

# Connections

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

Bringing Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services employees closer together

March 2011  
VOLUME 11, ISSUE 3



Photo: Audrey Hester

DHHS is on Facebook and so are Jeanie and James from the Eastern Nebraska Veterans' Home. Read about this Facebook Favorite Photo on the inside front cover of this issue.

## HIGHLIGHTS (Click on headline to jump to story)

<a href="#">The Good Life</a>	3	<a href="#">Hints from Help Desk Features Outlook</a>	8
<a href="#">Directions -- Behavioral Health</a>	4	<a href="#">Families Matter Success Stories/New Website</a>	9
<a href="#">New Website Platform Creates Collaboration</a>	5	<a href="#">DHHS Helpline Answers Popular Question</a>	10
<a href="#">Environmental Health Lab</a>	6	<a href="#">In Their Own Words</a>	11
<a href="#">Front Liners Features Colleen Svoboda</a>	7		

# DHHS now on **twitter** and **facebook**

You can follow DHHS at <http://twitter.com/NebraskaDHHS>

## DHHS in the News Update. . .

Here are a few headlines of news releases recently issued by Communications & Legislative Services about DHHS programs. You can read and subscribe to all DHHS news releases from the DHHS [Newsroom](#). You can also listen to [sound bites](#) issued with releases.

[Children Benefit From New Dental Program](#)

March 14, 2011

[Nebraska Medicaid Selects Practices for Medical Home Pilot](#)

Feb. 22, 2011

[Alcoholism in the Family Negatively Impacts Children](#)

Feb. 14, 2011

DHHS employees are interviewed by broadcast media, too. Here's an interview that Kerry Winterer did with Tom Becca. It was on KFAB radio, Thursday, Feb. 24 at 5 p.m. CST. Listen here! [http://www.kfab.com/cc-common/podcast/single\\_podcast.html?podcast+TomBeccaShow.xml](http://www.kfab.com/cc-common/podcast/single_podcast.html?podcast+TomBeccaShow.xml)

Go to [DHHS In The News](#) on the Employee Home Page for links to *Omaha World-Herald* and *Lincoln Journal Star* articles involving DHHS programs and services.

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 Website:** [www.dhhs.ne.gov](http://www.dhhs.ne.gov)

**DHHS Employee Website:** [www2.dhhs.ne.gov](http://www2.dhhs.ne.gov)

**DHHS Helpline:** 1-800-254-4202, (402) 471-6035 in Lincoln, or via e-mail at [dhhs.helpline@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.helpline@nebraska.gov)

Chief Executive Officer:

**Kerry Winterer**

Behavioral Health

Division Director:

**Scot Adams, Ph.D.**

Children and Family Services

Division Director:

**Todd Reckling**

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**

*Connections* is published monthly for employees of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services by Communications & Legislative Services (CLS) in collaboration with the Graphics & Layout Unit in Support Services:

CLS Administrator:

**Kathie Osterman**

Editor:

**Dianna Seiffert**

Graphics and Layout:

**Maisun Allahiq**

**Judy Barker**

**Robby DeFrain**

► **Readers are invited to submit news, photos & story ideas to the editor via:**

**Phone:** (402) 471-1695 **Fax:** (402) 471-3996 **E-mail:** [dianna.seiffert@nebraska.gov](mailto:dianna.seiffert@nebraska.gov)

**Interagency mail:** Nebraska State Office Bldg. 3rd Floor **U.S. mail:** P.O. Box 95026, 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-5026

## About the Cover: Facebook Favorites



Did you know that DHHS is on Facebook? With nearly 500 fans and counting, Facebook is another good way to share information and connect with people with similar interests. You can look at DHHS' Facebook and Twitter accounts through our website, [www.dhhs.ne.gov](http://www.dhhs.ne.gov). Click on the Facebook and Twitter icons on the homepage.

Here's a favorite Facebook blurb we posted recently: (Thanks to **Audrey Hester** who emailed the photo to us.)

