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Co-workers Rescue IT Colleague at CHFS

By Emily B. Moses

Gerald Hedrick started his lunch break like any other day on June 22: Gathering to eat with a number of his Office of Information Technology co-workers at the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.



From left, Gerald Hedrick, Alek Murray and Ben Popp.

But something soon went wrong.

“I took a bite of rice and it didn’t go down,” said Hedrick. “It was stuck in my throat so I took a drink to wash it down. Well, it didn’t go down.”

“I don’t know how long I sat there. For some reason it didn’t register that I wasn’t getting air. Then, when it added up and I realized it, I stood up grabbing at my neck.”

Alek Murray, one of two men sitting on either side of Hedrick, was the first to notice.

“He (Gerald) began trying to cough and he stood up. I asked him if he needed help and could immediately tell he did,” said Murray.

Murray, without hesitation upon realizing his co-worker was choking, took action.

“I’m not a very large person, so naturally, my arms are short,” he said. “I could reach around Gerald, but not enough to supply sufficient pressure to clear the airway. I knew immediately when I tried that I wasn’t able to perform it (the Heimlich maneuver) correctly. Ben Popp was standing across from me, so I spun Gerald around and told Ben to try.”

It was at this point that Hedrick started to black out.

“I was just going to the floor,” he said. “I don’t remember Ben doing the Heimlich.”

“I grabbed him and never really thought about it,” said Popp. “I pulled on him three or four times before he got air and once he got air, he snapped back to himself, but was obviously shook up.”

Foreign airway obstructions are in the top 10 list of unintentional causes of death, according to the National Safety Council.

While choking deaths predominantly occur in child and senior populations, it can happen to anyone.

That’s why the trio wanted to share this story with CHFS Focus readers.

Had Popp and Murray not known the Heimlich maneuver, Hedrick’s accidental choking could have turned tragic.

Popp said he learned the Heimlich after he saw his father perform it on his grandfather while on vacation.

“I thought to myself, this is something that a person really needs to know something about,” he said. The maneuver has come in handy one other time at a baseball game in Cincinnati when the man sitting next to him began choking.

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Murray, who used to be a cave guide at a park, learned the Heimlich 10 years ago during a Red Cross first aid certification program. He recertifies every year.

Popp hopes everyone will take the time to learn the Heimlich maneuver in the event that it could save a life.

“You never know what little part you may play in helping someone that just might save their life or help them in distress until help arrives,” he said. “I hope to never have to play that part again ... but if a situation is there, I want to be able to do what I can. There may be a time that I need help and I hope there is someone there willing to give a hand.”

To learn more about the Heimlich maneuver, visit the Heimlich Institute at:

<http://www.heimlichinstitute.org/howtodo.html>

To find a Red Cross Safety and First Aid Class in your area visit

<http://www.redcross.org/services/hss/courses/> and enter your zip code for contact information for your local Red Cross chapter.

Lincoln Trail Wraps up DCBS Tool Kit Pilot

By Anya Armes Weber

Lincoln Trail Service Region staff discussed evaluation of an electronic “tool kit” at a meeting last week.

Staff demonstrated the equipment - a cellular phone with maximum coverage area, a 6-megapixel digital camera with docking station and a small laptop - and talked about its benefits to protective services staff. They were joined in Elizabethtown by Children and Family Services Undersecretary Eugene Foster, Ed.D.; and Rep. Jimmie Lee, D-Elizabethtown.

“Caseworkers have long asked for this equipment to make their jobs safer and more efficient,” Foster said. “Many staff members have been using personal cell phones with spotty coverage to call for backup and decades-old instant cameras to document abuse and families’ living conditions. The lives of our vulnerable children and adults depend on these caseworkers. It’s time we invest in the tools they need to do their jobs.”

The pilot project began last November, when Lincoln Trail’s 30 child and adult protective services staff received the equipment to use when in the field and on home visits.

Protective services staff across the state will begin to receive equipment this fall.

Foster said Lee’s support was instrumental in securing legislative funding for the equipment.

“Rep. Lee continues to champion human services and the changes we can affect,” he said. “Families in crisis will particularly benefit from smoother service as a result of his legislative work.”

Lee helped obtain \$2.8 million for the Cabinet’s tool kits in the state’s biennium budget.

State Ten-ure Conference Successful

The state Ten-ure employees’ organization recently had its 55th annual state conference in Owensboro. Ten-ure is an organization comprised of current and former state employees with more than 10 years of state service.

