

Dec. 3, 2007

## Helping for the Holidays?

Is your office doing something special this holiday season to help people in need? Send us a brief description of what you are doing, who is involved and who will benefit from your efforts. Make sure you include your office name and location. Pictures may also be submitted in jpeg format. E-mail submissions to Focus editor Emily Moses at [Emily.moses@ky.gov](mailto:Emily.moses@ky.gov). Deadline for submissions is Wednesday, Dec. 12. All entries will appear in the Focus on Monday, Dec. 17, the last newsletter of 2007.

## 34 adoptions finalized on Louisville Adoption Day

*By Anya Armes Weber*

Twenty-four families grew last Friday when the adoptions of 34 children were finalized as part of Louisville Adoption Day.

A reception and celebration for the families followed the proceedings in Jefferson Family Court.

Jackie Stamps, deputy commissioner of the Department for Community Based Services, told the families and children gathered that today is the beginning of their “forever families.”

“Your families have become whole, not only as a matter of choice, but also because of a growing love,” she said. “The adoptive parents here today have made a world of difference for their children, and we honor you. You are heroes to your sons and daughters and to the state’s service providers as well. We thank you for opening your homes and your hearts to these beautiful children.”

Most of the adoptees were part of CHFS’ Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) and first entered their new homes as foster children in the state’s care.

In 2004, Chief Justice Joseph Lambert challenged Kentucky family courts to hold a statewide adoption day to finalize as many adoptions as possible and raise awareness about children in foster care.

Other goals of Adoption Day are to encourage others to adopt and foster, to build collaboration among local adoption agencies and organizations and to communicate the availability and need for post-adoptive services.

Learn more about adoption at [www.chfs.ky.gov/snap](http://www.chfs.ky.gov/snap).

## Adoption Awareness Tree traveling Northern Kentucky

*By Anya Armes Weber*

The Northern Bluegrass Region of the Department for Community Based Services is helping to raise awareness of the need for more foster and adoptive families in Northern Kentucky with a traveling outreach project this holiday season.

Staff of the Cabinet’s Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) and community partners created the Adoption Awareness Tree, which features ornaments with pictures and biographies of some of the 188 children in the region who await adoptive homes.

Regional SNAP Coordinator Tabettha Marsh said the tree shows the many faces of foster care.

“During the holidays, we’re often thinking of the needs of others and how we can fulfill them,” Marsh said. “This project highlights Northern Kentucky’s great need for loving families in the region who can welcome these many waiting children.”

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Dates and locations for the display are as follows:

- Dec. 3 - 9: Campbell County Library, Newport Branch, 901 E. Sixth St., Newport
- Dec. 10 - 16: Kenton County Library, Covington Branch, 502 Scott Blvd., Covington
- Dec. 17 - Jan. 1: Newport on the Levee, Newport
- Jan. 2 - Jan. 11: Proverbs Coffee Shop, 630 Madison Ave., Covington

Contact Donna Benke or Jenni Wiehe at (859) 292-6632 for information on displaying the tree.

For more information on adoption, log on to [www.chfs.ky.gov/snap](http://www.chfs.ky.gov/snap). Learn about foster care at [www.chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dpp/out\\_of\\_home\\_care.htm](http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dpp/out_of_home_care.htm). Or call CHFS at (800) 432-9346 to request an information packet.

### Use New Letterhead until Further Notice

The Division of Communications is advising staff to use an updated version of the Unbridled Spirit letterhead template for the next week. The new template updates the Cabinet secretary's name. Because the letterhead is temporary, staff is advised NOT to have any letterhead printed through Kentucky Correctional Industries at this time. Staff may download the letterhead here.

### 2008 Training Calendar Now Available

The Office of Human Resource Management's (OHRM) 2008 training calendar is now available for viewing. You can access the calendar at <http://chfsnet.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/4398EBBE-FF34-48B6-9C05-A893F03DD05C/0/2008TrainingCalendar112807.doc>

The calendar lists dates for:

- Personnel Management Training for Supervisors
- New Employee Orientation
- Anti-Harassment Awareness (online)
- Equal Employment Opportunity (online)
- Workplace Violence Prevention (online)
- Performance Matters

Dates are listed through June 2008. The schedule for the latter part of the year's classes will be available at a later time.

You can access a description of these classes at OHRM's Intranet site. (<http://chfsnet.ky.gov/afa/ohrm/dpod/tpdbranch.htm>)

Contact your [Pathlore Liaison](#) to enroll in any of the classes.