**James**, a member of the Eastern Nebraska Veterans' Home seen here with **Jeanie**, an RN, gets a hug from his purple monkey. The stuffed animals were a special Valentine's Day surprise from the Papillion-LaVista Kids Club and every member got one. The club is a K-6 before and after school childcare program with sites in Papillion, LaVista and Bellevue. You can bet the soft critters brought smiles to the faces of our members.

\*Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages, and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues.

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



Photo: Bill Wiley

By Kerry T. Winterer,  
CEO

I recently spent over half an hour with Tom Becka, one of Omaha's radio personalities, for a live interview in the "drive time" slot as people headed home from work one snowy Thursday. I've known Tom for a while so I thought it would be worth asking him to schedule me on his

program, and he was very happy to oblige.

I have to admit I was a bit uneasy about the "live" part of doing a long, live interview, but I thought it was a great opportunity to let people know more about DHHS and help them understand more about the work we do.

Tom asked quite a bit about Families Matter, the reform of Nebraska's child welfare and juvenile services, and the

reasons behind it. He's paid attention to news stories and knows there's been some controversy. He already knew that Nebraska has one of the highest rates in the nation of children who are made state wards and that, of those, the majority are in out-of-home placements.

I was able to tell him and KFAB listeners that we're making progress. We know kids grow best in their own homes and that whenever we can serve them there with services to keep them safe, that's what we should be doing.

Tom's questions also gave me the chance to talk about the Department as a whole. I touched on the huge scope of the divisions and told him and his listeners that Department employees are mission-driven and committed to serving Nebraskans.

As I had hoped, this turned out to be a good opportunity to talk about the Department's work, and luckily for me Tom was easier on me than he is on many of his on air guests. I hope to have more opportunities to do this with other radio stations. It isn't difficult at all to talk about the good work that you're doing each and every day.

**Editor's note:** You can access Kerry's interview with Tom Becka by clicking the link below. Look for the podcast on Thursday, Feb. 24, at 5 p.m.

[http://www.kfab.com/cc-common/podcast/single\\_podcast.html?podcast=TomBeckaShow.xml](http://www.kfab.com/cc-common/podcast/single_podcast.html?podcast=TomBeckaShow.xml)



Kerry Winterer, CEO, with Tom Becka, Omaha Radio Personality.



### Behavior Health

There are a lot of great things happening in the Division of Behavioral Health. Here's a quick rundown from **Scot Adams**.

- The Division of Behavioral Health's Gamblers Assistance Program in partnership with the State Committee on Problem Gambling is developing a new strategic plan for problem gambling services in Nebraska. The committee appointed a project facilitator and ad hoc team consisting of representation from the committee, DHHS, providers and stakeholders to be utilized to develop a draft plan for committee and state review. The final strategic plan is expected for release in April or May 2011. This strategic plan will serve as a guide for the next several years to support the mission of reducing the impact of problem gambling



Scot Adams

in Nebraska through quality and effective education and treatment services.

- The Problem Gambling Helpline handled over 2,000 calls during the last fiscal year, providing information, crisis intervention and referral services to people negatively impacted by gambling. The Helpline is available 24/7 at 1-800-522-4700. Help is a phone call away.
- The Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) and the Facilitator's Circle offered peer support and wellness

specialist training to 22 people in January. Seventy-four percent of the class passed the test. OCA will give the Peer Support and Wellness Specialist Exam to anyone with 40 hours of training in peer support in August and offer another training in July 2011.

- Joint Commission surveyors who visited the Lincoln Regional Center in January commented on the quality of people who work at LRC, how friendly staff was, and how knowledgeable and dedicated they are. Bill Gibson said staff interaction with the surveyors was a fine demonstration of teamwork.
- The statewide "Success, Hopes, and Dreams" behavioral health conference will be offered May 25th and 26th for people utilizing behavioral health services, family members and providers. This event will provide networking opportunities and educational resources, and foster community sharing and independent living. The goal is wellness, recovery, resiliency, and prevention for Nebraskans. For more information see <http://www.nebraskastateconference.org/>.



