

CONNECTIONS

Bringing Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services employees closer together

DHHS Employees Shine

Employees of the Year for 2012

Mary Barrett, Community Support Specialist, Children and Family Services, Central Service Area

Donna Baumann, Staff Assistant 1, Norfolk Regional Center

Margene Boyce, Social Services Worker, Children and Family Services, Lincoln Customer Service Center

Sondra Cluck, Child Support Enforcement Worker, Children and Family Services, North Platte

Paula Gutierrez, Housekeeper, Western Nebraska Veterans' Home

Joan Hult, Quality Assurance Coordinator, Norfolk Veterans' Home

Heather Leschinsky, Program Coordinator, Medicaid and Long-Term Care, Lincoln

Janice McHale, Staff Assistant II, Developmental Disabilities, Hastings

Kathryn Pinkley, DHHS Policy/Regulation Coordinator, Legal Services, Lincoln

Derek Rusher, Teacher, Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center, Kearney

Janis Singleton, Administrative Assistant I, Public Health, Lincoln

Carolyn Stuczynski, Human Resources Officer, Operations, Bellevue

Cherri Trump, Developmental Technician II, Beatrice State Developmental Center

Ying Wang, Statistical Analyst III, Behavioral Health

Supervisors of the Year 2012

Troy Bailey, Office Manager, Medicaid and Long-Term Care, Lincoln

Katherine Batt, CFS Service Delivery Administrator I, Children and Family Services, Western Service Area

Karry Bloomquist, Nurse Supervisor, Grand Island Veterans' Home

Dawnette Bredberg, Director of Nursing, Eastern Nebraska Veterans' Home

Congratulations to the newest Employees of the Year and Supervisors of the Year.

Brenda Chase, Children and Family Services Specialist Supervisor, Children and Family Services, Eastern Service Area

Vera Friesen, Associate Director of Nursing, Lincoln Regional Center

Libby Hanzel, Social Services Supervisor, Children and Family Services, Fremont Customer Service Center

Karen Harker, Federal Fiscal and Performance Manager, Behavioral Health, Lincoln

Deborah Johnsen, Program Manager, Beatrice State Development Center/Bridges

Melissa Leypoldt, Health Program Manager II, Public Health, Lincoln

Jillion Lieske, Service Coordination Supervisor, Developmental Disabilities, Lincoln

LaDene Madson, Human Resources Manager II, Operations, Hastings

Sandra Renken, Business Manager II, Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center, Geneva

These employees and more will be honored during employee appreciation month in October. For now you can always use the DHHS Bulletin Board to recognize your co-workers for all of the good work they do.

Good Life and Charitable Giving Campaign

"Why I Give" theme shows us firsthand how Charitable Giving Campaign helps those in need. Giving through this campaign touches lives and helps people, just like we do in our work.

[read more >](#)

Heads Up Nebraska! New Awareness of Sports-Related Concussions

Knocks on the head are just something every kid should expect in competitive sports, right? Not necessarily so...

[read more >](#)

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make the connection . . .

DHHS Public Website: www.dhhs.ne.gov

DHHS Employee Website: <http://dhhsemployees.gov>

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Kerry Winterer

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Division Director:
Scot Adams, Ph.D.

Children and Family Services
Division Director:
Thomas Pristow

Developmental Disabilities
Division Director:
Jodi Fenner

Medicaid and Long-Term Care
Division Director:
Vivianne Chaumont

Public Health Division Director/
Chief Medical Officer:
Dr. Joann Schaefer

Veterans' Homes Division
Director:
John Hilgert

Chief Operating Officer:
Matt Clough

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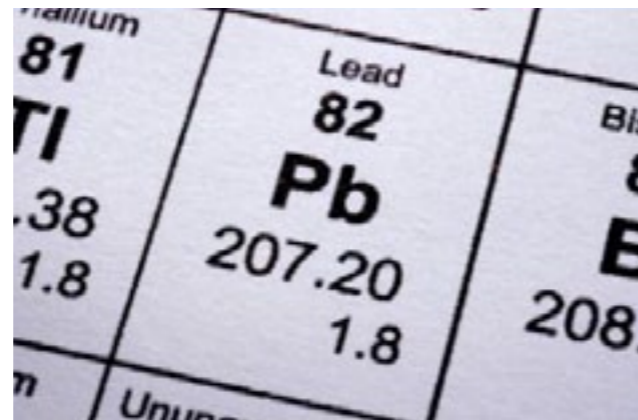
Homepage Homeruns

DHHS Employee Website

Looking for exclusive information about DHHS? Try the [DHHS employee website](#). We add new information and photos every day, things that are relevant to you and the work you do.

