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Social Services Staff Invited to Share Stories

By Anya Armes Weber

Attention social services staff: Here's your chance to tell Focus readers what it's like working in social services. What do you find most rewarding? What has been the biggest challenge you overcame to help your clients?

Comments will be featured in the Focus during March, Social Work Month.

Staff should send their responses to anya.weber@ky.gov by Thursday, March 1. Workers' e-mails should include their full names, titles and county offices. Responses may be edited for clarity and length.

Check the Focus in March to read these stories. All responses are subject to editing.

Conference on Special Needs Children Announced

Call for papers issued

By Anya Armes Weber

The Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs is hosting its inaugural conference on special needs children this summer.

The conference is scheduled for Sept. 13 and 14 at Louisville's Galt House Hotel. Its theme is "Improving Outcomes through Understanding and Collaboration."

Professionals, parents and other caregivers are encouraged to attend. Approval is pending for education hours for several professions.

For more information about the conference, contact sarahl.new@ky.gov

Conference organizers have issued a call for papers to be presented at the conference. Oral presentations must be no longer than one hour and 30 minutes and may be in DVD, PowerPoint or video format. Suggested topics include health, education, behavior and grandparent issues.

For more information about submitting a paper, log on to <http://chfs.ky.gov/ccshcn/CCSHCNnews.htm>, or e-mail Linda.vanorio@ky.gov.

New Horizons Frankfort Schedule Updated

New Horizons Computer Learning Center has an updated Frankfort schedule. To see the list of classes, schedules and pricing for all the locations, visit [New Horizon's Web site](#).

To register for a class, go to the CHFS Office of Human Resource Management Intranet site and follow the Computer Training policy and procedure. If you have any questions, please contact your [Department Training Liaison](#). (<http://chfsnet.ky.gov/afa/ohrm/dpod/trainlia.htm>)

**All approved training is dependent on the availability of department funds.*

Living Well: Are You Heart Smart?

By Kris Hayslett

Once considered more of a threat to men, heart disease now is being recognized as a serious threat for women. But heart health is something that everyone should be thinking about. Known risk factors for coronary heart disease include:

- Age: men older than 45; women older than 55
- Family history: father had heart attack before 55 years of age; mother had heart attack before 65 years of age
- Current cigarette smoking
- Hypertension: blood pressure reading greater than 140/90 taken on at least two different occasions
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Sedentary lifestyle

Some of these risk factors are inescapable, but many can be altered by living a healthier lifestyle. Adopting behaviors such as physical activity, weight management and a nutrient-rich diet will help reduce your risk.

The statement “you are what you eat” is strong, but in most cases true. If you want to feel better and maintain your weight or even lose weight, watch your food selection and portion sizes. When it comes to food, consider this:

- Focus on quality, not quantity.
- Balance the calories that you consume with the calories that you burn through physical activity.
- Select from a variety of foods from all of the food groups and place an emphasis on consuming at least five fruits and vegetables a day.
- Visit the American Heart Association Web site for a grocery checklist and a complete listing of heart healthy products available in your grocery store.

Any type of physical activity will benefit your heart as well as maintain your cholesterol level and weight. Physical activity is not limited to walking, jogging, swimming or cycling. Try one of these activities for something different:

- Housework/home improvements
- Yard work/gardening
- Washing the car

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- Basketball
- Archery
- Softball/baseball
- Billiards
- Bowling
- Canoeing
- Tennis
- Kids' games
- Dancing
- Darts
- Skiing
- Frisbee
- Golf
- Hiking
- Lifting weights
- Moving furniture
- Rock climbing
- Roller skating
- Scuba diving
- Shuffle board
- Sledding

Selecting different activities will help you find ways to be active with others as well as fight off boredom and repetition. A simple and easy way to start a new routine is by adding a short walk into your day or taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Adding these things can reduce blood cholesterol, lower blood pressure, increase cardiovascular endurance, increase bone density and help you manage your weight.

Behavior change does not occur overnight, so select a realistic plan of action and then try to stay consistent with your goals. If for some reason you have a disruption in your routine, don't quit. Pick up where you left off when the time is right and start your routine again.

Employee Recognition Tip

By Melinda Abell, Employee Recognition Committee

February is National Snack Food Month – a great way to recognize your fellow co-workers for their many contributions to the success of your team. Pick a day this month and make or bring a healthy snack to share with your team. Don't forget to personalize it by writing a note to each co-worker letting him or her know a quality that person possesses that is beneficial to your team.

Some quick and easy healthy snack ideas:

- Cheese and crackers
- Vegetables and dip

- Graham crackers and peanut butter
- Granola bars
- Trail mix
- Celery with peanut butter or cream cheese
- Tortilla chips and salsa
- Fruit and cheese kabobs
- Fruit and cheese tray

Consider these personal note ideas:

- Thank you for consistently completing your work in a timely fashion with very high quality and for making the effort to always strive for excellence.
- Thank you for always putting forward the most consistent effort in working together as a team.
- Thank you for coming up with the best suggestions for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our team.
- Thank you for providing helpful support to others on our team.
- Thank you for always treating others kindly and fairly and for knowing that by helping others succeed our entire team benefits.
- Thank you for providing a supportive environment that inspires others to develop and accept challenges, allowing them to obtain their true potential.
- Thank you for consistently contributing above and beyond what is normally expected.
- Thank you for bringing joy to the work place with your smile and friendly demeanor.
- Your organization skills are such a benefit to our team's efficiency. Thank you.
- Thank you for being the official "Go-to Gal" or "Go-to Guy" to come up with the correct answer quickly in a pinch.

Just as each snowflake is unique, each individual on your team brings a special skill or talent that contributes to the success of your team. Remember, you don't have to wait for a special month of the year to recognize your co-workers for a job well done. You may use these suggestions any month of the year. So why not get started today?

CHFS Focus Health Tip: Tips on Starting a Fitness Plan

By Mike Schardein, Wellness Committee Chairman

As we move toward spring and warmer days, you may consider starting that workout routine that you have been putting off for a long time now. Consider these ideas when getting started.

Take it slow. Working your way slowly into a fitness routine allows you to prevent injury. Try not to overexert yourself in the beginning. You may be less likely to stick with it if you do so.

Set goals. It's important to set goals so you'll have something to work toward. Do you want or need to lose 20 or 30 pounds? Do you need to lower your cholesterol or blood pressure? Set an overall goal first. Then set smaller targets within that goal so you'll achieve small victories on your way to the top. Reward yourself for these achievements.

Find a group. It's important to find others to work out with to ward off boredom. Also, partners can help you stay motivated and give you a reason to keep going when you feel like skipping a day or week.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Staff members keen on providing exemplary customer service usually take the time to be proactive – to anticipate needs before they arise. You can stay one step ahead of your customers with these tips from SmartPros.com, a business Web site primarily for accountants and engineers.

- Pencil in 30 minutes a week for some creative thinking. Try to get away from your office. This will take your mind away from your daily work and make it harder to be pulled into those tasks, with a phone call or visitor, for example.
- Keep your eye on the future. Look at the calendar to determine what your customers will need two or four months down the road. This may save your client some grief and keep you from scrambling to fulfill a need when it suddenly arises.
- Don't forget co-workers and supervisors. Innovations can help your own office too, so make time to brainstorm new ways to simplify common tasks or a way to eliminate paperwork.
- Keep thinking, and keep track of your thoughts. Don't discount any idea. Write it down and revisit it later, or share it with a co-worker. It could be the seed of something that will change your work for the better.