

Connections

WINNER OF THE NATIONAL
PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION
COALITION'S GOLD AWARD

Bringing Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services employees closer together

June 2008
VOLUME 8, ISSUE 6



Photo: Mike Wight

What does underage drinking in the state have to do with this distinguished-looking group that includes Nebraska's First Lady and the Acting U.S. Surgeon General? This group with an interest in combating the threat posed to public health by underage drinking met at University of Nebraska at Omaha to talk about ways of making a difference. For details, see article on page 4.



CONNECTIONS' GOES ONLINE!

Starting next month, *Connections* will move to an online publication, available at dhhs.ne.gov. Employees will be notified when the publication is available through an e-mail notification. Read more on page 5.

INSIDE

"From the CEO"	Page 3
YRTC-Kearney wrestling	Page 4
Surgeon General	Page 6
Food Commodities	Page 7
Front Liner Kelly Brumm	Page 8
Way To Go!	Page 9
"In Their Own Words"	Page 10
Happenings	Page 11

DHHS in the News Update...

A small sample of news releases recently issued by Communications & Legislative Services about DHHS programs. A full text of all releases is available under "Newsroom" on the DHHS Web site listed below.

Vulnerable adult abuse. Medicare scams. BSDC recruitment-retention. Just a few of the 52 media releases about DHHS programs issued in April 2008. Here are a few headlines of news releases DHHS sent to media in May 2008:

- **Week-long Activities Promote Children's Mental Health Week** May 1
- **School Nurses Make Important Contributions** May 2
- **DHHS Moves Service Coordination to Division of Developmental Disabilities** May 2

Check recent DHHS releases by going to www.dhhs.ne.gov/, clicking on the "Newsroom" link and then on "News Releases." You can listen to "sound bites" issued with releases.

Have a story idea you think DHHS should be sharing with media? Contact Communications & Legislative Services at (402) 471-9108! ☎

make the connection . . .

DHHS Public Web site: <http://www.dhhs.ne.gov>

DHHS Employee Web site: <http://www2.dhhs.ne.gov>

DHHS System Advocate: 1-800-254-4202, (402) 471-6035 in Lincoln, or via e-mail at diana.duran@dhhs.ne.gov

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Connections can be made available in an alternative format for those with disabilities. Requests will be filled within 15 working days. Prior consent has been obtained for this publication to identify and publish photos of all individuals receiving DHHS services.

EOE/AA/ADA



printed on recycled paper

Wellness Words:

Personal Preparedness!

While many work behind the scenes to help citizens of Nebraska and our nation be better prepared for emergencies, here's something you can do be better prepared yourself!

Nearly two thirds of all American homes have pets. Caring for pets can be challenging, especially during emergencies. Since our pets depend on us for their safety and well-being, we need to remember them in our emergency plans.

According to Noah's Wish, a group responsible for saving animals in disasters, pet owners should take two basic steps to help care for their pets in a disaster: 1) Have a safe and secure way to transport your animals, and 2) Know where you're going to take them.

Emergency shelters can't accept pets because of health and safety considerations, so plan ahead. Contact hotels to check policies on accepting pets. Keep a list of pet friendly places (boarding facilities, veterinarians) including 24-hour phone numbers with your emergency supply kit. Ask friends and relatives outside your area if they could shelter your animals if needed.

Take your planning one step further by assembling a portable pet supplies kit. Include things like food, water, cat litter/pan, current photos of your pets in case they get lost, vet records, and a sturdy leash.

For more information on emergency planning for your pets, visit the Humane Society at www.hsus.org or Noah's Wish at www.noahswish.com.

For additional information about personal preparedness, contact Public Information Officer **Dianna Seiffert** at (402) 471-1695 or dianna.seiffert@dhhs.ne.gov.

Happy Anniversary, DHHS!

From the CEO

Time flies when you're having fun.