Here are some recent posts on the DHHS employee website and the dates they appeared. Like what you're seeing and reading? Then check out the employee homepage every day! Have an idea or a photo you'd like to share for the employee homepage or *Connections*? Send it to Dianna.seiffert@nebraska.gov.

DHHS Website Lists Resources and Tips to Prevent Lead Poisoning, July 19, 2012



DHHS' updated lead website is now online at www.dhhs.ne.gov/lead.

Lead is a toxic metal that can damage our bodies. It can be found in and around homes, in soil, and in some consumer products. Exposures to lead can cause lead poisoning, but lead poisoning can be prevented by taking simple actions. You can help prevent lead poisoning by:

- Keeping It Clean: Controlling lead dust, washing hands, and house cleaning can help reduce exposures to lead.

- Making Your Home Lead Safe: Find and properly address lead hazards in and around your home.
- Getting Medical Check-ups: Visit a health care provider to help find out if your child is at risk, if your child needs a blood test, or if your child has certain nutritional needs.
- Eating a Healthy Diet: Good nutrition helps reduce the amount of lead that is absorbed in the body. Parents should ensure children eat:
 - Regular healthy meals and healthy snacks during the day;
 - Foods rich in iron, calcium and vitamin C.

Hot Enough to Fry an Egg on the Sidewalk? July 23, 2012

Here's the answer along with a little bit of summer humor in an excerpt from a Minnesota paper.



By Brian Sander, *The Post-Bulletin, Austin MN*

Q: Will it be hot enough to fry an egg on the sidewalk?

A: According to the Library of Congress, no.

An egg needs a temperature of 158 degrees to become firm. You're not going to find that type of heat on a sidewalk, even in Phoenix in July. You might, however, be able to fry an

egg on the hood of a car since metal conducts heat better than concrete. A black car hood would work best.

Survey: Behavioral Health Consumers Satisfied, Aug. 9, 2012

Behavioral health consumers are generally satisfied with the services they receive from the state's public behavioral health system, according to a survey of consumers conducted by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

The public system includes the state's six behavioral health regions, which offer direct services, and one of the state's regional centers, which is in Lincoln, that offers general psychiatric services. The survey asked about both mental health and substance abuse services.

"Consumers reported that the services they received improved the quality of their lives," said **Scot L. Adams**, Director of the Division of Behavioral Health, which conducted the survey. "The results of the survey will be used by DHHS to guide program decisions in the future so that we can improve the services we offer."

The survey of 1,404 adults found that 84 percent were satisfied with services, compared to 85 percent last year.

The majority of adults and youth felt mental health or substance abuse services had improved their quality of life (81 percent of adults and 72 percent of youth).

To see the full report, called the Nebraska 2011 Behavioral Health Consumer Survey, go to <http://bit.ly/MKLenQ>.

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



(L-R) Kelly Ostrander, Karen Berry, Dr. Joann Schaefer, Sharon Kahm, Kerry Winterer, Roxanne Redinger and Vivianne Chaumont for DHHS' jeans day. Photo: Mike Wight

By Kerry T. Winterer, CEO

I've seen more activity in DHHS this year with the Charitable Giving Campaign than previous years and it is good. This activity could be because, for the first time, all of DHHS is together on one team with our own captain, so it's easier to have some statewide activities and agency-wide communications. And that is good because it not only will produce good results for the campaign but it also provides a rare opportunity for everyone

statewide to share in a common activity at the same time.

The theme for this year's campaign is "Why I Give," and I hope you've read some of the personal reasons DHHS employees have shared on our Employee website. Some have been in the Box, others in Neat to Know, and a few others on the Employee Bulletin Board. Before we can give to any cause, including this one, we all need to have our own, personal reasons that inspire us to do so.

I give because I believe there are more human needs in the world than government can or should provide for. The private agencies that participate in the Charitable Giving Campaign represent, in my view, people coming together voluntarily to give back to their communities and to provide for others who in many cases are unable to provide for themselves. Some years ago I was involved with the United Way in Omaha and saw firsthand how a number of agencies worked and how effective they can be in providing help where needed, free from the various rules and regulations that at times make it more difficult for us in government to have the same flexibility.

