

HRC NEWS & VIEWS

Volume 9, Issue 8

August 2013

A GREAT YEAR FOR DHHS EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR—GRANT JOHNSON



Congratulations to Grant Johnson for being selected as one of the DHHS Employees of the Year! In Grant's role as Compli-

ance Specialist he works hard to keep us operating within policies, procedures, guidelines and regulations. He's a team player who steps up and volunteers to help out at any time.

Additional information on this award will be shared in the October issue following the presentation.

On another happy note, Grant and his fiancée, Christine, were married in Duck Key, Florida on July

13th with their 13 month old daughter, Zoey. Best wishes to you, Grant!



RETIRING AFTER 24 YEARS



After 24 years of service, Rhonda Brewster is retiring. Congratulations!

During those 24 years, Rhonda has worked in various positions. She began her career working the afternoon shift on Ward 44 which was the adult geriatric ward located in Building 4. In 2002, she served as the Central Scheduler and then was a Mental Health Security

Specialist which led to her current position of Youth Security Specialist II. Throughout her 24 years at HRC, her co-workers have enjoyed her warm sense of humor, smile and teamwork.

Join us in a Retirement Party on Tuesday, August 20 in Room 007 from 3:00pm to 5:00pm to wish Rhonda the best in her retirement!

August is

Golf Month

Happiness Happens Month

Water Quality Month

What Will Be Your Legacy Month

Simplify Your Life Week: 1-7

Exercise With Your Child Week: 4-10

National Fraud Awareness Week: 4-10

Sturgis Rally: 5-11

Be Kind to Humankind Week: 25-31

National Safe at Home Week: 26-30

Respect for Parents: 1

Watermelon Day: 3

Chocolate Chip Day: 4

Friendship Day: 4

National Kids' Day: 4

Purple Heart Day: 7

Happiness Happens Day: 8

Kool-Aid Days: 9-11

Best Friends Day: 15

World Humanitarian Day: 19

Senior Citizen's Day: 21

National Dog Day: 26

Race Your Mouse Around the Icons Day: 28

Crackers Over The Keyboard Day: 28



AS THE REGIONAL CENTER TURNS

BY MARJ COLBURN

I was going to do an article this month on change and all the implications change can have. In the meantime, Josh and I met as we do each month, and he presented me with a report of the changes that have occurred during his tenure as the Activity Supervisor. Talk about perfect timing! I asked him to work the report into an article and submit it to News and Views. If you read Kerry Winterer's article in Connections, his focus is on change too. Maybe HRC isn't the only program/facility undergoing change!

When the News and Views crew met this month to talk about what we wanted included in N&V, several thoughts came up from the group. We are going to start a change timeline each month that documents what is happening to move us towards the goal of the newly remodeled building, the demolition of old buildings, the sale of property, and where we are at financially in the process. The first "change" report is included in this issue.

I want to reiterate to people that while all current positions will remain available, responsibilities and roles in those positions will be changing for some staff. I've heard many staff say, "I need my job, I have to have this position". Now is your chance to prove it. As we keep inching closer to the goal of a new facility, many of you will be asked to take on additional responsibilities to keep the program moving forward. The only program that is going to sustain all of our positions is HJCDP, so the focus has to be on meeting the needs of that program. Flexibility, willingness to learn new skills/brushing up on

some old skills will be a requirement for all of us to keep moving. I expect those who plan to continue to be employed at HRC are on board with making some changes in how they do business.

I've been told at many levels that I seemed a little crabby in my last article. I will definitely own up to that. For years we have been under the cloud of - are we open, are we closed, will we have layoffs, what is our future? All those concerns have now been addressed by the passing of this new legislation, yet there continues to be a handful of people who can't seem to get past the negativity or don't seem to be on board with the changes coming. Please note I said "handful". I am grateful for the vast majority of staff who are excited and welcoming this new challenge. It's a new day. Change is going to happen. We have to operate as a well-oiled team to make this a successful project. We need to get to work and continue to make improvements to the program.

