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## **Cabinet Honors Kentucky Foster Parents**

Nine parents and couples from across the state were honored last week for their excellent service as foster parents to Kentucky's most vulnerable children.

The Cabinet honored the foster parents for their dedication and commitment to caring for children in custody of DCBS because of abandonment or abuse and neglect issues. The parents represent each of DCBS' nine service regions.

"Good foster parents like these are a gift," said Tom Emberton Jr., undersecretary for Children and Family Services. "They have the experience, the patience and the instincts to care for children in a fragile state, but most importantly, they have loving hearts."

Governor Ernie Fletcher has proclaimed May Foster Care Month in Kentucky.

CHFS established the Kentucky Foster Care Excellence in Service Awards in 1999. Selection criteria include initiative, advocacy, self-sufficiency, interest, flexibility and creativity in their foster caregiving.

DCBS has certified about 2,300 Kentucky households to care for foster families. Foster care is meant to be temporary for children whose families are overcoming the issues that keep their children at risk of abuse and neglect. About 7,000 children are in foster placements statewide.

DCBS Commissioner Mark A. Washington said the number of foster children has increased in recent years because of the ever growing problem of substance abuse and its high risk effect on the safety of children and youth.

"We are always in need of loving foster parents," Washington said. "The first step is a phone call,

and then families can attend a local information session where most of their questions will be answered."

The 2007 CHFS Excellence in Service Award Winners were:

### **Cumberland Region, Knox County (Girdler):**

Don and Donna Swafford

### **Jefferson Region, Jefferson County**

**(Louisville):** Linda and Huston Alston

### **Eastern Mountain Region, Perry County**

**(Busy):** Wanda Farney

### **Northeastern Region, Fleming County**

**(Wallingford):** Randy and Sandy Weaver

### **Northern Bluegrass Region, Scott County**

**(Sadieville):** Sandra and Barry Sebastian

### **Salt River Trail Region, Oldham County**

**(LaGrange):** Dave and Sally Sauerbeck

### **Southern Bluegrass Region, Jessamine**

**County (Nicholasville):** Janice Hukle

### **The Lakes Region, Fulton County (Fulton):**

Catherine and Mitchell (Mickey) Reilly

### **Two Rivers Region, Butler County (Quality):**

Charles and Deborah Brown

## **Art Therapy Makes Strides in Treatment at Central State**

*Artist opens his fifth show*

A unique program at Central State ICF/MR is helping clients express themselves in ways they may never have thought possible.

Central State – one of Kentucky's Intermediate Care Facilities for Persons with Mental Retardation (ICF/MR) – started its art therapy program when art therapist Jennifer Jackson came on board.

Jackson said art therapy is a way to connect with clients.

"With my clients, there is such a huge range of function," said Jackson. "Developmentally, they

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may be anywhere from 18 months to 8 years old when actually, the clients range from 19 to 71 years old. We serve such a diverse population.”

Art therapy, the union of art and psychology, is a form of therapy that gives patients an alternate outlet to express feelings, thoughts and emotions.

Many of the clients at Central State either cannot or do not use spoken language to communicate, said Jackson. So for many clients, art therapy has become an opportunity to say things they otherwise may have never been able to say.

Take, for instance, Tommy Boone Jr., who has been diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder and mental retardation.

Last week, Boone, 36, opened his fifth art show in conjunction with Starbucks. His shows draw quite a crowd, and Boone is often offered money for his work.

“He’s really proud of himself,” said Jackson of Boone. “He gets really excited.”

Jackson said Boone’s work is a means to learn skills that he may not otherwise acquire. And he has to practice them repeatedly – every time he has a show.

“He’s building relationships in the community,” said Jackson. “It builds his self-confidence. It builds his self-esteem. The shows help him develop patience. He has to initiate the process. He has to introduce himself to people. He has to have the appropriate social skills.”

“Everything we do in art therapy translates into what we do in our everyday lives,” said Jackson. “The same goes with every client I see.”

Deborah Zech, director of Central State, said the art therapy program was invaluable to the people it serves.

