

CONNECTIONS

October 30, 2015 VOLUME 14, ISSUE 10

Bringing Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services employees closer together

Employees of the Year 2015



Jamie Andersen,
Children and Family
Services, Eastern
Service Area, Omaha

Jamie has an amazing knowledge of the initial assessment process. Jamie has

mentored several new CFS workers over the course of her tenure at DHHS. Jamie is dedicated to making sure that new employees learn the skills necessary to keep children safe. Jamie is a problem solver, go getter and team player. Jamie is a great advocate for the children and families she works with. Even though the job as an initial assessment worker can be wearing, Jamie is always positive and wearing a smile.



Vonda Apking,
Public Health,
Lincoln

Vonda is a staff member who has been very supportive of unit changes by covering duties as

DHHS is proud to introduce the 2015 Employees and Supervisors/Managers of the Year. 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 Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln on Thursday, October 29.

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 of our honorees!

well as helping with new employees. Vonda has been instrumental in coordinating a major move of the Medical Office from third to first floor last fall. She made sure that all necessary files were transported with the move and others went to storage. Vonda has demonstrated a positive attitude, strong work ethic and a sense of humor on a daily basis.



Tammie Brackett,
Veterans' Homes,
Scottsbluff

Tammie's strong work ethic and willingness to go the extra mile makes her a valued asset to the Western Nebraska Veterans' Home. Tammie has provided an inviting working atmosphere and creativity in preparing quality meals for our Members'

enjoyment. Tammie has been a dedicated leader in the Dietary Department embracing opportunities to learn new things. Tammie graciously accepted a temporary reassignment to include supervisory responsibilities and excelled in this challenge. Tammie's most valuable trait is her ability to remain calm under pressure by handling difficult situations with empathy and respect. Tammie has taken on a new challenge as she continues to serve our members with her ever present smile and pleasant personality on our Housekeeping team. Tammie's knowledge and experience will be missed in the kitchen, but her gracious manner will continue to serve our Members well.



Julie Docter,
Medicaid and
Long-Term Care,
Lincoln

Julie is a person who readily takes on new challenges and who is able to envision steps needed for program improvement. Julie oversees the Early Development Network in partnership with the Department of Education. In her career with the Department, Julie has been involved in the development and implementation of numerous grants and special projects including recent planning for Managed Long-Term Services and Supports. Julie has been very flexible as jobs change and duties change. She is able to take the knowledge she has gained and refocus her attention on the next assignment. Julie is a dedicated state employee.

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DHHS Employee Website: <http://dhhsemployees.com>
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Chief Executive Officer: Courtney Phillips	Medicaid and Long-Term Care Division Director: Calder Lynch
Behavioral Health Division Director: Sheri Dawson	Public Health Division Acting Director: Courtney Phillips
Children and Family Services Division Director: Doug Weinberg	Veterans' Homes Division Director: John Hilgert
Developmental Disabilities Interim Division Director: Courtney Miller	Chief Financial Officer: Pat Weber

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Brittney Hart, Operations, Fremont

Brittney's constructive attitude has helped to lift her team to new heights. Brittney's passion for success

and willingness to serve with pride brings out the best in others. Brittney demonstrates high levels of integrity. Her selfless dedication to her team and personal standard of accountability led to her selection to serve in a newly-created training lead position. Brittney readily accepts new responsibilities and welcomes any challenges that often accompany change initiatives. Brittney ensures all individuals are well prepared and confident to apply their knowledge on the floor. Brittney is a very important part of our customer service center.



Diane Hill, Children and Family Services, Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center, Geneva

Diane is dependable, hardworking and very meticulous with details. Diane has been instrumental with the N-Focus data entry initiative in making sure information is entered on time and is accurate. Diane also worked in child welfare and has vast knowledge about the N-Focus system. She continues to serve as someone staff can rely on to answer questions. Diane is definitely an employee who can be counted on!



Tate Hurlburt, IS&T, Lincoln

Tate is the model employee for Technical Services. He provides guidance to the members of his whole team. His

experience in dealing with internal and external customers affords him a unique and highly valued insight into problem determination and remediation. Tate's reputation as a problem solver and a developer extends to areas that he has had very little to no direct interaction with, prompting others to seek him out for the highest level of assistance.



Steven Hurt, Children and Family Services, Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center, Kearney

Steve has such a pleasant attitude when he comes to work each day. He understands what his job responsibilities are and works hard to complete them. Steve always takes time to work with the youth and to make sure they are acknowledged when passing them. Steve has received recognition for working with the youth and not just observing them while they work. Steve's response was "I enjoy working with the youth and try to reach out to them as much as I can, but still get my work done." Steve is very dedicated toward the facility and the youth that reside here.



Angela Janssen, Veterans' Homes, Norfolk

Angela is always courteous and helpful to others. Angela has high energy and enthusiasm

with which she goes about her job in a notable way. Angela has a way of resolving difficult situations and conflicts with remarkable patience and tact. Angela works hard to ensure that our Members receive the benefits they are entitled to for their service to our country. Angela serves on many committees and brings new ideas to the table, always with a "can do" attitude. Angela represents all that is good at the Norfolk Veterans' Home--Members living well.



