

CONNECTIONS

October 2013 VOLUME 13, ISSUE 10

Bringing Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services employees closer together

Recognizing, Honoring DHHS Employees for Employee/Supervisor of the Year Awards and Special Service Anniversaries

This issue of *Connections* is dedicated to you, the employees of DHHS, who have devoted your careers to serving Nebraskans and making a difference in their lives.

Employees/Supervisors of the Year
Pages 4-8 list the 2013 Employees and Supervisors of the Year, complete with photos and a short write-up from their nominators about why they received this special honor.



Left: Rows of 10-year service mugs await new owners.
Below: Mary Gordon (left) Joni Dulaney, and Sue Dorffler (back) at the 10-year ceremony at the State Capitol.

Recognition for Years of Service
Many employees have been with DHHS for a number of years and are celebrating special years of service awards this year. See pages 11-14 for a complete listing of employees and their years of service, starting with 10 years.

CEO Kerry Winterer and Division Directors attended ceremonies across the state honoring employees with special years of service awards. This year, 538 DHHS employees received awards for meeting a milestone year of service.



Billy Haughton, Lincoln Regional Center, was one of three DHHS employees being honored for 50 years of service with the State. He is pictured above, center, with Gov. Dave Heineman, left, and DHHS CEO Kerry Winterer, right. Special years of service awards for employees in the Lincoln area, were presented by the Governor at ceremonies at the State Capitol on Oct. 24, 2013. Photo: Bill Wiley

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DHHS Employee Website: <http://dhhsemployees.com>
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Chief Executive Officer: Kerry Winterer	Medicaid and Long-Term Care Division Director: Vivianne Chaumont
Behavioral Health Division Director: Scot Adams, Ph.D.	Public Health Division Director/Chief Medical Officer: Dr. Joseph Acierno
Children and Family Services Division Director: Thomas Pristow	Veterans' Homes Division Director: John Hilgert
Developmental Disabilities Division Director: Jodi Fenner	Chief Operating Officer: Matt Clough

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DHHS Employee Website

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

12 Year Old Donates Birthday Money to ENVH, Oct. 10

What birthday presents are on your wish list? For 12-year-old **Olivia Graesser** of Bellevue, she wanted nothing. Her wish was to donate any money she might receive as a birthday gift and provide a pizza party for the members at the Eastern Nebraska Veterans' Home (ENVH).

She said if she received any extra money she wanted to give it to veterans who might not have enough money to go out to eat at a restaurant. Olivia's birthday gifts far exceeded her expectations. She received and recently donated \$670 to the veterans who reside at ENVH!



Olivia's mother, Marsha, was surprised that Olivia remembered being at the veterans' home when she was 7 years old, delivering Valentines as part of a school project for St. Matthew Catholic School.

"I am truly humbled with Olivia's generosity and indeed thankful for the gift from this remarkable young lady," said **Jeff Smith**, Administrator, ENVH.

DHHS' Office in Wayne Severely Damaged by Tornado, Oct. 9



Ceiling, west side of the DHHS office in Wayne, Nebraska

In *Neat to Know*, we reported that the DHHS office in Wayne was damaged by the recent tornado. Now that we have some pictures to share, it seems the word "damaged" is an understatement!

We are all very thankful that everyone in the office is safe. Our thoughts are with those who have experienced injuries, damage and loss over the devastating winter storms and tornadoes in Nebraska.

See also...Clean Up Continues in Wayne, Northwest Nebraska, *Oct. 17*

Circus Comes to Lexington Leaving Behind a Tent Full of School Supplies, Sept. 20



DHHS employees at the Lexington Customer Service Center put up the Big Top and brought the circus to town for a good cause. On Sept. 3-5, Lexington Customer Service Center administrators sponsored a carnival as a fundraiser for school supplies for local schools. Employees were divided into teams for the three days and earned points so the winning team could play 'Soak the Supervisor.'

Employees were encouraged to dress up in circus attire and participate in carnival games such as Pop Ring Toss, Bozo Big Prize Game, Juggling Contest, Balloon animal contest, and Hula Hoop contest, to name a few. It was a successful School Supply Drive and supplies were distributed to five area elementary schools.

"I think this is a great example of what the service centers and employees do for the community outside of their daily work," said **Crystal Fielder**, Social Service Worker. "This shows the genuine care and concern of employees for their communities. This was an awesome and fun week."

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



By Kerry T. Winterer, CEO

October is one of the highlights of the year for me. Why? Because it's Nebraska State Employee Recognition Month.

I enjoy traveling the state to attend the Years of Service recognition events. This year, 538 DHHS employees received special awards for meeting one of the milestone years of service.

It's an honor to be able to personally thank these employees for their

commitment to making DHHS a place where we strive to help people live better lives. (I apologize to those at the ceremony in Beatrice for having a conflict; I wish I could have been there.)

Three DHHS employees were recognized this year for 50 years of service. This is truly something to celebrate and I can only imagine the changes they've seen over the years. Congratulations to Billy Haughton, a Food Service Worker at the Lincoln Regional Center; Darlene Porter, a Secretary at the Norfolk Regional Center; and Suzi Skinner, an Administrative Assistant in Financial Services at the Central Office.

I want to pay special recognition to the 30 DHHS employees and supervisors of the year. Governor Heineman recognized them at an event the morning of October 30 and we held our DHHS recognition that afternoon.

It is humbling and a true honor when someone is nominated by their peers for this recognition. As I read the nominating forms, I was struck by the admiration that came through. So many qualities were described, like energy, enthusiasm, fairness, ability to remain calm in the face of diversity – hundreds of attributes.