I give because I believe there are more human needs in the world than government can or should provide for.

The state campaign effort has been divided into five teams statewide and the Governor has once again challenged the teams to out-do one another. The other teams are the Department of Roads, Correctional Services, and all other agencies divided into the two remaining teams.

Dr. Schaefer is our team captain and so far she and her team have come up with some very creative ways to engage and motivate our employees to participate.

The Governor will recognize individual teams in five categories. We want at least one of these traveling awards to come

to the Department during the next year. They are:

- Champion of Dollars (total dollars contributed/pledged)
- Champion of Givers (total number of employees contributing/pledging)
- Champion of New Givers
- Champion of New Dollars
- Champion of Creativity

There's not much time left in the campaign – it ends on August 31. For those of you who haven't yet made a decision, I'd like you to consider at least matching what you gave last year; give a little more; or if you've never participated, to consider giving to one of the agencies that participate in the campaign. You can spread your donation throughout the year by using payroll deduction.

Giving through this campaign touches lives and helps people, just like we do in our work. Contributing to the campaign will make you feel good, and it'll feel good to bring home some awards, too.

DHHS Veterans' Homes Celebrate 125 Years of Serving Veterans

The Grand Island Veterans' Home is observing its 125th anniversary this year and has been holding events to celebrate all year long.

"Nebraska's first veterans' home—Grand Island's—was built after the Civil War," said **John Hilgert**, director of the Veterans' Homes Division. "There was a need for veterans of the Civil War who suffered from wounds and disabilities received during the

rebellion to have someplace to go."

The system traces its roots to 1887 with the establishment of a Nebraska "Soldiers and Sailors Home" through the passage of a

legislative bill on March 4th. The Grand Island Board of Trade worked with local citizens and pledged \$25,600 to buy land for the Home, and the corner stone was laid in October 1887. At one time there was a small farm with crops and a garden along with livestock for food and dairy.

The staff in the Veterans' Homes Division do a great job of making members feel at home, said Hilgert. They go the extra

mile to see to members' comfort and care. The homes are abuzz with

activities for members that include bingo, crafts, educational opportunities and outings to meals, fishing, shopping and other places.

"It's an honor to serve Nebraska's veterans," Hilgert said. "We strive to make the veterans' homes places that they can truly call home. "Every day, through our service, we thank those who are responsible for our freedom and security."

Many American heroes have passed through the doors of the state's four homes—veterans from the Civil War, Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War, Afghanistan, and Iraq, as well as veterans who kept freedom's vigil in peacetime. As well as these warriors, many spouses who witnessed the sacrifice of their loved ones, as well as Gold Star parents, have made these facilities their home.

The Grand Island Veteran's Home is one of four. The others are located in Bellevue, Norfolk and Scottsbluff. Information about each Home can be found at <http://dhhs.ne.gov/veterans/Pages/veterans.aspx>.



David Beran, VFW Dept. of NE Commander, presents GIVH Administrator Alex Willford with a plaque of appreciation for the 125 years of service that the Veterans Home has provided to Nebraska's veterans.

Civil War Re-enactors Set up Living History Camp



By Nancy Klimek, Activity Manager, Grand Island Veterans Home

The "C Battery 3rd U.S. Artillery" Civil War Re-enactors set up a "Living History" camp on the front lawn of the Veterans Home Aug. 4-5, in conjunction with the GIVH's 125th anniversary celebration.

This small encampment included soldiers' tents, a mess tent, a medical tent and a blacksmith area. The group performed tasks throughout the day that an Artillery Unit would have been doing, as well as sharing historical information and answering questions for guests who visited their encampment. The Civil War re-enactors performed a "cannon demonstration" and several rifle demonstrations throughout the two days.

A special musical performance on the bandstand featured Chris Sayre. His program titled "A Musical Journey Across America: Songs That Helped Shape A Nation" featured a variety of musical instruments and songs from the Civil War era onward.

The program was made possible by the Nebraska Humanities Council, the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, and the GIVH as part of the NHC Speakers Bureau.

An "Old Fashioned Worship Service" featured special prayers, readings, and music from the Civil War era. Guests included **Larry Molczyk** (Activity Assistant, GIVH) on the guitar, Guest Chaplain Bill Forbes and fiddle player Heidi Hilligas.

