

# CONNECTIONS

August 3, 2015 VOLUME 15, ISSUE 7

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

## Charitable Giving May Start at Home, but Here's a Chance for it to Grow in the Office

The Nebraska State Employees Charitable Giving Campaign is the State's official workplace giving campaign and provides us an opportunity to give back to our local communities in a meaningful way. This year's campaign starts August 3 and runs through August 28, 2015.

Dollars raised by this campaign stay in Nebraska and have immediate impact on the lives of our family, friends, coworkers and neighbors. It's a way for us to continue to serve the public beyond our jobs.

State employees are a generous bunch! Since 2003, through this campaign, we've raised more than \$4.6 million dollars to support 400+ charitable organizations throughout Nebraska.

Our continued support allows these organizations to provide disaster relief, support community enhancement projects, educational programs, and offer needed aid for those suffering from chronic illness.

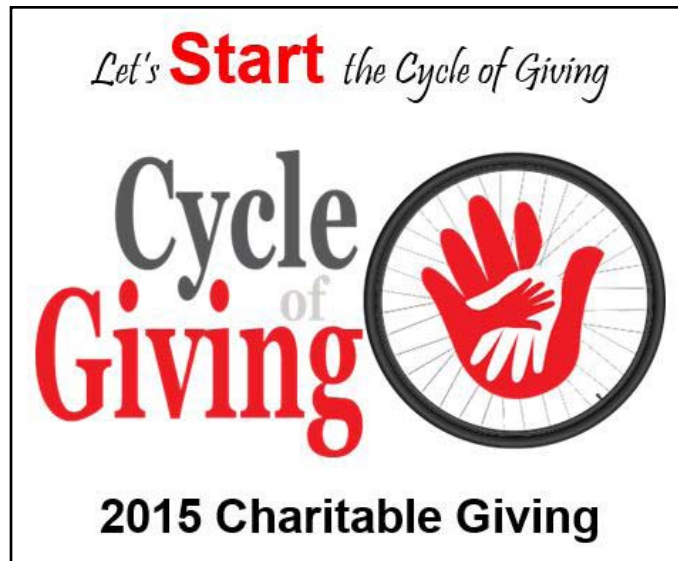
The 2015 Charitable Giving Coordinator Website is now available [here](#).

On the website you will find many helpful links including a copy of this year's brochure, blank pledge forms, information on what our dollars do for the charities, personal stories, a speaker request form, a listing of some of the charitable giving events scheduled so far, and so much more.

This website also tracks team progress throughout this year's Charitable Giving Challenge. **Calder Lynch**, Director of

DHHS' Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care, is the Team Captain for DHHS.

To help track team progress throughout the campaign, pledge forms and special event money need to be turned in to your coordinators each week so they can be consolidated by DHHS Human Resources and forwarded to Stacey Dvorak at the Department of Administrative Services.



*The month of August is always a fun one as we see all the creative fund-raising events listed on the DHHS employee website. I'm always happy to include information and photos on our website because it shows how caring and creative we are at DHHS. Send your ideas and photos to [Dianna Seiffert](#). And thanks for everything you do for the Charitable Giving Campaign.*

### Stay Tuned...

#### Future Issues of Connections

##### Employee Survey Results

The results of the employee survey you took are in! This particular survey focused on communications at DHHS.

Staff in Operations and Human Resources are analyzing the results now and are developing an action plan. The results will be published next month in various formats including email, *Connections* and the employee homepage

##### Get to Know New Leadership

As the DHHS' Chief Financial Officer **Pat Weber** gets settled into his new role and office, and the directors of the divisions of Children and Family Services (**Doug Weinberg**) and Developmental Disabilities (**Yolanda Webb**) start their work at DHHS in August, we'll feature them in future issues of *Connections*, so you can learn a little more about them.