“Giving our clients opportunities for success – whether it is a personal success or in the community where they live – is always the goal in the work we do,” she said. “I am proud to say this program is giving our clients those successes time and again, which allows us to move forward in our work with each client.”

Overall, Jackson said, art therapy enhances the quality of life for clients at Central State.

“It’s great for these individuals,” said Jackson. “And I think it humbles people. People think ‘poor me.’ But these people come into your life and their artwork is so raw. They’re just a breath of fresh air.”

*Tommy Boone Jr.’s art show runs from May 8 to June 8 at the Starbucks on Brownsboro Road.*

### **Current Response Rates for 2007 Employee Satisfaction Survey**

More than 1,500 employees have taken the 2007 Employee Satisfaction Survey so far with two days left to participate. Almost 100 surveys have been submitted to the Office of Human Resource Management for entering into the database.

You can take the survey until Wednesday, May 23.

When completing the survey, please remember:

- All responses are anonymous.
- All questions should be completed.
- Several departments/offices have additional “topical” questions for their specific employees.
- Employees are encouraged to submit recommendations.
- Average scores per question will be published for each organizational unit (i.e. department/office, region or facility).

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- All narrative comments will be categorized and used in a summary report for each major organizational unit.

To take the survey, visit <http://oitqc.chfsnet.ky.gov/sites/OHRM/default.aspx>

### Voting Leave Reminder

All state employees are encouraged to exercise their voting privileges, and all eligible employees are encouraged to avail themselves of the state's voting leave benefit. To ensure that the benefit is properly used, take a moment to familiarize yourself with the law.

Pursuant to Kentucky law, employees shall be granted four hours of leave to vote if:

- They are registered to vote in Kentucky.
- They are scheduled to work during the hours the polls are open.
- They request leave, and are approved by their supervisor, in advance.
- They vote.

Employees are cautioned that a qualified voter claiming voting leave, but failing to vote, may be subject to disciplinary action.

Employees electing to vote via absentee ballot in Kentucky are eligible for voting leave on the day that they travel to their respective County Clerk's office to request an absentee ballot, or to vote that ballot, pursuant to the provisions above and meeting the applicable laws for absentee voting in this state.

If an employee is scheduled to be off work on either sick or annual leave and the employee exercises the right to vote on Election Day, the employee is eligible for four hours of voting leave, if the requirements for taking voting leave outlined above have been met.

Employees who are eligible for paid voting leave and who are permitted or required to work in lieu of time off shall be granted compensatory leave on an hour-for-hour basis.

Part-time employees are eligible for paid voting leave for only those hours they are scheduled to work in excess of three and one-half hours.

### Focus Health Topic of the Week

You have an opportunity to help others by signing up to become an organ and tissue donor through Kentucky's state donor registry. The Kentucky General Assembly passed legislation in 2006 giving Kentucky residents an option to document their wishes to donate through the Kentucky Organ Donor Registry.

Only designated procurement personnel will have access to the donor registry, and access to the registry would only occur when it's necessary to confirm someone's wishes regarding donation upon that person's death.

All information submitted to the Kentucky Organ Donor Registry is kept confidential and secure at all times.

For detailed information about organ and tissue donation and transplantation, please click on [www.kyorgandonor.org](http://www.kyorgandonor.org) or [www.trustforlife.org](http://www.trustforlife.org).

To potentially save or enhance the lives of up to 50 people, please take the opportunity now to donate life, and [sign up](#) on the Kentucky Organ Donor Registry.

### Employee Enrichment

*By Anya Armes Weber*

Good e-mail etiquette is important if you want to get your point across succinctly in an electronic message. Emailreplies.com lists the most important tips for creating professional and

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readable e-mails. Here are 10 of the site's top rules.

- Be concise.
- Answer what you are asked and offer more information.
- Use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Answer expediently.
- Don't attach unneeded files.
- Don't use all capital letters.
- Use proper structure.
- Don't misuse the "high importance" option.
- Don't misuse "reply to all."
- Don't forward chain letters.