

Connections

Bringing Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services employees closer together

August 2011
VOLUME 11, ISSUE 8



The Power of Paws, Fins and Feathers:

Clockwise from left: Bob Schnuelle and pal Bella, GIVH; Aviary, BSDC; and Feeding the Fish, BSDC.

Story on inside cover.



HIGHLIGHTS (Click on headline to jump to story)

Good Life	3	Sweet Tweets	6	IS&T Tips	9
Back to School	4	Quitline	7	Breakfast	10
Way to Go!	5	Families Matter	8	In Their Own Words	11
New Homepage	6	My Dad's Illness	9		

Stay Connected:

DHHS now on [twitter](#), [facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

DHHS in the News Update. . .

Here are a few headlines of news releases recently issued by Communications & Legislative Services about DHHS programs.

Health Alert Issued for Lone Star, Rockford and Maskenthine Lakes, July 29, 2011

Did you know that DHHS works with the Department of Environmental Quality, Game and Parks Commission, and the UN-L Water Quality Extension to make sure the public lakes in Nebraska are safe? Workers take weekly samplings at 49 public lakes across Nebraska testing for toxic algae and bacteria. Water test results are updated on Fridays and posted on NDEQ's website. www.deq.state.ne.us

Emergency Medical Services Workshops Coming to Your Community, August 25, 2011

DHHS' Emergency Medical Services Program works with emergency medical technicians, first responders, physicians, and local hospitals across the state to enhance the availability and quality of care for Nebraskans. Several training workshops have been scheduled across the state for August. The workshop schedule is available online at <http://dhhs.ne.gov/ems/emscalendar.htm>.

make the connection . . .

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DHHS Employee Website: www2.dhhs.ne.gov

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About the Cover:

The Power of Paws, Fins and Feathers

What is it about petting a dog or watching an aquarium of fish that makes us feel so calm and relaxed? Pets entertain us and accept us for who we are. They brighten our surroundings and make us laugh and play.

Studies have shown that when pets come to visit a care facility, there is more interaction between clients, between clients and staff, and between clients, staff, and family or other visitors.

That's why many of our 24-hour facilities have visiting pet policies. At the Grand Island Veterans' Home (GIVH) the policy is "all paws are welcome!" Staff and visitors are asked to check in with the Volunteer Office before bringing a pet on campus.

Pictured on the cover: Bella, a Shiba Inu, is one of the many regular visitors at GIVH. Bella's owner and handler is Alison Brentzel, GIVH Recreation Assistant. Bella comes to visit members about once a week, and is pictured on the cover with veteran Bob Schnuelle. (Photo by Nancy Klimek.) We've featured other pets from GIVH on our employee homepage. Remember Bandit? You can read his story here: <http://www.theindependent.com/articles/2011/07/02/news/local/13576885.txt>

The Beatrice State Developmental Center has pets as part of people's everyday living. Individuals enjoy watching colorful birds in a large aviary and also watch and take care of fish in tanks throughout the campus. (Photos by Jody Hansen.) It gives people the opportunity to share a moment with pets that many people had and remember from their youth.

The Good Life: A reminder of what we all share and hope to provide to our fellow Nebraskans

By Kerry T. Winterer, CEO

In my two years at DHHS, I've learned that employees often go to great lengths to do what needs to be done.

You are experienced and resourceful which is a good thing, especially in times of tight budgets and level staffing. There are employees who are full of new ideas, new innovations and new ways of providing better services more efficiently. And, so many are willing to share knowledge and resources and learn from others to maximize skills.

I'd like to share one unique and innovative project that showcases this concept. It's a road that DHHS employees built (yes, you read this right) at the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center in Kearney! It's an excellent example of thinking creatively and pulling resources together to accomplish a monumental task. Here's some background information:

A long stretch of road at the YRTC-K needed to be replaced, but there wasn't money in the budget to do so this year.

So, instead of waiting to contract out the project, the maintenance staff at the YRTC-Kearney did the work with the help of others.