There are a group of staff I call my workhorses - they are my go-to people - the ones who burn the candle at both ends to keep things moving, never complain about what they are asked to do, and willingly take on new tasks in addition to what they are already doing. I count on them to make things happen. I wish I observed that same motivation and willingness to be a part of a productive team in all staff. As different positions are moved around and expectations are changed to meet the needs of the program, the workload is going to start changing and shifting too. We are all employees of the State - that

means we get paid for the work we do for the State. The expectation is that we spend our workday engaged in productive activity for the State and the HJCDP program. I sincerely hope that everyone who has said "I need this job" is willing to make whatever adjustments are required to make every job an important and productive part of the service we provide to youth. And I hope my workhorses look forward to others in the program sharing the workload and responsibilities they have been carrying.

Change is hard, change is difficult, but change is what got us to where we are today. Think back to where we have been in behavioral health - lobotomies, ECT, Insulin therapy, hot/cold wraps to control behavior. What if they had never come up with some of the medications that now control some behaviors? What if we were all still working 10 PM - 8 AM for a salary of \$18 a month with 1/2 day off each month? Change can be looked at positively or negatively, it's all a matter of perspective. The ultimate change for us will be the new building with everything located inside and operating smoothly.

Keep your eye on the prize as we move forward. Lots of changes will be coming down the road to get us there. With everyone's cooperation we will make it, of that I am confident.



The Dirty Six Letter Word That Makes Everyone Nervous - CHANGE

BY JOSH ALBRECHT

When we consider how difficult it is to change ourselves, the task of changing others can seem almost impossible. Here at HJCDP, we are the instruments that evoke, encourage and even sometimes demand change. We "redirect the lifestyles of young men and promote skills to live substance free and successful lifestyles". It's our mission statement, it's in our job descriptions, and it's what we are selling.... Do you have change to offer?

Journalist, Arnold Bennett once said, "Any change, even a change for the better, is always accompanied by drawbacks and discomforts". This past year, HJCDP has experienced a number of changes and accompanying growing pains. As we continue through this transitional stage, it is important that we stay focused on the end-goal and embrace the positive aspects of change. 1) *Changes can increase our flexibility and improve attitudes.* Being stubborn and resistant to new things can make a stressful situation even more so. But, by embracing change, we can learn to be more fluid and go with the flow. Flexibility and a positive attitude not only decreases stress, but it also makes it easier to weather future change. "If we change the way we look at things, the things we look at change" (Wayne Dyer). 2) *Change can make us smarter.* If things never changed, we'd never learn anything new! Every time we learn a new skill (even if it's just how to adapt) we are much wiser than the day before. 3) *Change reminds us that anything is possible.* It's easy to think that anything that's stuck will always be that way (i.e., the career that won't lift off the ground). But when you see things change, whether it's in your life or someone else's, it's encouraging to know that nothing stays the same forever.

Today I want to recap some simple changes that have occurred in the past six months at HJCDP.

Change of focus and staff roles

One of the biggest (and best) changes our program has gone through is our Steward program. The Steward is a Supervisor who is specifically assigned to each youth as an advocate, mentor and liaison between facets of the treatment program. The Steward assists in coordinating services such as life/survival skills, goal setting, social skills building, self-care services, personal wellness and vocational/career planning to help our youth build an arsenal against addiction and criminal thinking. The Steward will also compile data and report individual progress at team meetings which are held bi-weekly. The Steward works closely with our youth and their family to answer any questions they may have about the program, privileges and off campus outings. The Steward also works with our youth towards transitioning back into their home communities to develop sober supports and look into school and or job opportunities before youth are discharged.

The Recreation Department is more focused on working with each youth's individual fitness goals. Our Recreation Specialist, James, is working with each individual youth to develop specialized workout plans tailored towards self-improvement, diversification of leisure activities and making lifetime changes. In addition to recreation duties, James is now utilizing his strengths and organizational role to help with Learning Committee, crisis response/de-escalation and our Corrective Thinking program.

Our Pre-Vocational Center has also

seen a change in focus. Our Activity Specialist, Steve, was doing the work of a coach (30hrs) and teaching kids how to bake (10hrs). Now Steve is responsible for weekend life skills with all youth, not just PVC, 1:1 work on youth Occupational Therapy goals, providing resource's for the Steward Program, and documentation of everything along the way. It's a positive shift from mass baking to more individual based life skills

New partnerships

We have started volunteering with Start Over Rover (no kill pet shelter) on weekends and school breaks. This has not only provided us the opportunity to work with and for the community, but also provided new experiences and healthy leisure activities for both staff and youth. This has not only provided opportunities for our youth, but the families we serve as well. We are seeing families enjoy this free, healthy activity together while on pass instead of walking around Wal-Mart or the mall.