It's hard to believe that on July 1, the Department of Health and Human



By Christine Peterson
Chief Executive Officer,
Nebraska Department
of Health and Human
Services

Services will be one year old! It seems like just yesterday we were making plans to merge three agencies into one. The year has gone quickly. I can truthfully say that being part of building this agency has been

rewarding, challenging, exciting and fun.

Because of the commitment of staff from across the state, we can mark off many accomplishments during the past year:

Like LB 296* envisioned, it is now easier to access people and programs within the Department. Our organizational structure and the names of our six divisions very clearly point people in the right direction. The names — the Divisions of Behavioral Health, Children and Family Services, Developmental Disabilities, Medicaid and Long-Term Care, Public Health, and Veterans' Homes — are descriptive of their focus and work.

Governor Heineman appointed six new division directors and I appointed a Chief Operating Officer. They have all built on existing strengths, and wherever they find weaknesses or problems, they and their staff have worked hard to be more accountable

*LB 296 was introduced in 2007 on behalf of Governor Heineman and merged the three departments of the Health and Human Services System into one single state department.

and make the changes necessary to improve processes and services.

The division directors have worked on strategic plans and identified organizational changes that fit their vision for the future. Changes within divisions continue, with recent announcements that Adult Protective Services, Medicaid eligibility, and Developmental Disability Services Coordination are moving within the Department to new divisions.

Ten top priorities were identified for 2007–2008, with each division responsible for at least one. These have guided our work through the past year and we are seeing progress in all areas.

There have been so many program and facility accomplishments that I hesitate to start naming them, because I know I'll leave something out; however, they have occurred in each and every division. For example, several programs have received high national rankings for their work, others have succeeded in receiving significant competitive grants, and others have been able to increase services and/or implement new programs. Facilities have passed inspections and surveys. The number of state wards is down. The list could go on and on.

While it's fun and important to celebrate our successes, we've also had challenges to deal with and we've met them head on. Sometimes they have garnered more media attention than the positive stories and, therefore, the public perception can be that we do more wrong than right. I know that is far from the truth.

Some of the challenges we've faced include:

- We've worked with the State Auditor to correct and improve internal processes.
- Staffing shortages are a concern in several of our 24-hour facilities,

and contributed to federal survey concerns at the Beatrice State Developmental Center.

- Behavioral Health reform has brought a new way of delivering services for people across the state, often with a learning curve for communities.
- Recent budget constraints mean I've had to put restrictions on printing and travel requests.

Because of our size and scope of our work, we'll always have "fires" to put out, but responding to these problems is making us better. We're becoming more streamlined, efficient, and transparent, or open, in our work.

Employees are talking and working with one another across the divisions. In fact, three divisions (Medicaid and Long-Term Care, Children and Family Services and Behavioral Health) have jointly entered into a contract with one Administrative Services Organization (ASO) to automate, manage, maintain and coordinate mental health and substance abuse treatment, gambling addictions, child welfare and juvenile services for those populations identified in the three divisions. This is a great example of what can be accomplished by having one Department rather than three, and I expect more of this collaboration to happen in the future.

All in all, it's been a very good year. I encourage everyone to take the time to celebrate your successes during the past year and wish each other a happy first anniversary.

YRTC-Kearney youth find wrestling with challenges can help solve 'em

By Jerry Crisp

Youth at the Youth Rehabilitation & Treatment Center (YRTC) at Kearney, who wrestle with behavioral challenges that brought them to the facility, are learning wrestling can help overcome some of those challenges. **Tyler Swarm**, Health instructor at West Kearney High School on the YRTC campus for six years, uses the sport as a strategy to enhance behavior.

Through Swarm's leadership, groups of YRTC youth have been helping run score clocks and timing matches for college tournaments and kids' wrestling exhibitions that fundraise for wrestling scholarships. Through these experiences, the youth have worked side-by-side with University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) wrestlers.

