

# CONNECTIONS

May 2017

VOLUME 16, ISSUE 4

*Bringing Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services' employees closer together*

## LRC Arborist is "leafing" a legacy

*By Julie Naughton*

How does your garden – or arboretum, in this case – grow? Just ask **Dave Nicklas**.

Nicklas, who will retire in December after 45 years with the state of Nebraska, has worked at the Lincoln Regional Center since May 8, 1972, and has dedicated his career to making the grounds of the Lincoln Regional Center a prominent landmark. The Lincoln Regional Center campus has been an accredited arboretum and an affiliate site with the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum since 1984.

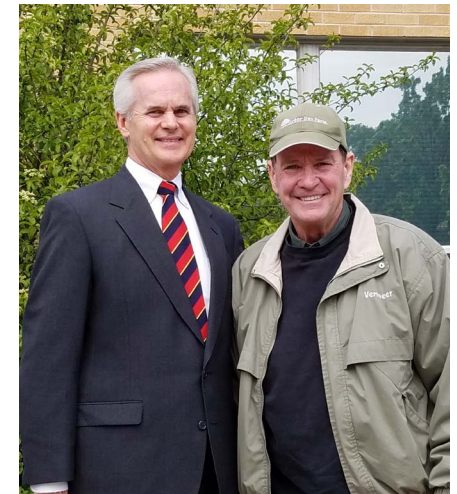
The arboretum at the Lincoln Regional Center focuses on the relationship between landscape plants and mental health. Since 1980, LRC patients have actively participated in planting and maintaining the Arboretum plants. While at the facility, patients maintain and improve plantings and exhibits as a part of reorganizing their lives. They have learned gardening skills, and experienced the healing power of nature. The campus is a peaceful setting that LRC patients, employees,

and visitors enjoy year-round. "Planting a tree symbolizes a faith in tomorrow for those who may have trouble envisioning a future for themselves," said Rachel Johnson, religious coordinator for LRC. "These trees will continue to bring healing and hope to all who experience their beauty."

**Lt. Gov. Mike Foley**, along with Sheri Dawson, director of the Division of Behavioral Health, Myles Jones, facility administrator, Stacey Werth-Sweeney, facility operating officer for the Lincoln Regional Center, as well as Justin Evertson, Christina Hoyt and Eric Berg of the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, honored Nicklas at the Lincoln Regional Center's annual Arbor Day celebration. Also on hand to offer congratulations were Dick Campbell of Campbell's Nursery and James Locklear, director of conservation, Lauritzen Gardens, Omaha. The LRC Arboretum Committee has organized and held the annual Arbor Day ceremony since 1978, planting trees each year to add to an already beautiful campus.

"Dave Nicklas emulates the spirit of what it means to truly love and care about your job and the role you play in making lives better," said Werth-Sweeney. "He is one of the hardest-working, most dedicated and loyal employees I have worked with and without him, our patients and staff would not have the luxury of enjoying such a beautiful campus to work in. Dave leaves us with a true legacy of building a beautiful arboretum that he can be proud of. We are all better because of the hard work him and his crews have done over the years to make LRC beautiful."

LRC, a 107-acre campus, has 375 different plant varieties that include evergreens, ornamental trees, shade trees, and shrubs, as well as approximately 4,000 trees. The variety includes a walnut grove, more than 30 different varieties of oaks, and a strong collection of viburnum trees. Many trees have been acquired over the years from the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum and from local nurseries,



Lieutenant Governor Mike Foley and Dave Nicklas

which has helped develop the great variety at the facility.

In 1982, trees honoring deceased staff members became part of the ceremony. The first memorial tree planted was in memory of Orville Peters. This year, trees were planted in memory of Kelley Champion, Moses Gaskins III, William Gibson and Pat Yochum.

## Stay Connected on



### make the connection . . .

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# Division of Veterans' Homes moves out of DHHS

By Melissa Lindell

Changes are coming to DHHS. Last month Gov. Ricketts signed LB 340 that gives the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs responsibility of the current DHHS Division of Veterans' Homes.