# Stay Connected on



## make the connection . . .

**DHHS Public Website:** [www.dhhs.ne.gov](http://www.dhhs.ne.gov)  
**DHHS Employee Website:** <http://dhhsemployees/>  
**DHHS Helpline:** 1-800-254-4202, (402) 471-6035 in Lincoln, or via email at [dhhs.helpline@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.helpline@nebraska.gov)

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Chief Executive Officer:<br><b>Courtney Phillips</b>                                | Medicaid and Long-Term Care<br>Division Director:<br><b>Calder Lynch</b> |
| Behavioral Health<br>Division Acting Director:<br><b>Sheri Dawson</b>               | Public Health Division Acting<br>Director:<br><b>Courtney Phillips</b>   |
| Children and Family Services<br>Division Director:<br><b>Doug Weinberg</b>          | Veterans' Homes Division<br>Director:<br><b>John Hilgert</b>             |
| Developmental Disabilities<br>Division Acting Director:<br><b>Courtney Phillips</b> | Chief Operating Officer:<br><b>Matt Clough</b>                           |

*Connections* is published for employees of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services by Communications and Legislative Services (CLS).

|  |  |
|--|--|
| CLS Administrator:<br><b>Kathie Osterman</b> | Graphics and Layout:<br><b>Judy Barker</b> |
| Editor:<br><b>Dianna Seiffert</b>            |  |

**Readers are invited to submit news, photos and 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:** NE State Office Bldg. 3rd Floor  
 U.S. mail: P.O. Box 95026  
 301 Centennial Mall South  
 Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-5026

## 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](mailto:Dianna.seiffert@nebraska.gov).

## Homepage Homeruns

### DHHS Works to Address Trafficking in Nebraska, June 22

**Nathan Busch**, administrator of legislative coordination and project development in Children and Family Services, attended the National Convening on Trafficking and Child Welfare in Washington, D.C., along with six other State officials as Nebraska works to address trafficking in our state. He and Jeanne Bradner, deputy administrator in the Office of Probation Administration, were selected from the group to attend additional trafficking sessions on June 10 at the White House.

New mandates, as part of the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014, require interagency and cross-systems partnerships to successfully provide services for the prevention and protection of children and youth who are or are at risk of becoming victims of sex trafficking.

Nathan said that nationwide, 68-95 percent of trafficked persons were in the child welfare system.

The National Human Trafficking Resource Center, which hosts a hotline, reported that last year, 115 calls were received from Nebraska reporting human trafficking. NHTRC's hotline number is 1-888-373-7888.

### Showing Kindness to a Coworker in Kearney, July 9, 2015

Coworkers in the DHHS office in Kearney wore special T-shirts and hosted a potluck lunch on July 2 to show support for long-time coworker and Social Services Worker **Mike Zgud**, front and center. Mike recently started treatment for prostate cancer.

The shirts are black with a light blue ribbon on the front shoulder and the following quote on the back: "The body heals with play, the mind heals with laughter and the spirit heals with joy."

Mike's coworkers also wrote inspirational quotes on blue paper ribbons and taped them up in his office to help encourage him the next few weeks of radiation treatments.

Kindness comes in all forms. Always remember those who may be struggling by being kind to one another.



Nathan Busch, Children and Family Services, pictured here with Jeanne Bradner.



Kearney staff supports long-term coworker Mike Zgud, pictured above, front and center. Photo Nora Baluyot



*Courtney Phillips, CEO*

## ***Message from Courtney Phillips, CEO***

I've been here for nearly four months now, yet I remember my first few days like they were yesterday.

I remember meeting a lot of dedicated and talented people. Everyone was so nice! Nebraska nice!

I have really enjoyed meeting many members of our team and still have a ways to go. But thanks for sharing your thoughts with me about DHHS and things to explore.

Keep sharing! Many of you have been here a long time so you know what works and what doesn't. Yet you know, too, that change brings opportunities, and you're open to try new ideas and ways of doing things.

You've taught me so much already! And I hope to return the favor by pushing us forward. Our CFO and new directors are bound to bring a fresh perspective to DHHS, as well.

I'm proud of the things we've accomplished together in the short time I've been here... Bigger accomplishments we've achieved as a team, and more personalized ones, you've done on your own. I like hearing

about the individual honors and awards you've earned for your good work, and, I enjoy reading the many letters of appreciation you've received from coworkers and clients that you've gone out of your way to help.