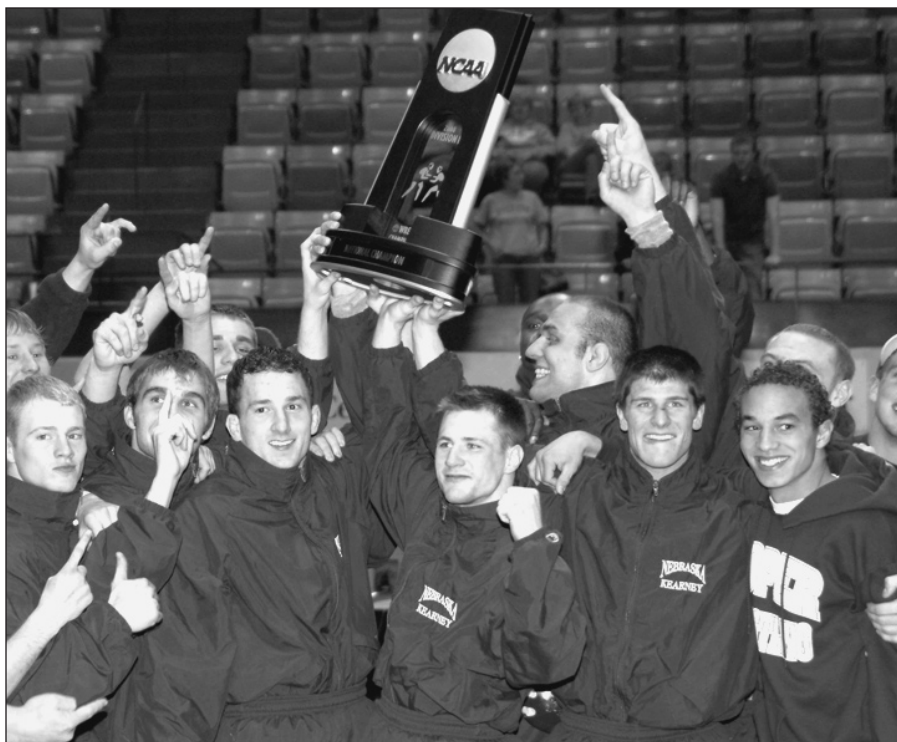
"We always emphasize the fact that what they're doing helps student athletes or assists a fund raising effort that provides those athletes with potential college scholarships," Swarm explains. "The youth are happy about contributing in this way."

"Working the tournament was great," says one YRTC youth. "It made me want to wrestle again."

"Working at the wrestling events is fantastic," says another YRTC youth. "It's enjoyable to see what talent young children have."

"It was great to sit back and watch kids have so much fun," said another YRTC youth. "It's nice to know that I was part of something important to these kids."

Swarm has also brought UNK wrestlers to the YRTC campus. These athletes have worked at the



The UNK wrestling team celebrates its victory in claiming the NCAA Division 2 team title at the national tournament last March in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Photo: Marc Bauer

Halloween Haunted House, assisted in team-building exercises, and mentored during Read Across America Week, during which UNK wrestlers discussed the importance of reading and education with all groups on the YRTC campus.

"These UNK athletes serve as role models and help inspire the youth who are grappling with problems they could use some help with," Swarm says. "These interactions help YRTC youth to learn the value of caring about others, of teamwork, and how by helping others we can also help ourselves."

"The YRTC students have always been hard workers and helped me with whatever tasks I asked of them," says **Keenan McCurdy**, NCAA All-American and 3-time

NCAA Academic All-American. "I have never once had a student act disrespectfully and in fact they always seem very appreciative."

"I had a lot of fun working with the YRTC students," says **Jeff Rutledge**, a 3-time NCAA All-American, 4-time NCAA Academic All-American UNK athlete. "They have been instrumental to the success of our youth wrestling tournaments, and both the YRTC and UNK wrestling program benefit from their time we spend together."

