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CHFS Steps it up for KECC

More than 600 people attend the July 17 Kentucky Employee Charitable Campaign (KECC) Kickoff event at the Frankfort Convention Center. The Education Cabinet's "Smarter than a Sixth-Grader" booth took top honors. However, CHFS was a strong contender with its Dance, Dance Revolution - CHFS Steps It Up for KECC booth, where Secretary Janie Miller joined in the fun for the long-established state employee charitable campaign.

All CHFS pledge sheets will be distributed by the end of July. To learn more about KECC, visit <http://kecc.org/index.htm>

Here are CHFS' KECC goals for 2008:

- 35.1 percent participation.
- \$125 average gift.
- At least 66 Leadership Circle givers (at least 1 percent of a person's salary; e.g., \$30,000 salary=\$300 annual pledge).
- \$250,000 in donations.
- The overall KECC fundraising goal for state employees is \$1,552,000.

Governor Beshear Announces Initiatives to Aid State Employees

Recognizing the financial burden imposed by escalating gas prices, Gov. Steve Beshear last week announced two initiatives designed to help state employees and their families with rising costs.

The governor introduced a new carpooling Web site that will link commuting state employees, and he encouraged a more aggressive push toward flexible work hours throughout state government.

"Families across Kentucky are looking for relief. We must be responsive, and we must be innovative," Gov. Beshear said. "These two

initiatives are creative and cheap. They will not only help our employees cut costs, but also by reducing driving time, they will help decrease fuel consumption, carbon emissions and highway congestion."

The CarpoolKY Web site is thought to be the first of its kind for state governments across the nation. It will provide a safe and secure venue for state employees to connect with other state employees who are potential ride partners. Interested commuters can access the Web site at www.kentucky.gov/carpool.

The flexible work options already exist through Personnel Cabinet regulations. Gov. Beshear, though, has asked Cabinet secretaries and other agency heads to take a closer look at implementing a voluntary flexible schedule for employees whose duties would allow it.

The governor emphasized the flexible work options initiative will not affect delivery of services. The initiative also will not reduce operating hours for various offices nor reduce the quality of service provided to the public.

"Kentucky state government will remain open for business on the same schedule it operates on today," he said.

The Personnel Cabinet provides an online tool to illustrate how various options can be put into practice. Managers can access that Web site at <http://personnel.ky.gov/csi/flexworkoptions.htm>.

Record-high gas prices are hurting families across the commonwealth. That pain is especially acute for Kentucky state government workers who commute long distances to work every day. Some 56 percent of executive branch state employees who work in Frankfort live outside Franklin County. That accounts for nearly 6,000 employees. Fifty-five percent of those commuters live at least two counties away.

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Living Well: Maintain a Balance

Balancing the summer schedule, work and fun is a test of our endurance.

July happens to be one of my favorite months not because it is the nation's birthday or my own birth month, but because it brings one of the hardest endurance events of all times, the Tour de France. This year, the Tour will take about 140 elite athletes on their bikes counterclockwise through France for three weeks with routes going through the Pyrenees and the Alps.

Watching this event has kept me up way past bedtime, so I am not only losing sleep, I am also remaining sedentary for about three hours a day. As the wellness coordinator for the cabinet, I am in violation of two wellness-promoting activities. The first is maintaining regular physical activity (instead of watching others do physical activity). The second is maintaining a consistent sleeping pattern. Both are things that I have written about and strongly encouraged.

I have recognized my dilemma and have found the answer to balancing my summer schedule. New technology offers us some valuable tools that I have recently utilized. Instead of sitting for three hours to watch the Tour, I have discovered "My DVR," which records the tour in the morning while I am at work and keeps it until I am ready to watch it. Also, I am able to fast forward through the commercials and commentary, which cuts my viewing time in half. This will also come in handy when the Summer Olympics start in August. I no longer feel as if I am sedentary for too long, and I keep my regular bedtime.

