CHFS Focus
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Lakes Region honored at volunteer service awards

By Anya Armes Weber

The Department for Community Based Services Lakes Region was honored last week at the 2009 Governor's Awards for Outstanding Volunteer Service.

Staff from the Lakes Region attended the awards ceremony at the Governor's Mansion in Frankfort and received the Make A Difference Day Service Region Award. Of all DCBS regions, the Lakes Region collected the most food per employee during the statewide food drive coordinated by the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service for 2009 Make a Difference Day last October.

The Lakes has 374 employees and collected 2.12 tons of nonperishable food, which was distributed to food banks and organizations in the region.

The 2009 food drive marked a 74 percent increase in the collection of nonperishable food items over 2008 — enough to feed nearly 500,000 Kentuckians an 8-ounce serving. If all Kentuckians receiving their portion of food stood in line, it would stretch 186 miles, nearly the length of Interstate-75 as it passes through the heart of Kentucky from Cincinnati, Ohio, to Jellico, Tenn.

Secretary Janie Miller, First Lady Jane Beshear and WKYT-TV News Anchor Amber Philpott presented the awards.

View a full list of the Governor's Awards for Outstanding Volunteer Service winners online. Learn more about Make A Difference Day on the state's Make A Difference Day home page.

For more information about Make A Difference Day in Kentucky or to see where your agency placed in the competition, visit http://chfs.ky.gov/dfrcvs/kccvs/madd.htm

Bowling Green group raises $8,000 for adoption

By Anya Armes Weber

A Bowling Green Department for Community Based Services office has helped raise thousands of dollars for adoption recruitment.

The Bowling Green Recruitment and Certification team, along with Wendy's and the Adoption Resource Center, raised $8,000 by selling decals featuring the Bowling Green Hot Rods baseball team.

These funds will be used for recruitment activities through the Adoption Resource Center, a prime partner of DCBS in recruiting families for Kentucky's waiting children.

Spring Energy Cleaning Tips

When you clear your home from winter dust and clutter, take time to free your household of energy wasters. This spring, clean your home of energy-wasting appliances and behaviors and make a goal to become more energy efficient. The following tips can help you save money on energy costs and reduce the carbon footprint of your home.

Brighten your home!

Replace incandescent light bulbs with ENERGY STAR compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) in fixtures throughout your home. CFLs are much more efficient and last up to 10 times longer than incandescent light bulbs. CFLs can help you save up to 75 percent in lighting energy use.

Soak up some sun

The sun is shining and temperatures are rising. Spring is the perfect time of year to turn off that thermostat, open your curtains and blinds and let the sun warm your home. Open up some windows on opposite ends of your home to let the warm air circulate naturally.

Prepare for summer temperatures now

In preparation for increasing summer temperatures, check your heating and cooling system to make sure it is operating at peak efficiency. Check your filters and duct work. Consider replacing old air conditioners with newer, more efficient ENERGY STAR models. You may receive a federal tax credit or rebate for your replacement.

Perform an energy audit on your home

To find out if you can improve the energy efficiency of your home, contact your utility company or a local contractor to perform an energy audit. This will help you pinpoint air leaks and poor insulation in your home. You will receive suggestions on how to prevent air loss, better insulate and improve the comfort of your home.

Living Well: Prostate Health for Men

By Noel Harilson

Entire months and media campaigns are dedicated to increasing awareness of women's health topics. However, June is dedicated to men as this month is Men's Health Month.

Due to the increasing numbers of people affected, prostate health is becoming one of the most important aspects of a man's health and is essential in the prevention of a number of conditions that can affect it. In recent years the issue of prostate health has moved to the forefront of many news and media stories and many of us know or have known someone who has had prostate problems.

More than half of men older than 60 develop an enlarged prostate, a condition known as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH.) In addition, the American Cancer Society estimates that more than 217,730 men in the United States will be diagnosed with prostate cancer this year. New cases of prostate cancer have increased rapidly in recent years. Most of the increase has been attributed to the greater use of screening guidelines and especially the widespread introduction of the Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) test.

The causes of prostate cancer are not fully known. Risk factors related to prostate cancer are:

- Age – Risk rises sharply after the age of 50 and doubles every 10 years thereafter.

- Family history – Men with close family members (father or brother) who have had prostate cancer are more likely to get prostate cancer themselves, especially if their relatives were young when they got the disease.

The three common diseases of the prostate are:

- BPH, commonly known as an enlarged prostate
- Prostatitis (inflammation of the prostate)
- Prostate cancer

The modern lifestyle that involves stress, sedentary activities (electronics, television and long commutes), poor nutrition (regular intake of sugar, caffeine and alcohol), and environment toxicity all set the stage for the onset of diseases, including prostate enlargement and prostate cancer. We have become a nutritionally advanced culture, learning more and more about the foods that you can eat to provide multiple health benefits. Experts have identified “super foods” for their healing and health promoting properties. Consuming foods with a variety of color, less red meat and more fruits and vegetables can put you in control, knowing you are doing what you can to promote a long, healthy life.

In spite of the increased awareness, many men remain unaware of its symptoms and the damage it can do. Fortunately, there is promising research that shows preventive measures are working, as well as early detection screening and new treatments which are all helping to reduce the risk of death from prostate cancer. Participate in men’s health month by taking charge of your health, scheduling annual physicals and discussing any personal concerns with your physician.

CHFS Health News: June is Home Safety Month

This month, look for home safety tips in the CHFS Health Tip section of the newsletter. Tips are provided by the Home Safety Council (homesafetycouncil.org).

Backyard Safety

Lawn mowing and landscaping top the list of household chores when it comes to preparing for backyard parties and barbecues. The simple act of yard work can be riddled with opportunities for injuries if you’re not careful. The Home Safety Council recommends the following tips to make sure your backyard doesn’t become an injury trap:

- Wear protective goggles and ear protection while using outdoor machinery to prevent sight and hearing-loss injuries.
- All garden equipment and tools should be kept where children cannot reach them. Store all sharp tools pointing downward.
- Use gasoline only as a fuel for motors.
- Store gasoline in a container designed just for gasoline in a shed or garage with a lock.
- Gasoline must never be brought indoors, even in small amounts.
- Use gasoline only outside. The vapors (fumes) are very dangerous if you bring gasoline inside a building.
- Fill mowers and gasoline-powered tools outside, before starting the job. Re-fuel only after the tool has completely cooled down.
- Start the mower outdoors to avoid raising carbon monoxide levels inside the home or garage.

- Chemicals, fuels (such as gasoline), car fluids (such as anti-freeze), pesticides (such as bug killers), and lawn and garden products (such as fertilizer) are poison.
- Store pesticides in their original containers.
- Close the lid on all dangerous products and put them away after using them.
- Store them in a safe place with a lock.
- Store them where children cannot see or touch them.
- Clear sidewalks and pathways of any toys and clutter to avoid slips and falls.
- Cover the ground under playground equipment with a thick layer (9-12 inches) of mulch, wood chips or other safety material.

For additional information and resources to help you learn more and stay safe in and around your home, please visit www.homesafetycouncil.org.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Setting aside time for creative thinking can actually save effort in the long run. Often the best place to find or generate ideas is within your own office. Take time out to think and encourage others to do the same. Record your ideas and act on the best ones.

Simple techniques such as brainstorming and process mapping (putting your plans in a flow-chart format) can get the ideas flowing, help you to organize them and save you time.

Innovation does not have to be about revolutionary new ideas. Look at your existing plans and ask yourself how they could be improved. It could be one simple alteration that gives your customers better service.

Mark Twain said, “You can’t trust your judgment if your imagination is out of focus.”