"This partnership has been a win/win situation," says UNK Head Wrestling Coach **Marc Bauer**, "and we look forward to more opportunities to help us grow and learn together."

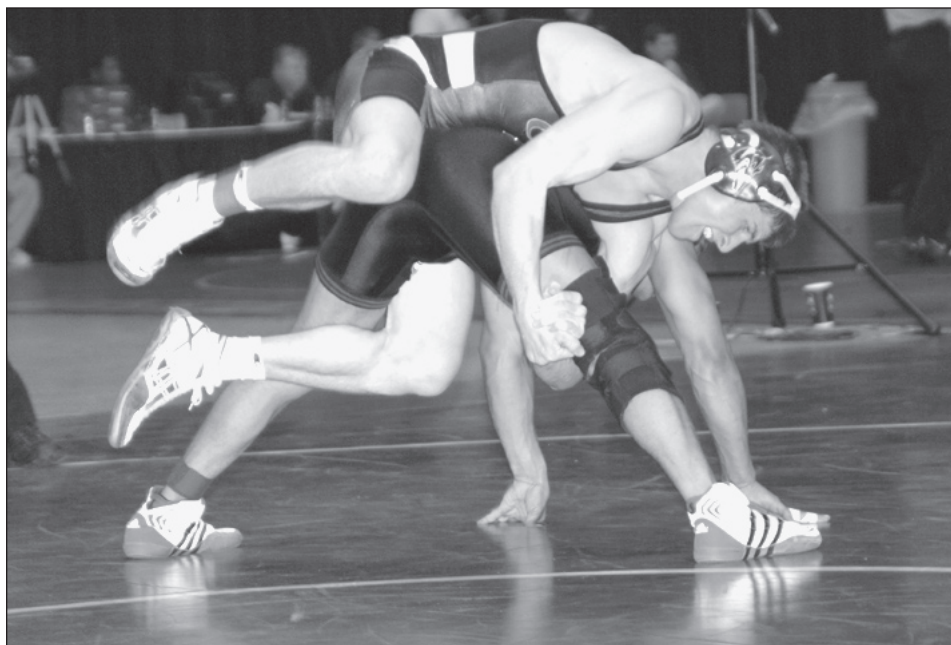
Swarm comes by a YRTC and

UNK partnership quite naturally. Five years after being recruited from Mitchell High School to wrestle at UNK, he student taught for a degree in Health and Physical Education K-12. During that semester, he was in his first year as assistant UNK wrestling coach and also working part-time as a Recreation Aide at the YRTC.

“When I entered the education field, I assumed that I would teach at a public high school while also coaching wrestling,” Swarm explains. “But after working as a Recreation Aid at the YRTC in 2001 during my senior year of college, I realized how much I enjoyed having an influence on youth who have had troubled pasts. A teaching opportunity at the YRTC opened up, and I have been teaching here ever since.”

The work has not been without challenges.

“One struggle I encountered both as a coach and a teacher is learning that you can’t help everyone,” Swarm says. “I have seen kids fail after leaving the YRTC and also seen athletes dismissed from the UNK wrestling program because they chose not to follow guidelines we set for them. But while you can’t help everyone, it’s important



3-time NCAA All-American Jeff Rutledge attempts to take an opponent to the mat.

Photo: Marc Bauer

to focus on providing opportunities and needed guidance while steering people toward positive destinations.”

In spite of the challenges, Swarm perseveres.

“Helping those who have struggled in the past to succeed makes it all worthwhile,” says Swarm. “I wouldn’t change what I’m doing for anything.”

Swarm’s work involving YRTC youth in athletics is an extension of the facility’s ongoing emphasis on community involvement. For many years, the facility has sponsored volunteer work details with Goodwill Industries, Rowe Wildlife Sanctuary near Gibbon, Nebraska, and the Salvation Army, among others.