The bill that he signed into law will put Nebraska's four state-run veterans' homes within the state Department of Veterans' Affairs for the first time. The Division of Veterans' Homes has been located within DHHS since it was created by the Legislature in 1997. Prior to 1997, it was located within the former Department of Public Institutions.

The legislation was one of the Governor's top priorities for the 2017 legislative session, and it was passed with unanimous support from the

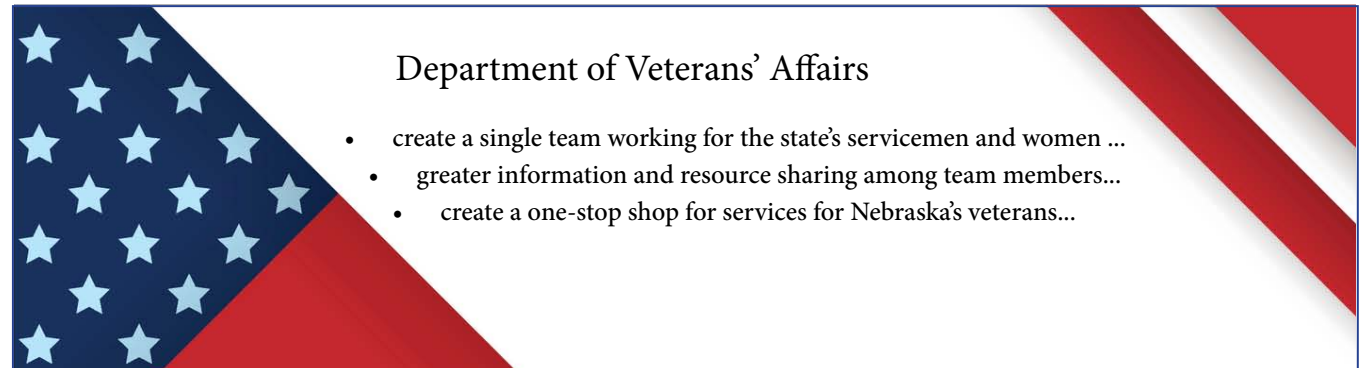
Legislature. Ricketts says the merger will form "one, united team" working to help Nebraska's 143,000 military veterans. "No longer will our veterans have to work with two agencies to receive services. This one-stop shop for services for Nebraska's veterans creates a single, united team working for the men and women who have sacrificed so much for our state and country," he said.

DVH operates four facilities from Bellevue in the east to Scottsbluff in the West, and includes facilities in Norfolk and Grand Island. NDVA has operations in Lincoln and Alliance as well as collaborating with veterans' service officers across the state. A single agency will:

- Unite the state's resources for veterans and create a single team

working for the state's servicemen and women.

- Allow for greater information and resource sharing among team members responsible for serving our veterans.
- Create a one-stop shop for services for Nebraska's veterans. No more calling more than one agency for assistance.
- Moving DVH out of DHHS will allow DHHS to continue its focus on helping its customers of the other divisions live better lives. "Thanks to the leadership of Governor Ricketts, we are realizing a vision that has been discussed for at least the last 20 years," said NDVA Director John Hilgert.



## Department of Veterans' Affairs

- create a single team working for the state's servicemen and women ...
- greater information and resource sharing among team members...
- create a one-stop shop for services for Nebraska's veterans...



Courtney Phillips, CEO

## Message from Courtney Phillips, CEO

### Greetings #TeamDHHS!

For this month's article, Melissa challenged me to a quick *Get-to-know the CEO*. So, here are some random facts that Melissa pulled out of me.

- Q: Do you play any sports?**  
 A: While I don't play any sports right now, in high school I was involved in track, volleyball, softball, and flag football...but no basketball---- couldn't dribble and walk for the life of me!
- Q: What is your favorite childhood memory?**  
 A: My favorite childhood memory is all about being active: I loved to play in the yard with my cousins. I also loved spending as much time with my grandfather as possible.

