state.

The best part of my job is when I am able present data in a format that creates a positive change in health policy or program development. Since I have worked as an epidemiologist for more than 10 years now, I have analyzed data from many different sources. I also enjoy guiding people to new data sources that may answer a particular public health question.

What is something interesting about your job that most people wouldn't know?

As an epidemiologist in the division office, I am not tied to a particular program. I work on many varied projects from day to day. Some projects might not even be coordinated by our division.

In the morning, I may be answering questions pertaining to Healthy Kentuckians 2010, and then suddenly I may need to switch to analyzing survey data. By the afternoon, I could even be planning a workshop.

What are your interests outside of work?

Most of my interests revolve around my family. I have been married to my husband, David, for 9 years, and we have a very active little boy, Will, who is 5 years old. At the age of 2, Will was diagnosed with autism. Although traumatic at the time, the early diagnosis was beneficial because we were able to start working early on the therapies and treatments needed to give him the best life possible. Will has made so much progress and is an inspiration for David and me every day. We have been so lucky to have an extremely supportive family as well as dedicated teachers and therapists all devoted to Will's success. Various autism groups have also helped us learn about new therapies and resources in our region. Will is now learning that he can use his words to control the world around him. We even heard his first sentences last week. His most popular one is "I want a cookie."

Give us your thoughts on the work that you have been doing most recently with organizing the avian influenza workshop.

I had never coordinated a workshop before, and coordinating one in two months was quite a challenge. I certainly have respect for those who coordinate workshops, trainings and conferences on a regular basis. The purpose of the conference was to build relationships with other agencies that might respond to an avian influenza outbreak and to identify gaps in our response. For this conference, DPH brought together representatives not only from public health, but also from other groups, such as the Department of Agriculture, Fish and Wildlife Resources, emergency management and the poultry industry. Breakout sessions throughout the

conference allowed members of different agencies to work through exercises that simulated an avian influenza outbreak in their region. Participants made valuable contacts with responders in their region and identified areas that needed additional emphasis. We are currently in the process of documenting the lessons learned from each breakout session. This information will be shared with all agencies involved to build on the partnerships already strengthened by the workshop.

State's Adoptive Families Honored at Reception

November is Adoption Awareness Month

By Anya Armes Weber

The Cabinet honored nine adoptive families last week at a reception celebrating "Forever Families."

At the Frankfort dinner reception, Cabinet staff read biographies of honorees who were selected for providing support to other adoptive families and furthering state adoptions in their communities. The "Forever Families" awards were established in 2003.

Mike Grimes, manager of the adoption services branch in CHFS' Department for Community Based Services, said people like the honorees are one of the state's best resources for recruiting and advising new adoptive parents.

"Adoption can be a difficult transition," Grimes said. "These veteran parents become mentors to our newer adoptive families and can guide them through the challenges of parenthood."

Grimes said adoptive parents have access to other resources, like mentor support groups, college tuition waivers for adopted children and regular training opportunities.

The need for adoptive homes grows every year, Grimes said. Of the nearly 7,500 children in out of home care, more than 1,900 have the goal of adoption. More than 500 are legally free for adoption with no identified adoptive family.

Governor Ernie Fletcher has proclaimed November Adoption Awareness Month in Kentucky.

To learn more about adoption, log on to www.chfs.ky.gov/snap. Or call (800) 432-9346 to request an information packet.

Award winners are as follows.

- Bennie and Ragna Boyd, Johnson County, Flat Gap (Eastern Mountain Region)
- Freddie and Susan Henson, Fayette County, Lexington (Southern Bluegrass Region)
- Lonnie and Margaret King, Pulaski County, Ferguson (Cumberland Region)
- Ariella and Alonzo Majors, Jefferson County, Louisville (Jefferson Region)
- Kenneth and Mary McBride, Hopkins County, Dawson Springs (The Lakes Region)
- William and Phyllis Sexton, Morgan County, West Liberty (Northeastern Region)
- Tommy and Romona Silva, Larue County, Hodgenville (Salt River Trail)
- Michael and Valerie Leeke, Kenton County, Villa Hills (Northern Bluegrass Region)
- Pam Rone, Henderson County, Corydon (Two Rivers Region)

I-64 Project to Disrupt Traffic in Frankfort

The I-64 twin bridges crossing the Kentucky River in Franklin County will undergo repairs starting Nov. 5. Motorists may want to find

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alternate routes or adjust their plans during peak travel times.