BSDC Celebrates Fifth and Final Certification



The fifth and final living unit at the Beatrice State Developmental Center (BSDC) was federally certified in July. As a result all living units are now eligible to receive federal funding. A celebration for employees and guests took place Saturday, July 21 on the BSDC campus.

People enjoyed music and entertainment throughout the day, a barbecue lunch at noon and an opportunity for a swim in the Carstens Center Swimming Pool.

The celebration was made possible because of the dedication of BSDC employees and the support from families, friends and the community.

BSDC was one large institution and has changed to operate as five, smaller

independently-licensed Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs). Each unit must pass a state licensing survey and two federal surveys to become certified. All five ICFs on campus are now licensed by the state and federally certified. They include 400 State Building, State Cottages, Sheridan Cottages, Solar Cottages and 100 Kennedy Building.

“The changes made at BSDC over the past several years are now how we do our business,” said **Jodi Fenner**,

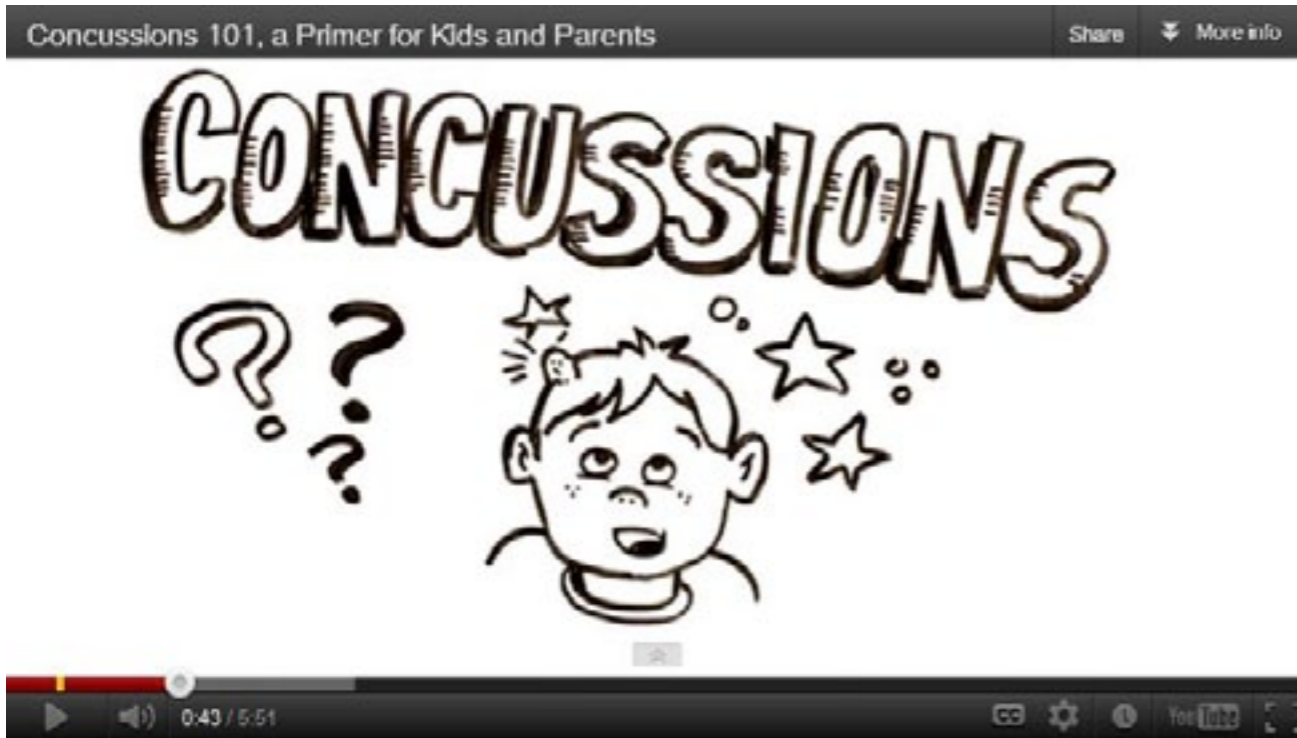
Director of DHHS’ Division of Developmental Disabilities.

“We continue to be diligent to ensure we provide the best possible services to people at BSDC.”