- Q: What are your favorite flowers?**  
 A: My favorite flowers are roses, water lilies, and tulips.
- Q: Who has been the most influential person in your life?**  
 A: I would have to say my grandparents, my mother, several teachers, and numerous mentors. And in the last five years, my son Langston has been a major influencing and motivating factor in my life.
- Q: How's your Ph.D. pursuit coming along?**  
 A: Ph.inishD! I just received my PhD. Special thanks to every team member that asked (nagged) me about it.



Courtney and her son Langston on graduation day.

- Q: Do you like to read? Do you have any favorite type of books?**  
 A: When I have the time, I like to curl up with a blanket and read. My favorite books have become the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) level 1-4 reading books. (These are the kindergarten-level books). (Hint: Langston is in Kindergarten). With all the work that I've been doing on my dissertation, I haven't had much time lately to do a lot of reading for fun.
- Q: Do you have any pets?**  
 A: We're a pet-free household--for now. (Langston has been begging for a dog for two years now!)
- Q: Do you have a favorite quote or guiding principle that you'd share with the team?**  
 A: A few of my most-loved quotes are:  
 "I greet the janitor with the same respect I greet the CEO." -Author unknown  
 "I speak to everyone in the same way, whether he is the garbage man or the president of the university."  
 - Albert Einstein  
 "I will not take "but" for an answer."  
 - Langston Hughes  
 "Hold fast to dreams, For if dreams die, Life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly, Hold fast to dreams, For if dreams go, Life is a barren field, Frozen with snow"  
 - Langston Hughes
- Q: What is your favorite coffee drink?**  
 A: I used to hate coffee... I love tea...but now I drink coffee...well, milk and sugar

with coffee! My favorite hot coffee drink is white chocolate mocha. My favorite iced coffee drink is a caramel Frappuccino.

- Q: Do you have a favorite cold beverage?**  
 A: I love COKE! I am trying to not love it so much.
- Q: What are your favorite pastimes?**  
 A: I love snuggling with Langston, family days, and trying new restaurants.
- Q: What is your favorite food?**  
 A: I'd have to say boiled crawfish is my favorite. I could eat it 5 days a week!
- Q: What do you love most about public service?**  
 A: What I love most about being a public servant is the ability that we have to help. Each day we can assist someone as they work to reach the life they envision for themselves.
- Q: If you have unlimited time, what is something you would do for your team?**  
 A: If I had unlimited time or if there were more than 24 hours in a day, I would love to take the time to tell everyone on #TeamDHHS thank you, face-to-face for all of your hard work. I appreciate all of our team!



# In Gratitude



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

Here are some letters & notes DHHS employees have received thanking us for the work we do every day to help people live better lives.

**Child Abuse & Neglect Central Registry Team Members have received several thank you's for the work they've done:**

To **John May**

Thank you John,  
Your customer service is outstanding. You helped me do my job today."

To **Chris Kort**

Thanks so much for your help Chris! I appreciate you taking the time to go through these with me on the phone!

To **Cindy Settrini**

You are great, thank you!

Thank you so much for your quick response Cindy. This helps a great deal. I appreciate it!

To **Brittnye Svehla**

"You are so helpful. My clients and I greatly appreciate it."

To **staff in general:**

Thank you! We greatly appreciate the prompt service and support.

The daughter and power of attorney for her mother called and wanted to recognize the outstanding phone call that she had with MLTC Social Services Worker **Cathy Garcia**. She reported how fabulous and amazing Cathy was on the phone and that she answered all her questions. She stated we need to hire more employees like her!