We have made new connections in regards to transitioning our youth back to their home communities. Our Lancaster youth are being referred to the HUB group, which helps provide transition support. The HUB worker not only visits and supports our youth through the treatment process, but also assists in developing a seamless transition process by setting up community based services and aftercare. They specialize in: 1) providing support for our families by offering effective parenting strategies; 2) devotion to education by assisting the youth by following up with the youth and school to ensure they are succeeding and also connecting the youth to supports within the school; 3)

(Continued on page 4)

THE DIRTY SIX LETTER WORD THAT THAT MAKES EVERYONE NERVOUS - CHANGE

(Continued from page 3)

providing, fostering and implementing mentor services through Big Brother Big Sisters and the University of Nebraska at Lincoln; and 4) helping youth receive job readiness training and assistance in securing employment through project HIRE.

Outside of the Lancaster area, we have also made great strides in setting up transition and aftercare services. Each youth is now referred to Vocational Rehab which assigns a worker to help with education credit transition, job readiness skills, career planning, and job placement. Voc Rehab is available statewide and more importantly doesn't have an "age out" date. They are able to help youth past the magic age of 19 which provides important aftercare opportunities. In Douglas and Sarpy counties, we have connected with Release Ministries to provide mentoring and transition support.

Programming changes

The Successful Living curriculum was completed and the new lesson plans were started. Robin and Connie have shown a lot of courage and enthusiasm in teaching the new material. Last month marked the completion of the first cycle of lessons. All 32 lessons have now been taught, reviewed and minor bumps and kinks have been worked out.

NA and AA programs have been strengthened tremendously. Our youth now have eight opportunities per week to attend both on and off campus meetings. We have added three additional volunteers from the Hastings chapter to host meetings at HJCDP, talk with our youth and work on additional material. Several of our youth have taken advantage of this by asking for sponsorship and asking for regular meetings with our volunteers to

work the 12 steps. NA/AA cards were developed to help track meeting attendance in Hastings and also in their home communities while on Therapeutic Home Visits. Extra efforts have been made to connect each youth with their local NA/AA chapter by physically taking them to a meeting in their home town before discharge and also using our Hastings connections to reach out to other chapters for transition assistance.

Independent living skills has been another focus area that has seen a lot of positive change. A Life and Budget Skills curriculum has been developed and a program has been implemented on the weekends. In conjunction with our Occupational Therapist assessments and recommendations, we are now having all youth complete the Ansell Casey assessment tool. Each youth is empowered to create specific independent living goals and we provide instruction and material to meet each of these. Job interviewing skills and career planning are also focused on during free times with assistance from the Steward program. The HJCDP dietary team has welcomed and embraced the idea of having our youth help plan and prepare our meals. This new found ownership has brought a sense of empowerment and excitement to our youth that can be seen and heard each day.

Our Youth Fellowship program has also been strengthened by adding an additional volunteer. We are so blessed to have Sonny, Kristy and Tanner come out each week. Not only do they manage weekly Youth Fellowship groups, but they take the time before and after groups to talk, listen and pray with our youth on an individual basis.

Health and Sober Health programs have been revised this year. Our

medical department has done an excellent job of seeking new material and finding new ways to deliver the message. Candi Fox reached out and found several local and state organizations to partner with. It's not the same old lecture on the do's and don'ts.

Community Meeting is another program that has been re-vamped. It's more focused on youth concerns and ideas. The new agenda encourages and empowers our youth to challenge the way we do business in a constructive and positive manner. They discuss problems they see on/off the unit and host discussions with our managers on how to make it better for everyone involved. This meeting has also produced several group goals and fun projects/activities such as our youth garden.

