

Social Services Staff Invited to Share Thoughts on Profession

By Anya Armes Weber

Social services staff, March is your time in the spotlight.

CHFS social services staff is invited to share their views about their work with Focus readers in recognition of Social Work Month in March.

How has social services work changed your life? What inspired you to become involved in social services work? We're looking for stories of inspiration to share with all staff.

Submit your replies to [Anya Weber](#) by Tuesday, Feb. 24. Include your job title and work county. You may also send a digital photo for possible online publication. Submissions may be edited for length and content.

Thanks for your participation.

Secretary Miller Invites Staff on 'Journey to Wellness'

By Anya Armes Weber

Secretary Janie Miller is encouraging CHFS staff to become part of the Kentucky Employee Health Program's "Journey to Wellness."

"Making healthy choices will improve your personal and professional well-being," Miller wrote in an e-mail to all staff. "Please join me and your fellow CHFS staff on this Journey to Wellness."

Journey to Wellness is a new personnel benefit designed to empower employees to take charge of their health and to accomplish personal wellness goals.

A liaison from each program will be named to the CHFS Wellness Committee, and these staff will be your direct contact to assist you on your own journey.

The Journey to Wellness will include four phases: "Know Your Numbers" – an opportunity for health screenings; nutrition and a "Biggest Loser" competition; physical activity and challenges; and prevention. For now, CHFS will focus on physical activity.

Your first step is to register for Virgin HealthMiles, a unique program with great tools and incentives to help you make better lifestyle choices that will improve your overall health. Log on to www.virginhealthmiles.com/kehpeemployees to create your account, complete the health profile and order your pedometer. Once your pedometer arrives, activate it at work or at home to upload your steps regularly. You can also enter other physical activity manually from any computer.

Look for this [message](#) when you activate your pedometer. Click “yes” when you are asked to confirm installation. If you choose to not install, you will have to contact the OATS Help Desk for assistance once you decide to install.

Virgin HealthMiles does require a small investment – as little as \$1.50 a month for staff participating in the state health plan. Fees vary for dependents and other staff. The investment is small compared to the valuable rewards – potential for cash or other prizes, as well as better health and well-being.

Learn more about the Journey to Wellness on the Personnel Cabinet’s Web site, <http://personnel.ky.gov/dei/wellness/>. Learn more about CHFS’ wellness activities at <http://chfsnet.ky.gov/wellness/>, or e-mail [Kris Hayslett](#) or [Noel Harilson](#) for more information.

Wellness Program Offers Session on Heart Health

By Anya Armes Weber

Frankfort staff is invited to lunchtime learning session focused on having a healthier heart.

“Love Your Heart,” sponsored by the Kentucky Employee Health Plan’s Journey to Wellness, will be from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 23.

The program will be in the auditorium of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, 200 Mero St., Frankfort.

State Wellness Director and exercise physiologist Stephanie Marshall will lead the session and discuss important steps we can take to have a healthy heart, including practicing good nutrition, being physically active and “knowing your numbers” like weight, body fat level and blood pressure.

For more information, e-mail [Marshall](#).

Living Well: Five Rules to Fitness

If your resolution this year was to add fitness to your daily routine, here are five quick tips to follow:

Use the correct gear: Whether you’re running, cycling, swimming or playing tennis, be sure to wear the appropriate clothing and use the right equipment for each activity. For example, don’t pull out old gym shoes and hit the roads running. Instead, visit a sporting goods store or specialty store and have your foot analyzed for an individualized shoe fitting. Also, if you are thinking of riding a bike, always remember to wear a helmet that has been adjusted to fit your head measurements. Both of these tips will reduce your risk for injuries.

Don’t ignore instructions: Most of us need the assistance of maps or a GPS system when traveling on a long trip. Be sure to ask for assistance when you have questions at your local gym.

Many facilities have a fitness professional on staff who is available to answer questions and demonstrate how each piece of equipment is used. In addition, new members are often given an introductory personal training appointment as an orientation to the gym's equipment. By asking simple questions you can avoid injuries and possibly find a new piece of equipment that will assist you in your fitness goals.

