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This week, Focus is happy to bring you our conversation with Mike Vaughn, food prep center coordinator in the CHFS Cafeteria. Mike has been here for more than two years.

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

A: I am in the unique position to provide quality food and service to some of the best people working in state government every day of the week. I feel very fortunate to be a small part of Kentucky State Parks and the standard we are implementing all around Kentucky.

Since my employment here at the CHFS complex, I have had many unique opportunities to not only introduce new dishes, but also to highlight health awareness. I have learned a great deal in that department thanks to the excellent health and awareness group here. It has been a pleasure working with them. I guess you could say my favorite part about my job is really the same that it always has been since I have been in the food industry business. That is, creating and serving people good food that hopefully they will remember as a positive experience or highlight of their day. It really is a satisfying feeling to know that you have made a positive impact on someone's day.



Q: How do you and your staff go about planning menus for the week ahead?

A: It really is a team effort. I get help with the menu from all members of my staff, particularly head cook Doug Simpson. What we really try to do is get not only the staff members from the kitchen involved, but also our patrons. Throughout the week I love to hear suggestions from the customers who come here to eat every day; this is not only helpful to us, but also gives the customer some ownership of the cafe.

Q: Tell us about the daily processes you and your staff go through to prepare meals.

A: The day here begins at 5:30 a.m. Breakfast is the first part of our day here. We try to provide a good selection for our patrons so they can start the day right. We are open for breakfast from 7 to 10 a.m. In the meantime, preparations for lunch are underway. We have some items that are the

same every day, one being fresh, homemade mashed potatoes. We really have gotten away from pre-made products. We even make our own tartar and cocktail sauces. Lunch is open from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and the sandwich line stays open until 2. On a good day everyone has left by 3:30. We also do a lot outside of this operation, whether it is catered meals or big events like an open house at the mansion or the Governor's Derby breakfast. Whatever a day may bring I am very fortunate to be working with a hard-working and very dedicated cafe staff.

Q: Tell us about your background in the food industry.

A: I have been working in food for 14 years now. My background is all experience, and varies from fast food to fine dining and in between. My goal in any kitchen has always been the same – to learn every aspect of the operation and hopefully contribute something positive. Most of my career in the food industry has been in Bowling Green. I also worked here at Serafini in downtown Frankfort. Working for Kentucky State Parks has definitely been a highlight for me. It is a great blessing to work with and for some really great people.

Q: What kinds of meals do you make for yourself or your family at home?

A: I do a lot of vegetarian cooking at home. Although I'm not a vegetarian, my wife, Amber, is. That has forced me to be creative and explore a whole other aspect of cooking. There really are some great vegetarian dishes out there. And like any style of cooking, it is only limited by your own imagination. One of our favorite dishes at home has become grilled pizza. If you haven't had pizza on a grill you're really missing out on something special. We also cook large meals when the family is over; I am not limited to veggies.

Q: What's your favorite food?

A: Wow, that is a tough question. There are few foods that I don't like. I guess if I had to pick one genre of cooking it would be southern-style home-cooking - the food that I - and many people from this part of the country - were raised on. To me, you can't beat a plate consisting of BBQ smoked spare ribs, mashed potatoes, green beans, biscuits and gravy, of course. To me that is a meal. Thai cuisine would be a very close second.

Q: How did you become interested in being a chef?

A: Really cooking and working in a kitchen is the only thing I've ever wanted to do as far as an occupation goes. My grandmother would be the most influential person for me. I always tried to help her out in the kitchen when my brother and I were younger. And she was always very supportive of that. It is a great feeling to go to work knowing that your heart is in what you do. I can't imagine doing anything else, and wouldn't want to.

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Q: What are your hobbies/interests outside of work?

A: As of late, home repair has become the No. 1 "hobby" around my house. When I really get some spare time I love to go metal detecting, and most importantly fishing. Here in the last year I have also started making cheese at home. I really enjoy the whole process. It is very involved and will certainly teach you patience.

Q: If you could invite anyone in the world to dinner, who would it be and why?

A: If I could pick a small select crowd of people, I would invite chef Alton Brown, Judge Judy and Don Knotts. If I only had one to pick it would have to be Judge Judy, hands down.

CHFS Sees Red

The Division of Women's Physical and Mental Health (DWPMH) sponsored CHFS Go Red Day Feb 14 in observance of Heart Health Month. Cabinet employees who stopped

by the information table received special Valentines with heart health tips and had the chance to register to



win a dozen roses donated by Undersecretary for Human Services Mike Fields. Patricia Biggs in the Department for Medicaid Services was the lucky winner of the flowers. The DWPMH thanks everyone who helped organize CHFS Go Red Day and all those who showed their support and took the event to heart.

Register Now for Voluntary Health Analysis

As part of Governor Fletcher's "Get Healthy Kentucky" campaign, the Personnel Cabinet and Humana are offering a Personal Health Analysis (formerly known as the Health Risk Assessment). Employees must register on Humana's Web site at www.humana.com to be able to complete the Personal Health Analysis. This 10-minute survey will provide Humana and the participant with an analysis of his/her health which will allow Humana to reach out to employees who may benefit from disease management programs, etc.

This survey is voluntary and confidential. Individual results will not be shared. The survey will provide

employees the opportunity to assess their well-being and provide a "starting point" for Governor Fletcher's "Get Healthy Kentucky" programs.

If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact the Department for Employee Insurance.

Helpful Hints for Improving Enthusiasm in the Workplace

Would you like to recognize fellow employees for exceptional performance? Does lack of funding prevent you from recognizing employees? The Employee Recognition Committee has the answer.