Change isn't easy. Change calls for us to step out of our comfort zone and into a gray area filled with uncertainty. Why be uncertain when you can be certain? Why change when you can choose not to? Change is powerful. As we know through our job training and experience, uncertainty is the first step towards discovery and breakthrough. Changing means discovering something new, moving forward and growing. Change may be hard, but not changing is harder. Failure to change means staying stagnant and things that are stagnant, by definition, fail to develop and eventually die. Change is definitely happening around you and it's what we preach every day. Nothing is permanent. If change is definite, why fight it? Why not embrace it? In this business, it takes an entire team to make all this "change" happen. Do you have change to offer?

EMPLOYEE UPDATES



HRC welcomes Clinton Luth, P-LMHP to HJCDP.

You will find Clinton's office in Room 281 and he can be reached at

ext. 3258. Please join us in making Clinton feel welcomed!



We also want to congratulate Shannon Peterson who recently accepted a Youth Security Specialist position.

Join us in wishing her

well in this new position!

YOU'RE A WINNER . . .

- At a recent meeting with staff from Magellan, Travis Parker, and Sue Mimick, CEO began the meeting by expressing their appreciation to Dr. Zoucha for his leadership and assistance in working with them in work groups discussing a variety of topics that impact multiple facilities. They felt he had innovative ideas on working with the youth, noting changing out beds and pillows rather than prescribing medication, and having family therapy sessions occur in the youth's home during part of each youth's stay. They expressed their desire to continue to partner with him and HRC in the future. Thanks, Dr. Zoucha for being a great representative of HRC.



MAINTENANCE NEWS BY CHERI DELAY

During this month, we have entered the "circle of summer" involving mowing the lawns, having it rain causing the grass to grow, mowing the lawns, a little more rain and so forth. Watering on campus has been decreased accordingly.

At this moment in time, all AC units are working to include the one in the kitchen – maybe we shouldn't

have mentioned that?? A new counter for the Central Med Room has been ordered that we are waiting for which will wrap up that remodeling project. Maintenance staff continue to make repairs on campus for whatever breaks down, and we will try to keep up with them.

HOUSEKEEPING UPDATE BY MARY ANN KOCH

August already? It seems to me that the summer is going incredibly fast, however, I think we still have a lot of hot weather ahead of us. We are so fortunate that the air conditioner works so well in Building 3, unlike the Kitchen. I can't imagine how hot it gets in the Kitchen. I just know how warm it gets in my kitchen at home when I cook. Kudos to you all! We will pray it gets you through the summer.

I have been asked to adjust the hours of housekeeping to provide more coverage through the day and evening when most of the staff and activities are happening. The idea is for most Housekeepers to work 8:00am to 4:30pm and one

work 12:00pm to 8:30pm. There are certain to be bugs to work out, but we are up for the challenge. We tentatively will implement this on September 23. More on this next month.

Just a reminder that International Housekeepers Week is September 8th – 14th. Since 1981, employers have set aside one week per year for all to focus attention and recognition on the professional housekeepers working in facilities such as hospitals, hotels, state facilities, colleges/ schools, and many others who maintain a cleaner, safer, healthier environment for us all each and every day. I would like to thank all the Housekeepers for the

job they do day in and day out!
Have a great month everyone.



ZENTANGLE BY ROBIN ADAMS

When the youth were on school break, I decided it would be a great idea to do something out of the ordinary. So while we were talking about “untangling their thoughts” – creating a tangle on paper seemed appropriate. I created one to show the boys, and I have been hooked ever since.

From Zentangle Basics by Suzanne McNeill she writes the following:

Traditional Zentangles. . .

A very simple process is part of every traditional Zentangle.

1. Make a dot in each corner of a paper tile with a pencil. Connect the dots to form a basic frame.
2. Draw guideline “strings” with the pencil. The shape can be a zigzag, swirl, X, circle or just about anything that divides the area into sections. It represents the “golden thread” that connects all the patterns and events that run through life. The lines will not be erased but become part of the design.
3. Use a black pen to draw Tangle patterns into the sections formed by the “string.”

4. Rotate the paper tile as you fill each section with a pattern.

They say no eraser is needed when Zentangling. “Just as in life, we cannot erase events and mistakes; instead we must build upon them and make improvements from any event.” (Suzanne McNeill)

The originators of Zentangle are a couple, the woman is a famous calligrapher and her partner is an ex monk. One day he had made dinner and called Marie to the table to eat and noticed she was “lost in her work.” She was illuminating some letters (putting the fancy touches, swirls and such around the letter). He suggested she was in a trance like state – hence the Zen part of this – and suggested to her that other people might benefit from the calming Zen state along with making beautiful art. And voila, Zentangle was created.

