

August 18, 2008

KECC Fact: A donation of \$6 per paycheck buys a Christmas basket, including food, for a family of four.

Submit Your KECC Story

We are interested in hearing your KECC stories. If you have a story about how KECC made a difference in your life or that of someone you know, please contact [Janis Stewart](#). We'd like to share these stories with your coworkers in future editions of the Focus.

Suicide Awareness Campaign Set to Launch

To help end the stigma and silence associated with suicide, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), the Kentucky Suicide Prevention Group (KSPG) and the Department for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addiction Services are launching a public awareness campaign about one of the most preventable, yet common, forms of death.

The “Let’s Talk: Kentuckians Affected by Suicide End the Silence” awareness campaign will launch at an event at 2:30 p.m. on Sept. 4 at the Capital Plaza Hotel in Frankfort. The event, which will feature a new educational video, is designed to educate Kentuckians about the warning signs of suicide; make people more aware of the prevalence of suicide in society; and help people discuss suicide.

According to a 2007 study, 64 percent of Kentucky adults knew at least one person who had attempted or died by suicide. The “Let’s Talk” campaign takes a closer look at what it’s like to be personally affected by suicide, and features several Kentuckians who will share their personal stories, as well as what they’ve learned from the experience.

“Keeping suicide a secret perpetuates suicide,” said Jenny Jones, chair of the KSPG steering committee who lost her mother, grandmother and other family members to suicide and is

featured in the “Let’s Talk” video. “For many struggling with mental health issues or experiencing thoughts of suicide, there is no outlet. We have to change that.”

In addition to Jones, other stories in the video include the friend of a young Marine who died by suicide after returning to Kentucky from war and a parent discussing youth suicide contagion (one suicide becoming the trigger for other suicides). The video also includes information on suicide on college campuses, suicide among select ages or populations, and suicide among Kentuckians affected by HIV/AIDS.

The “Let’s Talk” event will be emceed by WHAS radio talk show host Francene Cucinello and will be broadcast to locations across the state via satellite through the assistance of WLEX-TV in Lexington. Participants will receive community action materials to use in their hometowns.

Seating for the general public at the “Let’s Talk” kick-off is limited, and reservations are required by contacting Cheryl Ligon at (502) 564-4456 or Cheryl.ligon@ky.gov.

For more information about how to save a life, visit www.kentuckysuicideprevention.org or call (502) 564-4456.

Fifth Annual Golf Scramble Set

The fifth annual CHFS KECC Golf Scramble will be Friday, Sept. 26, at Juniper Hills Golf Course. Cost is \$40 per person and includes lunch. All proceeds benefit KECC. Lunch will be at noon. Shotgun start is 1 p.m. Employees must use leave time to participate; friends and spouses are welcome. For more information, contact Mary Gaetz at mary.gaetz@ky.gov or call (502) 564-6478, ext. 10084. (See attached form.)

Living Well: What’s Your Image?

By Kris Hayslett

August 18, 2008

Body image is a painful topic for most people. It is not often talked about, but it is secretly known that many of us - male and female - are unhappy with our shape.

The media prey on our insecurities by pushing new beauty products, clothes and diet aids. The diet industry alone is said to be worth \$100 billion a year. The cream that will restore your youth or remove stretch marks and cellulite is in high demand. After all, the models and celebrities we see in print ads, television and on the big screen have “flawless” bodies. It’s no wonder a majority of the population is dissatisfied with their body image.

Because women’s issues seem more prevalent, I would like you to consider what exactly you are comparing yourself to. The average model is 5feet 11inches tall and weighs 117 pounds. Most fashion models are thinner than 98 percent of the American female population. Also, the movement has included celebrities who may not all have the height of a model, but they are all far below the average weight. Men also can fall into the media trap, but it still remains more common in women.

Research has documented that women’s magazines have 10.5 times more ads and articles promoting weight loss than men’s magazines. Also, more than three-quarters of women’s magazine covers include at least one message about how to change a woman’s bodily appearance by diet, exercise or cosmetic surgery. The pages of these magazines scream a consistent message that “ordinary” women need adjustments or improvements to “perfect” their bodies.

Our body image plays an important role in our lives. Bad body image can be passed on to our children if we are constantly trying to look like our favorite celebrities or models.

Instead of keeping up, we need to recognize those factors that can be changed and focus on improving our individual health. To improve your health, follow these guidelines:

- Eat at least five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables a day

- Get at least eight hours of sleep each night
- Increase your physical activity

To improve your body image, make a list of what you think are your best features. Focus on these features instead of focusing on what you think is wrong. Look at what you like about yourself. If you are a parent, try not to complain in front of your children about the things you don’t like about yourself. You may think that children do not really pay attention to what you are saying, but you will be surprised on what they pick up. Young girls today are hearing the message that they shouldn’t eat as much because otherwise they will get fat, or they have learned from an adult that they should always be dieting. Kids today should not be thinking that diets, products and procedures are necessary to be healthy. Instead, talk with your children about how they can be healthy by eating nutritious foods, getting enough rest and being physically active. Let’s help restore negative body images and move forward by leading happier, healthier lifestyles.

Focus Health Tip of the Week

Protect Yourself, Children with Immunizations

As summer winds down, students from kindergarten to college are heading off to new schools, with lots of new people to meet — and new germs to catch. It’s a perfect time to start planning to protect your health. One of the best ways to guard you and your family against infectious disease is to stay up-to-date with your vaccines.

Thanks to medical research, many of us have never known the terrible diseases that immunization keeps at bay. In fact, cases of vaccine-preventable diseases have reached an all-time low, according to a recent report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

August 18, 2008

But because we rarely, if ever, see childhood diseases like diphtheria and whooping cough, some people question whether the vaccines are necessary. Others worry about possible links between vaccines and illness. The scientific evidence to date doesn't support such concerns, however, and public health officials agree that the benefits of vaccination far outweigh the risks. Staying up-to-date on vaccines doesn't just help you. When more people are vaccinated in a population, it's harder for pathogens to spread. History has already shown us that immunization is a very successful and cost-effective public health strategy. While new vaccines are in the pipeline, make sure to arm yourself and your children with the ones we already have. For more information about vaccines, visit the Kentucky Immunization Program at <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/epi/immunizationprograms.htm>.