Paula Jones, Children and Family Services, Southeast Service Area, Lincoln

Paula is very professional and her work ethic continues to impress us daily. Paula has been involved in many changes both in physical location, policy and procedures. Paula stays calm and strives to let out the old and take in the new. Paula is a key member of our team. She provides a sense of humor and approachability that makes all feel welcome to come to her for guidance. Paula is a top notch employee for DHHS. She is consistent and predictable in exemplifying DHHS' Values and Competencies.



Susan Kelly,
Developmental
Disabilities, Lincoln

As a Service
Coordinator Susan
exemplifies the
Values and Core
Competencies of

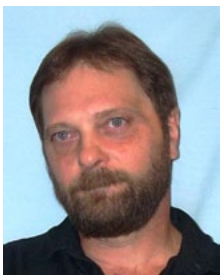
DHHS. Susan brightens everyone's day with her smile. Susan is kind-hearted, professional, timely, and, above all, she puts her consumers first. Susan has been a change agent for numerous customers and made a place for herself in the hearts of everyone with whom she works.



Paula Markuson,
Medicaid and
Long-Term Care,
Omaha

Paula has a wealth
of experience and
knowledge in the
management of

caseloads of clients residing in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Paula is well respected by the community including nursing facilities, advocates and attorneys working with the elderly. Paula always tries to help the families she serves when they are going through a rough time figuring out resources for family members who may need nursing home placements. Paula carries a caseload of more than 370 clients while doing so with compassion and patience, and never says no to another request for assistance. Paula has devoted many years to this growing population of the elderly and disabled. She shows every day the meaning of helping people live better lives.



Michael Powell,
Developmental
Disabilities, Beatrice
State Developmental
Center

Michael has been
at BSDC for many
years. Michael has

withstood the test of time through many changes over this last year. Micheal has been a constant solid support and role model through all the changes with staffing and with the individuals we serve. Michael is dependable and follows directives which helps mentor new staff. His support and knowledge is very much appreciated.



John Sweazy,
Behavioral Health,
Lincoln Regional
Center

John makes sure
that the medication
therapy for LRC
patients is effective,

safe and individualized. John has been instrumental in assisting LRC with changing to RXConnect, an electronic medication order entry system. John has been making sure that the system is working efficiently, not just for the Pharmacy Department but for the nursing and medical staff as well. John coordinates the procurement of the influenza vaccine each year. John is dependable, friendly and dedicated to ensuring that things are done correctly. John displays a consistently positive attitude that results in a positive work environment for his

coworkers. John genuinely cares for the success of the hospital and is dedicated to the patients we serve.



Kenneth Zoucha,
M.D., Behavioral
Health, Hastings
Regional Center

Kenneth is
compassionate,
dedicated, caring,
intelligent and

skilled. These are just a few attributes he possess. Kenneth has made vast improvements in the delivery of medical care to the youth we serve. Kenneth's experience and knowledge has been instrumental in updating the infection control and medication policies that guide and direct the care provided to the youth. Dr. Zoucha is a valuable member of the HJCDP Leadership Team with making decisions on the administrative level and medical level as well.

Supervisors of the Year 2015



Cynthia Brammeier,
Medicaid and
Long-Term Care,
Lincoln

Cynthia makes the
State Unit on Aging
a better place to
work. She rallies the

team while promoting progress, striving for deadlines and giving employees the respect and autonomy they deserve.

Cynthia manages by example. She is incredibly organized on the calendar and in her timelines. Cynthia has an attitude of success and is constantly improving herself by learning new policies, procedures, facts and processes every day. Cynthia creates an environment of trust, respect and constructive actions to make life better. Cynthia's motto is "under promise and over deliver," so we can take on a task and go beyond what is required so that we can make improvements in service for older adults in Nebraska. Cynthia will go down in history as being the best!



Brenda Coufal,
Public Health,
Lincoln

Brenda leads by
example and would
not ask any of the
PRAMS staff to do
anything she would

not do herself. Brenda works diligently to collect, analyze and translate data into meaningful information to be used for planning and evaluating public health programs. Brenda encourages suggestions and ideas, and people walk away feeling that she values your input. Brenda is admired by and respected by so many people. She has a pleasant and congenial demeanor which leads to a peaceful and harmonious workplace.



Levi Hadley,
Children and Family
Services, Youth
Rehabilitation and
Treatment Center,
Kearney

Levi is easy going
and caring. Levi has a

good rapport with the staff he supervises. Levi goes above and beyond to provide extra training on the program aspects. Levi is a great role model for the youth and the staff. He displays the Principles of Daily Living in everything he does. Levi truly demonstrates the DHHS Values and Core Competencies.



Richard Kreifels,
Developmental
Disabilities, Lincoln

Dick's dedication
to the Department,
his team and the
individuals he
serves is unmatched.

His passion for serving individuals in our community is exemplified by his knowledge of policy as well as his willingness to adapt to change. Dick has invested a great deal of time to serving others. His experience provides a welcome sense of consistency. Dick has the unique ability to support staff without enabling them, giving them the confidence to make good judgment calls.



Molly Krolikowski,
Children and Family
Services, Southeast
Service Area, Lincoln

Molly, is organized
and helps the team
be organized to
meet our deadlines.