## Going Paperless



Organizing experts agree. Paper can be a problem. And keeping too much of it around can cause stress for many people and cost an organization a lot of money.

With a state-wide directive to reduce printed materials, there's no time like the present to go paperless. In addition to the cost savings, reduced waste and greater accessibility provided by electronic documents, employees also know they're always working with the most up-to-date version of a form or publication.

Did you know that the majority of DHHS forms and publications are available online? Check out the [forms website](#) on the employee intranet. You can search by form number or title. There's also a public website for clients to access external forms 24/7.

Storing your papers and files electronically saves time and money. So avoid printing, if you can, and access your forms and publications online.

## To the Cloud:

# New Website Platform will Create Collaborative Work Space

By: Greg L. Votava

Participation and engagement are keys to a successful Website design effort, and in late December, 1,120 DHHS employees participated in the DHHS Employee Intranet Survey. The survey focused on the strengths and weakness of our current employee site and asked what features and improvements employees would like to see in the future.

While the results showed a mixed bag of responses, a few underlying ideas came through clearly. Many of you were fairly happy with our current site, and enjoy the new Bulletin Board and In-The-Box features. However, better search capabilities and the ability to access the employee site from any computer, anywhere, led the list of desired improvements.

Employees also supported building organizational unity through the use of employee profiles that will provide a face with a name. The desire to better know the people we work with was also expressed in two earlier surveys; one conducted by **Kerry Winterer** upon his arrival at the helm of DHHS and the other by the Division of Public Health last year.

Recently a major effort was launched to convert both the DHHS public and employee sites to Microsoft SharePoint, a content management platform. This move is also in-line with the Department's direction and use of SharePoint as a document sharing tool. SharePoint will be used to provide the framework for employee collaboration and improved site navigation, and provide a better understanding of how people use our sites.

This new work environment will allow employees to easily share information and collaborate with each other across the state. It will improve employee communication while providing efficiencies through a shared knowledge-base of our workforce. It will

help to retain the institutional knowledge of workers when they retire while providing tools that new hires expect. In turn this will produce more accurate, timely and useful information for our various external audiences and create a better user experience for both employees and the public.

Currently all the content on both websites is being reviewed and edited by agency Web Content Providers, and a User Test Group is being assembled to assist with site testing and to suggest design changes. Additionally Information Systems and Technology is developing site templates and the process of migrating over 27,600 files on the current public site and over 1,750 files on the current employee site to the new platform.

The projected completion date is July 30, 2011.

We appreciate your participation in the survey and the process of converting the DHHS public website to the new SharePoint platform. The feedback you provide and continue to provide will help create a useful, efficient and enjoyable work environment that you can call your home(page).



**Greg Votava** (left) and **John Canfield** (DHHS-OCIO) strategize about SharePoint. With SharePoint, DHHS employees will be able to access the employee website safely and securely even at home.

# Environmental Lab Tests Blood Alcohol Levels and More

By: Marla Augustine

“John” was stopped by a Nebraska State Patrol officer for erratic driving. As required by law, the officer gave him a choice between a breath test and a blood test for alcohol content. John chose to have his blood tested, so the officer took him to a local hospital for a blood draw.

After testing by the DHHS Public Health Environmental Laboratory, it was determined that John’s blood alcohol level exceeded .08, the legal limit. The County Attorney chose to prosecute John for driving under the influence.

All blood samples for alcohol testing are sent or delivered to the Environmental Laboratory on South 14th Street in Lincoln.

When the samples arrive at the lab, either **Amy Langan** or **Jamie Mraz** (both Forensic Scientists) uses a gas chromatograph and other equipment to determine blood alcohol content. After the testing is performed, a report is sent to local law enforcement and the local county attorney. Based on the test from the Environmental Lab, county attorneys decide whether prosecution is in order.

It’s not CSI like on television, according to Amy and Jamie. They don’t travel to crime scenes and collect the evidence. They don’t decide who did the crime. That is up to local law enforcement and the county attorneys.