Top: Kids enjoy the superslide; Left: Jodi Fenner, Carolyn Nelson and Pamela Kumpf; Right: Clowning around at the celebration is Kennedy, daughter of BSDC employee Jason Cohorst. *Photos: Jody Hansen*

Heads Up Nebraska! New Awareness of Sports-Related Concussions



By Bill Wiley

Knocks on the head are just something every kid should expect in competitive sports, right? From an early age we learn to “get tough,” “get back in the game,” or that getting “dinged” is just part of contact sports.

“Not necessarily so,” said **Dr. Joann Schaefer**, Nebraska’s Chief Medical Officer and Director of Public Health for the Department of Health and Human Services. “There’s a new awareness that a ding might just be a concussion, which is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head

that can change the way the athlete’s brain normally works. Sometimes a concussion is serious before the athlete, coach or parents even realize it.”

Heads Up Nebraska is a state-wide collaborative effort to raise awareness about head safety. Recent legislation (Nebraska’s Concussion Awareness Act) became effective July 1, 2012. This new law mandates concussion education for coaches, parents and players. Also, once an athlete is taken out of a game for a head injury, he or she won’t be allowed to play again until a licensed health care professional has cleared it.

A concussion can have short-term and long-term consequences, which

may include a headache, vomiting or nausea, weakness, dizziness, blurred vision, concentration and memory problems, irritability and even death. Recent studies have shown that players who received multiple concussions are more prone to thinking problems, depression and other brain-related issues, including dementia. Fortunately, 90 percent of athletes who experience a single minor concussion usually recover completely in a few days to several weeks.

During 2010, sports-related concussions accounted for 299 emergency department visits and six hospitalizations among Nebraskans

under age 19. Other concussions resulted from motor vehicle accidents, falls, and events involving unintentional impact.

“Concussions are serious business,” advised Schaefer. “If there’s any indication that the athlete may have suffered a “ding” or blow to the head, then it’s imperative to evaluate the player for a possible concussion to avoid problems down the road.”

DHHS offers online training, fact sheets and other resources, including the videos above, at www.dhhs.ne.gov/concussions. Another good resource is www.headsupnebraska.com.

Project Everlast: Supporting Nebraska's Youth in Care



By Anita Haumont, YRTC, Geneva

The 2012 Project Everlast* Summer Convening was held July 18-20 at Timberlake Ranch Camp near Hordville.

Thirty-five youth and 15 staff from Project Everlast Councils attended the meeting including youth and staff from the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center (YRTC) in Geneva and the YRTC in Kearney. The meeting is designed to bring members and staff together to strengthen local and statewide council relationships. It's also a time to build the skills of members and staff, allow for multi-council committee members to meet face-

to-face, and ignite passion and develop action steps for Project Everlast locally and statewide.

Three youth from YRTC-G were given the opportunity to attend, and they did an outstanding job. "I was genuinely proud of all three," said **Anita Haumont**, YRTC-Geneva Project Everlast youth advisor. "They were on task, interacted appropriately, participated fully and were courteous and respectful." Other Youth Advisors shared that the youth were a tremendous asset and asked if they would be willing to lead an activity at the campfire one evening.

The days were long and hot, as both the cabin and meeting rooms

had no air conditioning, but the youth didn't complain. Two of the YRTC-G youth were selected to serve on the state Project Everlast Advisory Board, which will give them the responsibility of continuing to meet with other youth leaders from across the state, while representing their local councils.

In the end, major decisions were made regarding the direction of Project Everlast. The purpose and vision were defined through a discussion and vote. It was also determined what work will be done at the local level and what will be done at the state level. This meeting energized the councils, as they created plans to ensure that Project Everlast can make sure Nebraska's youth in care feel supported and heard.

The involvement of YRTC youth in such a positive and meaningful group, and the preparation and support that it offers youth to transition back into the community is phenomenal," Haumont said. "The youth expressed their appreciation and enthusiasm for this opportunity and their plans to continue with Project Everlast on a council in their community on their release from YRTC-Geneva."

**Funded in part by DHHS, Project Everlast promotes using community resources to improve opportunities and networks for*

youth who will "age out" of the state's custody at age 19.