Molly has created a team environment that makes it enjoyable to work with each other and encourages us to be supportive of one another. Molly also helps other teams when needed. Due to the nature of the work Molly gives such support and encouragement—one reason so many still work there today.



Lois Little, IS&T,
Lincoln

Lois is responsible
for the compliance
of system design
to support Child
Support business
needs and policy.

Lois has established a good working relationship with the Child Support administration. She accepts new assignments as a challenge to increase her knowledge to better serve our customers. Lois demonstrates a commitment to service and high quality in her work. Lois has made a positive impact in Nebraska for Child Support Enforcement.



Shelly Malmstrom,
Veterans' Homes,
Grand Island

Shelly demonstrates
the mission and
agency values in her
everyday work ethic.
She is compassionate

and professional in all her interactions with Members, staff and guests. Shelly ensures the canteen environment is warm, friendly and comfortable for all who visit. Shelly regularly works to see that any Member special requests are met. This is an important task since many of our Members are not able to shop for themselves outside the facility. Shelly is well respected for her positive attitude, teamwork mentality and leadership for getting things done. Shelly is a great role model for all supervisors and staff.



Dianna Mastny,
Behavioral Health,
Norfolk Regional
Center

Dianna consistently
shows competence in
her job and handles
crisis situations with

the utmost professionalism. Dianna is firm and consistent in adhering to policies and focuses on ensuring safety for both staff and patients. Dianna goes above and beyond her job duties and is always willing to help out wherever needed. Dianna is a valued member of our clinical team and is always "serving people with excellence."



Kyle McConnell,
Operations, Lincoln

Kyle makes sure to
listen to concerns
of all customers
to give clarity and
solutions to issues.
Kyle has clear vision

of where the Department needs to go and his leadership is instrumental in the success of this immense undertaking. Kyle has assumed many other duties as they became vacant to make sure all continues to go well in his area. Kyle is willing to share his knowledge with his staff to get tasks completed. Kyle puts meaning into the words "support services" and truly leads by example. Kyle is a leader within DHHS and embodies serving people with excellence.



Kevin Merrigan,
Veterans' Homes,
Bellevue

Kevin is always
there to listen to
any Member's needs
and help when
it's needed. Kevin

does a tremendous job and is an asset to the dietary department and also to the Members at ENVH. Kevin has helped greatly with implementation of fiscal ordering practices and has contributed significantly in reducing waste in weekly food purchase amounts. Kevin is always willing to come in on his scheduled days off to help his dietary team.



David Nicklas,
Behavioral Health,
Lincoln Regional
Center

Dave has dedicated his career to making the grounds of the Lincoln Regional

Center a prominent landmark and an accredited Arboretum since 1984. Dave exhibits the qualities of person-centered care and all of the DHHS Core Competencies through his genuine loyalty and allegiance to ensuring the success of the grounds. Dave's pride in his work is evident in his genuine manner and the meticulous care and concern he has for the grounds. Dave is supportive of his team and the entire Maintenance Department, and he demonstrates commitment and high regard for others.



Amanda Sawtelle,
Children and Family
Services, Fremont
Customer Service
Center

Amanda demonstrates a commitment to

excellence. She recognizes her team for accomplishments at every team meeting. Amanda is approachable, gives constructive criticism and motivates her team. She inspires her team to be the best they can be by leading by example. Amanda is always looking for the positive side when our jobs get challenging. She keeps a "can do" attitude when things get kind of stressful. Amanda is willing to explore ideas from workers on how to streamline or approach a process differently that may save time.



Melanie Standifer,
Medicaid and
Long-Term Care,
Lincoln

Melanie manages a very diversified unit in the Medicaid & Long-Term Care

Division with expertise and efficiency. She has worked diligently with the HIPP program by setting up guidelines to make this a more efficient program. Melanie has implemented changes to the TPL Health and Casualty and Estate Recovery areas allowing those areas to work more smoothly. She is always willing to work with staff to resolve difficult issues. Melanie welcomes suggestions to allow us to accomplish the goals of DHHS. She loves people, work hard and always tries to lift spirits of those around her. Melanie makes sure to recognize teammates' special days and celebrates with some kind of treat. Working for the State of Nebraska is simply divine under the supervision of Melanie.



April Wagar,
Developmental
Disabilities, Beatrice
State Developmental
Center

April is flexible in her duties and always willing to

help to make sure tasks are finished. April is looked up to by staff and is often sought out for feedback and advice from coworkers. She is always willing to take on special projects to help better the ICF. April is definitely a team player as she will trade her schedule if necessary to allow her coworkers to go on vacations. April is an asset to the ICF team.

Congratulations



Message from Courtney Phillips, CEO

Our work is not always easy, but it's always worth it and these employees are shining examples of what we can accomplish if we bring our best to the table every day.

The work we do matters and it's important to celebrate the accomplishments of individual employees and what we accomplish as a team.

We're all in this together, because we're better together.

As we move forward, I encourage everyone to celebrate each other's work all year long, not just in October.

Each and every one of you makes a real difference in the lives of the people we serve.

Yes, there will be challenges and hard work ahead, but I believe that together we can accomplish great things.