“Tyler Swarm has enabled YRTC youth to experience a variety of unique activities with UNK students that help them learn new skills and enrich their lives,” says Administrator **Tim O’Dea**. “This helps create the kind of

Tyler Swarm (at right) with UN-K wrestlers Keenan McCurdy from Lincoln and Paul Sutton from Wahoo, get in the mood for an annual Halloween Haunted House on the YRTC campus. Not clear if they’re trying to frighten or showing fear themselves, but the first option is more likely. Photo: Marc Bauer

citizenship we try to encourage in all of the youth served at our facility.”

Like many other DHHS employees who work at the YRTCs in both Kearney and Geneva, Swarm has not only taught but learned that helping other people live better lives can help themselves live better lives as well.

CONNECTIONS’ OPTS FOR ON-LINE OVER PRINT PUBLICATION!

Connections will soon be published electronically and available on-line at dhhs.ne.gov/connections. An e-mail notice will alert employees to each issue. A limited number of copies will be printed for employees in the 24-hour facilities who do not have regular computer access. This decision will help save printing and postage costs and get information to employees sooner. Your DHHS employee newsletter will continue to provide its readers with information of interest and welcomes photos, information and story ideas to help it provide comprehensive statewide coverage.

Surgeon General issues call to action on underage drinking

By Marla Augustine

Gov. Dave Heineman welcomed the acting U.S. Surgeon General to Nebraska in mid-April to issue a call to action against underage drinking in the state. Rear Admiral **Steven K. Galson** was invited to visit the state by First Lady **Sally Ganem** as part of a national first spouses' initiative.

"Alcohol is the most widely used and abused substance among our nation's youth, more than tobacco or illicit drugs. Underage drinking contributes to violent crime, traffic accidents, burns, drowning, alcohol poisoning, addiction and dependency and suicide attempts," Rear Admiral Galson said. "This is unacceptable and preventable."

According to a DHHS report on substance abuse released in February:

- In 2005, more than two in every five Nebraska high school students reported drinking alcohol during the past month. The number of high school students reporting alcohol use was greater than those reporting cigarette and marijuana use combined.
- High school students in Nebraska are 1.7 times more likely than students nationally to report driving after drinking.
- Those in their late teens and early twenties are more likely to binge drink. They are also more likely to drive after drinking, to die or be injured in alcohol-related crashes, to be arrested for alcohol offenses, and to seek substance abuse treatment.



ON THE DAIS: Acting U.S. Surgeon General Steven K. Galson, First Lady Sally Ganem and Scot Adams, PhD, Director of the DHHS Behavioral Health Division, at Nebraska Educational Television in Lincoln. Photo: Mike Wight *Photo: Mike Wight*

First Lady Ganem said the Surgeon General's visit was part of an initiative to move the national conversation about childhood drinking to a wider audience.

"Our young people need to understand the risks they are taking when they choose to drink," Mrs. Ganem said. "And we need more people to be involved in helping young people make better, safer choices."

Rear Admiral Galson spoke at a public event at the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications studio in Lincoln taped for later use and at a public event in Omaha that was broadcast live to six college campuses across the state. The events included students, parents, educators and members of the community.

"We appreciate the opportunity the Surgeon General visits provides to draw attention to the serious challenge we face when it comes to underage drinking," said DHHS CEO **Christine Peterson**. "It takes collaboration at all levels — federal, state and local — to make an impact on an issue like this."

Dr. Scot Adams, Ph.D., Director of the Division of Behavioral Health, said that the Surgeon General's visit opened new discussions about the problem of underage drinking.

"His visit brought people together and encouraged them about what can be done in this state," he said. "I think that we can change the unhealthy and unsafe attitude that drinking is a rite of passage to adulthood."

DHHS Food Distribution Program makes school, child care lunches better than ever

By Dianna Seiffert

School lunches are better than ever, thanks in part to the DHHS Food Distribution Program. The program is responsible for allocating and distributing commodity goods purchased by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and school lunches are a big part of that.