Photo: Bill Wiley

Staff from the Lincoln Regional Center and Beatrice State Developmental Center offered their expertise and experience, too, showing how employees from different divisions and different facilities can come together as a team to tackle a big project.

This wasn't just any road, either. **Jana Peterson**, YRTC-K facility administrator, gives specific details: "The road is 525 feet long, 24 feet wide and 8 inches thick. 389 cubic yards of concrete was used (18,149,184 cubic inches). Maintenance staff poured the road in 10 different sections, plus four more for new walkways."

Cost savings on a project such as this are huge. **Craig Thelen**, former DHHS Facility Engineer Assistant Manager, said he couldn't put an exact dollar amount on the cost savings because the project didn't go out for bid, but he's had work like this done in the past and estimates the savings for this one project to be between \$100,000 to \$150,000.

By the way, Craig is one of the people who helped initiate this project. He kept a spreadsheet that lists special skills of all the maintenance staff at DHHS' 24-hour facilities, and has used that knowledge to share skills, resources and labor between all of our 24-hour facilities.

It's more than cost savings, though. When our own staff does the work they have a great stake in the project. Having employees go to other campuses gives them a chance to see what other facilities are doing and share that knowledge to make their own campuses better.

There are many benefits to sharing skills, resources and labor. This was just one example. The State of Nebraska is very lucky to have dedicated employees willing to take on a project of this magnitude and do it effectively and efficiently. It shows the world what DHHS employees are really capable of doing.

Editor's Note:

Craig Thelen recently became the Operations Manager for the Building Division within the Nebraska Department of Administrative Services. Craig will continue to oversee DHHS facilities and be an integral part of our maintenance process.

The YRTC-K maintenance crew and others fought rain, mud and extremely hot and muggy conditions, but kept their spirits up and finished the project. YRTC-K recently hosted a small dedication ceremony for their new road. We will follow this project and feature photos and more information in a future issue of *Connections*.

Happy School Year !

Immunization Information for You and Your Family

By Zoe Olson

Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere. – Chinese Proverb

August means back to school for students all across Nebraska. It's also National Immunization Awareness Month... a great time to make sure all your family members' immunizations are up to date. All 50 states and the District of Columbia have immunization requirements for children entering school. In Nebraska, children can't attend classes in public or private school until the school has written proof of their immunization status. To attend school, children in Nebraska are required to be immunized against the following diseases:

- Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis
- Polio
- Measles, mumps, and rubella
- Hepatitis B
- Varicella (chicken pox) **Documentation of disease by a physician or parent/guardian is accepted in lieu of immunization.



Photo: Thinkstock

Each school in Nebraska is required to keep the immunization history of students enrolled on file. Parents or guardians must present one of the following documents to the school to verify immunization status:

- An immunization record showing that the child is protected by age-appropriate immunizations.
- A statement signed by a physician that the required immunization would be injurious to the student or members of the student's family or household.
- An affidavit signed by a legally authorized representative stating that the immunization conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized religious denomination of which the student is a member.

For a summary of the Nebraska school immunization

Rules and Regulations for 2011-2012 visit

http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/LifespanHealth/Immunization/docs/2011-2012_School_RR_English.pdf

Have a child in daycare or preschool?

- Young children should have the same vaccines as school-age children plus Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) and Pneumococcal.

And while you're remembering immunizations for children, don't forget college students and adults. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends:

- Flu vaccine for everyone 6 months and older.
- Meningitis vaccine for college-age students. Many colleges and universities require it.
- A tetanus booster every 10 years with at least one of them containing pertussis (Tdap) for adults.
- A one-time pneumonia shot for adults 65 and older.

Talk to your doctor, nurse or local health department about which shots you and your family need.

Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one. – Malcolm S. Forbes

Way to Go!

Statewide and national recognitions, honors and awards

DHHS Employees Shine

Congratulations to the newest Employees of the Year and Supervisors of the Year. These employees and more will be recognized formally in celebrations scheduled for employee appreciation month in October. For now...remember to use the DHHS Bulletin Board on the employee homepage to recognize your fellow co-workers for all of the good work they do.