I've also had the privilege during my first few months here to announce the DHHS Employees and Supervisors of the Year for 2015. What an honor! I was impressed with the efforts you showed to recognize your coworkers. The competition was tough and it is a testament of the great work everyone is doing to support our mission of *Helping People Live Better Lives!*

I feel like y'all have embraced the challenges of working for a new administration and have had tremendous patience in waiting for new directors to come on board. I want to thank everyone for stepping up and taking on new responsibilities, especially **Tony Green** as Acting Director of Children and Family Services, **Sheri Dawson** as Acting Director of Behavioral Health, **Judy Martin** and **Jenifer Roberts-Johnson**, Deputy Directors of Public Health, and the entire team in the division of Developmental Disabilities.

Here's my advice to you as these new hires meet with you on their first day and beyond. Show them your passion, drive and determination. Continue to support and encourage each other and the new folks as they become part of our team. Keep following the [DHHS Values and Core Competencies](#) that drive our work. These behaviors and attitudes are the foundation of a great culture, and positive office cultures help us attract and keep the best talent.

From the very start, you made me want to work hard and add great value to DHHS, and I know you'll do the same with our new CFO and new directors. So when you see Pat, Doug and Yolanda out and about, be sure to give them a warm welcome. If you make even half of the same positive impression that you made on me that first day, then everyone will be off to a great start. Thanks for your commitment. Keep up the good work, y'all!

### **Making a Positive First Impression**

With the hiring of a new chief financial officer and the appointment of two new division directors, we're filling some important leadership roles at DHHS. Chief Financial Officer **Pat Weber** started work on July 20. **Doug Weinberg**, the next Director of the Division of Children and Family Services, starts Aug. 3, and **Yolanda Webb**, the new Director of the Division of Developmental Disabilities, starts Aug. 31.

Isn't it exciting? As we fill in these leadership roles, I find myself thinking about my first impressions of DHHS and what I've learned so far from working with you.

## A Day in the Life of...Nancy Klimek, GIVH Activity Specialist

*This “Day in the Life” series highlights DHHS employees and how we help people live better lives in different ways, through diverse jobs, across the state, every day. The following story is only one of many positive stories to be told about DHHS employees. If you’d like to be featured in this series, email [Ashley Hartman](mailto:Ashley.Hartman) or call her at 402-471-9108.*

By Lauren Sedam

Reprinted in part, with permission from the Grand Island Independent

Just about everyone says it.

Live life to the fullest. Carpe diem. Live each moment like it’s your last.

**Nancy Klimek** actually lives it.

She is the recreation manager at the Grand Island Veterans Home, and making the most of life has always been her philosophy.

The roots were planted in her childhood. And whether she’s running around the Veterans Home, leading tours at the Crane Trust, supervising volunteers at the state fair or anything else, she carries it with her.

Klimek strives to live her life to the fullest so that others can do the same.

“If you work hard and you have goals and you strive to have yourself ready for opportunities as they come along, then you’re ready to seize those opportunities as they come along,” she said. “And those help you live your life fully.”

### A tragedy, a choice

Though Klimek has spent her last 33 years in Grand Island, she spent her early years in Eddyville and went to high school in Axtell. She then attended college in Kearney, earning a degree comprehensive recreation. After a short stint at a nursing home in Omaha, she took a job serving about 400 members at the Veterans Home.

The department consisted of just her and a bus driver.

Klimek figured even if the position was only for a year, she could gain experience working at the biggest facility in the state.

Instead, she found a passion.

“Thirty-three years later, here we are,” she said.

Now, Klimek’s staff of seven activity specialists serve about 210 members at the Veterans Home, and she helps plan everything from bingo to having a circus come to the grounds for members to enjoy.

“They say ‘Love what you do, and do what you love,’” she said. “... That’s so true of my case. I love what I do, and I do it because I love it.”

The seeds Klimek’s philosophy were planted early.