Nationally 50% of students participate in the school lunch program. Nebraska's participation rate is higher at 69%. Currently, 409 schools and 86 child care programs participate. The key to keeping participation rates high is to serve nutritious foods that kids like to eat!

Schools and child cares across the state regularly serve tasty and nutritious meals for breakfast and lunch including favorites offered by Food Distribution like French toast sticks, barbecue pork sandwiches, garlic cheese rolls, and pizza. Even the classic dishes are healthier, like low-fat macaroni and cheese, low-sodium taco meat, and whole-grain grilled cheese sandwiches.

"We're always fighting the stereotype that government commodity foods taste terrible and are unhealthy," said **Julia West**, Food Distribution Coordinator. "It's simply not true. For example, commodity ground beef contains about 15% fat compared to the average 30% fat in the fast food industry. More than 50% of commodities available are grains, fruits and vegetables."

Although the majority of food in schools and child care centers is commercially purchased, commodities account for 20% of what's served. For that amount, schools get to choose what they want to serve.

"Some people think that the government 'dumps' food on the school



(Above) Two women sample nacho cheese dip at DHHS's Food Distribution Commodity Show at the Lancaster County Event Center. (Below) DHHS Food Distribution Program helps schools provide healthy, tasty and economically priced meals. Photos: Dianna Seiffert

lunch program, but really the schools get to choose," said Julia. "Deciding what foods to serve is easier when you're able to taste the products yourself. That's why every year DHHS hosts two commodities processing shows, one in Lincoln and one in North Platte."

The shows give vendors a chance to prepare and promote foods offered through the school lunch program and give school staff a chance to sample those foods available for purchase. For the Lincoln show, approximately 125 people were on hand to learn more about the school lunch program and to sample foods.

Once a school decides what to order, ordering is easy, and the process is all done on-line. For more information about the Nebraska's Food Distribution program, visit www.dhhs.ne.gov/fia/fooddistribution/.



Front Liners

There are thousands of stories to be told about DHHS employees who deliver direct customer services that *help people live better lives*. This is only one of them.

By Jerry Crisp

A Protection & Safety Worker with “Project Harmony” in Omaha, Kelly Brumm often finds herself in the middle of a family needing help. Project Harmony is a partnering agency that completes forensic and medical exams for children who have been sexually or physically abused and immediate medical exams for children placed into out-of-home care. Kelly’s job is to provide the help that family needs to mend and, if possible, reunite.

For four years, Kelly has investigated allegations of abuse or neglect where kids are at risk, when children are either removed from or remain in the home while receiving services. In this effort, she partners with law enforcement and often testifies in court. A couple times a month, she works in an on-call capacity, takes a phone home and goes out to investigate emergencies anytime day or night.

During the course of a day, she might go to homes, schools or child care centers to research a case, and work with service providers, including foster care, family support, and domestic violence agencies, as well as therapists and physicians. And, of course, necessary documentation demands its fair share of her time.

“I might plan a full day’s work, only to get a ‘Priority One’ call that supersedes everything,” Kelly says.

Obvious challenges include meeting the needs of all of the children on her caseload and working with families to help them fix their situations. Compensating rewards include working with those very children and their families and helping them to heal.



Front Liner Kelly Brumm

Photo: Ken Merchant

“No one does this job if they don’t love kids and enjoy finding resolutions that help make those families whole again,” says Kelly. “It’s especially rewarding if we can work with them without needing to go through the court system.”

Another reward is working with others like her.

“We have a superb support system in Project Harmony that allows us to bounce ideas off one another,” says Kelly. “We also learn a lot from each other by consulting with colleagues who have had similar experiences and are willing to share their insights.”

It can be risky at times walking into domestic situations where one is armed only with an ID badge and a cell phone, but caseworkers can contact law enforcement if they feel a situation is unsafe.

“We don’t think a lot about any potential dangers because we focus so completely on risks to the children involved,” says Kelly. “Protecting them from harm is our number one priority.”

