

Go Red for Women on Feb. 2

Observance to raise awareness of heart health among women

Governor Ernie Fletcher and First Lady Glenna Fletcher encourage state employees to show support for women and the fight against heart disease by wearing red on Feb. 2, National Go Red for Women Day. The observance kicks off Kentucky Heart Health Month, dedicated to raising awareness of heart disease risks and promoting healthier lifestyles to reduce those risks.

One of Kentucky's grandest ladies, the Governor's Mansion in Frankfort, will make a fashion statement of her own to commemorate Go Red for Women Week. During the first week of February, the mansion will be illuminated in red to raise awareness of heart disease among women, joining other landmarks across the country including the Empire State Building, Graceland and Niagara Falls. The Floral Clock on the state capitol grounds also will feature a Go Red for Women motif during February.

The American Heart Association instituted Go Red for Women, first observed in 2004, as a national awareness campaign focusing on heart disease, the leading killer of women older than 25 in the United States. Governor Fletcher has proclaimed February Kentucky Heart Health Month to coincide with the presidential proclamation of American Heart Month.

"It's alarming that nearly 90 percent of women don't view heart disease as a health threat, although it's the No. 1 killer of women," said Governor Fletcher. "Go Red for Women Day and Kentucky Heart Health Month are intended to make all Kentuckians aware that heart disease is a serious health threat that can be prevented with lifestyle changes like proper diet and exercise."

One woman in the United States dies every minute from diseases of the heart and blood vessels, collectively called cardiovascular disease (CVD). CVD, including stroke, claims more lives nationwide than the next four leading causes of death combined.

Symptoms of heart disease can be different for women than for men. Women may have heart disease without knowing it, while men often experience arm and chest pain, shortness of breath and other symptoms of CVD. More than 60 percent of women who die suddenly of heart disease have no prior symptoms. Heart disease rates can triple for women after menopause, regardless of age.

The state government observance of Go Red for Women Day and Kentucky Heart Health Month are part of Governor Fletcher's Get Healthy Kentucky initiative to reduce the incidence and severity of chronic disease and promote overall health improvement among Kentuckians.

For more information about National Go Red for Women Day, visit the Web site at <http://www.goredforwomen.com/index.html>. For more information about heart disease, contact the American Heart Association at (888) MY-HEART or visit the Web site at www.americanheart.org. For information on ways to prevent heart disease, including diet and physical activity tips, visit the Get Healthy Kentucky Web site at www.gethealthy.ky.gov.

January 29, 2007

Focus Employee Spotlight: Mike Schardein, Wellness Committee Chairperson

Mike Schardein is an environmental biologist in the Division of Epidemiology and Health Planning. Some people in the Cabinet may know him better as “the West Nile guy.” He has worked in that position for more than two years. Schardein has also recently assumed the role as chairperson for the CHFS Wellness Committee.



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

This job allows me to channel important information about West Nile Virus and other vector borne diseases out into the public. This information in turn helps my fellow Kentuckians protect themselves and limit their chances of acquiring a serious illness. The best part of my job is being able to assist the citizens in the Commonwealth of Kentucky in that way.

What is something interesting about your job that most people wouldn’t know?

I would say the most interesting thing about my job is the ability to work in connection with multiple national organizations and learn more about vector borne diseases that have or may become a problem for people in the country and state.

What are your interests outside of work?

First, I am a very serious runner and am currently training for the Louisville Derby City Marathon in April. During the fall and spring, I am an assistant cross country and track coach for Georgetown College. I love horse racing and follow ever aspect of that sport. I try to find as much time as I can to watch college basketball and professional baseball (Go Reds.) Mostly, I like spending time with my wife and my friends.

Explain the goals of the Wellness Committee and how it can be used as a tool for employees.

The goal of the CHFS Wellness Committee is to promote worksite wellness within the Cabinet. We try to promote ideas and programs that individuals can relate to and use to make positive lifestyle changes. The committee is made up of Cabinet employees who have a passion for wellness and volunteer to spend some of their energy helping others reach their own health goals, whether it’s losing 10 pounds, cutting cholesterol, or just feeling better every day. As the chair of the committee, I just want to remind everyone in the Cabinet to remember to check the Intranet wellness site often. This year is going to be very exciting and busy for Cabinet-wide activities and you can find a lot of information posted there.