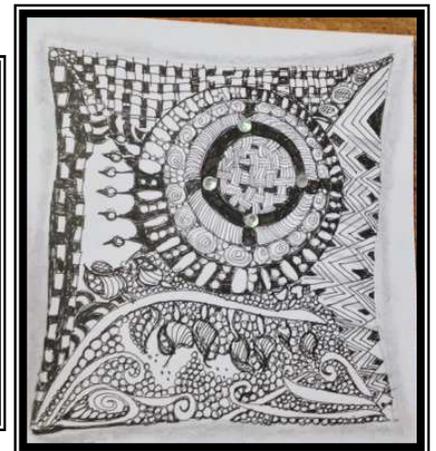
The founders of Zentangle have workshops and participants are then certified Zentangle trainers.

While getting started I was perfectly fine with using fine tipped Sharpies

bought at Wal-Mart. But soon found out online there were better tools of the trade. There are pens with tips so fine you need a magnifying glass to see them! (Slight exaggeration.) There are patterns with silly names – Togh, Knightsbridge, Jonqal, Chillon, Queen’s Crown and many more. There is no wrong or right, no right side up or down, you are free to do any repeating pattern you can think up.

What I love about Zentangling is that no artistic talent is required – if you can draw a line or a circle you too can create something that looks fabulous. The designs are created on 3 ½ x 3 ½ or 5 ½ x 5 ½ cardstock tiles. I have the youth make theirs on index cards I found at work. I did a fair amount myself on index cards, but just found they carry cardstock paper at Wal-Mart which I just cut to the size I want.

Below are a few Zentangles I have created. The one with the guitar is for my son who requested something musical.



MAN'S BEST FRIEND

No one can win hearts like man's best friend and in honor of this bond between man and canine, Dog Day is celebrated on August 26. It is a time to appreciate the love and value that dogs bring to our daily lives, and to do your bit for homeless and abused dogs the world over. Dog Day has been supported by high profile individuals such as former US President, George W. Bush, whose own dog, Barney, the Scottish terrier, has his own website and has even starred in a series of short films. So, we asked employees to share photos of their canine friends, and we present to you the following:



Brinkley, best friend of Cheri Delay



Billy, best friend of Carmen



Barkley - Granddog of Mar-

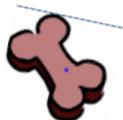
 To you, it's a dog. To me, he/she is an adopted child who is short, furry, has 4 legs and barks.



Angel, best friend of Carmen



Lucy and Lilly , best friend of Pam Schwabauer



Bella - Granddog of Charlene



MORE OF MAN'S BEST FRIEND



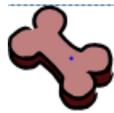
Moose, best friend of Shannon



Bear and Tucker - Granddogs of Corinne



Daisy and Duke, best friends of Diane



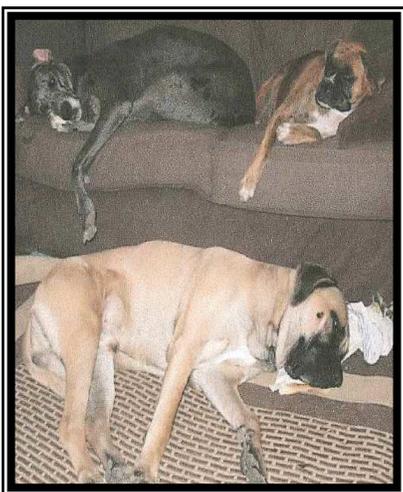
Buddy - Granddog of Carmen



Rowdy — Granddog of Carmen



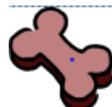
Blizzard, best friend of Heather and family



Shannon's best friends: top left is Pixie; top right is Ellie and bottom is George.