It's clear these 30 people are an inspiration to those around them and to those they serve, and they are role models for all of us. Congratulations to you all.

It is without saying that not everyone can be recognized for years of service

milestones in one year, and there were other employees and supervisors who were nominated by their peers for special recognition. I want to take this opportunity to thank all employees for the job you do every day, and to thank you for your continued support.



"Thank you for your years of service to the State of Nebraska. Every day, you and your co-workers work hard to provide exceptional products and quality services to the citizens of our State. It is because of dedicated employees like you that we are able to continue our standard of excellence in public service. Congratulations on your achievements. Together we are creating a positive impact in Nebraska."

*Sincerely,
Dave Heineman,
Governor*

Employees of the Year 2013

DHHS is proud to introduce the 2013 Employees and Supervisors/Managers of the Year. It's such an incredible honor! These employees were recognized for their achievement at a ceremony at the State Capitol, a reception at the Governor's Residence and a ceremony at the Lincoln Country Club--all on Oct. 30, 2013.

State agencies are allowed to select one employee and one Supervisor/Manager of the Year for every 500 people employed by the agency. The following write-ups were taken from the nomination forms. Pictures were provided by the Department of Administrative Services. Congratulations to all!



Karen Berry

Karen Berry is an Administrative Assistant II for Public Health. Karen is an exemplary employee and always willing to go the extra mile. She has a positive attitude, strong work

ethic and professional manner. Even when her workload dramatically increases, Karen tackles the assignments with dedication and a smile. She is very knowledgeable and enjoys sharing that knowledge with others. She communicates in such a way that enables her to resolve differences, build trust and respect, and create an environment open to creative ideas, problem solving, and compassion. Karen is a team player and a great asset to DHHS.

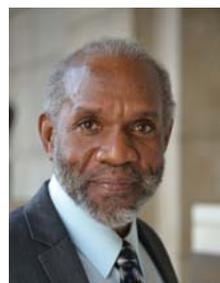
reinforcing DHHS policies and procedures and achieving greater acceptance and understanding of why we do what we do. Diana helps people live better lives and serves people with excellence every single day.



Diana Duran

Diana Duran is the DHHS System Advocate with Communications & Legislative Services. Diana responds to inquiries made through the DHHS Helpline and helps

people navigate the department's wide breadth of programs and services. Diana is extremely compassionate and possesses a truly remarkable ability to listen attentively and patiently to someone asking questions or expressing concerns. Diana earnestly works to benefit clients while



Billy Easterling

Billy Easterling is a Social Services Worker for the Division of Children and Family Services in the Eastern Service Area. Billy makes customer service, treating people with

dignity and respect, and providing timely responses a part of his daily work. His goal is to have positive interactions with both internal and external customers. Billy's customers often comment on his fair and customer oriented approach. He volunteered to be a Champion of Serving People with Excellence. Billy's honesty, integrity and commitment to provide excellent customer service were clear in all of the sessions conducted. His genuine belief in what he was training provided inspiration to many staff members. Billy has consistently done the best job possible with timeliness, accuracy and great customer service at the forefront.



Renee Faber

Renee Faber is a DHHS Program Coordinator for Behavioral Health. Renee serves as a liaison and contract manager for designated Behavioral Health Regions. Her

positive attitude and conscientious work ethic have helped her develop relationships and maintain contract compliance. Renee's willingness to take on new tasks and contribute in a unique way is remarkable. She is a positive role model for new staff and demonstrates a strong commitment to the DHHS values. Renee promotes a positive culture and brings humor, grace, wisdom and integrity to her work. Her flexibility, professional manner, willingness to mentor and ability to extend her commitment and character is exceptional.

can always be counted on for her program knowledge. Kristy completes her case work with very high accuracy and payment error rates. She was selected as a trainer for Serving People with Excellence which included traveling to various local offices to provide training to staff in the Northern Service Area. Kristy is currently assisting with the transition from Economic Assistance to the Medicaid Long-Term Care division. Kristy's ability to adapt to changes with ease and maintain a positive attitude makes her a true asset!



Erica Hardessen

Erica Hardessen is a Child/Family Services Specialist for Children and Family Services in the Central Service Area. Erica is knowledgeable and has a drive to help not

only the families we serve but also the agency itself. Erica carries her large caseload without complaining and goes above and beyond for the families. She continually receives high scores on her performance accountability report for her face-to-face contact with youths and parents. She continues to display a high level of leadership and can be relied upon to



Kristine Hanefeldt

Kristy Hanefeldt is a Social Services Worker for Children and Family Services in the Northern Service Area. Kristy is dependable and

help coworkers in their times of need. Erica is always present, smiling, and has a laugh that carries throughout the office.



Cynthia Hartley

Cynthia Hartley is a DHHS Program Specialist for Children and Family Services. In her capacity as a Policy Specialist for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Cynthia

drafts responses to complex policy issues that are circulated as memos, tips or policy guidance. Cynthia has also served on several ACCESSNebraska work groups charged with improving efficiency, accuracy and customer service within the call center model. Cynthia is compassionate, caring and upbeat. She seeks to find the positives even in the most frustrating situations. Over her years of service, Cynthia has shown fairness and generosity with others, a deep respect for the work of the agency, and an eagerness for improvement.



Grant Johnson

Grant Johnson is a Compliance Specialist at the Hastings Regional Center. Grant has excelled in his role by developing opportunities to evaluate safety and compliance and

improve care and processes. The youth in the program are comfortable around Grant

and often seek him out to ask his advice. Grant is a certified trainer and often attends additional training to improve his ability to serve the facility. He has taken on the responsibility of scheduling staff training to ensure there are no lapses in training. He recognizes and utilizes the strengths of his coworkers and is generous with compliments for jobs well done. Grant's personal motivation and desire to do the best possible job makes him a true asset.