DHHS Employees of the Year

Bryan Bretschneider, Facility Maintenance Specialist, Norfolk Regional Center

Diana Buhrman, Staff Care Technician II, Grand Island Veterans' Home

Randy Fischer, Health Program Manager I, Public Health, Lincoln

Russell Fralin, Staff Assistant II, Beatrice State Developmental Center

Christina Garcia, Secretary II, Gering

Julie Hippen, Program Specialist, Children and Family Services, Lincoln

Lisa Irwin, Teacher, Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center, Kearney

Phillip Jefferson, Training Specialist I, Lincoln Regional Center

Gregory Kosmicki, Children and Family Services Specialist, Omaha

JoAnne Meyer, Food Service Assistant, Norfolk Veterans' Home

Courtney Miller, Program Specialist, Medicaid and Long-term Care, Lincoln

Julie Reineke, Accounting Clerk II, Operations, Lincoln

Mary Stockwell, DD Service Coordinator, Developmental Disabilities, Gering

Linda Weber, Infrastructure Support Technician, Hastings Regional Center

DHHS Supervisors of The Year

Jesse Bjerrum, ICF/DD Manager, Beatrice State Developmental Center

Thomas Blacketer, Facility Maintenance Supervisor, Eastern Nebraska Veterans' Home, Bellevue

Sheri Dawson, Administrator I, Behavioral Health, Lincoln

Pamela Hovis, Administrator I, Developmental Disabilities, Lincoln

Michael Judson, Psychologist, Hastings Regional Center

Sandra Klocke, Health Program Manager II, Public Health, Lincoln

Lisa Levasseur, Food Service Supervisor, Western Nebraska Veterans' Home, Scottsbluff

Lara Novacek, Children and Family Services Specialist Supervisor, Columbus

Georgia (Suzi) Skinner, Administrative Assistant III, Operations, Lincoln

Kathleen Stolz, Administrator I, Grand Island

JoDeen Swartz, Office Supervisor, Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center, Geneva

Ruth Vineyard, Administrator II, Medicaid and Long-term Care, Lincoln

Kay Wenzl, Administrator I, Medicaid and Long-term Care, Lincoln

Kaylene Wessel, IT Business Systems Analyst Supervisor, Lincoln

New Employee Homepage

New Employee Website...the Possibilities are Endless
When we launched your new employee website on Aug. 15, your colorful, electronic Post-it notes said it all. Thanks for all of your positive comments.

- BRAVO! Love your new look. Congratulations.
- Very nice! Way to keep up with the times! I am impressed.
- Love the changes! The new look of the Employee Website is great! I'm a huge fan of electronic post its, so I especially like those. I hope everyone will use them.
- This is really cool! Way to go, team, for giving us this nice new website. I am excited to explore it more.
- Awesome site! Easy to use and information is much more manageable!
- Wow the new site is awesome!
- Cool website! The possibilities are endless.



Thanks for accepting these technical changes in your work life and for your willingness to make the best of it. We're still working through some technical issues and appreciate your comments. Both good and bad. The information you are passing along to us through the webmaster email (webmaster@dhhs.ne.gov) continues to be helpful as we work to convert the public DHHS website to SharePoint.



twitter 1,000 Tweets and Counting...Sweet!

We've hit a milestone on our DHHS Twitter* account, 1,000 tweets and counting. That's a lot of information from a lot of different programs and services that DHHS has to offer. We've got over 800 followers, too.

You can access DHHS' Twitter and Facebook information from the DHHS employee website. Look for the icons on the homepage.

Have some information you'd like to share through the DHHS Twitter account? Contact **Zoe Olson**, 402-471-2355. By working together, we can continue to reach out and grow our audience.