Cassy Blakely, Project Everlast Youth Engagement Coordinator, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, wrote the following letters of appreciation:

Dan Scarborough (Administrator, YRTC-G),

I wanted to send a quick note to share how wonderful it was having **Anita Haumont** (Recreation Specialist, YRTC-G), and the youth at our Project Everlast Convening. They were among the most attentive, dedicated, vocal and insightful members present. A great example of this occurred during campfire on the last evening. I needed members to lead a sharing activity at campfire and approached your council members while they were on their way to shower and relax from the busy day of work. They jumped at the opportunity, practiced what they would say and cut their shower time short to be early. They did an outstanding job of focusing their fellow members and facilitating a great activity that brought all seven councils present closer. In fact, it was probably

the most well-participated activity of the Convening outside of recreation times. It was evident that YRTC-Geneva has invested a great deal in these young women and that they take pride in membership on Geneva's Project Everlast Council. All three women communicated with the Youth Advisor from their communities to ensure they could connect after leaving YRTC.

Jana Peterson (Administrator, YRTC-K),

I wanted to send a quick note to share how wonderful it was having YRTC-Kearney represented at our Project Everlast Convening. They welcomed fellow members, helped set up and actively participated in every discussion. Their energy and eagerness to make an impact was fantastic. Their initiative was a great example for their peers.

Thank you for all you and **Mike Pearson** (Religious Coordinator, YRTC-K) have done to bring a council to your campus. We look forward to the continued growth of the Kearney Council.

Nelnet's Team Building Exercise Benefits Area Foster Children



Taking part in presentation of the bikes were, left, Allison Gemelke, Raquel Roberts, Cindy Terwilliger, Jen Thuelin, Jill Wolverton, and (standing at right) Joni Oliver, Children and Family Services.

Six bicycles were presented to DHHS by Nelnet employees to give to area foster children.

The donation was part of a Nelnet team-building exercise. As employees practiced team-building techniques, each earned decorations to place on a bicycle. The decorations were designed to each child's special interests.

The Nelnet and DHHS employees assembled and decorated the bikes, which were then judged and a winner was selected. Students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Campus Recreation Department double-checked the bikes to

ensure they were assembled well and correctly.

Children weren't informed beforehand that they would receive a bike. One child, described as a chatterbox, was so surprised and overwhelmed by the gift that she couldn't talk.

"These were heart stories for our workers," said Children and Family Services Resource Developer **Joni Oliver**. "We knew the gift of the bikes would light up their life."

Oliver said Nelnet initially offered five bicycles for foster children, but when six children were nominated, they contributed another so all nominated would receive one.

Nights of improv with YRTC-G



The power of words...

By Mary Stofer, Facility Operating Officer, YRTC-G

Laughter, tears, smiles and exhaustion. All were experienced by the youth and staff at the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center in Geneva as they participated in Improvisational Theatre (improv) from July 30 through August 2. Jon Beranek, a consultant from South Dakota, coordinates the annual event.

Improvisation requires a lot of creative thinking, playing it by ear, and taking things as they come. YRTC-G's improv theatre is designed to raise awareness and generate discussion and solutions to a variety of health issues facing young people. This is the 14th year that YRTC-Geneva youth have participated in improv.

Improv theatre days are long and action packed, beginning at 8 a.m. and sometimes lasting until 9:30 p.m. During the day, youth are engaged in activities such as discussions involving self-esteem, station mind games*, community meetings, talent show, bedtime story, Living the Dream (fulfilling goals), Stress and Stressors (bullying and walking the line), and bridge building. All the activities culminate with a showcase that involves each group presenting an improv scene that they had worked on throughout the week, including topic selection,

scripting and staging. The most recent showcase included scenes about making fun of people, hurtful posts on websites, shoplifting, and peer pressure.

Facility Administrator **Dan Scarborough** said that improv allows youth and staff to explore common challenges and work together to provide thought-provoking solutions. "The positive effects of improv last long after the sessions are done." Scarborough stated that in the 14 years that YRTC-Geneva has participated in improv he has seen more staff recognize the benefits of improv and become active participants. He also notes that youth who have previously had little involvement in positive activities learn how to have fun in a productive, caring manner.

"It was a blast," one girl involved in improv said. Others thanked the staff for "the time you spend each and every year you come here...bringing new ideas as well as keeping some old traditions." And still others reported that improv "helped us to bring our group together."