**Jana Peterson**

MLTC Social Services Supervisor

**Michelle Eby,**

Bravo! Plaudits! Those are two words that truly express the experience I have had with **Danny Gruber** as a case worker. Life creates circumstances that we often wonder where and how we are in the midst of the journey. That is just what happened when I received the call to become part of my "ex" mother and father-in-law's lives in January of 2017. Not a normal call. But the guidance, direction, insight and education that Danny was able to provide to me in helping getting them on Medicaid was beyond what I expected to receive. The whole process was new (and still is) and I felt very out of touch with what to do and where to go but carefully Danny explained the steps, accepted my panic calls when I was confused and looking for direction and each time he calmly gave me insight and understanding. My gratitude cannot be captured in words but if I could find a "red cap" I would give it to Danny... because for me....I consider him a "superhero"! Seldom in life to we get the opportunity to share our gratitude....please extend my deepest appreciation and gratitude to Danny for going the extra mile.

With Personal Commitment,

**A grateful client**

**Darcy Schneider,**

Just a quick note to express my thanks to you and your department. I also wanted to express my thanks to one of your employees Sarah Seberger. Sarah has spent quite a bit of time personally following our case. Sarah is awesome. She is patient. A great quality to have while dealing with all the red tape of verification.

As you may know, I recently requested an administrative appeal on my case, which was agreed upon to reinstate my minor daughter's medical access through the Nebraska Medicaid program. Sarah was assigned to our case. Sarah worked diligently by keeping me updated. Sarah is just one example how having convenient access to healthcare is extremely important and often taken for granted. You people who work at the state level do an excellent job! I commend you for the arbitration part of this process.

Thank you all and my daughter can now access her medical needs. Keep up the great work!

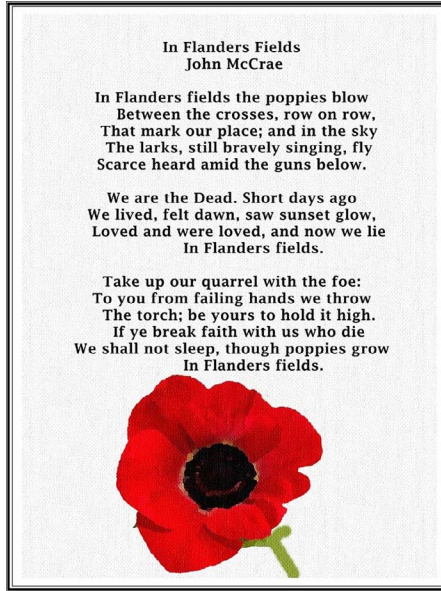
Sincerely,

**A thankful mother**

# Memorial Day

As we celebrate Memorial Day in May, many Americans often wear a poppy to honor our military service members. Here are a few facts you may not have known about the small, red flower.

- After World War I, the poppy flourished in Europe. Scientists attributed it to soils in France and Belgium becoming enriched with lime from the rubble that resulted from the war. The red flowers also were commonly seen around the gravesites of fallen service members.
- In 1918, Moina Michael popularized the idea of wearing a poppy flower in memory of the war dead. She was moved by Lt. Col. McCrae's poem "In Flanders Fields," when she wrote the following response: "...the blood of heroes never dies." Michael later started a campaign to adopt the poppy as the national symbol of sacrifice.
- On Remembrance Day, a national holiday in France and Belgium, the poppy is often worn to symbolize the sacrifices made by service members around the world during World War I.
- The American Legion Auxiliary, the world's largest women's patriotic service organization, passes out paper poppies on Memorial Day and throughout the year to raise funds for veterans. The red poppies serve as a reminder of the sacrifices made by fallen service members. The poppies are sometimes worn on Veterans Day.
- Poppies have a long history of being used to honor the dead, having roots in Greek and Roman Mythology.
- The Remembrance poppy is the common field poppy (Papaver rhoeas), one of the first wildflower to colonize disturbed ground of fallow cornfields. It became identified with the battle zones of the First World War, or Flanders Fields, which were originally corn fields.



# Fitting in Fitness

*By Bob Furr*

In April we looked at activities that help keep a person healthy and the need to fit in fitness as part of our daily routine. There is one activity that is really excellent at meeting both the need for physical fitness as well as the need for mental exercise and the social connection that tends to keep us involved in exercise. Those three things are recommended by fitness experts as the kind of activity that keeps a person physically and mentally young.