Great things are already happening.

In my time here, I've been inspired by how you have embraced the challenges of working for a new administration and by your passion and dedication for your work.

We're all growing and learning together every day, but as long we continue to keep the people we serve at the front of our minds, we will just get better and better.

There is nothing greater than working toward something much bigger than yourself and that is what we do here every day.

We do that work well because of people like you.

Thank you for all you do.

As always, it is an honor and a privilege to work with all of you.

Keep up the good work, ya'll.

#TeamDHHS

October is State Employee Recognition Month.

Each year at this time, we recognize our most important asset – you, the people who make up this organization and make it great.

The DHHS team is filled with good people who work hard every day to fulfill our agency's mission of helping people live better lives.

In October, we celebrate some of our team members for their dedication to this mission and the people we serve.

In this issue of Connections, you'll learn more about your teammates who were selected as Employees and Supervisors of the Year and your coworkers who are being honored for their years of service to DHHS.



Recognition for Years of Service 2015

DHHS employees help people live better lives every day. Each October we recognize DHHS employees who have reached years of service anniversaries. Here is a listing of those employees and their years of service. Employees are broken down by their division. We hope everything is spelled and listed correctly. If it isn't, please let us know and we will pass that information along to Human Resources. Congratulations to all of these employees and thank you for your dedication to DHHS!

45 Years of Service

Behavioral Health

Paul Day

Children & Family Services

Marilyn Kudera

Developmental Disabilities

Gary Scott

Operations

Victoria Blome

Veterans' Homes

Kenneth Jensen
Deanna Meedel

40 Years of Service

Behavioral Health

Lois Brenneman
Klaus Hartmann
Joanna Johnson
Thomas Schmitz

Children & Family Services

Carol Citta
Suzanne Cochennet
Kristine Fegter
Jo Forst
Mary Krance
Jean McNeely
Marlene Stege
Pamela Warner
Dick Wetjen

Developmental Disabilities

Susan Kelly
Pamela Kujath
Elizabeth Weinman
Janet Whitehead
Rhonda Yost

Financial Services

Connie Johnson
Julie Reineke

Human Resources

Pamela Bretos
Sandra Carmichael

Medicaid & Long-Term Care

Roxie Anderson
Michale Cruthers
Patricia Flury
Roxanne Giebelman
Rosemary Harnly
Carol Schmid

Public Health

Janet Blackman
Nancy Borchers
Thomas Borden, Jr
Patricia Infield
Norman Nelson
Christine Stefkovich

Veterans' Homes

Colleen DeLeon
Joseph Karner

35 Years of Service

Behavioral Health

Robin Adams
Daniel Dilla
Margaret Hipp
Corinne Jensen
Carolyn Johnson
Mary Ann Koch
Stephen Petersen
Charles Wooldridge

Children & Family Services

Sondra Brown
Linda Cox
Harriet DeLay
Manuel Escamilla
Fawn Hoit
Lesley Jimerson
Joletta Kuhn
Caryl McKenzie
Debbie Moravec
James Scodris

Jennifer Schultz
Judy Spale
Elizabeth Warburton
Diana Younker

Developmental Disabilities

Natasha Bartles-Lieneman
Fylis Falk
Pamela Garton
Barbara Hudson
Debora Lantz
Kari McPeck
Sharon McVay
Jolene Pike
Michael Powell
Patrick Ramsey
Debra Turman

Human Resources

Vicki Borden
Sharon Ziers

IS&T

Linda Weber

Medicaid & Long-Term Care

Margaret Ahola
Jae Bertrand
Pamela Evans
Vicki Faulkner
Phyllis Steiger
Mary Sukovaty
Janice Wittwer

Public Health

Mary DeLancey
Kathy Hickox
Mary Kulhanek
Jana McDonough
Sheryl Mitchell
Duane Newland

Veterans' Homes

Patricia Hopp
Lori Richardson
Lynda Turner
Yvette Vetsch

30 Years of Service

Behavioral Health

Bryan Bretschneider
Bradley Campbell
Daniel Divis
Corrine Janovec
William Jennings
Beverly Lueshen
Tim Mastny
Richard Miller
Gregory Sterner
Rhonda White

Children & Family Services

Marilyn Atwood
Kelly Case
Beverly Goodwin
Sherri Haber
Melissa Hajny
Jeanette Hastings
Bob Johnson
Michaela Kotlarz
Kimberly Messman
Joan Schakat
Kathleen Schweitzer
Darla Severson-Berger
Debbie Strudl
Cynthia Swanson
Betty Toelle
Sandra Wiler

Developmental Disabilities

Julie Bratt
Mary Eman
Wayne Erickson
Alvin Martin
Lesla O'keefe
Mary Witulski

Financial Services

Kim Collins

IS&T

Alene Siebert

Legal Services

Judith Auman

Medicaid & Long-Term Care

Lance Njos
Margaret Thoms

Public Health

Krystal Baumert
Marjorie Blankenship
Ronald Briel
Colleen Cassada
Jeann Granstra
Terence Jones
Debra Kuhn
Kim Mai
Jolene Pfeiffer
Jo Ann Wagner
Rebecca Wisell
Sherri Wren