*Station Mind Games are activities that involved team-building skills. They included:

- Atomic waste, where the group moved a bucket filled with water from one area to another without spilling. A "restricted area" forced the youth to use ropes and hooks to figure out ways to pick up and move the bucket.
- Helium sticks, where group members worked to get their helium sticks on the floor and held them there; and
- Tube ball, where group members each had a piece of PVC tubing and a marble to move down the hallway and around the corner without dropping the marbles out of the tube.

Way to Go!

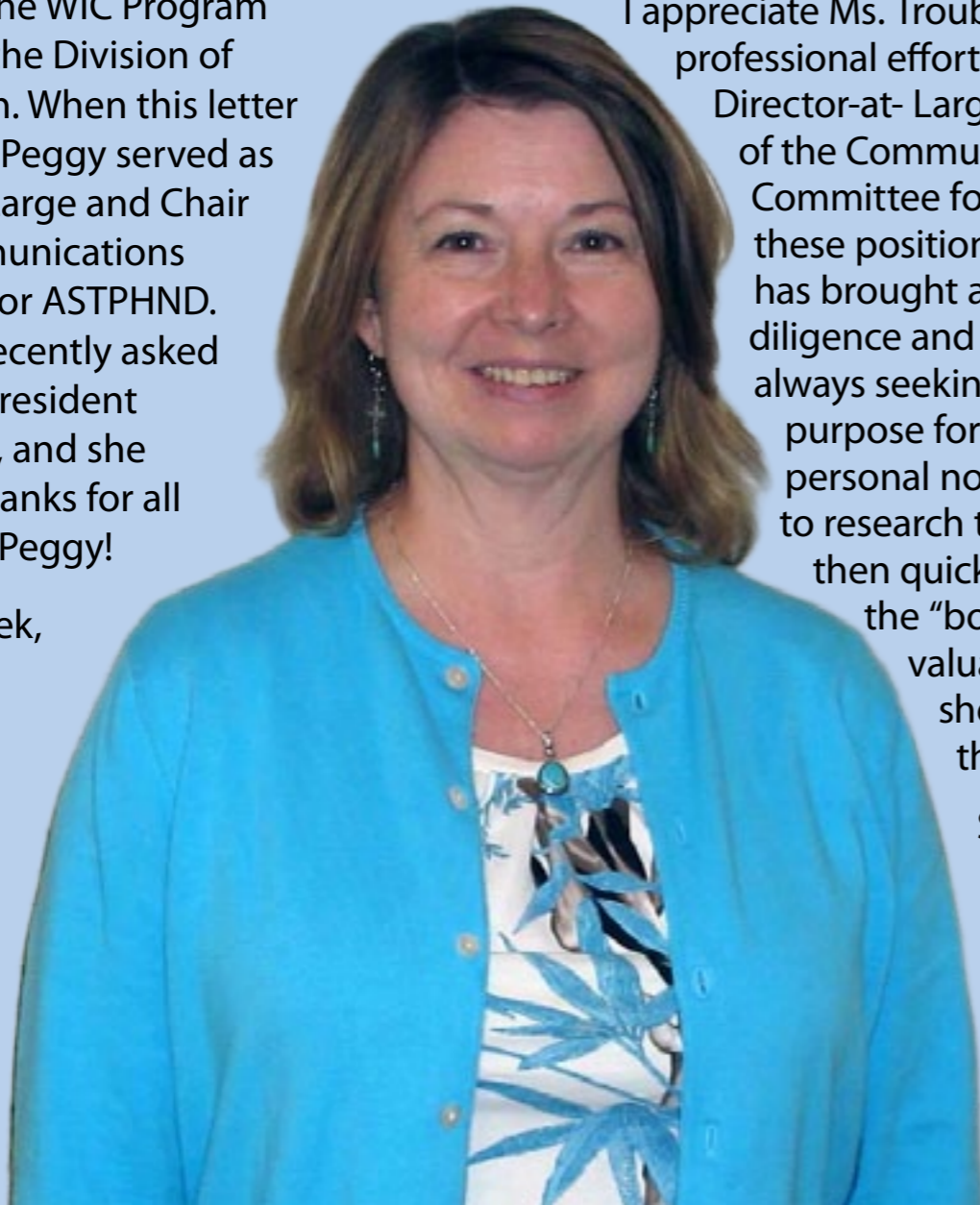
Statewide and national recognitions, honors and awards

Editor's Note: Paula Eurek (Administrator, Division of Public Health) recently received a letter (excerpts below) in support of **Peggy Trouba's** involvement on the Board of the Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors (ASTPHND).