### Living Well: Best and Worst Habits for Living Healthy

Many of us will set a New Year's resolution to live a healthier lifestyle and lose weight. If you have not paid attention to your health this year until now, it's time to evaluate your daily activities. Is breakfast a forgotten meal or a doughnut in the car during your commute? Does lunch consist of a burger and fries? Do your meals at home consist of sitting on the couch or in front of the television? Are you always on edge, or do you feel as if you are under constant, uncontrollable stress? Whether your health behaviors are good or bad, the key to remember is that everything you do affects your overall health. Below is a list of the best and worst habits for healthy living.

Best habits:

- Eating a variety of nutritious foods
- Walking or regular physical activity
- Regular check-ups with your doctor
- Taking time to relax

We have all heard the saying “you are what you eat,” and for most of us that may be true. Eating a balanced and nutrient-rich diet will do wonders for you mentally, as well as physically. Also, watching the portions sizes that you consume will help you stay healthy. Focus on eating more fresh produce like vegetables and fruits, switch from white bread to whole wheat, and exchange steaks for fish.

Make time for regular physical activity. If you do not have time once you leave work and go home, use your work breaks and walk around your building. Also, use the stairs whenever possible instead of taking the escalator or elevator. Select a parking space that is farther away from the office and walk briskly to your work station. If you are not accustomed to regular exercise, remember to start slowly and gradually work up to longer and more strenuous activities. Turn off the television and stay away from the couch, and just remind yourself that any physical activity is better than none at all.

Every year, schedule an appointment with your physician and take the basic tests – cholesterol, blood pressure and diabetes screening. Also, schedule preventive screenings based on your gender, age and family history. Annual visits to your physician will not only provide you with valuable health information, but will also help you build a relationship with your health care provider.

Making time for ourselves is usually last on our list of things to do. Taking the time to actually relax and do something we enjoy can help us cope with feelings of depression and stress. Pets make great walking partners because they are always available when you are. Try out a beginners class at a local yoga studio to help you relax and clear your mind. Revisit an old hobby that you haven’t made time for but have always enjoyed.

#### Worst habits:

- Smoking
- Eating fast food and red meat on a regular basis
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Avoiding the doctor

Using tobacco products is known to be an unhealthy addiction. Some possible health hazards range from an increased risk of a heart attack, stroke, lung cancer or mouth cancer, among other health conditions. The risks associated with tobacco are well known but the addiction is a tough fight for many regular users.

Fast foods are full of salt, fat, cholesterol and calories. Those additional calories also do not carry beneficial nutrients to maintain your health. Stay away from fried foods, doughnuts, cookies, chips or any snack that tacks on additional calories without any valuable nutrients.

Evaluate your day and determine how much of your time is spent sitting. The drive to work, sitting at your desk, and driving home all add up to more sitting than moving.

Annual visits to your doctor give you some indications of a fluctuation in your health. Avoiding regular check-ups can lead to a downward slide in your health. Many illnesses develop over a long period of time. Regular check-ups can help raise your awareness if you are at risk for developing a serious illness. Even if you feel great, regular visits will allow your physician to have a baseline comparison as well as some background information to help provide more assistance if needed.

Instead of a New Year’s Resolution this year, try and exchange one of your worst habits with one of the “best habits” listed above. Even the small changes that you make can make a difference in your health.

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### **Christmas Memo for Staff**

The Finance and Administration Cabinet wants to remind all employees:

State funds shall not be used to purchase or mail Christmas cards or decorations for offices.

State funds may be used to purchase decorations for Parks and institutional lobbies, dining rooms and patient recreational areas.

### **CHFS Focus Health Tip**

Want to avoid weight gain this holiday season? Consider some of these tips from the American Heart Association for healthy holiday eating.

Cut down on saturated fat in creamy dressings by mixing in some nonfat or low-fat plain yogurt.

Use non-stick cookware so you can cook with a minimum of oil or vegetable oil spray.

For a wonderful flavor enhancer, sprinkle food with vinegar or citrus juice. Add it at the last minute so the flavor is at its strongest.

Substitute chopped vegetables for some of the bread in your stuffing recipe.

Find more tips from the AHA online at <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3016281>.

### **Employee Enrichment**

*By Anya Armes Weber*

Psychologists say that the most important need for individuals is to be listened to. Being a good listener to your co-workers may help your team become more cohesive.

Make a conscious effort to actively listen when teammates speak to you. Here are a few tips:

- Maintain eye contact.
- Offer feedback throughout the conversation to demonstrate your interest.
- Follow up about the conversation at a later date.