

Love Your Pets?

We here on the Focus staff have at least one thing in common – we all love our pets! And we know you do too. That’s why we’ve decided to start a weekly pet spotlight. See your pet on our front page! E-mail us a jpeg photo of your precious pooch or feline friend. Make sure you include your name, department and location of workplace. Include your pet’s name, age and anything else you’d like to include. Send submissions to Focus Editor Emily Moses at emily.moses@ky.gov.

Employee Spotlight: Noel Harilson

My name is Noel Harilson. My job title is administrative coordinator/building manager/health and safety officer for the Kentucky Disability Determination Services (DDS). I have been with the state for about 4 and ½ years.

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

Working at the Department for Disability Determination Services has been a real pleasure. My job is not really program-related, so most of my duties affect the employees of the department firsthand. So, my responsibilities to the worksite and the employees who are here every day affect the citizens of our state who are in need of our services.

The best part of my job is coming in contact with so many nice people who work in our building. Going to work can be pretty miserable if you can’t enjoy the people you work with. I have to say that the staff of DDS is really wonderful. It is also nice to know that my responsibilities to our building and the health and safety of the employees affect the citizens of the Commonwealth.

Share your interest in health promotions and explain your interests in this field.

"Health promotion is the science and art of helping people change their lifestyle to move toward a state of optimal health. Optimal health is defined as a balance of physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual health. Lifestyle change can be facilitated through a combination of efforts to enhance awareness, change behavior and create environments that support good health practices. Of the three, supportive environments will probably have the greatest impact in producing lasting change." (American Journal of Health Promotion, 1989,3,3,5)

My interest in health promotion came out of my interest in sports and physical activity. Growing up - and still to this day - I have always been physically active. It wasn’t until about four years ago that I was introduced to the term health promotion. As I entered graduate school at the University of Kentucky, I was able to learn more about health promotion and found that the idea of optimal health really was a great concept. My interest in health promotions lines up perfectly with those used in the AJHP definition - physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual. These five components – and sub-components – are imperative for all of us to achieve optimal health:

Physical – fitness, nutrition, medical self-care, control of substance abuse

Emotional - care for emotional crisis, stress management

Social – communities, families, friends

Spiritual – love, hope, charity

Intellectual – educational, achievement, career development

The most positive thing about these five areas is that they all come together to help us achieve the goal of optimal health, whether at home or at work.

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What impact do you hope to have on CHFS employees as the new Wellness Committee Chairman?

The impact I hope to have as the Wellness Committee Chair is one of advancement. I want to carry on what has been achieved up to this point with the committee, but not just rest there. I believe that with the help of the committee we can really make a positive change in the lives of the CHFS staff. We can forge ahead and be a leader for positive lifestyle change and greater health awareness for all state employees.

What suggestions do you have for readers on how they can help raise awareness about worksite wellness?

As the chair of the CHFS Wellness Committee, I ask that all of you support the programs and events that we bring to you. If anyone would like to learn more about health promotion, I suggest visiting the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Web site as well as the CDC, American Journal of Health Promotion and the World Health Organization sites. A little closer to home, it is well-documented that the citizens of Kentucky are extremely unhealthy. We have such a huge population of these citizens at our disposal as state employees. A number of surrounding states that has full fledged employee wellness programs. With enough support, I believe this is possible for the employees of the Commonwealth.

Nominate your co-workers or yourself for the employee spotlight. Send an e-mail to emily.moses@ky.gov to receive a questionnaire or make a nomination.

National Wear Red Day

On Friday, Feb. 1, the American Red Cross is asking women, companies, organizations, and cities across America to honor a national dress code and wear your favorite red clothes or

accessory. National Wear Red Day is in support of the American Heart Association's campaign to raise awareness of the devastating effects heart disease has on America's women.

Currently, heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women (and men). By wearing red, the American Heart Association hopes to raise awareness and donations to support the ongoing research and education specifically relating to women and heart disease. A healthy lifestyle plays an important role in decreasing the risk of a heart attack. Please visit the site <http://www.goredforwomen.org/> to find out what you can do to protect yourself against heart disease and how you can help the women in your life live heart-healthy.