Peggy is the WIC Program Manager in the Division of Public Health. When this letter was written, Peggy served as Director-at-Large and Chair of the Communications Committee for ASTPHND. Peggy was recently asked to become President of ASTPHND, and she accepted. Thanks for all that you do, Peggy!

Dear Ms. Eurek,

I consider Peggy Trouba to be one of those special public health nutrition



professionals who strives to be the best, always going above and beyond, to strengthen policy, programs and environments making it possible for everyone to make healthy food choices and achieve healthy, active lifestyles (ASTPHND Mission).

I appreciate Ms. Trouba and all of her professional efforts in serving as Director-at- Large and Chair of the Communications Committee for ASTPHND. In these positions, Ms. Trouba has brought a sense of diligence and preparedness, always seeking to know the purpose for all tasks. On a personal note, her ability to research the facts and then quickly synthesize the "bottom line" are valuable traits that she has brought to the Board.

Sincerely,
Phyllis S. Crowley,
President,
ASTPHND

Celebrate Volunteer Excellence. Nominate Someone for a Points of Light Award.



"Nebraskans are known for giving of themselves and that quality is part of what makes our state such a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family."

-Governor Dave Heineman

service to their communities. Points of Light recipients are presented with a beautiful award while their inspiring stories are shared at a special ceremony at the State Capitol.

The nomination process is easier than ever! Just [click here](#) to download, complete and submit your

It's time once again to nominate a youth, adult or group from your community for a Points of Light Award. Every quarter, ServeNebraska, in cooperation with the Governor's Office, honors accomplishments of Nebraskans who have given exemplary volunteer

Governor's Points of Light Award nomination. The deadline for this quarter's nomination is Sept. 15, 2012.

If you have questions, please contact Kimberle Hall at kim.hall@nebraska.gov; or call 402-471-6228 or 800-291-8911.

In Gratitude

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

Kathleen Stolz, Children and Family Services Administrator, shares this touching story about **Colette Evans**, Children and Family Services Specialist. Colette became involved with this family after the Grand Island DHHS office received a call regarding a mother who had recently given birth and that there were concerns about her ability to parent the infant. Unfortunately, this mother suffered complications during the birth and died shortly after surgery.

As there was no legal guardian for the infant girl, she was placed in a 48-hour hold. When the infant's family arrived from out of state, Colette worked with them to establish legal guardianship. To do this, Colette contacted a local attorney who agreed to complete the guardianship papers pro bono. Colette also sat at the hospital with the family and assisted them in accessing funds through the county burial program for the infant's mother. After the guardianship was established, and before the family left, Colette tracked them down at the funeral home to make sure that everything was alright. Colette brought with her a gift for the infant – a Nebraska Husker outfit so that she would have a memento of her time in Nebraska. This was very touching to the family as the infant girl's mother was a big Husker fan.

The family wanted us to know that Colette was a bright spot during their grief and was thankful for everything she did for them during this difficult time.

Heather Stryker (Social Services Supervisor, Fremont), Recently I had the pleasure of getting **Erin Smith** (Social Services Worker, Fremont) on the phone when calling into the ACCESSNebraska Call Center.

My situation was very grim requiring someone with the excellent phone presence, compassion, care and follow-through that Erin Smith demonstrated.

Please let Erin know that due to her efforts ...I feel confident that things will work out. ...the one person whom I will be eternally grateful to is Erin.

She was truly the angel that I'd prayed for who got the ball rolling. I only wish there were a 100 other Erin's answering and inputting documentation into case files. Those entering into Medicare would be blessed to work with others having Erin's exceptional skills of tact, care and exemplary follow-through and knowledge.

Grateful Client

Hello **Melodee Drenkow** (Social Services Supervisor, Norfolk),

I just wanted to let you know what a GEM **Sharon Clausen** (Program Accuracy Specialist, Norfolk) is. We were struggling with the new voucher change and participant services not being interrupted. I called Sharon on a brainstorm and she tracked down and talked to people and together we have a way to create vouchers without interruption to participant services today! What an amazing woman and asset she is to you and the Department. I don't know what I would do if Sharon was not available on the other end of the phone. To me this went way above her job and I wanted to share this with you.

ResCare Workforce Services