Wanted: Wellness Ambassadors

Become a CHFS Wellness Ambassador and share your new commitment, goals and progress with your CHFS colleagues. The Governor’s new program – Get Healthy Kentucky – is a great opportunity to

January 29, 2007

promote wellness throughout our Cabinet. Our goal is to help you feel better, increase productivity, decrease sick days and increase your overall quality of life.

The CHFS Wellness Committee is looking for CHFS employees to volunteer to be Wellness Ambassadors. Let us help you achieve your goals while your efforts are tracked and reported in the Focus. Our hope is to provide a running report of your experiences and personal tips as well as insight into reaching your goals.

Participation in this program is completely voluntary and your wishes will be respected regarding what is published in the Focus.

The Wellness Committee is committed to creating, promoting and sustaining a workplace environment that encourages healthy lifestyles and improves employees' health.

To apply, fill out the form and return it to Lisa Wallace in the Office of Public Affairs, 4C-A.

Wendy's Grant Nets Adoption Recruiter

By Anya Armes Weber

A grant from Wendy's restaurants' charity foundation is funding adoption recruitment efforts in the Jefferson County Department for Community Based Services office.

The \$63,000 grant from the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption's Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) program finances the salary of child-specific recruiter Tori Mack, as well as related administrative costs.

Mack, a former state caseworker, said she understands the pressures social workers are under and hopes she can bring some relief to them as she finds homes for kids.

"I know the many demands and expectations that workers have," she said. "I believe WWK is critical because the program is designed to help take some of the load off of workers. My time is to be spent for child-specific recruitment. I sincerely hope that I can help and we can work together to find adoptive homes for children."



Kentucky's WWK funds are targeted to Jefferson County because one-third of the children awaiting adoption are from that region, said Mike Grimes, manager of the CHFS Adoption Services Branch. Grimes said the grant helps recruit families for children who may not have relatives or others waiting in the wings to adopt them.

January 29, 2007

“Most of the children in our care will be reunited with parents or join a relative’s family, but for many of them, there is no obvious, permanent solution,” he said. “This WWK grant lets us specifically search for families who would be a natural fit for them. Tori’s efforts are a real advantage.”

Mack is responsible for locating families for about 20 to 25 of the state’s Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) children. WWK’s model requires caseworkers to spend sufficient time with the children so they are better able to assess their needs and find the home that’s right for them.

Mack said she conducts diligent searches on children’s backgrounds and tries to get in touch with extended family and people who have a history with the children who might not know they are available for adoption.

“This doesn’t necessarily mean one of these people will adopt, but it does give me more insight into the child,” she said.

A University of Kentucky graduate with a bachelor’s degree in social work, Mack started her job last October. She said she’s helped four families get connected with CHFS to begin foster and adoptive parent training in her three months as WWK recruiter.

“I hope to make a positive impact,” she said. “I hope that families truly see that there are children who really need a permanent and safe home. It’s not just talk. It’s a reality.”

More than 150 Attend Louisville Adoption Fair

By Anya Armes Weber

The winter weather didn’t dampen the interest of almost 80 families who attended the Louisville Adoption Fair on Sunday, Jan. 21, to learn about all aspects of adoption.

Sponsored by the Cabinet and WLKY Wednesday’s Child Inc., the fair was a “one-stop” educational event for families wanting to learn more about the process. They could speak to experts from 16 agencies that offer public and private adoption services, parental support and home studies.

The fair, at the University of Louisville’s Shelby Campus, also included workshops on international adoption and a “how-to” of adopting. Jefferson County adoption specialist Melissa Robinson led a special needs adoption workshop for prospective parents.

Karen McKiernan, the Cabinet’s child-specific recruiter for Jefferson County, said the annual fair is a good introduction to adoption.

“Families come here to understand their options and what kind of support they can get,” she said. “Agency representatives do a good job describing what they have to offer. And we hope the interested families go home with enough information to decide that adoption is right for them.”

January 29, 2007

“Parents may come knowing nearly nothing about adoption or so much that they can ask very detailed questions of the exhibitors here,” she said. “The goal of the fair is to give families the information they need to get one step closer to having a child in their home.”