Molly and Sophie, best friends of Marj and Marv



Wee Wee - Granddog of Carmen

EXPRESS YOURSELF

Happiness is a choice. When it comes to your job, your attitude can make a big difference. Whether it is supervising youth during activities, remodeling a room, attending a meeting or training session, a flooded bathroom to mop, pots and pans that must be scrubbed or traveling to Scottsbluff for family therapy. We all play a role to make this program successful, efficient and

running smoothly. You may or may not love your current job and you may not believe that you can find something in your current job to love, but you can.

The Editorial Board encourages you to take a look at yourself, your skills and interests, and find something that you enjoy. Share that enjoyment on the poster boards located

in the breakrooms and copy room of Building 3. Comments can remain anonymous if you choose. All comments will be published in the September *News and Views* issue.

We hope you will participate and share your enjoyment. Let it serve as a reminder each day to make your day brighter!



RETAINING WALL REPLACED

Have you noticed the new wall outside the basketball court as you enter HRC grounds? A new retaining wall was installed this summer to replace the old crumbling wooden ties. The new wall makes the area look sharp and will be completed with the addition of rocks along the fence edging.

A special thanks to Craig Thelen for coordinating this project and for making it all happen!



NEW LOOK FOR BREAKROOM

Thanks to the work of the Maintenance staff, the second floor breakroom has a new look!

When looking for a compatible space for a Central Med Room, the 2nd Floor Breakroom was chosen to be the best fit. Therefore, the Breakroom had to find a new home. With a little paint and some different furnishings, Room 285 is now the Breakroom with a whole new look and inviting atmosphere complete with a microwave, refrigerator, comfortable chairs and spacious table. It even has a recliner if you really want to relax and put your feet up!



All employees are welcome to enjoy this new space during breaks!

ENGAGEMENT



Carmen Novak is pleased to announce the upcoming wedding of her daughter Shanna and Robby on October 5, 2013.

Congratulations!

VICTIM OR SUPERHERO? THE CHOICE IS YOURS

BY JOE TYE, CEO OF VALUES COACH, INC.

This past week I encountered a victim and a superhero. Let me tell you about each, and then you decide which is the victim and which is the superhero.

The man sitting in front of me on a flight to Los Angeles was very well dressed, obviously had not missed a meal in quite some time, and was reading a magazine about expensive sailboats. The plane landed right on time, but then was delayed by ten minutes waiting for ramp attendants to guide the plane in. The well-dressed, well-fed man slammed his magazine down on the seat and for the next ten minutes ranted about the incompetence of the airline and the lazy employees who weren't there waiting for us when the plane arrived. You would have thought the entire air travel industry had conspired in a plot to make him miss his connec-

tion.

The other was from one of the nominations I received for the Tiny Superhero capes Sally and I are sponsoring. The nomination was for a 6-year old little boy named Holden who has been battling cancer for the past three years. When Holden was admitted to the hospital for his most recent round of treatments, he asked if he could have Superman pajamas. One of his doctors responded that it would be more appropriate for Superman to request Holden pajamas!

So who is the victim and who is the superhero? The well-dressed and well-fed businessman who was inconvenienced by having to wait ten minutes to get off the plane, or the little boy fighting for his life who wants to dress up like Superman?

Unfortunately, we live in a culture

where too many people feel entitled to have the world bend over backwards to make their lives easy, comfortable, and fun; and when the world lets them down they feel victimized. There are fewer people who find strength in adversity and are made stronger as a result.

The ultimate irony is that the things self-perceived victims whine and complain about are often so insignificant in the scheme of things (so what if you miss a flight, catch the next one!), while people who are confronted with *real* problems - like a 6-year-old with cancer - are more likely to be concerned about the problems of other people than they are to complain about their own.

We grown-up victims can learn a lot from these Tiny Superhero kids.

LABOR DAY BY CAROLYN BROWN

Labor Day was originally organized to celebrate various labor association's strengths and contributions to the United States economy. Now it largely is a day of rest in the modern times. Many mark Labor Day as the end of the summer season and last chance to make a trip to an outdoor event such as camping or fishing. It also marks the beginning of the football season on or around the Labor Day Holiday. The first Labor Day was held in 1882 and became a Federal Holiday in 1894. It was intended that

the day would be parades to allow the public to appreciate the work of the trade and labor organizations. After the parade, a festival was held to amuse local workers and their families. Prominent men and women held speeches also. One reason that Labor Day Holiday was set for the 1st Monday in September was to add a holiday in the long gap between Independence Day and Thanksgiving.