The activity is dancing. Most dancing combines physical, mental and social activity in a way that very few other workouts can. Be it country western dancing, polka, or square dancing (which is the state folk dance of Nebraska) each minute spent in active dancing is equivalent to a minute of fast walking as far as fitness value. Learning a new skill like line dancing or square dancing also exercises the brain forming new synapses and improves the overall health in one step. New friendships formed through dancing provides a support group that keeps you active and involved.

Dancing is one of the most popular non-competitive team sports. It has been called "friendship set to music" and the start of many lasting relationships. A dance partner is not a requirement to get started.

For more information, do a simple internet search of "dance information Nebraska" and you will find dozens of websites with information on dance events and opportunities to join in and learn across Nebraska. Who knows, you may "do-si-do" your way to a healthy future and have a lot of fun getting there!



# The Pareto Chart

By: Jesse Cushman, CLSSGB Process Improvement Coordinator

In a previous edition of *Connections*, you were introduced to the daily huddles and some of the successes that have been realized using them. In this edition, we want to look at a specific tool of the daily huddles called “The Pareto Chart.”

## A brief history:

The Pareto chart is a column graph, with categories stacked highest to smallest. The chart is a Lean Six Sigma tool and is used to identify the category with the largest number of issues. The principle alleges that 80% of the problems can be attributed to 20% of the causes. It is based on the work of Vilfredo Pareto, an Italian economist. The Pareto principle (80/20 rule) was first described and used as a method for understanding and articulating the distribution of wealth. The original assumption was that roughly 80% of the land in Italy was owned by 20% of the population. Joseph Juran popularized the tool in quality circles around the Second World War (the Economist, 2009).

## What is 80/20?

As this principle has been made popular through the years, it has been applied to more than just economics or Lean Six Sigma. At its simplest, it is a guideline that 80% of the problems can be contributed to 20% of the causes. What does this mean for the today’s Lean Six Sigma Green belt and Yellow belt? It means that this tool can be used to compare categories of issues to find that “vital few” 20% that, if addressed, would correct 80% of the problems.

## How is it used most often at the State of Nebraska?

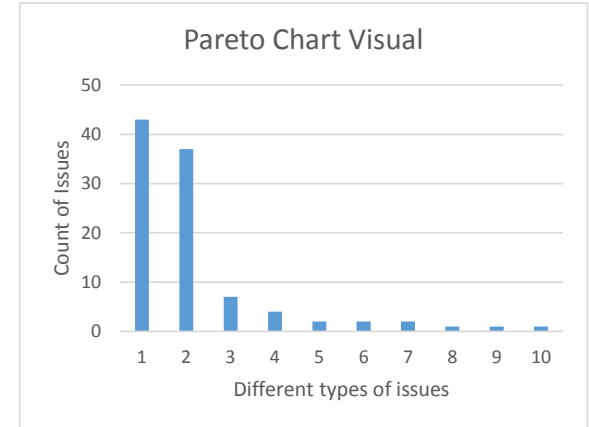
For the State of Nebraska, this tool is used on the QDIP boards (Quality, Delivery, Inventory, and Productivity), in the issues section (no that is not what the “I” means). Do not worry, we will learn more about those in future installments of Tool Time. The intent is that as issues pile into different columns, the Yellow belt leading the huddle can use the Pareto principle to target action items to address the most common issues. If there are questions, the Yellow belt should contact their Process Improvement Coordinator. This tool works great to help see the most common or prevalent cause. This allows us to both visualize and quantify the issues.