Janet Johnson

Janet Johnson is an IT Business Systems Analyst Coordinator with Information Systems & Technology. Janet has great organizational skills and is highly knowledgeable about

the Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS). She accepts each new assignment as a challenge to increase her knowledge. Janet is dedicated to keeping the MMIS functioning accurately and at maximum processing capability while incorporating extensive program modifications and functionality. Janet is a great mentor, providing valuable background knowledge, direction for the Business Analyst Team and coordination of the technical system changes. She is a good communicator, very professional, and highly respected. IS&T is fortunate to have Janet working on the team.



Jackie Langan

Jackie Langan is a DD Service Coordinator for Developmental Disabilities. Jackie has a specialized caseload working with individuals placed on the Developmental Disabilities Court-

Ordered Custody Act. Jackie was the first Service Coordinator to cover someone on this Act and now covers all of these cases in Lancaster County. Jackie's attention to detail and ability to communicate is vital because individuals placed on this Act pose a threat of harm to others. Jackie continually displays the DHHS Values and Core Competencies. She demonstrates responsibility and accountability, has a positive attitude, and shows good judgment. Jackie is a joy to work with and a tremendous asset to the Service Coordination team.



Margaret McPherson

Maggie McPherson is a Human Resources Officer for Operations – Human Resources and Development. Maggie is the epitome of the DHHS Values and Core Competencies. She is

courteous, prompt, efficient and committed to excellence. Maggie helps managers and applicants navigate through the hiring process. She works with managers to utilize selection tools to help find quality

applicants. She takes time to research and develop creative methods to promote DHHS as a great place to work. Maggie's extensive knowledge of DHHS policies and procedures often makes her the "go to person" for recruiting and hiring questions. Maggie is a valuable team member and a true asset to DHHS.



Patricia Montgomery

Trish Montgomery is a Case Aide for the Division of Children and Family Services in the Northern Service Area. Trish has an upbeat, optimistic attitude

and helps make the jobs of others more manageable. She is always willing to help, never complains, is very organized, and gets everything done in a timely manner. Some of her duties include mailing, filing, printing, faxing, notarizing, dictating, assigning cars and completing authorizations. Additionally, Trish prepares files for the foster care review board and tracks case plans and court reports. It is often because of Trish that the work is done and documented on time and files are kept in order. Trish always goes above and beyond and her team is very grateful to have her as a Case Aide.



Joette Novak

Joette Novak is a DHHS Program Specialist for Medicaid and Long-Term Care. Joette recently spearheaded two large projects geared towards enhancing ease of program use

for providers and staff. Joette's commitment to quality customer service and saving valuable time and resources has shown throughout these projects. Her attention to detail, excellent communication skills and ability to recognize potential problems in advance have been essential to her success. Joette has been an excellent role model to new staff and encourages their growth and development. Joette has proven herself as an asset for making DHHS a great place to work and to come to for service.

serves on several committees. Regardless of the assignment, Nadine brings her knowledge and enthusiasm and puts forth her best effort.



Scott Wilson

Scott Wilson is a Facility Maintenance Specialist at the Eastern Nebraska Veterans' Home (ENVH). He is a very talented member of the maintenance team. Scott's positive

customer service and support of ENVH's mission of taking care of America's heroes is remarkable. Scott is typically assigned to the dementia unit where he patiently responds to the needs of 30 members plus staff with a smile and a can-do attitude. He often goes above and beyond by volunteering to help with special projects. During a disaster in which high winds damaged ENVH's roof, he was one of the first on the scene to assess damage and begin repairs. Scott is valued by both members and staff. ENVH is very fortunate to have Scott as a part of the team!



Nadine Wearne

Nadine Wearne is a DHHS Quality Assurance Coordinator at the Western Nebraska Veterans' Home (WNVH). Nadine's willingness to take on new tasks, openness

to change, and strong work ethic have served WNVH well during the formation of the Quality Assurance program. Nadine's hard work and dedicated efforts in leading mock surveys and follow-up work for any perceived issues have been instrumental in being deficiency free for three years running. In addition, Nadine has enthusiastically taken on the challenge of being a Super User for Electronic Medical Record (Avatar) and RX Connect. She also



Susan Yates

Sue Yates is a Developmental Technician II at the Beatrice State Developmental Center (BSDC). Sue has a great personality and attitude. She brings lots of experience and

joy to the individuals living at 411 State on the BSDC campus. She has a great rapport

with the 411 gentlemen. They treat her like family as she does with them. Sue is very dependable and always goes above and beyond. Sue is always first to volunteer to help out when there is a shortage of staff. She is willing to work extra to make the lives of the individuals and other staff better. Sue is truly an asset to the BSDC and deserves to be recognized for her commitment, kindness and hard work.

Supervisors of the Year 2013



Jill Aksamit

Jill Aksamit is a Social Services Supervisor for Children and Family Services at the Fremont Customer Service Center. Jill manages the training unit. Her caring spirit, enthusiasm, humor

and ability to motivate help her excel at welcoming and training new employees. Jill is a hard worker and spends hours preparing to make sure new workers feel comfortable and empowered during their training. She is a good listener and is never too busy to answer questions or provide clarification. Jill is very professional and has a positive attitude. She encourages communication and problem solving and never stops thinking of ways to help the team succeed. Jill puts her heart and soul into every single day. She is truly dedicated to the success of others.