The mission of the committee is "to provide an environment where each CHFS employee understands the importance of their job, is valued and recognized for his or her contributions, resulting in great pride and enthusiasm in the workplace." We want all employees to be recognized for their contributions. So we have come up with some low to no cost suggestions. Many suggestions can be used by any employee wishing to show appreciation.

The helpful hints contain many suggestions, from a simple thank you note to pot-luck luncheons. Using these tips will not only improve rapport between supervisors and employees, but also among co-workers. Research shows recognized work is repeated. Recognizing work is a win-win solution! Go to the following link <http://chfsnet.ky.gov/afa/ohrm/06emprecog.htm> to start recognizing employees today.

Wellness Ambassador Profile

Shawn M. Crouch

Age: 32

Deputy Secretary

Single

Health objective: Weight loss

The past two years have added considerably to Shawn Crouch's resume – and, according to him, his waistline.

"The extra weight I've gained over the past two years has negatively affected my health," he said. "My blood pressure is elevated and the extra weight is fatiguing."



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Crouch hopes to increase the time he spends exercising and alter his diet to replace certain foods with more healthy choices. His goal is to lose at least 25 pounds.

This isn't Crouch's first attempt to lose weight and improve his general health. He lost about 40 pounds three years ago by following a healthy diet regimen.

Since then, he's crossed the 30-year age threshold when the body's natural metabolic rate begins to slow. Some studies have shown metabolic decline averages about 2 percent per decade after age 30. Without adjusting calorie intake (fewer) and exercise (more), the aging process alone could add 10 pounds of weight gain a year after age 30.

Crouch points to stress as one of the biggest contributors to his unwanted weight gain. He will try to find ways other than eating to relieve stress while working toward his health goals.

The wellness ambassador program appealed to Crouch because it provides peer monitoring and health information resources. He said being challenged also is a powerful motivator for him.

Parks sponsor running series

This is no ordinary walk in the park. It's a run, or a series of runs, through a number of beautiful parks, to be more exact.

For the second year, the Kentucky State Parks will sponsor a series of 5K races through its parks. The series begins March 11 with the "Two Rivers 5K" at General Butler State Resort Park in Carrollton, and concludes July 15 with the "Magnolia 5K" at Rough River State Resort Park in Falls of Rough.

Between those races is the "Spring Classic 5K" on April 1 at Dale Hollow Lake State Resort Park in Burkesville; the "Barren River 5K" classic on May 20 at Barren River State Resort Park in Lucas; and the "Possum Ridge 5K" on June 17 at Taylorsville State Park, just outside Louisville.

Runners can enter each race individually, but are being offered a significant discount to enter all five events. The cost is \$15 per race for pre-registration or \$18 on the day of the race, compared to only \$65 for the whole series. Additionally, a grand prize will be awarded to the male and female runners who enter all five events and earn the most points. Everyone who finishes all five races will receive a certificate of recognition and be registered for a special drawing.

For details, or to register, please visit the park's Web site at www.parks.ky.gov or e-mail chris.head@ky.gov or call (502) 564-4940, ext.247.

For more information on Kentucky parks, visit <http://www.parks.ky.gov>

Deferred comp seminar set

It is never too soon to start planning for your retirement. Kentucky Deferred Compensation is an optional, state-sponsored benefit available to all state employees. Kentucky Deferred Compensation is the easy, tax-sheltered way to supplement your retirement needs. At Kentucky Deferred Compensation, we want to help new employees take full advantage of this important tool to help achieve financial independence at retirement. Join us for a brief enrollment presentation on Kentucky Deferred Compensation, and take the actions necessary to:

- Learn about the different risks and rewards associated with investing
- Discover the best way to invest your money to help meet your retirement goals
- Enroll in our 401(k) and/or 457 plan immediately

The seminar is from 12:10 to 12:50 p.m. on Feb. 23, at 105 Sea Hero Road, Suite 1, Frankfort. Lunch will be provided. Seating is limited, and pre-registration is required. To register, call Carol Cummins or Larincia Bowers at (502) 573-7925 or (800) 542-2667. Call for an information kit if you are unable to attend.

CHFS Health Tip: Consider organ donation

By Anne Parr, R.N.

While much effort is put into recognizing February as Heart Month, many people may have overlooked the fact that Feb. 14 was National Organ Donor Day.

People in need of organs and tissue transplants have only hope and patience to sustain them during their wait.

You may be surprised at these statistics:

- More than 90,000 people are waiting for the gift of life.
- Every 12 minutes another name is added to the national transplant waiting list.
- More than 14,000 transplants were performed from Jan. 1 to June 30, 2005.

Each day, about 74 people receive an organ transplant. However, 18 people die each day waiting for transplants that can't take place because of the shortage of donated organs.

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Because of advances in modern medicine, an individual can donate one of his or her kidneys, a lobe of a liver, a lobe of a lung, and some bone marrow while still alive. Decide to be a donor and donate life. It's an opportunity for you to share your life with others.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better focus on team building, customer service and personal development.



It's hard performing at your best when you have an aching neck. Many factors -- including stress, anxiety and poor posture -- can cause a pain in the neck.

This simple "relax and roll" exercise, suggested by the University of California's Human Resources and Benefits office, can be done at your desk and relieves tension in your neck and surrounding muscles.

- Relax your shoulders and let your head roll forward, chin to chest.
- Slowly rotate your head in a circle without straining your neck. Repeat five times.
- Relax. Then rotate in the opposite direction and repeat five times.
- Try not to raise your shoulders as you do this exercise.