

Secretary Miller Thanks State Fair Volunteers

By Anya Armes Weber

Secretary Janie Miller is applauding the contributions of the more than 200 staff that helped make the Cabinet's exhibit at this month's Kentucky State Fair a success.

"I am so grateful to these staff for representing the Cabinet and teaching thousands of Kentuckians about our services and programs," Miller said. "It wasn't easy, but even with reduced staff and tight budgets, these programs provided opportunities for our visitors to learn about how they can take further steps to improve their personal health and family wellness."

Hundreds of staff educated visitors about various Cabinet programs – including KCHIP, foster care and adoption.

And dozens of staff also contributed behind the scenes – filling in for fair workers, helping with paperwork and creating posters and activities for guests.

Miller said staff has reported positive feedback from fair visitors.

"So many Kentuckians can benefit from our programs," she said. "At the fair, we were able to reach hundreds of families about our services, and we've encouraged them to make a change for the better."

KECC Events Coming Up

The Kentucky Employees Charitable Campaign is in full swing. Numerous events have been planned for September. Read on to find out what's happening with KECC this month.

Aug. 31-Sept. 25

- KECC needs your recipes! The KECC committee is compiling a KECC cookbook. Participants of a recent Cook Off will be spotlighted in the book along with recipes submitted by employees. Staff can submit recipes for inclusion in the book via e-mail to Kellye Cheek until Sept. 25. Books will go on sale in October.

Sept. 15

- Department for Public Health Jewelry Sale – Cafeteria Conference Room
- Department for Aging and Independent Living's Pie in Management's Face – third floor DAIL Offices

Sept. 18

- UK/UofL Chili Cook-Off – Main CHR Building Lobby

Sept. 28

- DCBS Online Auction starts

Sept. 30

- DAIL Ice Cream Social – third floor DAIL Offices

DPH Gives Swine Flu Update

The Department for Public Health last week continued its work toward preparing the state for the second wave of H1N1 influenza (swine flu) that health officials are expecting to affect Kentucky residents.

“The second wave has not arrived, but it is knocking on our door,” said DPH Commissioner Dr. William D. Hacker last week in a conference call with reporters and other stakeholders. “Our stance is: We are not alarmed; we are concerned.”

As school started in early August, many counties reported outbreaks of swine flu activity. Health officials had expected these outbreaks as swine flu has been circulating throughout the country since spring. Swine flu is a current, active pandemic.

“We usually start the school year with no flu activity,” said Hacker. “This year we are starting with flu activity, so it’s reasonable to expect more.”

The DPH commissioner said people should be taking extra precaution to wash hands thoroughly and often to lessen the risk of becoming ill.

Symptoms of swine flu include fever, chills, headache, sore throat, cough and body aches. Some people have also reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. Individuals at high risk for complications — such as those with chronic health conditions or who are pregnant — should contact a health care provider early, in case treatment with antiviral medication is necessary.

Along with hand washing, Hacker said the most important thing people can do is be vigilant if they start feeling sick. He said to control the spread of swine flu, people who are ill need to stay home from work – or keep kids home from school – until their fever is gone for 24 hours. He said citizens should also follow the news related to swine flu.

Last week, DPH reported the flu activity level in the state has increased to regional, the second highest level of flu activity. The activity levels for states are tracked weekly as part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s national flu surveillance system.

Nearly all flu cases at this time are due to swine flu, as seasonal flu has not yet begun to circulate.

Common sense precautions to prevent illness include: avoiding close contact with those who are ill; staying home when sick; covering the mouth and nose when coughing or

sneezing; avoiding touching the eyes, nose or mouth; and frequent hand washing.

For more information on swine flu, visit: www.flu.gov. Individuals can also visit <http://healthalerts.ky.gov> for information on swine flu and Kentucky, or follow KYHealthAlerts on Twitter to be notified when new information is posted at the Web site.

Deferred Comp Announces Workshops

First workshop is this week

If you are a participant in Kentucky Deferred Compensation and would like to have your account reviewed, this is the workshop for you. Join Deferred Comp for a working lunch and have your account reviewed by a retirement specialist. The luncheon will be Thursday, Sept. 3, from 12:10 to 12:50 p.m. at 101 Sea Hero Road, Suite 110, Frankfort. Upcoming workshops include: New Enrollments, Sept. 10; Sept. 17, Consolidate Your Assets; Sept. 24, Deemed IRAs. A reminder e-mail will come to you for each of the workshops you register to attend. Registration is required. Seating is limited. Contact Carol Cummins at CarolV.Cummins2@ky.gov or call (502) 573-7925.

Living Well: What's in Your Container?

Do you have a favorite writer or artist that you follow? I have become a regular subscriber to Runner's World magazine and a fan of one specific columnist. The writer is a working mother of three and, of course, a runner. I am especially drawn to her columns about the "teachable moments" she has with her kids. I have a son and a daughter and any insight into raising them to be healthy, happy and productive people in life stirs my interest.

In a recent article, she talked about speaking to a group of girls ages 7-11 about the subject of body image and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. The topic of body image is discussed more with girls, but maintaining a healthy lifestyle is a lesson for all. The group of girls paired up, each armed with one piece of butcher paper and a marker. The pairs then traced their partner's outline or shape on the paper. Once they had their own outline, they had to fill the body of the shape with descriptive, positive words. All words had to be things the girls liked about themselves. Here is what some of them wrote:

- Good friend
- Honest
- Responsible
- Loving
- Good sense of humor
- Disciplined
- Good student
- Smart
- Athletic
- Strong

- Good reader
- Adventurous
- Brave
- Thoughtful
- Kind
- Generous

Think of your own personal shape or “container.” What words would you fill it with? I am sure you will have many from the above list and lots more. Now apply that list to help you achieve a healthy lifestyle.

Teddy Bass, a personal trainer to stars like Lucy Liu and Cameron Diaz, suggests keeping a food journal so you can keep track of what you eat. The trainer also says, “It’s not about starving yourself, it’s about being fully aware of what is going into your body.” In other words, hold yourself accountable for what goes into your “container.”

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

September is Healthy Aging Month, and it’s a good time to remember that aging well is about more than just taking care of our bodies. We have to take care of our brains, too. Staying mentally acute as we grow older will help us personally and professionally. Here are some tips from the Alzheimer's Association to keep your mind sharp.

Stay mentally active. Mentally stimulating activities strengthen brain cells and the connections between them, and may even create new nerve cells.

Remain socially active. Social activity not only makes physical and mental activity more enjoyable, but it also can reduce stress levels, which helps maintain healthy connections among brain cells.

Stay physically active. Physical exercise is essential for maintaining good blood flow to the brain, as well as to encourage new brain cells. It also can significantly reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke and diabetes, and thereby protect against those risk factors for Alzheimer's and other dementias.

Adopt a brain-healthy diet. Research suggests that high cholesterol may contribute to stroke and brain cell damage. A low fat, low cholesterol diet is advisable. And there is growing evidence that a diet rich in dark vegetables and fruits, which contain antioxidants, may help protect brain cells.