Here are some of the Tweets we've recently posted:

- Do you have a child entering school this year? Here's a list of immunizations needed. <http://t.co/bk3xy8s>
- Live healthy - Try to walk 10,000 steps daily. It's good for you!
- Need help cooling down? DHHS provides fans to low-income, aged or disabled people and families in many communities. <http://t.co/lVeEZHZ>

*What's Twitter? It's a social networking and microblogging service that allows you to answer the question, "What are you doing?" by sending short text messages, 140 characters in length, called "Tweets," to your friends or "followers."

Helping Nebraskans Quit Tobacco For Good!

By Monica Pribil

If you've ever tried to quit smoking or chewing tobacco you know it's hard. It's hard because nicotine is a very addictive drug. In fact, it's common for tobacco users to try to quit several times before they're successful.

The Nebraska Tobacco Quitline, sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services' Tobacco Free Nebraska program, has been helping people quit tobacco since 2005 as part of the national quitline.

Last year, the Quitline helped 3,454 people.

Calls to the Quitline are free, confidential, and answered around the clock by trained Quit Coaches.

When callers first call in they are given a choice of services, ranging from:

- telephone coaching;
- self-help materials;
- referrals to community programs; or
- a combination of these.

If coaching is picked, callers can receive up to five coaching sessions at times that work the best for the caller.

"We know there isn't a cookie cutter approach to quitting tobacco," said **Judy Martin**, Tobacco Free Nebraska program manager. "What works for one person, might not work for another. That's why the Quit Coaches are trained to address a variety of situations and circumstances like working with pregnant smokers or those trying to quit chewing tobacco."

"We also know that not everyone feels comfortable quitting via a telephone Quitline, added Martin. "As a result, Tobacco Free Nebraska has developed the QuitNow.ne.gov website with links to a variety of resources, including online coaching, Facebook and other online communities and text messaging."

When tobacco users quit, their health improves, the health of those they live with improves and their pocketbook saves as well.

Quitting tobacco lowers the risk of diabetes, lets blood vessels work better, and helps the heart and lungs.

And, a pack a day smoker, would save over \$2,000 a year if he/she quit. That's enough to buy a new flat screen TV with lots of bells and whistles ... and still have money left over.

If you've been thinking about quitting or know someone who is, find resources and support at QuitNow.ne.gov or by calling the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-784-8669.



**A Pack-a-Day Smoker
Spends \$1,752 a Year
on Cigarettes.**

What's tobacco costing you?

QuitNow.ne.gov | 1-800-Quit-Now

Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services • Division of Public Health



for a great state of health

Nebraska Tobacco Quitline
1-800-784-8669
QuitNow.ne.gov

"My Quit Coach really talked some sense into me and helped me understand how I was feeling about tobacco. His work is commendable!"

-- Quitline Caller

"My Quit Coach stuck with me through thick and thin. My coach has been the most patient, sincere, thoughtful, and persistent person I've known in my life. I wasn't sure about her counseling abilities at first, but she fooled me. She read between the lines and helped me find ways to address obstacles that seemed to prevent me from becoming a non-smoker. I will forever be grateful to her for all her help."

-- Quitline Caller

"I never would have made it without the Quitline helping me. I am so glad to have all the support from this program, it's been very helpful."

-- Quitline Caller



New Families Matter Leadership Team in Eastern and Southeast Services Areas

By Jeanne Atkinson

In early July, Eastern and Southeast Service Areas Families Matter Administrator **Vicki Maca** announced the formation of a team to focus solely on child welfare and juvenile services efforts.

“This is a team of child welfare experts whose focus will be solely on how we, along with system partners, improve the delivery of child welfare and juvenile services in the two service areas,” said Maca. “I have 100% confidence in this management team and know they will provide effective leadership to support the Families Matter Children and Family Services and contractors’ workforce who serve Nebraska children and families.”

Families Matter Leadership Team members for the two service areas are:

Camas Diaz, Initial Assessment and On-Going Case Management. Camas joined DHHS in 2000 and is responsible for initial assessments, case management, Children and Families Outcome Monitoring (CFOM) staff and resource development.