Katherine Becker

Katherine Becker is a Social Services Supervisor for Children and Family Services at the Lincoln Customer Service Center. Katherine is fair, honest, knowledgeable and

trustworthy. She has great communication skills and can be counted on to follow through on promises. Katherine has demonstrated a calm demeanor in dealing with an ever changing environment. She has a positive attitude and encourages others to be positive. Katherine makes herself available to her team and other employees to answer questions. She guides her employees with a firm but consistent disposition that encourages growth and the overall well-being of her employees. Katherine strives for excellence and is dedicated to the success of her team.

Kimberly Bro



Kim Bro is a Child/Family Services Specialist Supervisor for Children and Family Services in the Southeast Service Area. Kim has a strong work ethic, positive attitude and great sense of

humor. Her expertise in child welfare is widely valued. Kim has a zero backlog expectation and works with her team to ensure deadlines are met. She thoroughly reads each assessment to make sure that it is following policy. Kim is professional and

offers constructive criticism in a way that is helpful and not hurtful. Kim is extremely approachable and works to make her team feel comfortable. She is always willing to listen to new ideas and implement different ways of doing things. Kim not only cares about the work produced, but also cares about her team.

governing NVH and the Veterans' Home Division. Lori works hard to ensure the members receive the benefits they are entitled to. Lori has shown grace under pressure throughout the changes the business office has experienced over the past two years. She is a great person to have in charge of the budget because she does her best to get needed services and supplies for staff while keeping in mind that taxpayer money is being spent.



Shawn Bryant

Dr. Shawn Bryant, PsyD, LP, is the Psychology Director at the Beatrice State Developmental Center (BSDC). Dr. Bryant's leadership skills helped foster a team environment within the

Behavior Support Team (BST) following a period of departmental restructuring. The newly-redesigned BST has made tremendous progress toward meeting DoJ settlement requirements. Dr. Bryant has contributed greatly to improving employee morale and enjoyment of the work place. His management style focuses on team members' strengths which helps inspire success. Dr. Bryant is very humble, hard-working, respected and deserving of this recognition.



Jane Cleveland

Jane Cleveland is a DD Service Coordination Supervisor for the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Jane's spirit with the DD program is contagious.

Her extensive knowledge of programs in Nebraska is impressive. Jane is a great team leader and supervisor. She is dedicated to the success of her Service Coordinators and the individuals they work with. Jane challenges her Service Coordinators in many ways to encourage them to do a fantastic job for the individuals. She goes the distance for her staff. Jane has monthly team meetings with her staff so they can learn new information that is being passed on to the Service Coordinators throughout the state. Jane always makes time to listen to her staff and help them become the best Service Coordinators possible.



Lori Burns

Lori Burns is a Business Manager II at the Norfolk Veterans' Home (NVH). Lori is an outstanding supervisor who listens and works well with her staff. She provides excellent

guidance regarding policies and procedures



Jon Eisenhauer

Jon Eisenhauer is a Food Service Manager for Children and Family Services at the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center in Geneva. Jon's past experiences and food service industry

knowledge benefit the entire facility. Jon and his staff have met the challenge of changing the menu to meet the new federal guidelines of reduction of fat and adding more fruits and vegetables while also appealing to the youth. He has used the food youth survey to modify the menu. The food service department works as a team to produce high quality meals which often receive compliments. Jon is willing to step out of the box with ideas and join committee efforts to enhance the quality of life for the youth.



Chad Frank

Chad Frank is a Medical Services Unit Manager for Medicaid and Long-Term Care. Chad is a dependable, knowledgeable, and compassionate supervisor. He has taken a true leadership

role in the Nebraska Money Follows the Person (MFP) program. MFP supports the rebalancing of long-term care systems to transition individuals with Medicaid from institution living to community living. Chad is dedicated to the MFP program and has aspirations of enhancing the long-term care system. Chad advocates for the

people he works with in order to create a system. He is always thinking outside of the box and coming up with new ideas and ways to improve the program. Chad genuinely wants the program to succeed and demonstrates that sincerity daily.



William Manhart

Ross Manhart is a DHHS Resource Developer Supervisor for Children and Family Services in the Eastern Service Area. Ross has a positive attitude

and accepts challenges with dedication, humor, and creativity. He understands the importance of Resource Development (RD) in relation to ensuring the safety of children and families. He is focused on making RD valuable and effective. Ross is always available to listen whenever his team has questions or concerns. He stays actively involved. RD is constantly changing and Ross is able to quickly adapt while keeping his staff positive and focused. Under Ross' leadership, RD has become an essential part of Child Welfare reform.



Mark Miller

Mark Miller is a Health Data Coordinator for Public Health. Mark is a great listener and tremendous leader. In addition to directly supervising

staff, Mark provides guidance, advice and

leadership to 20+ coworkers in his role as System Administrator for the Vital Records Electronic Registration System (ERS). The enhancements Mark orchestrated to the ERS have made it the envy of the nation. Other states have praised Mark's leadership in advancing data exchange between states. Mark also serves as an expert in backing up the Vital Records helpdesk which supports 1300+ statewide providers on birth, death, marriage and divorce data. Mark has the skills and patience necessary to make system wide changes interesting and exciting.



Thomas Nider

Tom Nider is the Pharmacy Manager at the Lincoln Regional Center (LRC). Tom has a positive outlook and is a genuine, hardworking employee. He is team-oriented and

encourages the Pharmacy staff to work together. Tom has been instrumental in improving the treatment of patients by educating team members on the benefits and potential side effects of medications. LRC is the pilot facility for the new Electronic Medication Administration Record (e-MAR) system. Tom has been collaborating with nurses and medical staff to determine how e-MAR will benefit all DHHS 24-hour facilities. He is always looking for new ideas to improve patient care and the work environment for employees. Tom is a positive role-model for serving our patients and the State with excellence.