She grew up going on camping trips and traveling the country with her family, she said, and she learned what a big place the world is. She also learned to constantly strive to make herself better.

But it took a tragedy to hammer the point home.

In June 1995, Klimek was living in Grand Island with her husband, Dave, his son and daughter from a previous marriage, Ed and Dusty, and their daughters together, Allison and Tara.

One night, Dusty went to sleep and never woke up. The nursing student was just shy of her 19th birthday.

It took Klimek a long time to go through the stages of grief and to learn to take steps forward. Then she realized she had a choice.

“At some point, you come to a turning point, and you have to say, alright, now, is this life experience going to turn me into a cynical, bitter and angry person, or am I going to choose to find ways to honor the life that was cut short by making sure that I don’t take life for granted ... ?” she said.

It sounds easy, she said, but when you’re on the ground, the choice isn’t always so clear. Still, day by day, moment by moment, Klimek chose light.

### An essential volunteer

Her volunteering started small, and it started with her children.

As her kids grew up, her reach grew, too.

People who knew about her position at the Veterans Home invited her to get more involved with veterans causes.

She served on the core committee for the World War II Hero Flight and the Korean War Hero Flight, and she is a volunteer with the Vietnam War Hero Flight.

Klimek also helps fill gaps in service for veterans with Central Community College’s Veterans Task Force.

But Klimek doesn’t just do it all — she does it all with gusto.

Those who work with her can’t say enough.

Chelsey Jungck, the events and entertainment director at the state fair, said there’s only one word to describe Klimek’s personality — infectious.

On the job, **Joanne Badura** said, it’s the same way.

“She’s a little piece of dynamite,” she said.

They have worked together for 16 years, Badura said, with Badura serving as the department’s administrative assistant and the volunteer services coordinator.

Klimek, she said, is the department’s Energizer Bunny.

“If we didn’t have her energy, I don’t know what we would do,” she said.

Even so, Klimek maintains that what she is able to do is because she’s part of amazing teams.

At the Veterans Home, she said, the departments come together with support from volunteers, organizations and the community.

“You can have the vision and you can have the passion and you can have the energy, but it’s nothing if you don’t have that team with you to make it happen,” she said.



### Helping others live

But though what Klimek and her teams are able to make happen vary greatly, the reason she works so hard is the same.

“That’s what I’m passionate about, is helping people be connected,” she said. “I’m passionate about helping people be able to pursue those recreational interests.”

Many times, members come to the home knowing it will likely be where they finish their lives. Sometimes, she said, they think whatever dreams they had will never happen.

Those in the department do everything they can to find something to give each member purpose. “...Our whole mission is to make sure our members have the opportunity to live their lives to the fullest degree possible every single day,” Klimek said.

Once, she said, that meant finding a way to take a member to his first Husker football game. He was near tears the whole time, Klimek said, because he didn’t think it would ever happen. Moments like those, she said, are everything.

When Klimek sees that her passions have allowed someone else to follow theirs, she knows she is living her life.

She is making a choice, striving and making the world better. And she is honoring the life Dusty couldn’t lead.

# Nebraska - An Epicenter of Ebola Monitoring, Care

By Leah Bucco-White

*Editor's Note: This article appeared in the Summer edition of the National Association of Local Boards of Health's NewsBrief.*

Nebraska has been recognized as a national leader in preparedness since the early 2000s when the state initiated its smallpox vaccination efforts, created pandemic flu response plans and opened the Biocontainment Patient Care Unit.

The unit was officially unveiled March 7, 2005 in Omaha, a partnership between the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Nebraska Medicine and the University of Nebraska Medical Center. A news release from that day heralded it as “the first-of-its-kind in the nation.” The unit was built with the purpose of providing specialized care to people with potentially deadly and infectious diseases.

Almost 10 years later, it would be this unit and a deadly disease called Ebola that would put Nebraska in the national and worldwide spotlight.

Last summer while the Ebola outbreak in West Africa was making headlines, the U.S. State Department visited the Biocontainment Unit. Federal officials were very impressed with the facility. That was Aug. 1.