Ronda Newman, Training and Education. Ronda’s been with DHHS for 28 years, and is responsible for training and education coordination in the two service areas. Ronda’s work will initially focus on implementing Structured Decision Making tools for safety assessment and decision-making in child welfare, and will quickly expand to include an on-going training initiative and quality monitoring.



Standing from left: Tony Green, Camas Diaz, Lindy Bryceson. Seated from left: Ronda Newman, Vicki Maca
Photo: Bill Wiley

Lindy Bryceson, Hotline/Intake and Policy. Lindy started with DHHS in 1981 and is managing the statewide Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline and assisting with policy development and compliance with Federal requirements.

Tony Green, Juvenile Services. Tony has 20+ years of experience in serving children and families. He’s responsible for juvenile services and developing strong working relationships to ensure that the appropriate services and interventions are available to promote youth and community safety.

Jeshena Gold provides administrative support to Vicki and the team.

Families Matter is a statewide initiative that focuses on making sure kids and neighborhoods are safe, and that kids are connected to caring adults and have the tools to lead productive lives.

Vicki Maca is responsible for implementation in the Eastern and Southeast Service Areas, overseeing the contracts with two lead agencies for case management and coordination of services. **Todd Reckling**, director of the Division of Children and Family Services (CFS), is responsible for implementation in the Central, Northern, and Western Service Areas, where CFS workers are responsible for case management and coordination of services.

DHHS-sponsored Film Shows Family's Personal Struggle with Mental Illness

By Bill Wiley

“My Dad’s Illness” is a recently produced film about the candid, personal story of a family’s struggle with mental illness. Sponsored in part by DHHS, the short film was produced by former NET Television intern Megan Plouzek who grew up near Lincoln. Plouzek’s father struggles with depression, and “My Dad’s Illness” explores how mental illness affects not only the family member with the disorder, but also the entire family. The film features interviews with Plouzek’s father and mother, as well as her two brothers and paternal grandparents. It is narrated by Megan Plouzek.

“I tell this story in hopes it will spark a conversation about mental illness. It is sad to see so many families struggling and remaining silent,” she said.

“My Dad’s Illness” will be paired with a discussion program that focuses on mental illness and features a panel of experts who will provide viewers with current information. It is hosted by NET’s Mike Tobias. The two programs will air back-to-back at various times on NET Television from September 9th – September 23rd. Check the NET Television website, www.netNebraska.org/television for airdates.



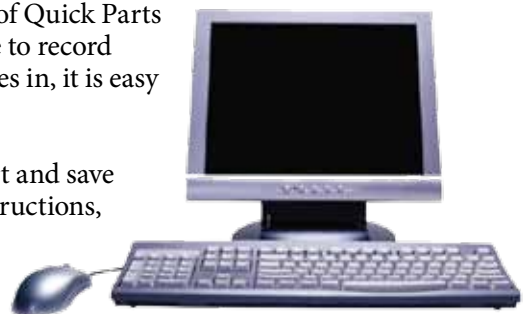
IS&T Tips and Tricks

By Joe Homan

WEBINARS - With the popularity of web meeting technology, there are many different types of webinar software being used, like GoToMeeting, WebEx, Adobe Connect to name a few. When invited to participate in a webinar with vendors or external partners, taking a few minutes to prepare your computer can save you frustration later. Most webinar programs offer a means to make sure your computer is setup to work properly in the webinar. Your webinar meeting invite will have a link to check your computer or test the meeting connection. Follow the link to determine if you will connect correctly or if you need to install any plug-ins. If you need assistance testing your connection or installing any plug-ins, please contact the Help Desk.

Outlook Quick Parts - Staff across the state have been discovering the value of Quick Parts in Outlook (and other Office Applications.) Front desk staff create a nice table to record phone calls and use quick parts to save the blank form. When a new call comes in, it is easy to add the design to a new memo.

Staff who send out forms or policies can save the attachment into a Quick part and save time from having to search their Windows explorer to find a specific file. Instructions, Standard replies to incoming questions and other commonly used messages are easily saved into a Quick Part. Find it in a new memo under Insert – Text – Quick Part. Right click on the Quick Part command to add it to your Quick Access Toolbar.