The best part of her job is hearing from families who are now successfully reunited or making steady progress.

“When families who were battling meth addiction or violence in their home send a card, phone or even stop by to say thanks for helping them,” Kelly explains, “that’s what it’s all about.”

DHHS Protection & Safety Workers like Kelly Brumm often have similar experiences to share, but those stories never seem redundant. That’s because all of them are clear and shining examples of helping people who help themselves in times of need.

Way to Go!

Statewide or national recognitions, awards, honors



Photo: Jerry Crisp

Joni Thomas, Unit Manager with the Medicaid & Long-Term Care Division, was named as one of eleven distinguished experts on an advisory panel to the National Technical Assistance & Research Leadership Center that promotes employment and economic independence for adults with disabilities. The group will play a critical role in shaping technical assistance and training activities for the NTAR Leadership Center.

“This advisory panel will ensure that our activities reflect the genuine interests and needs of state and local policy makers and practitioners as they work to move adults with disabilities to employment,” said **Kathy Krepcio**, NTAR Leadership Center Project Manager.

According to Long-Term Care Program Supervisor **Ginger Goomis**, “Providing her insight, both as an administrator and a consumer, Joni will be a valuable contributor to the advisory panel in its effort to support employment of people with disabling conditions.”



Photo: Bill Wiley

Dr. Jackie Miller, DDS, Chief Community Health Administrator within the Division of Public Health, has received the 2008 Advocate of the Year Award from the Nebraska Dental Hygienists’ Association (NDHA).

According to NDHA Awards chairperson **Shannon Ostransky**, “The award is an expression of thanks and special recognition for Dr. Miller’s outstanding contributions to the dental hygiene profession.”

Dr. Miller’s contributions to the NDHA include advocating for preventative services, supporting sealant and fluoride programs, providing continuing education presentations, and her dedication to bettering health for all citizens of Nebraska.

Annette Byman of Omaha spoke for many other Dental Hygienists when she said, “Our only wish is that there would be many more Dr. Millers working within our health care system!”

The award was presented to Dr. Miller at a reception in Omaha at the Hilton Hotel on April 18.



Photo: Bill Wiley

Dr. Joann Schaefer, Chief Medical Officer and Director of the Division of Public Health, was recently featured in a “50 Prominent Alumni” article in *Titan*, a publication of California State University at Fullerton. Nebraska’s Chief Medical Officer ranked high, alongside some pretty famous co-alumni, including movie stars Kevin Costner and Forest Whitaker and singing star Gwen Stefani.

Nice to know that DHHS has stars of its own who *rock!*

DHHS employees should be proud of themselves and each other. If you earn statewide or national honors or know a co-worker who does, make sure that *Connections* knows, and we’ll proclaim it here!

In their own words...

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

Dear **Jodene Gall** (Protection & Safety Worker, DHHS Omaha Farnam St. office):

You are one of the best case managers that I have had the opportunity to work with. I have worked with you on two particularly difficult cases, and you have been a trouper on both. You keep me up-to-date on what is happening, which I appreciate. You have been a pleasure to work with.

Kristin Huber
Douglas County Attorney's Office

Dear **Jae Bertrand** (Social Worker, DHHS Kearney office):

Thank you so much for what you have done for my family. It seemed as if you were the only one who cared enough to take time to help me. You have made a difference in my life and in my heart. You are great at what you do.

A Kearney service recipient

Dear **Julie Gockley** (Social Worker, DHHS Imperial office):

Thank you so much for helping me out. Words can only say so much, but for what it's worth, THANK YOU!

A service recipient

Dear **Mona Kramer** (Service Coordinator, DHHS Dakota City office):

Hi, Mona! I have been L's teacher since she was born. I just had to write you and tell you thanks for all you have done to help this family get the waiver! I am so happy to see such a hard-working, nice family get the help they deserve. You are truly an angel!