Veterans' Homes

Connie Beck
Debra Morris
Noberta Murillo
Kristine Roe
Linda Sparr
Shirley Wilson

25 Years of Service**Behavioral Health**

Kurtis Anderson
 Juleen Brand
 Kennetha Conway
 Luann Eddy
 Sarah Fechner
 Michael Gettman
 Marilyn Harmon
 Vickie Maulucci
 Paula Thompson
 Amy Vollbrecht
 Jane Wells

Children & Family Services

Jesse Aragon
 Betty Bower-Hansen
 Patricia Brady
 Marylyn Christenson
 Pamela Compton
 Jodie Gibson
 Murrayetta Gill
 Velna Hasch
 Linda Hassler
 Patricia Johnson
 Dianne Jones
 Mary Lueck
 Richard Morse
 Ricky Moses
 Tamie Schol
 Dan Svoboda
 Karen Swenson
 Susan Willig

Developmental Disabilities

Marilyn Adam
 Cynthia Ashmore-Blunck
 Cheryl Bales
 Julie Belding
 Alice Blaser
 Teresa Bubbert
 Joanne Gaylord
 Larry Hadorn

Lori Harder
 Mona Kramer
 Cynthia Lytle
 Michele Miller
 Marsha Parrish
 Pamela Poole
 Chelotte Snyder
 Lori Sperry
 Kim Tietjen
 Patricia Zabokrtsky

Financial Services

Robert Halada

Human Resources

Jana Leistriz
 Richard McKenzie
 Christine Miller

IS&T

John Crha
 Angel Othling

Legal Services

Pamela Hagaman

Medicaid & Long-Term Care

Dwana Flaig
 Sara Frederick
 Barbara Hinz
 Pamela Knapple
 Sally Michener
 Joan Prince

Public Health

Sharon Fitts
 Carol Gabbert
 Michael Gould
 Michelle Heffelfinger
 Susan Jensen
 Richard Koenig
 Dawn Kozak
 Diane Kvasnicka
 Judy Martin

Janell Miller
 Ralph Naber
 Thomas Safranek
 Sue Semerena
 Douglas Woodbeck

Veterans' Homes

Joseph Dembowski
 Theresa Evans
 Roger Fisher
 Shari Fox
 Jana Fusselman
 Kevin Harrom
 Bonnie Larsen
 Teri Maldonado
 Elaine Rauch
 Shelly Vap

20 Years of Service**Behavioral Health**

Marilyn Bailey
 Julie Batenhorst
 Shannon Black
 Lynn Briard
 Jeanette Hoffmann
 Christina Martin
 Reba Middleton
 Jeffrey Polage
 Lori Rector
 Michael Roberts
 Diane Schumacher
 Chris Silvey
 Randy Torske
 Patricia True

Children & Family Services

Jennifer Allen
 Dawnita Beirow
 Kimberly Borowiak
 Kathleen Buhr
 Brenda Chase
 Vickie Christiansen
 Dona Drohman

Laura Ehmen
 Catherine Emrick
 Karen Knapp-Halpin
 Mary Leiser
 Nancy Lyon
 Lorraine McCoy
 Mary Navarajo
 Linda Nelson
 Kelly Olson
 Tammie Scholz
 Karen White

Developmental Disabilities

Michael Cool
 Randall Corter
 Kristine Larsen
 Jennifer Saathoff
 James Truscott
 Richard Vogel
 Kathryn Wade
 John Welsh

Financial Services

Janell Svoboda

Human Resources

Elizabeth Bartell
 Carrie McFarland-
 Mickelson
 Wendy Walgrave

IS&T

Deanna Poe
 Kimberly Ramsey
 Kathy Schroeder
 Tina Zegers

Medicaid & Long-Term Care

Janile Campbell
 Jackie Kimes
 Roberta Masloskie
 Salli Ross
 Lianne Umbenhower

Public Health

Margarita Allen
 Carla Becker
 Karen Drews
 Michelle Hood
 Susan Kopera-Crumb
 Kathie Lueke
 Tracy Moore
 Stephen Schlife
 Stefanie Sellers
 Larry Wiehn

Support Services

Alan Gransee

Veterans' Homes

Janelle McDonald
 Cynthia Morris
 Scott Nathan
 Deana Pullen
 Shelley Tharp

15 Years of Service**Behavioral Health**

Timothy Elario
 Daniel Fox
 Jann Frank
 Irene Hirschman
 Antoinette Hoefler
 Tami Krontz
 Thom Marsh
 Julie Redwing
 Ray Winter
 Stephanie Wolf

Children & Family Services

Kinsey Baker
 Joann Henrickson
 William Hogue
 Steven Huffman
 Sarah Jameson

Michele Janky
 Sam Kaplan
 Cheryl Linden
 Bobbi Linder-Carpenter
 Julie Loeffelholz
 Rose Marshall
 Kristi McDowell
 Lisa Morfeld
 Kathryn Peppard
 Nicole Peterson
 Kari Pitt
 Lori Posvar
 Kevin Quail
 Camas Steuter
 Patricia Stocks
 Mark Tyrrell
 Laura Westenburg
 Allison Wilson
 Sharlene Wondercheck