Lisa Sedlak

Lisa Sedlak is the Food Service Director II at the Grand Island Veterans' Home (GIVH). Lisa truly puts the interests and welfare of the members first. She developed a

Food Committee that meets monthly to address any food concerns or complaints of the 200+ members. Lisa has been integral in meeting member needs by rearranging the snack provision process on each nursing unit which has increased member satisfaction of snack and beverage choices. She provides a great deal of organization, support, and leadership. Lisa is approachable and addresses issues and takes action to help prevent recurrences. She willingly jumps in where there is a need and has a tremendous 'make it happen' attitude.



Emily Walter

Emily Walter is a Human Resources Manager II for Operations – Human Resources and Development. Emily effectively manages the team who processes payroll for all DHHS

employees. She meets strictly enforced deadlines while balancing technology and policy changes. Emily embraced the transition to the Employee Work Center by assisting DAS with training, never-ending patience, and continued improvement of processes within the new program. Her technical expertise with many other programs has made her an invaluable

resource. Emily is always available to provide support, advice, humor, or simply an ear. She not only helps her staff problem solve, but goes the extra mile to teach the justification behind the answer.



Heather Wood

Heather Wood is a Quality Improvement and Data Performance Manager for Behavioral Health (DBH). Heather possesses a high

personal standard of integrity and works diligently to make a difference. She is dedicated to the success of others. Heather seizes every opportunity to coach and mentor her team and make sure they feel valued. She has also been a leader in analyzing and recommending strategies to improve the DHHS employee survey. Heather assisted DBH in using employee survey results to find strategies that will improve work experiences and build upon the team culture. Heather consistently shares her time and talents to further the DHHS mission of helping people live better lives.

50 Years of Service...Darlene Porter Remembers

Many employees have been with DHHS for a number of years. This year is particularly special for **Darlene Porter**, Secretary at the Norfolk Regional Center, because she is celebrating her 50th anniversary working for the state. Darlene tells *Connections*...

"I started my state career at the Norfolk State Hospital, now the Norfolk Regional Center, in 1963. I have been in the same office for all of those 50 years! I started as one of three support people and eventually became the only one serving an extended department. I have seen the Regional Center go from 1,200 male and female patients to 80 males. We went from locked wards to some open units and from a totally open building and grounds to no admission to the building without keys.

Word processing went from dictation on red records to the telephone system. There were no copy machines when I started. Carbon paper was an important part of every day; from manual typewriters to computers; from mimeograph and ditto machines to copiers, fax machines, scanners, etc.; From taking a quarter to lunch and bringing back change, to \$4 for lunch. From having our own dairy, garden, and bakery, to food cooked at the Veterans' Home, and back to cooking at NRC."

When asked what gets Darlene back to work every day, she answered quickly... the great bunch of people I work with. They are my work "family." The most important part of all the years, she said, "is the people I have known because of my work here at the Regional Center."

Congratulation, Darlene on this important honor.

Email Etiquette

By Richard Mettler,
Human Resources and Development

Email is the perfect tool to use for a message that's brief, quick and effective. A tremendous amount of DHHS communication is through email. Many of us are so familiar with email that we fall into lazy habits, making our messages needlessly difficult for readers.

Following are some reminders to help ensure successful communication.

- Ask yourself, "Is email the best choice? Would a phone call or in-person conversation be a better way to communicate what I have to say?" For example, conveying personal information and doing confidential problem solving are often done best in real time with the human voice.
- Write to your audience and the relationship you have.
- A brief yet descriptive subject line informs the recipient of content and purpose—what the email is about, including actions requested, by when.
- Be concise and get to the point of the email quickly.
- Make your email reader-friendly.
 - o Use 12 to 14 font size.
 - o Break text into small paragraphs.
 - o Use bullet points, numerals, and ample spacing.
- Don't discuss multiple subjects in a single email. If you need to discuss more than one subject, send a note for each.
- Do not type in all caps for emphasis—it feels to the reader as though you're



SHOUTING. Also, all caps are difficult to read.

- Be careful about your tone. Avoid humor, irony or sarcasm, none of which convey well in a brief note, and can accidentally offend the reader. It's best to keep the tone polite, friendly and professional, including the social graces such as, "Good morning/afternoon," "Please," "Thank you," "You're welcome."
- Use an email signature with your name, title, email address, mailing address and phone number.
- Do your best to reply to email within 24 hours, and remember to activate the Out of Office Assistant as needed.
- Always proof read email before sending.
- Before sending ask yourself, "Would I appreciate receiving this email?"

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Please email your thoughts, concerns, or suggestions about workplace courtesy and workplace relationships to: Richard.Mettler@nebraska.gov. I will email you a response, and perhaps anonymously feature your ideas in a future column.

Woods Awards...a Tradition of Excellence

The Woods Award is a prestigious award given each year to direct care staff at the Lincoln Regional Center who provide outstanding service to the people in LRC's care. The Woods Foundation has provided this award since 1952 to deserving front line staff. The Thomas C. Woods family began this important tradition to recognize excellence in patient care given to a relative of the Woods Family.

Psychiatric technicians and security specialists are selected for awards by a committee of involved citizens. Nominations are made by fellow staff, patients and family members.

Congratulations to the Lincoln Regional Center 2013 Woods Award Winners:

Trudy Bakesz, Security Specialist II; Lori Ditson, Security Specialist II; Karen Friday, Security Specialist II; and Jade Richtarik, Security Specialist II.