## This is but one tool, use when needed:

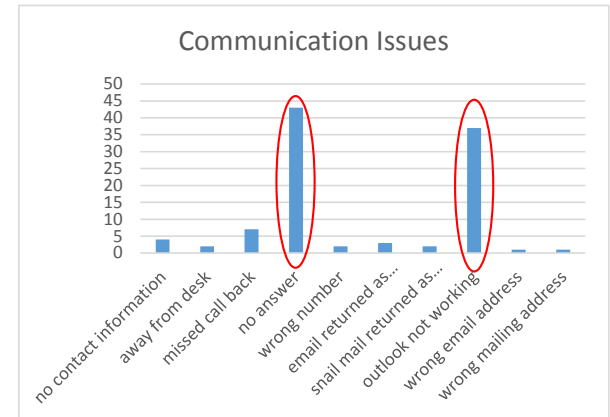
Keep in mind when using the tool that it is but one tool in the vast Lean Six Sigma tool set. Like any tool, it has a specific purpose, and the success of the tool can be impacted greatly by the categories used to identify the issues. The tool can also be used in conjunction with other tools such as the “5 Why” to ensure that you are identifying the root cause of issues and thus categorizing the issues to common root causes making Pareto charts that much more effective.

### References:

The Economist (June 19th, 2009) Guru Joseph Juran. *The Economist, Online extra*. Retrieved from <http://www.economist.com/node/13881008>



This is the standard looking Pareto Chart with all the issues neatly stacked in order from largest to smallest.



What you will likely see on your Issues Charts from the QDIP or Swim Lane boards, the issues are not lined up in order. Circled are the two types of issues that need to be addressed. This indicates there is an opportunity to improve the current process.



## “Make a Difference, Take a Stand: May is Adult Abuse Awareness Month and June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day”



### What is Elder Abuse?

Elder abuse refers to intentional or negligent acts by a caregiver or trusted individual that causes harm to a vulnerable elder. Elder abuse takes many forms, including:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Financial Abuse and Exploitation
- Self-neglect

### Who is at Risk for Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation?

Elder abuse can happen to anyone – a loved one, a neighbor, and when we are old enough, it can even happen to us.

Elder Abuse can occur anywhere:

- In a person’s own home
- In nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and other institutional settings
- In hospitals

Some common risk factors:

- Dementia
- Mental health or substance abuse issues (victim, perpetrator, or both)
- Social isolation
- Poor physical health

### Just How Big is the Problem?

In Nebraska each year, Adult Protective Services (APS) investigates approximately 3,000 allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults. Over 300 persons 60 and older were found to have been abused, neglected, and/or exploited in 2016. And that’s only the reported cases. Experts believe that for every reported case, as many as 23 cases go unreported.

Many victims are people with disabilities, or are older, frail, and depend on others to meet their most basic needs. Many victims are isolated, ashamed, or embarrassed, particularly if a family member is the abuser. Many are afraid to report for fear that the abuse will get worse or that they will have no one to care for them. Declines in cognitive and physical functions make some seniors more vulnerable to victimization as well. May is Adult Abuse Awareness Month and June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. It is a time to spotlight the mistreatment of vulnerable and older adults and to communicate how people, organizations, and communities can take action now.

DHHS employees involved with vulnerable adult and elder abuse awareness developed a toolkit with ideas and resources to help people understand vulnerable and elder adult abuse issues and also to plan and implement effective awareness campaigns. The toolkit contains a wealth of important information, like:

### Signs of neglect by caregivers or self-neglect:

- Unusual weight loss, malnutrition, or dehydration;
- Untreated physical problems, such as bed sores;
- Unsanitary living conditions such as dirt, bugs, soiled bedding and clothes, poor hygiene;
- Unsuitable clothing or covering for the weather;
- Unsafe living conditions: no heat or running water, faulty or exposed wiring, fire hazards;
- Desertion of the vulnerable adult or elder at a public place.

### Signs of financial exploitation:

- Sudden changes in bank accounts or banking practices such as unexplained withdrawals of large amounts of money;
- Additional names on an older person’s bank cards or checking accounts;
- Abrupt changes in a will or other financial documents;
- Disappearance of funds, possessions, or medications;
- Unpaid bills or substandard care despite the availability of funds;
- Evidence of the elder’s signature being forged;
- The sudden appearance of previously uninvolved relatives;
- Payment for unnecessary services;
- Reports from the individual of financial exploitation.