Amy and Jamie don’t mind that their work is not like CSI. They like it for other reasons.

“I love working in the lab,” said Jamie. “From fifth grade I knew I wanted to do forensic toxicology someday.”

To support the introduction of the test results into evidence in a court case, the process for testing and the implementation of chain of custody standards have to be explained. Sometimes, Amy and Jamie testify before a judge or a jury.



Photo: Marla Augustine

“I like seeing the lights go on in the eyes of jurors when I testify,” said Amy. “If I can explain it so they understand it, I get a lot of satisfaction. I also like talking to students who are interested in forensics. Of course, they expect it to be like CSI, but they are interested in what I do.”

The lab processed about 2,800 blood samples in 2010. The peak times for number of samples that come to the lab is right after St. Patrick’s Day. Other peaks are around the Christmas/New Year’s holidays and after Husker football games.

“The lab is a vitally important part of the prosecution of drunken drivers,” said **Dr. Joseph Acierno**, Deputy Chief Medical Officer. “Amy and Jamie do a good job helping to keep them off the streets.”

The lab has been in business for over 80 years. It employs 17 full-time staff and is certified by the EPA, which performs on-site audits every three years.



Jamie Mraz (left) and Amy Langan

Photo: Marla Augustine



# 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.

## Colleen Svoboda: Helping People Live Healthier Lives, One Community at a Time

By Dianna Seiffert

Helping to make communities healthier is one of **Colleen Svoboda's** goals at DHHS. She serves, in part, as a liaison between the state and Nebraska's local public health departments.

"A favorite part of my job is getting out there and seeing what's going on at the local level," Colleen says. "Working with local health departments makes me feel connected. I feel like I have a better appreciation for our state and the people here."

Colleen works in the Office of Community Health and Performance Management in the Division of Public Health. The office coordinate millions of dollars of grant money and activities — a huge process. Some grants are passed along or awarded to local health departments, communities and other organizations. These grants involve a lot of people which is why Colleen is quick to point out that making communities healthier is a team effort.

We work with local health departments on a lot of activities,

Colleen says. We plan, organize sharing opportunities, provide training...all things that help us determine how to make communities healthier.

Colleen started working for DHHS five years ago, right out of graduate school, and says she couldn't have taken a better first job. Colleen has her Masters' degree in Public Health with special areas of focus on health behavior and health education.

"I enjoy working with my co-workers," says Colleen. "I've learned something from each and every one of them. Dave Palm is an excellent mentor. He has a good vision for public health in Nebraska."

Colleen started working for DHHS as a Program Coordinator. The federal government wants to create performance improvement processes at state health departments, so Colleen's current job of Performance Improvement Manager adds duties to help with that process.

"We'll be creating benchmarking standards to make health departments become more credible and accountable,"

Colleen says. "We will also need to do some strategic planning for the Division of Public Health so we can create a statewide health improvement plan."

From visiting local health departments to writing grants and progress reports, Colleen said she enjoys her unique job and likes the fact that no day is ever the same.

"I really like thinking about the big picture of public health in Nebraska... where we are headed, and what we're doing to get there. I feel like we're all in this together...like we're all going in the right direction."

"I learn something new every time I visit a community," Colleen says. "I like visiting local health departments and learning what it takes to work at one. Sometimes a health department has only five employees, and they are responsible for the health and safety of residents of 10 Nebraska counties. Those kinds of things are incredible to me. When I get to visit I get to find out what the local issues are. I feel like we're all getting a lot of good work done."

With all of the excitement and energy that comes with changing the face of public health in Nebraska, there are challenges, too. Colleen said one of the major ones is keeping track and evaluating what we do. She also talked about the importance of finding time for reflection.

"We have a lot of great ideas and want to make sure we have time to implement them. We also want to make sure we give our partners what they need; we don't just assume we know what they need."

"Everything we do helps people live better lives because of better health," says Colleen. "If you don't have an organized process or don't know what your health priorities are, you can't make a change for the better."