The Woods Award ceremony was held this year on the evening of Oct. 8 in the LRC Administration building lobby. Gail Scott, President of Gail Scott & Associates, was the guest speaker. This year, past Woods Award winners who are still employed at LRC were also invited to participate in the ceremony. The Woods award ceremony takes place every year during National Mental Health Awareness Week in early October.

Congratulations, Trudy, Lori, Karen and Jade, and thank you for all that you do!



2013 Woods Award winners, from left: Trudy Bakesz, Lori Ditson, Karen Friday, and Jade Richtarik.
Photo: Linda Henslee

Recognition for Years of Service 2013

Celebrating Long and Loyal Service...

DHHS employees leave a legacy every day by helping people live better lives. Some people have been with DHHS for a number of years and are celebrating special years of service awards this year. Three people are celebrating 50 years of service with the state. Congratulations Billy Haughton, Darlene Porter and Georgia Skinner on that remarkable accomplishment. We appreciate your dedication and devotion through the years and continue to rely on your expertise.

Here's a listing of those employees and their years of service, starting with 10 years.

Because employees are located across the state, those working in facilities and service areas are identified accordingly. This information is provided by DAS State Personnel. We hope everything is spelled and listed correctly. If it isn't, let us know and we will pass the information along to Human Resources. This information is provided by DAS State Personnel. If errors or omissions appear, please contact your local Human Resources Office.

50 YEARS OF SERVICE

[Lincoln Regional Center](#)
Billy Haughton

[Norfolk Regional Center](#)
Darlene Porter

[Operations - Financial Services](#)
Georgia Skinner

45 Years of Service

[Operations - Financial Services](#)
Shirley Baack

[Public Health](#)
Jack Daniel

40 Years of Service

[Beatrice State Developmental Center](#)

Teresa Goetz
Marilyn Hoppe
Carol Janssen
Barbara Jones
Susan Laber

[Children & Family Services](#)

Sandra Accardy
Michelle Buresh
Beverly Weber

[Children & Family Services – Central Service Area](#)

Deborah Pool
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Roger Girch
Lois Kotas
Debra Swoboda
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Melba Engel
David Knisely
Stanley Miller
Bernice Rinne

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Malinda Shobe
Charline Duncan
Janice George
Ronda Newman

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Bob Furr

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Sandy White

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Dian Schellenberg

Customer Service Center – Lexington
Dee Walton

Customer Service Center – Scottsbluff
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Christina Magdaleno

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Richard Kreifels
Lori Pellan

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Tamala Hansen
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Lynn Folcik
Marsha Utecht

Lincoln Regional Center
Marijo Herman

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Douglas Moats
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Sheryl Oberheu
Carmen Segura

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Shirley Deethardt
Connie Luers
Paula Eurek
Julie Luedtke
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25 Years of Service

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Robert Chace
Frederich DeVries
Elton Edmond
Shelly Johnsen

Nancy Lamb
Delores Marmon
Billie Miller
Laurie Muhlenbruch
Virginia Reimer
Shari Swett
Julie Weyer

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Vickey Kobza
Vickie Stauffer

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Kristal Millstead
Lynelle Schwedhelm

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Cindy Keller
Karen Kuta
Nancy Lyne
Connie Philbrick
Vicki Schindler
Marjorie Creason
Patricia Wright

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Rosezerian Jackson-Griffith
Dara Johnson
Diane Martig
Jane Teten

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Stacey Brockhaus
Julie Brenneis

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Darren Duncan

Beverly Probasco
Dana Thornburg

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Alvin Zimmerman

Customer Service Center – Lincoln
Gregory Stinson

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Rita Briggs
Pam Hovis
Pam Mann
Paul Farrand
Rita Simpson

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Sandy Anderson

Director’s Office – Legal Services
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Lillian Wesemann

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Debra Dimmitt
Brenda Hall
Linda Marisch

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Scott Casper
Lori Ditson
Darlene Drees
John Eilers
Heidi Fahrnbruch
David Fricke
James O’Connell
Cynthia Reece
Gordon Tebo

Daniel Ullman
Tamara Welch

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Penny Clark
Joyce Schneider
Ruth Westergren

Norfolk Regional Center
William Block
Raymond Garver
Sandra Wiseman

Norfolk Veterans Home
Lanell Bilau
Shelley Hubers
Lori Retzlaff

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Sharon Kahm

Operations – Human Resources
Karen Dvorak
Dan Theobald

Operations – Support Services
Karen Homes

Public Health
Shirley Pickens-White
Dean Cole
Ali Latifi
Heidi Burkklund
Sheila Exstrom
Nancy Hauschild
Michele McClellan
Nancy Stava
Linda Stenvers
Cynthia Strufing
Wanda Vodehnal
Peggy Ogea-Ginsburg
Kathy Fischer
Jacqueline Johnson
Nila Irwin
Cynthia Stollendorf

Western Nebraska Veterans Home
Laura Singleton

Youth Rehabilitation & Treatment
Center – Kearney

James Christensen
20 Years of Service

Beatrice State Developmental
Center

Julie Pirnie

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ANDI – Omaha

Barbara Russell
Deborah Underwood

Children & Family Services

Lori Koenig
Roxana Webb

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Central Service Area

Kathleen Stolz

Children & Family Services –
Eastern Service Area

Patty Junge

Angela Mitchell
Jeffrey Morton
Claudia Trexler

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Northern Service Area

Linda Hintz
Jennifer Baumann

Children & Family Services –
Southeast Service Area

Monica Hinrichs

Children & Family Services –
Western Service Area

Linda Schliep
Leann Laurent

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Fremont

Rachelle Christy
Patricia Ferguson

Customer Service Center –
Scottsbluff

Rebecca Goltl

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Teresa Tack-Stogdill
Amy Peterson