### Help prevent elder or vulnerable adult abuse and neglect by:

- Listening with empathy and without judgment to vulnerable adults, elders, and their caregivers;

- Watching for warning signs that might indicate abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Looking at the elder or vulnerable adult’s medications. Do the amounts left match how much should be gone?
- Watch for possible financial abuse. Ask the individual if they need help looking over their bank or credit card statements and talk about authorized vs. unauthorized transactions;
- Call and visit as often as you can and offer to stay with the individual so the caregiver can have a break.
- Talk to the individual about the phone calls and letters they have been receiving. Talk about prominent scams and how to look out for them.

### Why Should I Care About Elder Abuse?

The older population in America is continuing to grow. According to A Profile of Older Americans: 2016, U.S. Administration on Aging, Department of Health and Human Services:

- Between 2005 and 2015 the population age 60 and over increased 34% from 49.8 million to 66.8 million.
- The 85+ population is projected to triple from 6.3 million in 2015 to 14.6 million in 2040.

### What Can People Do to Prevent Elder Abuse?

If you suspect abuse, report it.

- Call the APS Hotline at 1-800-652-1999 or the local police or sheriff’s office

For more information visit:

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

# Dual Trainings Seek to Protect Older Nebraskans Against Financial Exploitation

*By Madhavi Bhadbhade, Medicaid and Long-Term Care*

The State Unit on Aging in Medicaid and Long-Term Care and Nebraska State Bar Association's Elder Law Section are co-sponsoring a special training on financial exploitation and other elder issues. The 2017 Elder Justice Training will be held June 20 from 8:45 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. (CDT) at NET in Lincoln, and will also be offered via web streaming at 12 locations across the state and/or through your personal computer.

The training is free and open to staff in the Area Agencies on Aging, long-term care facilities, Adult Protective Services, program volunteers in the aging network, attorneys, bankers, law enforcement, medical professionals and other organizations. DHHS employees may attend the training with supervisor approval and by registering in advance.

**Erik White**, Nutrition Coordinator and **Kimmie Fox**, VISTA Volunteer in the State Unit on Aging will present on Nutrition and the Elderly and New Developments in Aging, respectively. Pam Moriarty, Supervisor in Adult Protective Services and Toni Bonsera, Adult Protective Services and Child Protective Services Program Specialist within the Division of Children and Family Services will give an overview of the APS investigations. Additional

training topics for the day include Power of Attorney Do's and Don'ts presented by Bill Lindsay, J.D., of Gross & Welch and Ann Mangiameli, J.D., Legal Aid of Nebraska. The agenda also includes a panel featuring financial exploitation of the vulnerable from the legal, investigative and medical perspectives.

**Jenefer Duane**, Senior Program Analyst with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), in Washington, D.C. will discuss a recent study on fighting financial exploitation through community networks.

[Click here](#) for more information, including the agenda, registration form, and web streaming locations.

In addition, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Money Smart for Older Adults training will be offered free of charge as a webinar on June 21 from 9:00 a.m. to Noon (CDT) with a live audience at NET. Jenefer Duane will highlight the various features in the Money Smart training module with a lot of practical tips. If you are interested in participating in this webinar, email [dhhs.aging@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.aging@nebraska.gov) and a webinar invite will be sent to you.

## Patriot Award

**Levi Hadley** is a Unit Manager at the YRTC Kearney. He was recently honored with a Patriot Award, presented by **Noah Stewart**, Youth Program Specialist at the YRTC Kearney.

Noah is on an active duty assignment for 3 months with the National Guard. The Patriot Award reflects the efforts made to support citizen warriors through a wide-range of measures including flexible schedules, time off prior to and after deployment, caring for families and granting leaves of absence if needed. Congrats, Levi!



Left to right: Noah Stewart and Levi Hadley (recipient of the Patriot Award).

2017 Elder Justice Training  
June 20, 8:45 a.m. to 4:45 p.m (CDT)  
at NET in Lincoln and via web streaming