Photo: Brian Coyle

Colleen Svoboda (left) with colleagues from Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health

# Helpful (Outlook) Hints from the Help Desk

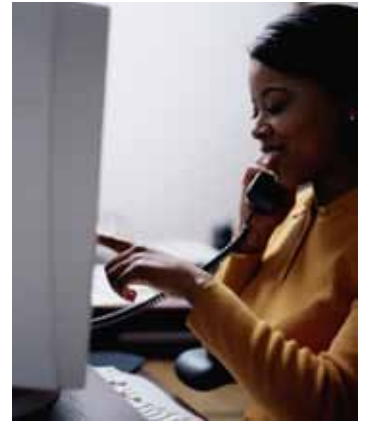
Having trouble logging on to Outlook? Who should you call for help? The DHHS Help Desk! Help Desk staff respond to an average of 440 calls and emails per day, not including the weekend. That's a lot of help! There are things we can do for ourselves, though, that might save us a call to the Help Desk.

Here are some tips related to Outlook.

1. If you are unable to log onto Outlook, make sure you have the full email address as the user name (firstname.lastname@nebraska.gov)
2. When logging into Outlook, if you click on the "remember my password" option, it will save your user name. It will not save your password, just the user name. This will need to be repeated if you are logging onto a workstation for the first time or if you have had any work done on your workstation.
3. If your email is getting full, check to make sure that you have emptied your deleted items. Deleted items, sent items and everything else in the folders in Outlook count towards your mail file size.
4. Remember to change your Outlook password before it expires. Otherwise you will have to call the Help Desk to unlock your account. When you change your Outlook password, be sure to make the same change to your

- mobile devices, and to Live Meeting.
5. The Outlook Quick Access Toolbar is easy to use and very helpful. Right-mouse click on any feature in the Ribbon that you use often and add it to the toolbar. You can even add an entire Tab. Your chosen features will always be visible no matter where you are in the "Ribbon" Tabs. Another option is to display your Quick Access Toolbar below the Ribbon for easy access.
6. Save Sent Items - In Outlook when drafting a new memo, open the Options Tab, Click on Save Sent Items. Then select the folder where you want to store your memo. This is like the Send and File option in Notes. Add it to the Quick Access Toolbar.

Remember, you can contact the Help Desk at (402) 471-9069 or (800) 722-1715. Or, by email at: [dhhs.helpdesk@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.helpdesk@nebraska.gov). The Help Desk is open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. CST.



---

## DHHS TUNE Your Life Project



The DHHS TUNE Your Life project has been recognized through several public relation and advertising awards for its innovative use of music to promote wellness messages to youth. Celebrating the recognition are (left to right): Leah Bucco-White, Marla Augustine, Dr. Jackie Miller, Paula Eurek, Sue Spanhake, Linda Henningsen, Greg Votava, Bill Wiley, and Dr. Joann Schaefer. Check out the Tune project website at <http://www.tunemylife.org>.



# Families Matter Website Features Success Stories

By Jeanne Atkinson

Families Matter child welfare and juvenile services reform is built on serving more children in their homes and is driven by the federal outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being.

“We’re partnering with KVC Behavioral Healthcare, Inc. in the southeast area including Lincoln, and with both KVC and Nebraska Families Collaborative in Douglas and Sarpy Counties,” said **Todd Reckling**, director of the Division of Children and Family Services. “We’re hearing about great success stories.”

For example:

- “Carrie” was removed from home last July and placed in a foster home through KVC. Her worker made a special effort to get this little girl placed with extended family, because we know children do better with someone they know. Carrie moved in with her grandparents and in January they became her guardians. She now has a loving home with them.
- “Barbara” has had an open case with DHHS since 2008. After two of her children were returned to her home last June, Barbara worked tirelessly to maintain consistency and structure in her home. She celebrated two years of

sobriety in July of 2010. The plan that was submitted to the court included voluntary aftercare for Barbara, and the case was closed successfully.