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Jolene Jarecki
Robert Peters

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Carmen Fox
Jeffery Oxford
Mary Sims
Phillip Snell

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Nancy Kinyoun

Lincoln Regional Center

Linda Henslee
Rafael Tatay

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Lori Lewis

Norfolk Regional Center

Stephen O'Neill

Norfolk Veterans Home

Nila Brandner

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Ann Linneman
Sherry Nutsch

Operations – Human Resources

Randy Coil

Operations – Support Services

Sandra Warford

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Jody Plihal
Steven Rowell
Irene Eckman
Renee Madsen
Stephen Jackson
Ruthanne Jorgensen

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Center – Geneva

Samuel Musquiz
Janice Myers
Connie Taylor

Youth Rehabilitation & Treatment
Center – Kearney

Richard Hancock

15 Years of Service

Beatrice State Developmental
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Rebecca Adams
Tiffany Barrett
Jeanette Bessler
Barbara Coleman
Lory Costello
Teri Dorn
Gregory Hamm
Ruth Herman
Jodee Houseman
Nicole Jurgens
Patricia Marshall
Krista McCaghy
Raymond Reckley
Ruth Schoen
Karen Schwarz
Marjorie Weichel
Danny Wenzl

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ANDI Center – Lincoln

Patricia Kermmoade

Children & Family Services
ANDI Center – Omaha

Helen Hanes-Palm

Children & Family Services

Cindy Kadavy
Patricia Callahan
Patrick McClure
Cindy Wiesen

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Patricia Foster
Cheri Strong

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Marlene Rivas
Jane Bodnar
Jennifer Potterf
Mary Rice

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Jobeth Blecher
Tangela Gropp
Traci Kuhl
Daniel Wieneke

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Barbara Arens
Lori Coon
Kimberly Harris

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Western Service Area

Kriste Mott
Pamela Herron

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Fremont

Pamela Eckel
Sarah Phan

Customer Service Center –
Lexington

Cheri Anderson

Customer Service Center – Lincoln

Jodilyn Fransen
Sherry Holmes

Customer Service Center –
Scottsbluff

Linda Kehn

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Lana Frazier
Cheri Rychly
Shauna Becker
Rhonda Erikson
Tammy Kocian
Deb McQuistan
Linette Molczyk
Julie Splichal
Jolene Stockamp

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Dale Hauptmeier
Darren Knudson
Joni Kraemer
Nancy Minchow
Misty Sinsel
Broc Witt

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Carol Sheets

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Patricia Bryer
Natasha Hamm
Jan Hettinger
Linda Lewis
Deborah Lohman
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Jerome Dierfeldt

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Michael Judson
Lisa Laurell
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Joan Stepan
John Sweazy

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Sharon Valencia

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Susan Johnston
Cynthia Krause
Dianna Mastny
Melodie Nielsen

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Kari Calvillo
Joseph Mrsny

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Denise Uhing

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Chin Chew

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Vonda Apking
Nancy Hansen
Patricia Patton
Julieann Boyle
Rayma DeLaney
Beverly Kliment
Janis Singleton

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Linda Bottorf
Patricia Carpenter
Louis Matthies
Natalie Sieber

Youth Rehabilitation & Treatment Center – Kearney

John Dutton
Peggy Jorgensen

10 Years of Service

Beatrice State Developmental Center

Jason Arnold
Alyssa Arntt
Rebecca Behring
Paula Bishop
Robert Bruhn
Shawn Bryant
Lynn Chelewski
Jillaine Hagemeyer
Steven Hale
Doreen Joekel
Richard Kerr
Amber Lovitt
David Meyer
Crystal Perkins
Barbara Peterson
Laura Rosenthal
Jonathan Scott
Jennifer Sladek

Arnie Sommer III
Ryan Stephens
Peggy Tennant
Carolyn Wahl
Yvonne Wineinger

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Sara Goscha
Cynthia McPherson
Courtney Parker
Sonja Smith
Eldonna Woltemath

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Christine Grealish
Maria Torres
Colleen Duering

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Melanie Anderson
Larissa Caruso
Debra Gill
Susan Mitchell
Loree Reimers
Michaela Stamm
Susan Ward
Eric Williams

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Brandee Ehlers
Lara Novacek
Nancy Wright

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Monica Dement
Holly Hansen
Sara Jelinek
Heidi Schreiner
Rajeana Harris
Katie Tang

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James Gehman

Customer Service Center – Lincoln

Kenneth Plank

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Carol Harrah
Elizabeth Spilker
Beth Matschullat
Monica Baete
Karla Ludden
Nancy Tworek

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Leah Bucco-White

Director’s Office – IS&T

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Jeffery Hastings
Cassie Phillips

Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home

Kari Marr

Grand Island Veterans Home

Angela Barcenas
Karry Bloomquist
Jennifer Clinger
Kim Fullerton
Barbara Lurz

Lincoln Regional Center

Matthew Ahlstedt
Mary Gallagher
Robert Jones
Andrea Keller
Ronald Kmiec
Kenneth Montgomery
Trina New

Sheryl Olson
Bruce Rafferty
David Scott
Tammy Stickney
Patty Stoki
John Weyer

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Layla Lamborn
Valerie Lenard
Vicki Ekstrum
Carole Roberts

Norfolk Regional Center

Byron Blain
Karen Bressler
Steven Daniels
Kristy Goetsch
Peter Graham
Barbara Papstein
Nancy Wragge