On Sept. 2, DHHS received a call from the State Department about an Ebola patient – a U.S. physician who contracted the virus while working in West Africa. The State Department wanted to bring him to Nebraska. Decision time.

Ebola itself was not new to us but having Ebola patients on U.S. and Nebraska soil was. This was about more than treating a patient. This decision impacted everyone in the state. We had the facility. We had the expertise. And we had a person who needed our help.

“This is what the unit was built for, what people had trained for. We believed the staff at Nebraska Medicine could safely treat the patient while protecting the public and that the risk to Omaha and greater Nebraska was minimal,” said Dr. Joseph Acierno, Director of Public Health and Chief Medical Officer for DHHS at the time.

DHHS and Nebraska Medicine have been partners in preparedness for more than 10 years. Building the unit was a joint effort and so was the decision to open it. It was a decision that required careful consideration on both sides because one of us couldn’t move forward without the other.

Dr. Rick Sacra arrived at the Biocontainment Unit on Sept. 5 and all eyes were on Nebraska.

Nebraska Medicine’s team successfully treated Dr. Sacra and he was released almost three weeks later on Sept. 25 with a standing ovation, smiles and tears.

And there would be more patients to come. One would be treated and released and another who arrived gravely ill would die.

Nebraska had now become a national epicenter for Ebola care and treatment and with that came more responsibility.

Health care professionals with a possible high-risk Ebola exposure were now being transported to Nebraska to be near the Biocontainment Unit if care was needed.

They were either monitored inside the unit or housed close to the unit in a controlled and safe environment during their 21-day incubation/monitoring period.

Monitoring was a joint effort between the Douglas County Health Department and Nebraska Medicine with support from DHHS.

At the same time, other local health departments across the state were monitoring more people who recently returned from West Africa. These travelers were in a lower risk category and didn’t need to be placed near the unit.

A total of 23 travelers were monitored statewide since late October.

Established relationships and partnerships played a critical role in

our response. There were many more key players including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, State Patrol, local law enforcement, fire and EMS. Things went smoothly because these people had trained and exercised together as part of preparedness planning and responded together to real-world events like flooding, tornadoes and H1N1 influenza.

“Beyond its role in opening the Biocontainment Unit and monitoring people with potential Ebola exposure, public health was able to quarterback coordination between federal, state and local partners as well as Nebraska Medicine and help make sure other important parties who may not be directly participating were in the loop,” said Jenifer Roberts-Johnson, Deputy Director of Public Health for DHHS.

Local health departments engaged their local boards of health early on providing updates on Ebola before the first patients even landed in the U.S. The local boards of health supported their health departments and helped provide guidance and acquire additional resources like funding.

In 2005, Nebraska led the nation with its foresight to build the Biocontainment Unit.

In 2015, the unit is now a national asset in the fight against Ebola. Because of the dedication and diligence of the many people involved in our Ebola response, Nebraska has emerged as a national leader yet again.



Source: ThinkStock

# Way to Go!

## Statewide and National Recognitions, Honors and Awards

### Congratulations **Pat Infield** 2015 TB Controller of the Year

**Pat Infield** (Tuberculosis Program Manager, Lincoln) recently received the 2015 TB Controller of the Year award, the National TB Controller Program's highest honor. It recognizes an outstanding contribution and impact on tuberculosis prevention and control at the local, state, regional and national levels.

In his nomination letter, Dr. Phil Smith, Medical Director, UNMC, said, "Pat has a BSN and RN from Winona State University in Minnesota, as well as special training in TB. She has spent virtually her entire career in TB control, and has been TB program manager for the State of Nebraska Department of Health since 2003. Overall she has worked in public health TB programs 40 years!

"Her tireless work in the field of TB is legendary. When called upon to assume the leadership role of TB Program Manager for the health department she did so smoothly. Under her watch the incidence of TB in Nebraska has continued to improve, as has the care of the individual TB patients.

"Pat is one of the kindest and most caring people I have ever met. She

works with a variety of health care providers, and has engendered only admiration and kind comments. She has a consummate integrity and is never irritable, angry or impatient."