Snipping Tool - Trying to print a screen shot of your computer? The Old Print Screen command had a built-in Print button. The new one does not. The easiest way to print is to first capture the part of the screen that you want. Then right-click on the captured image. Choose the option to Send your image to “An e-Mail recipient as an attachment.” When the email opens, simply right click on the file and choose Print. Be sure to choose the size that you want printed and uncheck the fit to frame button.

Happy School Year!

Start It Off Right With a Healthy Breakfast

By Zoe Olson

The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows. – Sydney J. Harris

Eating a healthy breakfast is a great way to help start the day off right and give children the necessary brain fuel to enhance learning.

Yet mornings can be hectic, so how do you ease the chaos and provide a healthy morning meal that's both fun and delicious? Plan, prepare, be flexible and try a few of these suggestions:

- ✓ Use the weekend to prepare and freeze breakfast items such as your family's favorite whole grain and fruit muffins, pancakes or waffles.
- ✓ Make sure all fresh fruit is washed and ready to eat or, store a large bowl of cut up fruit in the refrigerator.
- ✓ Have plenty of quick choices available such as whole grain cereals and instant oatmeal.
- ✓ Remember that leftovers from a healthy lunch or dinner can be a great option for a quick breakfast.

Whether it's food on a plate or in a lunch box remember this visual from the U.S. Department of Agriculture at <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/> when planning meals to ensure that your family is getting the right combination of foods for a healthy diet.

- ✓ Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- ✓ Make at least half your grains whole grains.
- ✓ Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.

Here are a couple of fun and easy breakfasts to get them out the door and on their way to a great day at school:

My Favorite Fruit Smoothie

Take ½ cup of a favorite fruit + ½ cup of yogurt (Greek yogurt is higher in protein), put in individual zip top bags and place in the freezer. In the morning put the contents from the bag in a blender, add ½ cup of juice and ½ cup milk and blend until smooth. The combinations are

only limited by your imagination and taste buds. Add a slice of whole grain toast or mini bagel and you have a fast and healthy breakfast.

Banana Dog

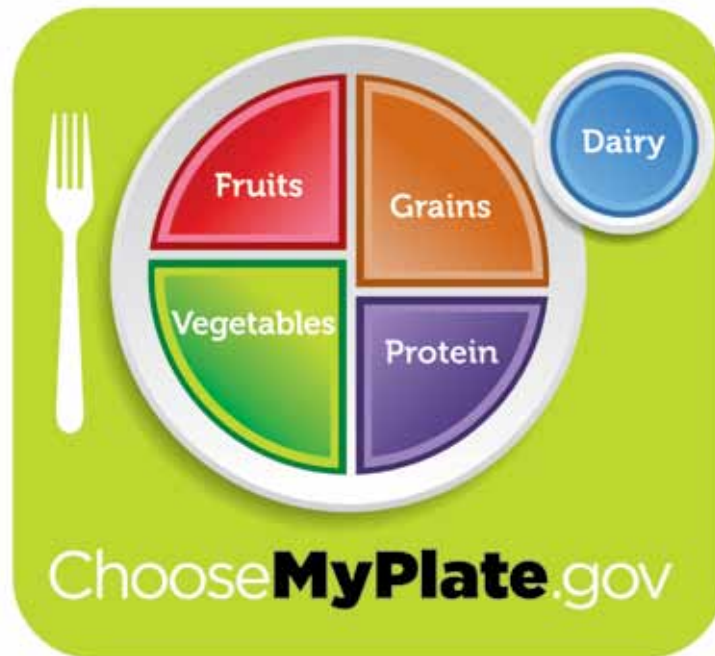
Spread peanut butter on a whole grain hotdog bun and sprinkle with wheat germ or sunflower seeds. Place a whole peeled banana in the bun and add a drizzle of strawberry or raspberry jam. Top with diced kiwi, raisins or granola and add a glass of milk to

complete your meal. You can substitute a whole grain tortilla for the bun and have a banana burrito.