McKiernan helped plan the event along with Recruitment, Training and Support Team Supervisor Angie Walz and recruitment specialist Betty Bastin, both of the Jefferson Region.

State employees who adopt may apply for assistance through the Adoption Benefit Program.

Learn more about the benefit online at <http://personnel.ky.gov/stemp/adoption/adoptben.htm#hfs>.

Visit the Special Needs Adoption Program homepage at www.chfs.ky.gov/snap.

AmeriCorps Members Give State Program High Marks

Kentucky AmeriCorps members consistently rank their satisfaction with the program higher than the national average, according to a recent survey.

The federal Corporation for National and Community Service released findings of a national survey of AmeriCorps members that gauged satisfaction with state programs and service experiences.

In Kentucky, the AmeriCorps program is administered by the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service (KCCVS) in the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. Nine local programs are in operation across the state, providing services to meet community needs.

“While many factors contributed to the outstanding results of Kentucky’s AmeriCorps member satisfaction survey results, leadership very likely played a significant role in members’ attitudes toward the program,” said CHFS Secretary Mark D. Birdwhistell. “From the state director’s office through the local AmeriCorps programs, great leadership keeps Kentucky consistently among the states making the greatest investments and reaping the greatest rewards from community service and volunteerism.”

The Corporation for National and Community Service, in collaboration with the Urban Institute and Princeton Survey Research Associates International, conducted the latest AmeriCorps State and National Member Satisfaction Survey using a random sample of current and former members.

Kentucky AmeriCorps members indicated a high level of overall satisfaction - 70 percent rated their overall satisfaction as excellent while 56 percent of AmeriCorps members nationally rated their overall satisfaction as excellent.

AmeriCorps members who complete their required terms of service receive an education award worth \$4,725 to use at any accredited institution of higher education or to help pay off student loans. More than half of the Kentucky AmeriCorps members participating in the survey said the education award was a significant incentive to join and remain with the program. Nationally, 34 percent of members indicated the education award was a significant incentive.

January 29, 2007

Satisfaction with program training was rated as excellent by 49 percent of Kentucky members, compared with 44 percent of members nationwide. On a measure of satisfaction with program supervision, 72 percent of Kentucky AmeriCorps members rated supervision excellent, while 56 percent of members nationally said their program supervision was excellent.

“Our member satisfaction survey results are an important tool in our program development, recruitment and continuous improvement efforts,” said Eileen Cackowski, KCCVS director. “The most successful service programs require participants who value their experience and receive personal benefits from it. We have worked hard to make sure Kentucky AmeriCorps not only helps communities address unmet, vital needs, but also provides a meaningful, enjoyable service experience for members we hope leads to a lifelong commitment to volunteerism.”

During the 2005-06 program year that ended Sept. 1:

More than 67,500 Kentuckians directly benefited from the service provided by AmeriCorps members through nine state programs.

AmeriCorps members, in turn, recruited nearly 9,000 community volunteers who provided more than 42,000 hours of service in their hometowns.

Kentucky AmeriCorps members helped build 56 new homes and rehabilitated more than 20 homes for disabled and elderly residents.

More than 4,050 children in grades 1-12 received academic tutoring.

Nearly 16,000 at-risk elderly and disabled received help with everyday living tasks so they could remain in their homes and continue to live independently.

Approximately 600 homeless individuals and families found permanent or transitional housing thanks to housing counseling and related assistance from AmeriCorps members.

About 3,000 Kentuckians benefited from information, activities, screenings and fellowship at 46 community events, including health and safety fairs, organized and staffed by AmeriCorps members.

Ninety-five public assistance recipients became gainfully employed after receiving help, including job counseling and skills mentoring, from AmeriCorps members.

More than 350 youth each completed 15 hours of leadership training and are on their way to making a difference of their own in communities all over Kentucky.

For more information on Kentucky AmeriCorps, visit the KCCVS Web site at www.volunteerKY.ky.gov.