All of us have different daily demands and schedules. The key is to recognize what in your daily schedule you have the power to change. Here are some suggestions for tackling your busy schedules:

- Plan your weekly meals and do your grocery shopping for one full week in one trip. Running to and from the store frequently will cost you more in gas and groceries because more trips results in more unnecessary items.
- Prepare larger meals and freeze the extra portions to use at another time.
- Keep quick healthy snacks on hand to hold you over until meal time.
- Invest in a wireless headset so you can catch up with phone calls while you do household chores or while you walk around the neighborhood.
- Carpool whenever possible. This assists most homes financially as well as offering up a few extra minutes in the day.
- Make a "to-do" list and check things off as you do them. Writing it down clears your mind and allows for clearer, quicker thinking.
- Monitor time-sapping addictions like television time and Internet surfing.

A Story of Change

If you've got a little change in your pocket and you don't know what to do with it, I've got a story for you.

A little more than a year ago, my husband and I purchased two large and lovely vases and put them atop our entertainment center. I was content to keep their use strictly on the aesthetic side of things, but my husband got inspired and started using them as a receptacle for spare change.

Now, I'd always been one of these dump-your-change-in-the-cubby-hole-of-your-car people and really felt no need to look beyond this seemingly acceptable method of coin collecting. Soon enough, I'd joined Steve in using the vases as our contemporary household piggy bank. It wasn't long before I noticed that our vases were

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getting heavy. We kept saying that in a few months we'd cash them in. We'd buy this. We'd travel there. Then we decided we'd wait until they were both full.

The time to cash in came last week, so we paid a visit to the credit union – full vases in tow – and had the most pleasant surprise. Those pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters sure do add up. I'm not going to say exactly how much we saved, but I can tell you it was enough to cover the costs of the passports we had to purchase for an upcoming trip.

Now, one could argue that a dearth of change only leads to more ATM visits for that can of soda, pack of gum or whatever item you favor while on work breaks or in need of a sugar rush. I beg to differ. Instead, I think a commitment to change-saving, actually prevents spending – i.e. you are less likely to drop those two quarters and a nickel on that extra can of diet coke if they're not readily available to you. Plus, as Steve and I discovered last week, those change machines they have at the bank are super cool and really fun to use!

This week's Focus Money Saving Tip of the Week comes from Vicki Crace Rice, sister to my dad and my beloved aunt. Vicki's a successful business owner and has served as Circuit Court Clerk in Johnson County for more than 20 years, but still values saving a dollar (or two)! To save money on meals, Vicki says bring your lunch to work and channel your inner-McGuyver.

"Turn a roast into BBQ and make sandwiches, or use leftover roast in soup. I can be creative with my meals," she says. "I also freeze leftovers for another time instead of throwing them out. Just Ziplock them and keep them for a lunch or another meal. Waste not, want not."

CHFS Health Tip of the Week

Eat Right as You Age

How should you eat as you get older? Which foods are likely to keep you most healthy and which ones should you limit? Is it possible to eat well and stay within a healthy weight?

Your need for healthy foods doesn't diminish with age. As we age, our bodies still require essential nutrients, most of which are found in foods.

"Eating well is vital at any age, but as you get older, your daily food choices can make an important difference in your health," said Dr. Richard J. Hodes, director of National Institutes of Health's (NIH) National Institute on Aging (NIA).

Eating a well-planned, balanced mix of healthy foods every day may help prevent heart disease, type 2 diabetes, bone loss, some kinds of cancer and anemia.

However, eating healthy may not always be easy for older adults. Changing appetites, slower metabolism, eating alone, buying ready-to-eat meals and living on a fixed income can all affect the quality of your food choices.

These and other questions are addressed in *Eating Well as You Get Older*, the latest topic to be added to *NIHSeniorHealth*, the health and wellness Web site developed by NIA and NIH's National Library of Medicine.

In addition to learning how to make wise food choices, older adults who visit the Web pages will find information about food labels, food safety, meal planning, food shopping and ways to enhance the enjoyment of eating.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

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When it's break time, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends you reach for a cool glass of water. Better yet, keep a bottle of water at your desk and drink throughout the day.

It's important to meet your daily fluid needs, especially in the warmer months. While you get some of the fluid you need from food, most of it needs to come from what you drink. You lose water through everyday activities like sweating, using the bathroom and even exhaling. To prevent dehydration, you have to replace this loss.

Sweetened beverages like sodas, sports drinks and fruit drinks do provide water, but your best choice for fluid is plain water with no sugar.

Drinking a proper amount of water can increase your energy level, flush out toxins and help maintain your overall health.