Now isn't that a quick, fun and nutritious breakfast that will bring a smile to a child's face?

The object of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives.

– Robert Maynard Hutchins



In their own words

Letters to DHHS employees who are *helping people live better lives*

Virginia Newman (Case Aide, Grand Island) and **Ali Smith** (Children and Family Services Specialist, Grand Island)

Thank you for listening, understanding and helping me with Mom's Medicaid Review for Long-term Care Waiver. That was very kind of the two of you. Don't know what else I would have or could have done. Again, I greatly appreciate your help.

Thankful client

Megan Spilker (Staff Assistant, Beatrice State Developmental Center) writes...I received a phone call from the Beatrice Community Hospital (BCH) regarding a patient and the care staff who accompany him on medical appointments. BCH wants to tell everyone that **Bernice Rinne**, (Developmental Technician, BSDC) is the most helpful, kind, polite care staff that they have seen, and they appreciate her greatly!

Beatrice Community Hospital staff

Jaylynn Graham (Children and Family Services Supervisor, Kearney) writes...This was a nice note received in regards to **Judy Tomczak**, Children and Family Services Specialist, Kearney). I know Judy spent a lot of hours in research and gathering information for our safety assessment and spent a lot of time on this case. Judy, thank you for all that you have done. This case was definitely not a black and white one, but you did a super job in maintaining and assessing these children's safety. Keep up the good work!

Judy Tomczak,

This just goes to show what can be accomplished when everyone works together as a team. This was not an easy or traditional investigation and several people really stepped up to the plate on this one. I am very proud of the way this investigation was handled. What a group of professionals! Kudos!

The Buffalo County Attorney's Office

Points of Light Awards – Deadline Sept. 15!

Every month we read positive comments people write about DHHS and our employees. Now it's your turn to write good things. Celebrate volunteer excellence by nominating a youth, adult or group from your community for a prestigious Points of Light Award. Every quarter, ServeNebraska, in cooperation with the Office of the Governor, honors accomplishments of Nebraskans who have given exemplary volunteer service to their communities.

The nomination process is easier than ever. Go to the ServeNebraska website to download, complete and submit your Governor's Points of Light Award nomination, http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/awards/awards_governor.htm .

Editor's Note: Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center (YRTC) youth volunteer in the community and often receive letters of thanks for their efforts. According to the YRTC-K's 2009-2010 annual report, the youth performed 4,799 community service hours for 43 local organizations. Here are three letters of appreciation:

YRTC-K staff and volunteers:

Thank you for your generous help in tagging ducks for the United Way Duck Race. The boys were so kind and helpful. We so appreciate your part in making the duck race a success!

Grateful staff at the United Way

For their help with the traveling Vietnam Wall memorial...

Dear Young Men,

This is from the big guy that gave you all the orders. I need to tell you how thankful I am for your help. I appreciate you just doing what I said and not asking why. I hope working on the wall made you think about what it really all means. It sure gave me a different view of things. I hope we can call on you again sometime.

Thanks guys.

from a United Way newsletter...

On July 8th the United Way and YRTC teamed up to provide a valuable service for the RAFT House.* The RAFT House has a play area that desperately needed a makeover. So the United Way sprang into action and asked the city of Kearney to use a dump truck to unload wood chips.

Next, **Angel Casillas**, case worker, YRTC, was contacted to see if he was interested in having his charges take on this project. In a little over two hours, they had finished what the folks at RAFT had been kind enough to start. Today the play area has woodchips to soften a child's fall when they play, and sandboxes with fresh sand. We would like to thank Angel, his team and the city of Kearney for taking the time to give and volunteer.

** RAFT stands for Residential Assistance to Families in Transition. It is a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to meeting the needs of the homeless in the greater Kearney area and helping them in their efforts to become self-sufficient.*

Please send letters from satisfied customers via any method listed in our editorial box on page 2, and we'll publish as many as space allows.