Coworker **Heather Krieger**, Infectious Disease Prevention Unit Manager, Lincoln, said that Pat has done incredible work with Nebraska's TB Program.

Congratulations, Pat, on this well-deserved honor, and best wishes on your upcoming retirement. We'll miss you!



### Peggy Trouba Earns 2015 Excellence In Assc. Work Award



Congratulations to **Peggy Trouba** (WIC Program Manager, Lincoln) for being selected to receive the Association of State Public Health Nutritionists (ASPHN) 2015 Excellence in Association Work award. This award recognizes outstanding leadership that makes a major difference in moving forward ASPHN's goals and objectives.

"Your peers want to honor you for your

creative and caring leadership in moving ASPHN into the future with new strategies and approaches for increasing the value of ASPHN to all members," according to the letter announcing Peggy's award. "You are a unique and valuable leader who makes a positive impact on everyone you encounter and for that we are very grateful! These are spectacular times for our members who are directing and coordinating public health nutrition actions in state health departments, local health agencies, and university programs."

**Paula Eurek**, Administrator, Lifespan Health Services Unit, Lincoln, said that Peggy was very deserving of this honor for all of the time and energy she has devoted to ASPHN over the years.

Peggy was able to accept her award in person at ASPHN's annual meeting in St. Louis in June.

Thank you, Peggy, for your continued dedication to the field of public health nutrition. Your work at DHHS continues to support our mission of helping people live better lives.

## Finding Inspiration by Remembering the Big Picture

*“What we see depends mainly on what we look for.” Sir John Lubbock*

By Richard Mettler,  
Human Resources



The story of Three Stonecutters was made famous by management guru Peter F. Drucker. As the story goes, the stonecutters were asked what they were doing. The first stonecutter replied, “I am making a living.” The second stonecutter answered, “I am doing the best job of stonecutting in the entire country.” The third stonecutter declared, “I am building a cathedral.”

Clearly, it’s the third stonecutter whose efforts are being inspired by purpose beyond himself.

During the course of a hectic work day, we can become so focused on specific tasks and deadlines before us that we lose sight of the big picture which answers, “Why am I doing this?” It’s as though we lost our compass heading.

### Three Important Principles about Finding Inspiration at Work

- (1) People want to know the overall end result of their efforts—who benefits, and how. Knowing the ‘why’ keeps us in touch with the purpose behind the work we do. For example, “We’re in the business of helping Nebraska’s women, infants, and children in need eat well and stay healthy.”
- (2) People want to know that the work they do is socially useful, and makes an important difference in the lives of

- (3) We naturally rally around a shared purpose that is meaningful to us, and where we are contributing to something greater than ourselves. When we feel connected to others in pursuit of a meaningful shared purpose we are more engaged and committed, with greater workplace satisfaction. For example, “Remember, to succeed, all of us must work together to honor the veterans living in this home.”

### Actions We Can Take

- We all can remain clear on the big picture in our corner of DHHS and what Helping People Live Better Lives means for us as we do our work, as individuals or as part of a group. Whatever our specific job duties, what we accomplish are building blocks for this big picture.
- Problem solve and plan with coworkers toward continuous improvement as we pursue our big picture.
- Encourage coworkers to follow our example and reframe their efforts at work from, “Why am I doing this?” to, “What I do is important!”

.....  
Please email your thoughts, concerns, or suggestions about workplace courtesy and workplace relationships to [Richard Mettler](#).

*“Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.” William James*

## New Overtime Process for DHHS Facilities

By Alex Garcia,  
Human Resources and Development Administrator

Happy New (Fiscal) Year! Along with the sincerely appreciated pay increases, July 1 also marked the beginning of the new two-year Union Labor Contract. The [January Connections](#) highlighted the changes and a detailed summary of the master contract changes can be found on the [DAS Employee Relations’ website](#) and the [DHHS HR website](#) for Appendix C changes.