Communications and Legislative Services

Diana Duran

Developmental Disabilities

Bonnie Ackerman
 Lori Albrecht-MacPherson
 Lisa Brown
 Karla Bryant
 Cristina Cramer
 Shirley Doupnik
 Jerry Grafe
 Angie Ludemann
 Courtney Miller
 Sharon Parde
 Gary Saathoff
 Retha Siems
 Theresa Vogel

Human Resources

Carolyn Brown
Kari Foote
Karen Keller
Scott Rasmussen
Christine Silvey
Deborah Ziola

IS&T

Kerry Jarecki
Keri Johnson
Jon Kleve
Steve Mayer
Melissa Sanny
Sheryl Wolfe

Medicaid & Long-Term Care

Saeed Amoun
Colleen Barth
Robert Kane
Ray Martinez
Susan Roe
Debbie Scholl
Jacqueline Schoonover
Michelle Schreiber

Public Health

Robert Byrkit
Brenda Coufal
Jude Dean
Elizabeth Esseks
Dixie Fischer
Jamie Hahn
Carol Jorgensen
David Jundt
Anthony Martinez
Jennifer Severe-Oforah
Kaylene Straetker
Sharon Wellensiek
Teri Zimmerman

Support Services

Gary Burress, Jr.
Beth Hyde
Doris Montang

Veterans' Homes

Colleen Benson
Roxanne Bretschneider
Karolina Dunn
Leona Groskopf
Virginia Lemke
Deanna Maslonka
Cathy McKimmey
Frances Sandoval
Michelle Segura
Deadra Shada
Lonnie Starke
Tammy Thompson

10 Years of Service

Behavioral Health

Les Adams
Kathleen Barrett
Marnie Benson
Leann Daniels
Kathy Dobesh
Jim Fuchs
Michel Knaub
Iliana Martin
Marsha Nelson
Merylyn Olsen
Laura Paswaters
Donna Rodriguez
Todd Schave
Jay Schmitz
Elizabeth Stebbins
Mark Townsley

Children & Family Services

Jamie Andersen
Nora Baluyot
Dana Barringer
Antonia Bonsera
Kaye Bourn
Gregory Brockmeier
April Carlson
April Christensen

Dawn Coffey
Brenda Connell
Cynthia Cox
Stephanie Dreier
Rachel Evans
Jessica Feller
Norma Fellhoelter
Patricia Fortkamp
Karla Frailey
Dana Gellermann
Anthony Green
Juli Hansen
Janette Harker
Rebecca Hoffman
Colby Holz
Nancy Jackson
Cindy Jones
Susan Klawonn
Benjamin Kroeze
Kimberly Krueger
Martha Langin
Brenda Lobner
Raquel Maar
Vicki Maca
Amanda Mack
Lisa Maddock
Lori Mendoza
Samantha Pfister
Bridget Phillips
Amy Redden
Marci Reinsch
Patrick Schlentz
Patricia Shore
Laura Slack
Patricia Stanosheck
Karma Stockwell
Terra Stuart
Katie Weidner
Diane Wotipka
Steven Young
KaCee Zimmerman

Developmental Disabilities

Tami Badertscher
Cassandra Beckman-
Leader
Nina Christen
Kathryn Dicostanzo
Karen Evans
Wayne Harris
Julianne Jefferis
Patrick Knoflicek
Korene Krzycki
Maria Lintz
Hillary Maatsch
Vincent Moreno
Angie Morten
Amy Nutter
Jonathan Potter
Jeffery Reed
Christy Reeson
Amber Rutt
Sarah Schoen
Shirley Slansky
Aaron Smith
Kimberly Smith
Nichole Spilker
Cherri Trump
Mark Wimmer

Financial Services

Craig Barnett
Caroline Crosby
Michael Kaczmarczyk, Jr.
Mary Nutsch

Human Resources

Holli Penner
Wanda Plank
Brent Schneider
DeAnn Smith

IS&T

Chasity Britton
Delores Feeken-Schmidt
Frank Fornataro
Tate Hurlburt

Legal Services

Christopher Roberts

Medicaid & Long-Term Care

Donna Brakenhoff
Stacey Brunner
Gregory Carlson
Julie Docter
Catherine Gekas Steeby
Marta Milligan
Lorena Najera
Patricia Pierson
Magaly Rodriguez
Carie Sterkel

Public Health

Karen Benzel
Dale Chandler
Ronald Chase
Kelli Dalrymple
Jessica Davis
Eugenia Ewing
Jacqueline Fairbanks
Susan Griepenstroh
Jason Kerkman
Diana Meyer
Diane Pearson
Becky Robeson
Joseph Schumacher
Alice Smith
Colleen Svoboda
Shonna Werth

Support Services

Debbie Hintz
Michael Scanlan

Veterans' Homes

Krystal Curtis
Cindy Gellner
Lori Haase
Judy Laravin
Annette McBride
Jeremy Nicholson
Jerra Pester
Sandra Schuldies
Paul Thober
Sheryl Yelli

Meet Doug Weinberg, DHHS' Director of Children & Family Services

Doug Weinberg, DHHS' director of Children and Family Services, has worked, lived and traveled extensively around the country.