During the conference, Department for Community Based Services Commissioner Tom Emberton Jr., and State President Gary Brooks presented the top state Ten-ure Region Award to the Purchase Service Region. Accepting the award on behalf of the region were Renee

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Buckingham, SRA, and Peggy Merideth, Area I representative.

Special recognition awards were presented to Peggy Merideth and Gary Brooks. Merideth received the Jill Day 110 Percent Award. Brooks received the Bruce Haynes Award.

Commissioner Emberton presented the Outstanding Presidential Awards to Pamela Waldrige, Sandra Rollins, Teresa Proffitt and Leo Dontchos.

The 2007 Conference will be held in Louisville. To view events at the 2006 Conference, please go to the Web site at www.ten-ure.org.

Volunteer Vibes

By Eileen Cackowski, Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism

This month I want to share more information about Kentucky's exciting AmeriCorps programs and one of the principles behind AmeriCorps.

AmeriCorps doesn't offer a free education – members work hard in volunteer or national service assignments. But, upon completion of one year of service, members may earn education tuition vouchers. And, many AmeriCorps members return for a second year of service. Some even use their volunteer service experience to qualify for other scholarships and education grants. Several young people are financing their college educations 100 percent based on their volunteer or national service activity.

Our AmeriCorps members range in age from 18 to older than 80.

Q: I know someone who would be a great AmeriCorps member. What programs do you have and where are they located.

Check out our Web site.

<http://chfs.ky.gov/dhss/kccvs/nationalservice/ameri-corps/kyacprograms0506.htm>

We have programs that provide student tutors, work with the elderly, counseling for the homeless, disaster preparedness training, home construction and other programs that serve the greater Louisville community. Most programs start Sept. 1 and membership commitments range from nine to 12 months, depending on the program.

Q: I have a friend with a physical disability. Can she be an AmeriCorps member? What should she do?

Of course your friend can be a member. She first should contact the director of any of our Kentucky AmeriCorps programs in which she is interested (use the Web link above for program contact information). In addition, she may wish to contact Lanny Taulbee, the disability coordinator for KCCVS, who can discuss reasonable accommodations and Social Security Disability Insurance policies if she is an SSDI recipient. As long as the person can participate in the chosen program with reasonable accommodations, she is more than welcome to join.

Q: What can I do with the educational voucher?

AmeriCorps education vouchers can be used to pay off college loans – and you may qualify for temporary suspension of your school loan payment during your AmeriCorps service. Vouchers also may be used at any title IV college, university or technical/trade school. One Kentucky AmeriCorps member applied her education voucher toward tuition at an American university in Chile where she is working to earn a Ph.D. A good number of our members use their vouchers to attend community and technical colleges to learn a trade.

CHFS Focus Health Tip of the Week

Reflect on Independence Day

Submitted by Anne Parr, R.N.

Let freedom ring on the 4th of July, America's Independence Day. The 4th is more than just a holiday, it is the day we gained our independence, the day we celebrate our values and especially the day America became America.

It is a day of picnics and patriotic parades, a night of concerts and fireworks and the flying of the American flag.

Remember to practice safety on the Fourth.

- Keep children a safe distance away when setting off fireworks.
- If you'll be in the sun all day, remember to wear protective clothing, sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat.
- Don't operate your car after consuming alcoholic beverages.
- Make sure foods kept outdoors at picnics do not spoil and are prepared correctly.

Have a happy and safe holiday!

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.



Does your work team need a tune-up? Patrick Lencioni, a management consultant and author of "The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable," lists these five common

problems teams face and must address if they want to become stronger.

Lack of trust. Teammates who are not open with one another about their mistakes and weaknesses will have a shaky foundation of trust. Try to become comfortable enough with team members to be honest about your feelings and skills. Not clashing will give you more energy to get your work done.

Fear of conflict. Avoiding conflict is no way to handle differences in opinion. A respectful debate helps teams resolve issues more quickly, Lencioni says.

Lack of commitment. Complete agreement isn't always possible when it comes to group decisions. When team members dissent, they at least need to feel as though their opinions are heard and valued. If they don't, it could mean the entire team suffers because of these weak links.

Lack of accountability. When team leaders neglect to hold staff responsible for their mistakes, it can undermine the team. Sometimes leaders with close personal relationships to staff are afraid to hurt a friendship. Lencioni says leaders have to ignore this inclination to keep team standards high.

Inattention to results. When team members pay more attention to their personal needs than the team's collective goals, the team suffers. Cabinet staff sometimes must be reminded of the results they are working toward to make Kentuckians' lives better.