Living Well

Cold Weather and Exercise: Stay Motivated and Maintain Your Fitness

Cold weather is an excuse for many of us to cancel our exercise sessions and fall into hibernation mode. However, you don't have to give up your fitness goals just because the temperature has dropped. Exercise can be done indoors if you just can't bear the cold or can still be done outside with the proper clothing. The benefits of physical activity are:

- Stronger heart
- Stronger bones
- Improved sleep
- Decreased body fat
- Increased productivity
- Decreased stress and depression
- Improved immune function
- Increase metabolism
- Improved quality of life

The list above is a condensed version and does not even touch the physiological benefits like the decrease in blood pressure, cholesterol and improved glucose tolerance and insulin sensitivity. If you look at the above list, several benefits are needed most during those cold winter days when many of us fall into the winter blues.

Regular physical activity can keep you from becoming a victim of the winter blues by keeping you in a better mood and getting you in shape for the warmer temperatures.

Here are some indoor alternatives when the temperature drops:

- Walk the mall
- Sign up for a trial membership at your local gym
- Research indoor pools and their activities
- Invest in home exercise equipment

The mall is a great place to walk because the thermostat is set to a comfortable temperature. The walking surface is smooth and even, so you don't have to worry about tripping, and there are lots of interesting things to look at. Just remember to participate in continuous exercise first, then you can go back and browse the stores.

The New Year is always a busy time for fitness facilities and they welcome anyone who is thinking about joining, so visit different gyms in your area and see if you can get a trial membership to use the facility to see if you like it.

Indoor pools and recreation facilities are a great place for you and your family to enjoy some fun activities. Water workouts are great for those who are just starting back to fitness because it is easier on

your joints. So take a few laps, sign up for water aerobics or just splash around with your kids for 30 minutes.

If you choose to invest in home exercise equipment, make sure you invest in something that is practical, easy to use and something that is enjoyable to you. Before you buy, you may want to get educated about the different types of equipment by shopping at stores that sell only fitness equipment. Once you have some sound information, you might save some money by looking through the classified ads or purchasing used equipment.

If you choose to brave the cold temperature and get some fresh air, be sure to read the following:

Get a doctor's OK. In some cases cold air can trigger chest pain or an asthma attack, so if you have any pre-existing conditions, check with your doctor before you head outside.

Wear layers. Start with a thin layer of a synthetic material that will draw sweat away from your body. Next, try a fleece layer to insulate you from the cold. Follow that with a breathable, waterproof shell. In addition, always wear a hat and gloves. Reflective clothing is also a good idea when natural light is poor. Winter sports such as skiing, hockey or sledding may also require a helmet.

Head into the wind. Start your work out heading into the wind and finish with the wind at your back so that when you will be sweaty, you will avoid getting chilled.

Drink plenty of fluids. Cold air has a drying effect. This can increase the risk of dehydration, which can lead to frostbite. So even though you don't feel thirsty, take in lots of liquids.

Know when to call it quits. Pay attention to the wind chill, which will rob you of the warm air that surrounds your body to keep you warm. If the temperature drops below zero or the wind chill is below minus 20, alter your plans and stay inside. Also, check the road surfaces and make sure that you have the proper treads on your shoes to prevent slips or falls.

Don't let the cold shut down your exercise routine. Instead, get creative and check out your options.

Relay for Life Meeting for Franklin County

A captains' meeting for the Franklin County Relay for Life will be from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 30, on the fourth floor of the main office at Farmers Bank, 125 West Main St. Organize a team with your co-workers, family or friends and make a difference in the fight against cancer.

While you're raising money, you will also be raising awareness of cancer prevention, early detection, treatment and patient support. Relay brings people together from all walks of life, with the common goal of eliminating cancer.

The Franklin County Relay for Life is scheduled for June 15 at Kentucky State University.

For more information, call Julie Riggs at (502) 227-1604 or visit the Web site at www.frankfortrelayforlife.com.

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.

Sometimes we express our anger or frustration about something by lashing out at our family or co-workers. Instead of lashing out at the person who bugs you, focus on what is bothering you by using the “I message” technique.

Dr. Donald A. Cadogan, a California clinical psychologist and teacher, says “I” messages usually contain four elements:

- a description of the problem or issue
- its effect on your life
- how you feel about this effect
- what you would prefer

Cadogan recommends using “I” messages to handle everyday interpersonal difficulties. It’s more controlled and more professional, and it may get to the root of the problem.