

CHFS Employee 2011 Buyer of the Year

By Anya Armes Weber

A contract specialist in the Department for Income Support (DIS) has been honored by the state's leading governmental purchasing organization.

Felicia Biggerstaff was awarded the Kentucky Public Procurement Association's (KPPA) Buyer of the Year Award last year.

Biggerstaff is a contract specialist for the Office of Child Support Enforcement in DIS and was formerly in a similar position at the Department for Public Health (DPH).

Kentucky Public Health Preparedness Manager Rebecca Gillis, who worked with Biggerstaff in DPH, said the staff in her office misses Biggerstaff's "smile and expertise."

"Felicia was very helpful and responsive to our needs during her time as a contract specialist," she said. "She was very knowledgeable and taught me a lot about the contracting process when I came on as a new manager. Felicia was very patient and did a great job of explaining the process."

Biggerstaff is responsible for requests for proposals, contract monitoring and memoranda of understanding in DIS. She previously held positions in the Justice, Transportation and Finance cabinets. Biggerstaff has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Eastern Kentucky University and received her certification as Certified Professional Public Buyer in October 2005.

Jackie Watkins of the cabinet's Office of Policy and Budget said Biggerstaff earned the honor from KPPA, a nonprofit educational and professional development organization for all public purchasing and contracting officials in Kentucky.

"This is a very prestigious accomplishment, and Felicia is very deserving," Watkins said.

Biggerstaff said she cherishes the honor.

"It's a very special privilege to be chosen for this award," she said. "It has shown me that I am respected in the procurement world and have many caring friends within the Kentucky Public Procurement Association."

Biggerstaff said she has honed her skills through working with colleagues within the Office of Policy and Budget.

"They have always provided me with the support and resources that I needed as well as challenged me to become a better buyer," she said.

Biggerstaff said part of her personal philosophy is "to do whatever needs to be done on the job and at home, and try not to worry about the small stuff."

She said she starts and ends each day with a prayer of thankfulness for what she has and for the courage to make a difference.

Biggerstaff grew up in Monticello and now lives in Georgetown with her husband, three children, two dogs and three cats. Her hobbies include reading, mission work and couponing.

Focus on Wellness: Healthy Hearts

By Anya Armes Weber

February is American Heart Month, and the focus is on preventing the cardiovascular disease that causes heart attack and stroke, the nation's leading killers. To empower everyone to make heart-healthy choices, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has launched Million Hearts. Here are some tips from the campaign.

Get up and get active by being physically active for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week.

Know your ABCS:

- Ask your doctor if you should take an aspirin every day.
- Find out if you have high blood pressure or cholesterol, and if you do, get effective treatment.
- If you smoke, get help to quit.
- Make your calories count by eating a heart-healthy diet high in fresh fruits and vegetables and low in sodium and trans fat.
- Take control of your heart health by following your doctor's prescription instructions.

Share the initiative by challenging your family and friends to take the Million Hearts pledge at millionhearts.hhs.gov.

Learn more about heart disease and stroke prevention on the [CDC's heart health page](#).

Nominations Sought for Volunteerism Awards

It's time to honor those groups and individuals who have served their fellow Kentuckians in an exceptional manner during the past year. Nominations are now being accepted for the 2011 Governor's Awards for Volunteerism and Service.

"There are many Kentuckians who serve every day, every month, or every year through faith-based organizations and as volunteers for community groups, addressing a variety of unmet critical needs," Governor Steve Beshear said. "These individuals deserve our sincere admiration and gratitude."

To honor these individuals, the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service (KCCVS), an agency of the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, is now accepting nominations for the 2011 Governor's Awards for Volunteerism and Service.

This is the 17th year for the annual volunteer awards, which recognize the contributions of Kentuckians to their fellow citizens. KCCVS hosts a special ceremony each year to publicly honor the winners and others who have given back to their communities through volunteering and service.

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KCCVS Executive Director Eileen Cackowski said volunteers are essential to meet community needs.

“Particularly when governments and nonprofit organizations are struggling in this tough economy, volunteers are more important than ever,” she said. “Volunteers exemplify the spirit of service across the Commonwealth, and honoring worthy individuals and groups with the Governor’s Volunteer Awards is a great way to show our appreciation.”

The award nomination deadline is Wednesday, Feb. 15.

Nominations for most awards must focus on service activities completed in Kentucky during 2011. Individuals and groups may be nominated in only one category. Self-nominations are accepted.

For the second year, the First Lady’s Award will recognize a Kentuckian that has gone out of his or her way to assist youth in their efforts to graduate from high school.

Award winners from the previous five years are ineligible for the 2011 awards. A panel of distinguished judges reviews and scores nominations using a 100-point scale.