One of the significant changes was the change in management of overtime in the 24-hour facilities. We went from two lists (voluntary and mandatory) to one list (overtime), giving credit for any overtime performed when considering selecting for mandatory overtime. By enticing people to volunteer, this gives you more control of your schedules and reduces the amount of total mandatory overtime hours.

The Lincoln Regional Center and Western Nebraska Veterans’ Home were the first to implement the system in April as a result of a joint agreement with DHHS and NAPE. Overall the feedback has been positive. Although mandatory overtime has increased at LRC recently, it has not been due to the new process, but other factors, including a shortage of staff which they are aggressively addressing.

Thanks to the early implementation, we found a few points of clarification in regards to the new process and worked with Union officials to ensure we both agreed on these points.

One was allowing all volunteers to be initially considered for overtime posted in advance versus first using those on the shift prior to the overtime shift needed.

The other clarification involved when advance overtime could be assigned in advance. A timeline was not specified in the contract due to the variety of factors at each facility. Therefore, each facility will establish their timeline, but will still need to follow the intent of the overtime program.

If you have questions about the Labor Contract, please contact your local [HR Manager](#).

# 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.

Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center – Kearney employees **Jana Peterson**, Administrator; **Rey Rodriguez**, Facility Operating Officer; **Dan Schmidt**, Teacher; **John McArthur**, Principal; and **Cathy Emrick**, Staff Assistant;

I just wanted to say “thank you” so much for allowing some of the boys to come to help unload and set up for the conference we held in Kearney a few weeks ago. The boys did a great job, under the supervision of Dan.

The event was a very big success because of volunteers that worked so hard. The boys made all of that hauling look easy, and we couldn’t have pulled it off without their help.

**President and CEO, Compass**

Notes to two of our coworkers from one grateful client who was able to use the emergency energy assistance fund:

**Mike Zgud**, Social Services Worker, Kearney:

I want to thank you for going that extra mile and helping me. I wish I could express the gratitude I feel and how much of a difference you made not only for me but for my daughter and grandsons, too. My oldest grandson was very upset that Gramma broke down in tears. He told me it scared him and made him sad. Thank you for helping them, too! I am very very grateful for the work you do. Please know that you definitely do make a difference.

Thank you **Brenda Bender** (Social Services Supervisor, Kearney). You have no idea how grateful I am...when I got home a gentleman from NPPD was there to restore my power. I shook his hand and thanked him and then cried for almost an hour. Thank you so very very much for going above and beyond to help. I guess my breaking down and crying [in the parking lot] really unnerved my oldest grandson...I guess they are not used to seeing me upset. Your efforts helped him to not worry about me tonight. So once again my dear lady, Thank You..I just can’t say it enough. Big hugs to you.”

**Colleen Fiegner** (Supervisor, Medicaid and Long-Term Care, Falls City),

I just wanted to let you know how NICE it is to work with **Janice Willwer** (MLTC worker, Falls City) and **Kellie Wiers** (MLTC worker, Falls City) on our Medicaid cases for Good Samaritan in Auburn. They are both very pleasant and willing to talk with the clients at any time and really explain things to families when they don’t quite understand. We will defiantly miss Janice after her retirement but very thankful Kellie is there to continue doing the hard work for us! I just wanted to pass on the appreciation we have for these two ladies.

**Good Samaritan Society, Auburn**

**Jeanette Hastings** (Social Services Worker, Norfolk),

A recent report from a Guardian Ad Litem recognized the extraordinary and time- consuming work that **Julie Brenneis** (Children and Family Services Specialist, Norfolk) did for a child she is working with. Here are some excerpts from that report:

Enormous amounts of time and energy were spent by Julie Brenneis, not only placing the child with relatives but also making certain that the child was Medicaid eligible. When the child began experiencing significant mental health issues, Julie spent countless hours making arrangements for the child to receive the psychiatric care needed and to assure the mental health providers that they would be paid. When a new placement was needed, Julie again spent a significant amount of time securing placement at a treatment center. This child is truly fortunate to have Julie Brenneis for a caseworker.

CLS-PB-1 (99726)