- “Jeremy’s” mother has relapsed from substance abuse treatment many times. She has said that “Ed,” Jeremy’s father, didn’t want to be involved in Jeremy’s life. NFC worker Jennie decided to look for more options for this little boy and discovered Ed was in drug court and trying to change his life. She set up visitation and now Jeremy and his father have an amazing connection. Jeremy was one happy little boy on Christmas Day, when he was returned to his father. This is a great example of how taking the extra step of finding fathers can be worth every bit of effort.
- “Emily” has been in and out of foster homes for six years but is free for adoption. Her sister has already been adopted. Despite best efforts, no foster homes were willing to provide permanency for Emily. NFC worker Melissa searched again for family or people who knew Emily. Due to Melissa’s actions, Emily is now placed with her half brother and his father, who is considering guardianship for her!

Get more information about Families Matter at:  
<http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/FamiliesMatter>

DHHS Families Matter website is updated and easier to use and navigate.

Official Nebraska Government Website

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Home

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH | CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES | DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES | MEDICAID & LONG TERM CARE | PUBLIC HEALTH | VETERANS' HOMES

SEARCH

WELCOME! I invite you to look at how we're serving more children in their homes and improving Nebraska's child welfare and juvenile services system.

-Todd L. Reckling

Children and Family Services Home  
Contact Us  
Subscribe to this Site

Families matter.

Nebraska Child Welfare and Juvenile Services Reform  
Safety • Permanency • Well-being

What is Families Matter? | Successes & Communications | How We're Doing | Partners

# DHHS Helpline Answers Popular Questions

The DHHS Helpline is a toll-free hotline for people who have questions or concerns. We know people have real concerns, and we want them to know a real person will answer their questions about the services we provide.

The Helpline is available Monday through Friday 8-5, Central time. The main users are consumers of DHHS services, citizens and providers. The toll-free statewide number is 1-800-254-4202. In Lincoln, call: (402) 471-6035; or, email: [DHHS.Helpline@nebraska.gov](mailto:DHHS.Helpline@nebraska.gov)

**Diana Duran**, Communications and Legislative Services, is the person in the know when it comes to the Helpline.

Last year she and others logged 8,398 Helpline calls, emails and walk-in contacts.

What are some of the most frequent questions? Here's one. People call in asking what the law says about what age a child can be left home alone. Believe it or not, Nebraska has no law that states a specific age when children can be left home alone. Each situation must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis considering a number of factors.

Here are the guidelines that Children and Family Services use to help parents decide what is appropriate: [http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/Children\\_Family\\_Services/homealone.htm](http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/Children_Family_Services/homealone.htm)



**Real Questions, Real Concerns, Real People**  
*We want to help!*  
**Call the DHHS Helpline**  
Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Central Standard Time.  
**>> E-mail: [DHHS.Helpline@nebraska.gov](mailto:DHHS.Helpline@nebraska.gov) <<**

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

**DHHS Helpline:**  
(800) 254-4202

**In Lincoln call:**  
(402) 471-6035

Department of Health & Human Services  
**DHHS**  
NEBRASKA  
11-08

*DHHS is on the move*

Employees are settling into new office space in Fremont this month. The Fremont Customer Service Center recently opened its doors as the second of four planned centers. Employees are undergoing extensive training now and plan to start taking calls as an official customer service center in May.

We'll have more coverage on the move in next month's issue of Connections. Watch for it here.

# In their own words

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

**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 two letters of appreciation:

Dear **Jana Peterson** (Administrator, YRTC Kearney):

On behalf of the entire membership of Elk's of Kearney lodge #984, thank you and your students for their assistance in helping us stage the "Elk's Hoop Shoot."

Having your guys keep the ball moving during the competition really helps us get things done in an efficient and timely manner, which is invaluable to the shooters and all involved. With over 60 kids shooting in each group, this is of great benefit.

Hope to see you again next year.