Electronic submission is encouraged. Find nomination forms, category criteria and more information online at the KCCVS website, <http://chfs.ky.gov/dfrcvs/kccvs/govawards/> or contact Shannon Ramsey at (800) 239-7404, ext. 4115.

Disabilities Corner: Winter Realities

By Lanny Taulbee, KCCVS Disabilities Coordinator

Brrr... Sitting inside with a warm blanket, hot chocolate and a good book, it is easy to forget about the realities of the frigid tundra outside.

For those of us with mobility issues, winter weather can challenge us more than any other season of the year. Our determination to be as independent as possible sometimes becomes an obstacle in itself. We go to school, to work and to the grocery just like anyone else, with one major difference. Each time we venture out into the cold, snow and ice, we are at greater risk of falling, breaking bones and getting frostbite.

It may take longer to get to the car or van maneuvering through an obstacle course of snow, ice, salt and cinder, all of which can stick to shoes, wheels and crutch tips. Getting to the vehicle is just half the battle. We now have to manage scraping snow and ice from the windshield before we can get on our way. Try that while sitting in a wheelchair or on a scooter. A lucky few of us may have a dependable family member or neighbor who is willing to assist with this wintertime chore. Many of us must resort to the use of the old standby, the defroster, to clear the windshield, eventually.

Tires are always an issue when it comes to winter weather, whether they are on cars, trucks, vans, wheelchairs or scooters. Wheelchair tires and rims often get packed with snow and cause our hands to freeze. Wearing gloves often weaken one's handgrip and become wet and frozen. Gloved or not, frostbite is always a danger when outside for an extended period. For wheelchair users, the ability to overcome snow-packed sidewalks and plow through snowdrifts depends largely on wheelchair tire type and the upper body strength of the individual.

Scooters and power-chairs are notorious for getting stuck on any surface rougher than the finest mall flooring. A snow-covered sidewalk is out of the question for these mobility devices. Crutch and cane tips may break through the snow while our feet remain above the snow pack, sending us face-first into the realities of winter. In my case, once I am down, I am completely dependent on the generosity of others to resurrect me before I can continue my journey.

To add insult to injury, strong winds often turn an otherwise serene winter adventure into a major obstacle course. Despite fighting with all your might against it, the wind will suddenly stop altogether or shift directions and suddenly you're at the mercy of gravity...again!

Wheels are wheels whether on a vehicle, wheelchair or scooter, and wind can redirect your attention in an instant by whipping you into a wall, handrail or a parked car. It doesn't matter if you're facing it or if it's at your back.

Once you finally reach your car, you may find yourself locked out, even with your key in hand. The wind can hold any door closed better than the most expensive deadbolt. If you do manage to get the door open, the wind may slam it shut again before you can make any move to gain entry.

If you're inside the car trying to get out, you do have one advantage. You can park in the opposite direction. However, this too has its drawbacks. You may not be able to get the door closed! Either way, sustained high winds can hold you hostage for hours.

Once we are finally in the car, truck or van we are not apt to go back indoors and wait while the vehicle warms up. We remain inside shivering until the defroster has done its work and the heater has thawed our frozen digits.

Even if all goes well with getting the vehicle scraped and we finally get inside the vehicle, we still must be ready to tackle the parking lots with the limited accessible parking spaces. Many times these designated spaces are filled with a mountain of snow from recent attempts at snow removal. Even if the parking spaces are snow free, the spaces between them are often ice-packed at the very spot where you open the door causing you to take two spaces to straddle the netherworld and risk getting a parking ticket.

For all those considerate folks who have offered assistance during this extraordinary winter: Thank you! Every little act of kindness – from carrying groceries to the car to shoveling snow from my sidewalk – reduces my risk of having a major medical event take place. I do not need to prove my independence during record-setting winter storms. My independent spirit drives me to be as independent as possible, but my common sense usually keeps me from recklessly risking life and limb to prove I can do it myself.

I appreciate every "Can I help you?" and "Need some help?" It makes both of us feel better. You feel good because you were able to help someone and I feel good because someone cared enough to ask if I needed help. That's a win-win situation to me. Remember: Inclusion is an attitude, so keep it positive!

Lanny Taulbee has worked with the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service for the past five years promoting disabilities inclusion in the AmeriCorps programs in Kentucky and nationally. This article originally appeared in the KCCVS Heart Line February

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2011 newsletter. Lanny gives readers a glimpse into the lives and challenges of people with disabilities through his regular Heart Line articles.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Need help getting past your negative thinking? From Healthwise, these three simple steps can help guide you to better positive thinking.

Stop. When you notice a negative thought, stop it in its tracks and write it down.

Ask. Look at that thought and ask yourself what is going on in your mind. Is your thinking helpful or unhelpful right now?

Choose. Choose a new, helpful thought to replace the negative one.

Once you've practiced enough, you'll be able to do these steps without writing down your answers. Soon you can curb your negative thinking and your acting on those thoughts.