Overdoing it: Doing too much, too soon or too hard leads to injury and often results in stopping exercise completely. This scenario is usually seen early in the new year when the resolution goal is to get back in shape, when temperatures start warming up or when a competition is coming up. Allow your body some rest days to recover and remember to schedule a fitness routine that progresses gradually.

Vary your routine: Overuse of the same muscles and the same activity can lead to overuse injuries such as knee pain, hip pain, shin splints, weight plateau or boredom. Incorporate different activities into your workout routine to stimulate new muscles and to keep you motivated. If you prefer a certain activity you can still do that activity a majority of the week, but try to include a few other activities at least two or three days out of the week. Also, add some type of weight training to your program to increase muscle mass and muscle strength.

Overexposing yourself: If you exercise outdoors, prepare yourself for the elements. In the winter, dress in layers and wear a hat and gloves. If you exercise in the early evening or after dark, wear lighter clothing or reflective gear. A moisture-wicking material is also preferred because in the winter and summer it will pull moisture away from your body and dry quickly, keeping you insulated in the winter and cool in the summer. Also, in every season apply sunblock to exposed areas to protect the skin from harmful rays. Make sure you maintain adequate fluid intake.

These five simple tips are great reminders to help you increase your fitness level and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Take a Look at Your Spending Habits

When it comes to saving money, one of the first things to consider is what makes you spend it. Of course, that's a complicated question. Sometimes we spend because we have to. Sometimes we spend out of obligation. And sometimes we just spend. It's that last piece that generally gets us into trouble and often is hardest to fix. After all, it's hard to solve a problem when the root of it seems so completely beyond our grasp.

In many ways, fiscal warfare is not unlike going on a diet. For most, getting eating habits under control first requires an examination of what makes them eat so much in the first place. Spending is very similar. Often, we spend more money when we're celebrating; when we're down; or when we're bored. If this is the case for you, it might be time to put yourself on a financial diet. Take a month to look at your expenses and closely examine what was the result of an emotional whim rather than a need.

This might not be the most entertaining use of your free time, but it'll likely be a useful one. Plus, a financial diet is the only kind where it's actually OK to gain something!

Fiscal War Money Saving Tip of the Week: You may not realize, but your television could be contributing mightily to your spending habits. Think I'm crazy? Try limiting your exposure to your TV and its oh-so-seductive array of advertising. You just might find you'll be less inspired to buy products you don't really need and you'll have more time to focus on other areas of your household, physical activity or spending quality time with friends and loved ones. Plus, you'll save a little on your electric bill.

Message from American Red Cross

On behalf of the thousands of patients we serve each day, thank you for your dedication and commitment to helping save lives by donating blood through the American Red Cross. Your participation in the blood program at the Cabinet for Health and Family Services helps ensure a safe and adequate blood supply is available for hospital patients like accident victims, people undergoing surgery and cancer patients.

This February, help the community one pint at a time by giving blood. A blood drive is scheduled for Friday, Feb. 20, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Training Room C.

To schedule an appointment, please visit our new Web site at www.givebloodgivelife.org. You will need your sponsor code, 41. This will be the only way to access the drive because it is considered closed. If you have any problems or questions, please contact Paula Yochum at paula.yochum@ky.gov or Melinda Falin at falinme@usa.redcross.org.

Due to recent bad weather, the blood supply is critically low because of canceled drives and low turnout. We need you!

On behalf of the American Red Cross and all blood recipients, thank you for donating.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Does getting a new assignment make you feel so anxious that it gets in the way of your doing a good job?

Here are some tips from Bryan Taylor, president of the Partnership for Learning, that may help you focus on each assignment to see better results.

- Look at the big picture. See how it relates to what you are already doing.
- Clarify the outcomes of the project with your supervisor or the person who gave you the assignment. Find out specifically what it will take to make the project a success.
- Ask your supervisor what he or she already knows about the project and where you can find more information.

- Break down the project: Outline the steps you'll need to take to complete your work.
- Make a schedule with a checklist for deadlines.
- Begin your research.
- Ask questions as needed.
- Evaluate your completed work to make improvements next time.