How does he feel about being in Nebraska? Doug says he feels right at home! Nebraska is part of the Big 10, after all, and Doug earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin and his MBA from the University of Illinois, two more schools in the Big 10 family. His son, Derek, graduated from the University of Illinois as well, and his daughter, Stephanie, graduated from Purdue University this past May.

"I like watching football," Doug said, "I've seen a lot of Nebraska games, and I'm always happy to see the Huskers do well."

Doug describes his career in football terms, too. He says the "first half" of his career was more corporate and financially-oriented: Chief Financial Officer of Energy Partners in West Palm Beach, Florida; Director of Corporate Development of Energy East Corporation in Binghamton, New York; and Vice President, Capital Square Financial Corporation in Madison, Wisconsin.

The "second half" is all about children and families, and Doug said it has been by far the most rewarding for him. Doug made his second half career change in early 2002 to child welfare, and said he hasn't looked back. He was volunteering at a girls' group home in Florida at the time when the parent company, Children's Home Society of



Florida, was looking for a Chief Financial Officer. Doug said he got the job, and it was one of the best and most challenging ones he had held so far.

"Working with the Children's Home was an opportunity to transition my career from corporate life into children and family services," he said. "The timing was right and I feel that this second half of my career has been the more successful one, in terms of making a difference and feeling good about what I'm doing."

"It's amazing how many families the division of Children and Family Services touches," he said. "It's important, life-changing work

that makes such an impact on the people we serve and the communities we live in, he said.

We've got some really good programs at DHHS, Doug said, and some great providers, as well. We've also have excellent public-private partnerships in place. It's more than that, though. It's the people. We've got a great team willing to talk, work together and look at the big picture.

"I'm really impressed with the people here," Doug said. "They are here for all the right reasons. And their dedication is exemplary."

All of these are good things we can build on. When we're building we need to remember that we're not alone in our work here with children and families, Doug said. "We can't do this by ourselves. We need to focus on relationships...relationships within DHHS and outside. Once good relationships are established, we'll have better

collaboration overall. The culture of collaboration that Gov. Pete Ricketts and DHHS CEO Courtney Phillips are helping to create will break down barriers...not only between divisions and across DHHS, but across state government, as well.

"We're one team," he said, "And it helps having the Governor and Courtney facilitate and encourage that process."

In the short time Doug has worked for the Department he said he has learned so much, has met a lot of people and has traveled to many places. Doug said he has already met DHHS staff and state senators along with providers' staff and partner organizations.

"We've got a great team," Doug said. "People we can count on to handle the everyday challenges of the type of work we do. We've already made significant progress with some of the recent challenges we've faced. The ACCESSNebraska teams have really come together, for instance, and customers are experiencing much lower wait times on the phones. We're receiving a lot of support in that area."

That being said, Doug knows there is always room for improvement and teamwork will help get us there.

"We're never going to be all done with everything and be able to say we're exactly where we want to be," Doug said. "There will be other opportunities tomorrow. Every day we should be thinking what can we do to improve outcomes, do things better, be more efficient and produce meaningful results."

Thanks, Doug, for taking time to let us get to know you a little better. And, remember, now that you're in Nebraska...**Go Big Red!**

Way to Go!

Statewide and National Recognitions, Honors and Awards

Kathy Karsting, BA, RN, MPH, Program Manager with Public Health, is one of only 25 nurses from across the country selected as a Public Health Nurse Leader by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). Kathy will participate in a two-year leadership development program designed to strengthen the capacity of senior public health nurses to improve population health, address social determinants of health, respond to emerging trends in health and health care, influence policy, and lead collaboration in their states and communities.

The program's goal is to support nurses who are ready to lead public health departments in building a culture of health in their communities.

"It's an honor to be selected for this program. I look forward to strengthening my skills so I can do even more to improve the health of children and families in Nebraska, while helping advance the nursing profession," said Karsting. "I know this experience will deepen my involvement in shaping the future of public health nursing to meet the needs of a changing society and a changing health care system. It's an exciting opportunity to work with other nurse leaders and Nebraska Action Coalition partners and set a strong example for nurses considering a fulfilling career in public service."

Karsting has worked for DHHS' Division of Public Health for eight years, first as a school nurse consultant and now as program manager and supervisor for Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Programs. She is a graduate of Mary Lanning Hospital School of Nursing in Hastings. She earned her Bachelor's degree

in Natural Sciences from Johns Hopkins University and a Master's in Public Health from the University of Minnesota.

RWJF's Public Health Nurse Leaders program was open to registered nurses who hold leadership positions in governmental public health organizations. Participating nurses will spend their first year focused on individual leadership development. Second-year activities are designed to enhance leadership and coaching skills of the nurses in this program and key members of the Action Coalition in their states.

Lincoln Regional Center Employees Honored with Thomas C. Woods Award

The Thomas C. Woods Award recognizes leading psychiatric technicians at the Lincoln Regional Center (LRC) each year.

This year's winners are **Stephanie Pinkston**, a mental health security specialist II; **Dusty Trospen**, youth security specialist II; **Violet Crane**, mental health security specialist II and **Eric Howard**, mental health security specialist II.

Award winners are nominated by LRC staff, patients and patients' family members.