Norfolk Veterans Home

Victoria Ambroz
Amy Johnson
Brian Moser
Kandra Ortez
Nancy Phillips
Nancy Praeuner
Jeffrey Rethwisch
Catherine Tunink
Jennifer Upshaw
Glenda Wiedeman

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Tammy Kassebaum

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Blanca Ramirez-Salazar

Steven McNulty
Susan Dorffler
Dixie Jackson
Betty Smith
Kari Majors
Heather Younger
Kristi Chapman
Jill Crane
Lynn Chermok
Barbara Trusty

Western Nebraska Veterans Home

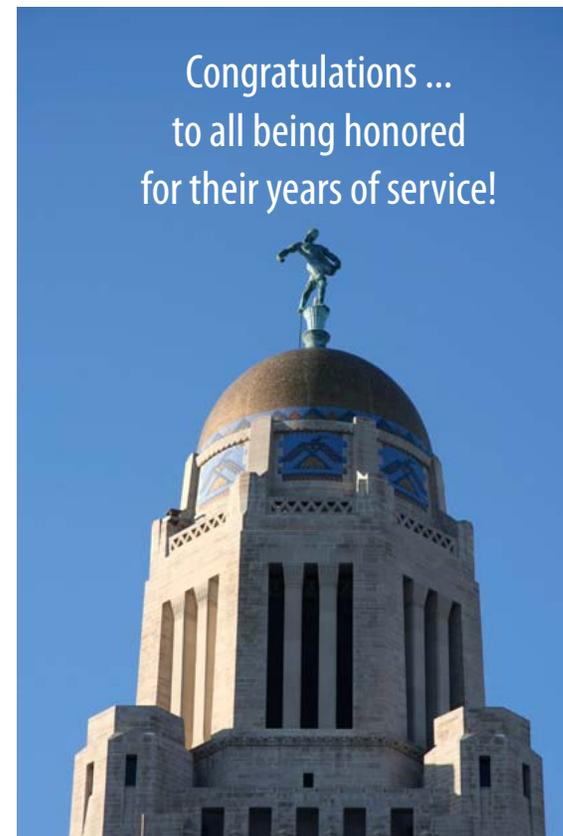
Debra Bonow
Virginia Escamilla
Anna Mendoza
Paul Richard

Youth Rehabilitation & Treatment Center – Geneva

Cindy Betka
Norma Boettcher
Deb Davis
Shawn Maloley
Donis Reutzler
Lisa Schweitzer

Youth Rehabilitation & Treatment Center – Kearney

Melvin Krueger



In Gratitude

Letters to DHHS employees who are helping people live better lives

To: **Rene' Tiedt**, Program Manager, Public Health

Michelle Humlicek (Health Licensing Specialist, Lincoln) has been very patient and helpful. I appreciate the work she does to support our Occupational Therapy students as they work their way through the licensure process.

Creighton University

Care Was Wonderful...*from the Norfolk Daily News,*

Plainview--I would like to share with your readers the "prize" they have--the **Norfolk Veterans Home**.

My husband recently passed away there after a struggle with Alzheimer's disease. He was cared for in the Alzheimer's pod.

He was a resident at the Home for 18 months.

The nursing staff in this facility is wonderful. They have compassion, patience, kindness and love for those they care for.

The social workers at the Home and with hospice also were so kind and helpful to all of our family.

The supporting staff is excellent, and as I walked down the hall, I would be greeted with a smile and greetings.

Thank you, dear ones, at the Home and AseraCare hospice.

I will never forget you and the loving care given our loved one.

A Thankful Spouse

Spirit of Giving Continues Year-Round

The Spirit of Giving is alive and well at DHHS and continues to live in the hearts of our coworkers. Here's an idea from our coworkers in the State Office Building in Lincoln. They have developed an easy, simple and fun way to support the Lincoln City Mission and want to share their idea with others in the hopes of getting even more people involved. Even though this story comes from employees at DHHS, they will be the first ones to say that their giving efforts are not about them, but rather about people in need who they support.

A group of Surveyors/ Consultants in the Division of Public Health travel a lot for their jobs. During their travels, they collect the little soaps, shampoos, lotions and other toiletries from the hotels where they stay. They gather all these items and then they donate pounds and pounds of the needed supplies to a very appreciative Lincoln City Mission.

"We're traveling anyway, and this is a really easy thing to do," said **Jessica Schoepf**, Developmental Disabilities Surveyor/Consultant, Public Health. "The City Mission is so appreciative. We definitely get more out of this than we give."

"We gather items all year round and know that we are meeting an important need," said **Karen Statham**, Developmental Disabilities Surveyor/Consultant,

Public Health. "We collect more items than we ever thought we would, which is great."

Jessica, Karen and others who work with them said that they would like to gather even more of these supplies and would welcome other donations to this special cause. It's all about paying it forward to others.

This group doesn't stop with travel supplies, either. They purchase and gather other items as needed for the Mission. In September, it was school supplies, now there's a need for hats, scarves and gloves/mittens. There's always a need for socks.

"We don't exchange holiday presents with each other anymore," Jessica said, "because we enjoy doing things for the Mission so much more. It's really not about us anyway. It's all about what we can do for others."

Jessica and Karen said they would be happy to collect items (NSOB, 3rd floor, southeast corner) and will deliver them to the Mission.



DHHS Spirit of Giving stories abound during the holidays and throughout the year. We want to feature as many stories as we can on the employee website and in *Connections*. Send your ideas to Dianna Seiffert and/or post them to the Employee Bulletin Board.