The project will involve the replacement of expansion joints at the east end of the two bridges. These joints provide for the expansion and contraction of the bridge where the deck and roadway meet.

As part of the project, one lane of traffic will be closed. However, to limit the impact on travelers, the contractor will be required to complete the project as quickly as possible. Ten working days will be permitted for each bridge (eastbound and westbound), and the project must be completed by Dec. 15. The first phase of work will start at noon Nov. 5, when the right lane of eastbound I-64 will be closed. Once the eastbound construction is completed, the contractor will move to the westbound lanes.

Living Well: Fit Nation

By Kris Hayslett, Wellness Coordinator

In 2006, CNN's Dr. Sanjay Gupta stated that his New Year's resolution would be to help Americans get fit. He then launched a nationwide tour of seven college campuses. The following year, he visited several large cities with the Fit Nation Express. Celebrities, activists, political figures and organizations also attended these events. The Fit Nation events brought together people interested in finding answers to obesity and secondary health issues by brainstorming possible solutions to the nation's growing epidemic.

The Fit Nation Express made stops in Atlanta, Ga.; New Orleans, La.; Denver, Colo.; San Diego, Calif.; and Chicago, Ill.

These stops across the nation were designed to provide helpful tips and tools to keep Americans on the road to fitness. Here's a checklist the program provides to help keep people fit.

1. Learn your family history.
2. Make fitness fun.
3. Get at least 30 minutes of exercise daily.
4. Drink water.
5. Be a role model for children.
6. Take the stairs.
7. Be consistent.
8. Do the math.
9. Eat a healthy breakfast.
10. Involve the whole family.

Learning your family history gives you some helpful information regarding your risk for future disease. Also, it will help you and your health care providers take a more proactive look at your health and your preventive screenings.

Making fitness fun is the key to sticking with physical activity. Stop thinking of exercise as being limited to running, walking, biking and swimming. Instead, find something that you enjoy, like hiking, rollerblading, gardening, home improvement projects or dancing. Trying new activities will not only help you find something that will work for you, but it may also open you up to new experiences and new friends.

Put down that regular or diet soda and drink more water. Regular and diet soda offer no known nutrients and are therefore called "empty calories." Your body is made of approximately 60 percent water, so staying hydrated has many health benefits. Water promotes health by:

- Helping with digestion and allowing for the absorption of vital vitamins and nutrients
- Detoxifying the liver and kidneys and carrying waste away from the body
- Hydrating the skin
- Weight control (natural appetite suppressant)
- Regulating body temperature

If finding the time to exercise is your main problem, try making a personal effort to take the stairs whenever possible. Stairwell walking has been both popular and successful because individuals actually make a choice to take the stairs, which makes them feel more in control. Do you know where the stairways are in your worksite?

Doing the math simply means that if you want to maintain your weight, your caloric intake has to be equal to your caloric output. If you want to lose weight, your calorie intake needs to be less than the amount of calories your burn off by being active.

Involving the whole family makes it easier to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle. The rise in obesity isn't just for adults, it affects children too. Children who are overweight are at a greater risk for joint problems, poor self-esteem and some even suffer from sleep apnea. These increased health risks combined with childhood obesity can also lead to shortened life spans, diminished overall quality of life and an increased burden on the public health care system.

Each year, the University of Baltimore Obesity Initiatives issues grades to each state for efforts to pass obesity-reducing legislation. This year, six states - California, Illinois, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Tennessee - received A's for their legislative and public policy work to control obesity in children. Many states are moving forward in this fight to control obesity for children through new policies and research. If you would like more information on ways to improve your family's health, visit gethealthy.ky.gov and view the individualized information for youth, adults, and seniors, as well as healthy recipes and events in Kentucky.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

When you want to influence coworkers, you can use one of three models suggested by the Vengel Consulting Group.

The "push" method is the more direct technique. With this model, you may assert, suggest, provide rationale and identify consequences of the actions you support. You would use data and reason with this technique.

The "pull" method is more involving and works to engage people. It uses open-ended questions, questions focused on others, summaries of feelings and disclosure of information. You will build trust by echoing a person's feelings and sharing information with them.

The third method is a combination of the two. The "push/pull" technique works when you want to both provide direction and ensure commitment. This model allows you to create a vision of what might be if the person you are communicating with does what you want.