Sometimes we all too often don't realize how important our job is to us. In today's world, we are very

fortunate that we have a job in the labor market. I love working in Human Resources and feel lucky to work with LaDene, Randy and Wanda. They are a great group of professional people to be an Assistant to. I also am so grateful to be a co-worker to all the awesome people on the grounds of HRC. Most all are very dedicated to their job and do an awesome job of it. Let's all keep up the positive work we are doing for the youth, for the State of Nebraska and for ourselves!!!!

MY OROMO CULTURE BY SUFIAN KALIL,

In Oromo, culture most everything starts with greetings, so I would like to greet you all with "akkam nagaya"? It simply means, how are you? The traditional greeting used by men and women is called

"salamatta". They grasp each other's hands and kiss the top of the other person's hands. If they are related or close friends, they would kiss each other on the cheek. In the States, they often shake hands in

the western manner. When meeting a person on the street in Oromo, the greeting goes something like this, "akkam bultan" which means good morning or "akkam

(Continued on page 11)

MY OROMO CULTURE BY SUFIAN KALIL

(Continued from page 10)

ooltan", good afternoon. Younger generations commonly hug when they greet each other.

The Oromo people constitute the largest ethnic group in the horn of Africa (Ethiopia). Today you can find Oromo people throughout different regions of the world. You can find the majority of Oromos in Twin Cities, Minnesota and Seattle, Washington and many more majorities in America and Canada. I have many relatives that settled in Twin Cities and extended families play a large role in the Oromo culture. In this article, I will do my best to acknowledge all I know about my culture and from interpersonal relationships, status, role and prestige. I have been to weddings and scrutinize how Oromo people interact during marriage and family kinship.

In Oromo, you never know if you'll soon be the one on the asking end, whether for a cup of water, a meal or a roof over your head for the night. Strangers are accordingly welcomed as family. In Oromo culture, daily rhythms are determined by the sun and the seasons until recent decades of modernizations. In Oromo culture, you won't be able to find monthly social security checks in the mail, and community life is essential for support in times of sickness and age, as well as in ensuring a proper upbringing for the young. Mourning is a community affair, as is celebrating. It would be unheard of not to attend the funeral of your mother's second cousin once removed, just as it would be equally unheard of to miss celebrating the wedding of your father's stepbrother's neighbor. Proper jobs are scarce, and if you're one of the educated few to have found one, it's expected that you'll share your good fortune with the extended family. In Oromo cul-

ture, 'I' and 'Me' are very much out, while 'our' and 'we' are in.

In Oromo culture, interpersonal relationships are important from giving names to newborn to how family interact with one another. Each individual is given a main name and most often given other personal "love names" by family members. The second name is the main name of their father. A third name is usually the name of the paternal grandfather. Traditionally, the father picks the newborn's name, but mother has great influence in naming the daughter of the family. It must also be said that Oromo names have meanings as if to convey wishes of success, wisdom, and prosperity through generations. For instance, the most popular Oromo names are lbsaa for males and lbsituu for females. The meaning of these names is "light".

In Oromo culture, advance in age comes with great respect. Oromos have a tradition of viewing long age as accumulation of wisdom gained from experience. Therefore in Oromo culture, we approach elders as students would professors, ready to learn. The elder of the village or the household is a leader of a given domain, and perhaps beyond. Responsibilities, light or heavy, are assigned to persons according to how old the person is. The older the person, the less physical responsibilities, such as farming, heavy lifting, etc., while physical responsibilities are usually assigned to the young, physically strong and able. Elders are given the task of thinking, conveying and radiating wisdom as needed. Strangely, when issues such as weddings, death, or disputes arise among individuals, the most able and senior of elders are assembled. Issues can be won or lost on the credibility and ability of the elders, much like the quality of counsel defending or prosecut-

ing legal cases in Western cultures.

In gatherings, Oromos normally reserve the most comfortable area for the elderly and the seniors of the group to display respect for age, and wisdom is expected from the audience. Respect for the start time of the gathering is also important. If a person does not respect the set time, his ideas and contributions to the group will have cold reception or he will be reminded of his/her offense from this and previous experiences. Depending on the subject matter, the young are encouraged to attend meetings as a way to teach the social etiquette and pass it on to the next generation.