Honorees receive a plaque, certificate and a monetary award during an awards ceremony held during National Mental Health Awareness Week in October.

The Thomas C. Woods award was created 64 years ago and continues because of the support of the Woods' family.

Congratulations to all of the award winners!

Photo: Lincoln Regional Center employees: Stephanie Pinkston, a mental health



security specialist II; Dusty Trospen, youth security specialist II; Violet Crane, mental health security specialist II and Eric Howard, mental health security specialist II; were recently honored with the Thomas C. Woods Award for psychiatric technicians.

Gekas Steeby Receives National Rising Star Award

On October 19, the National Academy for State Health Policy awarded **Catherine Gekas Steeby** its Rising Star Award for 2015.

Gekas Steeby, of Lincoln, has been the eligibility policy and program accuracy administrator with the Medicaid and Long-Term Care division since 2012. The competitive award, recognizing accomplishments of those who have been working in and committed to effective state health policy for less than seven years, was presented at NASHP's annual meeting in Dallas.

"Being recognized for a job I believe in is an honor," said Gekas Steeby. "I know that every day, the work I do positively impacts the lives of clients I may never meet."

"Cat is very deserving of this recognition," said Courtney Phillips, DHHS Chief Executive Officer. "It speaks highly of her work and involvement in policy setting

and leadership. We're certainly glad she is a member of TeamDHHS."

Trish Riley, NASHP executive director, thanked Gekas Steeby for her public service and welcomed her to the NASHP "family." "We look forward working with you throughout what is clearly your promising career," Riley said.

Gekas Steeby has been involved in major DHHS initiatives including the successful implementation of Nebraska's Medicaid interface with the Federally Facilitated Marketplace, the implementation of Medicaid for former foster care youth, and the transition and ongoing management of Medicaid eligibility determination from a different division in DHHS to the Medicaid and Long-Term Care Division. She is currently involved in the development of a new enrollment and eligibility system for the state's Medicaid program.

Employed with DHHS since 2005, Gekas Steeby previously served as a case aide, a social services worker and social services supervisor.

She was recognized in 2014 for her leadership and management skills as the State's 2014 manager of the year for the Medicaid and Long-Term Care division.

Photo: Catherine Gekas Steeby receives the National Rising Star Award from the National Academy for State Health Policy on October 19.



Photo credit: National Academy for State Health Policy

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.

Marcia Bremer (Case Aide, Alliance),

Marcia and I worked pretty hard to help this client as all of his utilities were shut off and an Adult Protective Services case was reported on his behalf. I coordinated with Northwest Community Action Partnership and together, we restored his utilities in time for the upcoming winter months. He was also able to obtain funds from a local church to help him restore his utilities. I also explained the SNAP program to him and he is now active on SNAP. I don't think this client was even aware of the services that are offered in our community and is very appreciative of all of the help. Marcia helped him each day that he would come in to use our phone to make local calls in his efforts to obtain assistance and even gave him Halloween candy while he took care of his business.

Erica Bauer (Social Services Worker, Alliance)

Ann Alberico (Certified Master Social Worker, Lincoln Regional Center),

We would like to thank you and the Lincoln Regional Center staff for all you have done to help our son in this last year. The staff has been patient and kind - very professional and compassionate. We are grateful, as the care taken has literally saved our son's life.

Thanks for all you do.

Grateful Parents

Jennifer Van Eperen (Health Licensing Specialist, Lincoln),

I merely wanted to take a moment to recognize one of your employees - Jennifer Van Eperen, an APRN licensure specialist. She was so nice and helpful on the phone and on one occasion I had to leave a voicemail, which she returned within 15 minutes. She even went above and beyond to email me and let me know when my application had been approved. I hope that you can take the time to get this to whomever Jennifer reports to so they can know what an awesome job she does and what an asset she is to your team.

A Thankful Client

Joseph Gause (Accounting Clerk, Lincoln),

Sometime we don't always get to hear the good things that one does, or that their efforts get noticed.

I just wanted to take a quick minute to let you know how much I appreciate Joe. He is always quick to respond to my emails, and when I don't understand the process of how something works in your unit, he takes the extra step to explain it. For that, I am grateful!

A Thankful Client

Fran Kreifels (Social Services Worker, Medicaid and Long-Term Care, Lincoln)

I recently had the opportunity to work with Fran on a Medicaid application for my mother. Needless to say, I was not anticipating the process. However, I was quite pleasantly surprised at the assistance from Aging Partners and the caseworker assigned to my mom's application, **Fran Kreifels**.

Having been in positions where customer service was extremely important, when I have an opportunity to commend someone on efforts which I felt were above the norm, I want to take advantage of it. Fran was instrumental in expediting the process and making me fully aware of all the nuances for the present as well as the future. In this regard she alleviated a great deal of stress for me. Fran had several phone conversations with me. Some were short and some were quite long but always informative. I never felt that she was impatient or rushing me through the process.

Possibly my circumstances and how Fran handled the process were not unique. You certainly should know that in my opinion if this is how Fran handles all of her cases, she is an extremely dedicated, knowledgeable and personable employee for DHHS, and I will look forward to any interaction she and I may have regarding my mom's case.

Sincerely, A Grateful Daughter of a Client