Weight Watchers Interest Meeting Tuesday

An open, interest meeting for Weight Watchers at Work will be at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 5, at the First City Complex in Conference Room C. Sign-ups will be held at the end of the meeting.

Anyone interested is welcome to come to the meeting with no obligation to join.

March of Dimes Fundraisers Start Soon

The name has changed, but the goal remains the same. The March of Dimes has changed the name of its signature event from WalkAmerica to March for Babies. You can help raise money for the organization between now and April by creating a team for the event.

The 2008 Frankfort March of Dimes "March for Babies" for state employees will be April 18 on the Capitol Grounds at 11:30 a.m., with registration starting at 11. The kick-off event will be Feb. 28 at the Governor's Mansion. First Lady Jane Beshear is the honorary chairwoman of the event.

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The March of Dimes' mission is to improve the health of all babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality.

For more information about creating a team and raising funds for the March of Dimes, contact Wellness Coordinator Kris Hayslett at kris.hayslett@ky.gov.

CHFS Health Tip of the Week

By Emily B. Moses

I called it the "smooth transition." In winter, I would call my friend who lived next door and tell her I was coming over. She would watch for me and, as I approached her door, she'd pull it open quickly so I could rush inside, thus avoiding unnecessary time in winter's chill. There are few things I fear more than getting stuck outside in the cold. As a matter of fact, just last week I made a survival plan in case I get stranded in my backyard during a snow storm. If you're like me – and I'm sure there are plenty of you – combating the effects of cold weather is currently at the top of your list. So here are some tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help you in your quest.

What should I do if I get stranded in my vehicle in cold weather?

Tie a brightly colored cloth to the antenna as a signal to rescuers.
Move anything you need from the trunk into the passenger area.
Wrap your entire body, including your head, in extra clothing, blankets or newspapers.
Stay awake. You will be less vulnerable to cold-related health problems.
Run the motor (and heater) for about 10 minutes per hour, opening one window slightly to let in air. Make sure that snow is not blocking the exhaust pipe — this will reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

As you sit, keep moving your arms and legs to improve your circulation and stay warmer.
Do not eat unmelted snow because it will lower your body temperature.

What is the best clothing for cold weather?

Adults and children should wear:

- a hat
- a scarf or knit mask to cover face and mouth
- sleeves that are snug at the wrist
- mittens (they are warmer than gloves)
- water-resistant coat and shoes
- several layers of loose-fitting clothing

Be sure the outer layer of your clothing is tightly woven, preferably wind resistant, to reduce body-heat loss caused by wind. Wool, silk or polypropylene inner layers of clothing will hold more body heat than cotton. Stay dry — wet clothing chills the body rapidly. Excess perspiration will increase heat loss, so remove extra layers of clothing whenever you feel too warm. Also, avoid getting gasoline or alcohol on your skin while de-icing and fueling your car or using a snow blower. These materials in contact with the skin greatly increase heat loss from the body.

Do not ignore shivering. It's an important first sign that the body is losing heat. Persistent shivering is a signal to return indoors.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Ronald M. Shapiro and Mark A. Jankowski, authors of "Bullies, Tyrants, and Impossible People," suggest using a special approach when you're communicating with someone in a tense situation.

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The authors call this type of people “situationally difficult” – they are generally reasonable but become tough to deal with because of stress or events with a negative impact. Because of problems with service, some of our clients may become situationally difficult.

Shapiro and Jankowski write that when the emotions of these people quickly escalate, the “E.A.R.” approach helps to put their behavior back in neutral.

Here are the steps the authors recommend to respond to situationally difficult people:

Empathize - Let them know you recognize that they are under emotional stress or pressure.

Ask - With non-threatening questions, let them vent their emotions.

Reassure – Tell them that you believe, with time or outside assistance, the situation will defuse or improve.

By lending an “E.A.R.,” you may help someone recover from a tough situation.