**The Co-Chair of Elk's Hoop Shoot**

**Jana Peterson**  
(Administrator, YRTC-Kearney):

Thank you for giving up your time for us to come tour. I know a lot of people thought the tour was very interesting. I know that I learned a lot about YRTC. Also, thanks for letting the kids give the tours because kids listen to kids better than they do adults.

**Signed by All of the Leadership  
Kearney Youth**

**Editor's Note:** The YRTC-Geneva North School is accredited. Credits earned by students at Geneva North are transferable to Nebraska schools once the girls are paroled from the facility. According to [YRTC-G's 2009/2010 annual report](#), seventeen students received Geneva North High School diplomas through various programs. Here's a letter from a high school senior:

Dear **Mr. Scarborough** (Administrator, YRTC-Geneva)

I just wanted to say thank you for letting me take my senior pictures here on campus and letting my mom come early and letting me wear my own clothes to take the pictures. They turned out really good!

**A Grateful Youth**

Good morning **Marilyn Kudera** (Social Service Supervisor, Norfolk):

I wanted to give your worker, **Linda Hintz** (Social Service Worker, Norfolk), some kudos for being so very nice. She was very easy to talk to about the case and was able to answer all my questions. She clearly demonstrates excellent customer service and has her cases' best interest in mind. Thank you for having such a great worker!

**Community Outreach  
OneWorld Community Health Centers Inc.**



**Denise O'Brien**, (Children and Family Services Specialist, North Platte), received a nice letter from the U.S. Attorney's office expressing appreciation for his assistance in a child abduction case last summer. Dennis conducted an interview that was a big part of the U.S. Attorney's "solid" case. (Background: An 8-year-old was kidnapped from the Big Springs truck stop last June, and William Buckner recently entered a guilty plea to the kidnapping charge. Since Buckner pleaded guilty, the 8-year-old didn't have to testify at trial.)

Thank you very much for all your hard work and effort putting this case together, and completing the follow-up work requested. The strength of the case greatly facilitated Buckner's willingness to enter a guilty plea, which may well not have happened if the case had not been so solid.

**U.S. Attorney's Office**

**Hello,**

This week I was told that I would be required to travel out of the country for my job in just a few short weeks. Naturally, that means an immediate passport. An immediate passport requires an immediate certified birth certificate. I personally wanted to take time to thank the wonderful people who helped me obtain what I needed within a very short amount of time. First they were very courteous and polite. Second they were very knowledgeable and helpful, and third they helped me get this application expedited very rapidly.

**A Grateful Customer**

Dear **Irene Eckman**, (Health Licensing Specialist, Public Health, Lincoln)

I would just like to thank you for your assistance in getting my Respiratory Care license. I appreciate your professionalism and the manner in which you interacted with me. I know that sometimes it is easy to take for granted the work that others do for us because we see it as their "job," but I hope this note of appreciation helps you feel that your efforts are worthwhile and greatly appreciated.

**A Thankful Client**

**Editor's Note:** Vital Records gets many letters of appreciation from customers needing certified records (birth certificates, etc.) right away. Here are a few of those letters:

Dear **Vital Records** (Division of Public Health, Lincoln),

I received a copy of my birth certificate from your office two days ago. I was fearful of possible delays in getting my necessary document, and in my case, my job was in peril due to needing to renew my driver's license as a condition of work. I was able to renew my license the next day. I wish to convey my sincere thanks and appreciation to your office for helping me in such a fast, efficient manner.

Also, your website could hardly be easier to access and use, and I was kept notified of your receiving my application in a timely manner. Thanks so much for being so fast, efficient and capable. It was a pleasure doing business with you.

**A Satisfied Customer**

Hello **Sheila Bacon** (DHHS Administrator, Customer Service Center, Lincoln)

I wanted to let you know about my experience with **Maryland Williams** (Social Service Worker, Omaha). She was one of the nicest caseworkers I have worked with at DHHS. She had very good customer service and was able to answer my questions about the case within a timely manner. When we work with someone with such great customer service, we always like to give them "kudos."

**Meghan Kissel**  
**OneWorld Community Health Center, Inc.**

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.