Just like any other cultures in the worlds, marriage is one of the most important rituals in the Oromo culture. There are three things Oromos talk about in life: birth, marriage, and death. These are the events that add to or take away from a family. Before the onset of foreign religions, namely Christianity and Islam, Oromo marriage rituals include exchange of gifts, mainly by the bride to be. In a nutshell, the Oromo ritual of courting begins a long time before the marriage date. Once the boy has demonstrated responsibilities, not only for his own livelihood, but also for the society in which he lives, he picks the girl he is interested in. He will inform a family member, usually his uncle or father, who then contacts the family of the girl. Usually the girl knows of the boy's intent, and in many instances, she encourages him to pursue her in this way. There are mediators, such as the girl's best friends, who convey the girl's wishes to the boy. Once the needs of all relatives are satisfied, the actual date for a marriage will be set. On the date of the wedding, gifts for the bride's family are brought by an assembly of well-respected elders who join the wedding party. Bringing home the new

MY OROMO CULTURE CONTINUED BY SUFIAN KALIL

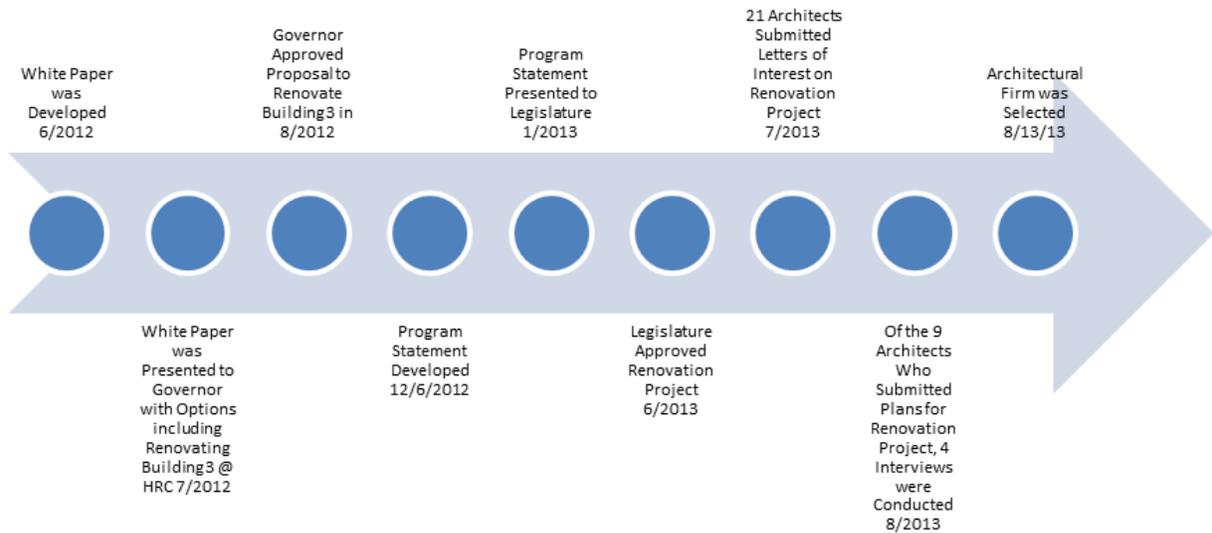
(Continued from page 11)

bride is an all day process. Without the presence of knowledgeable elders, the marriage can be delayed. Once the groom is home with his new bride, the wedding

party may take another three or more days to complete. I was engaged in this ritual when my cousin got married a few years ago. It was an awesome experience to be part of the wedding process. When someone gets marriage in Oromo,

the whole village or city takes part in the wedding party. There is no such thing as an invitation request to attend a wedding ceremony like in Western society.

POSITIVE CHANGE TIMELINE



Watch for updates each month as changes occur!

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CHARITABLE GIVING CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISERS

August 21 – Bake Sale

August 22 – Blue Jean Day

August 29 – Kiss the Pig Contest

LOOK FOR DETAILED INFORMATION ON POSTERS!