Julie Higgins
Fremont Public Schools

The following letter from **Brian Farrar** (Developmental Disabilities Service Coordinator, DHHS Kearney office) was published in the *Omaha World-Herald* (May 8, 2008). I wish to thank all of those who recently assisted the Beatrice State Developmental Center in its efforts to meet federal standards. I also share Brian's view that progress is part of the facility's present and his hope that dedicated staff will continue to be a vital part of the facility's future.

John Wyvill, Director
Division of Developmental Disabilities

I recently returned from a 5-week assignment at the Beatrice State Developmental Center as one of 25 state workers from across Nebraska. Going in, I had no idea what I would see... In fact, I found the people living there to be happy, content and living life to the fullest—Living units were well-kept. Residents had their own belongings and were well fed and cared for. Many left the grounds almost daily for a haircut, lunch or a movie.

The staff members I worked with were top-notch people who cared about what they were doing and were properly trained to do it. My only hope is that those truly dedicated staff will ride the wave, continue to believe in what they are doing and stay around.

Brian Farrar, Kearney, Neb.

While *Connections* receives more letters from satisfied customers than we can ever publish, please send letters via any method listed in our editorial box on page 2, and we'll print as many as space allows.

Happenings!

Photos spotlighting DHHS activities around the state



DIVERSITY TIME TRAVEL! The always-creative Diversity Team at the Grand Island Veterans' Home (GIVH) has done it again with a visit to the "Dirty '30s." A timeline of 1930s facts was posted down the hallways leading to the auditorium transformed into a movie theatre, where folks of that time tried to escape from the

harsh realities of the Dust Bowl and Great Depression.

While in the "theatre," visitors watched news clips of the era and met "celebrities." Some of those celebs were (Above left to right) "Hobo" (GIVH Member **John Huenber**), "Mae West" (Volunteer Coordinator **Joanne Badura**), "Movie Star"

(Diversity Committee chairperson **Jeri Thiede**), "Shirley Temple" as child (**Annlea Hamm**, daughter of R.N. **Tasha Hamm**) and Shirley Temple as adult (Social Work Technician **Linda Marisch**), "Albert Einstein" (Maintenance Specialist **Joe Dembowski**), and "Amelia Earhart" (Activity Manager **Nancy Klimek**).

(Below) A basketful of cuddly cuties represents the Canadian-born Dionne Quintuplets, who captured the world's interest and became the most famous babies of that decade.

According to **Geri Thiede**, "We felt that bringing back an earlier era that was familiar to many of the veterans would also help others to learn how those days were both different from and similar to our own time."

Photos courtesy of GIVH Diversity Team



If you have a photo of a DHHS activity you'd like to share with co-workers across the state, contact *Connections* by any method listed in the editorial box on page 2, and we'll print as many as space allows.

BSDC offers Provider Fair

The first “Provider Fair” in April offered an opportunity for 17 service providers from across the state to showcase community-based services so that individuals on campus can become more aware of placement alternatives. More than 100 attended.

“It was a great opportunity to meet people with developmental disabilities, their families, service providers and advocates,” said Deb Weston, Director of the Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) of Nebraska. “A great turnout of people and exciting, fun conversations. Imagine the possibilities!”

It was a great experience, a welcoming environment,” said Travis Jacobs from Community Alternatives of Nebraska, a community provider in Lincoln.

“It was good to see people attend who live at BSDC, so they can be exposed to choices of community providers,” said Rhonda Erikson, DHHS Services Coordinator in Beatrice. “I hope that BSDC will offer another Provider Fair in the future.”



ARC of Nebraska Director Deb Weston, Director of DHHS Division of Developmental Disabilities John Wyvill, and Laurie Ackermann of the Ollie Webb Center in Omaha.

Photo: Fran Stegemann

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services mission:
Helping people live better lives.



**Nebraska Department of Health
and Human Services**

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