

FOCUS

on
Federal Employee Work/Life and Wellness Programs



United States
Office of
Personnel
Management

DOI Event Celebrates New Quality of Work/Life Initiatives

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Department of Interior employees (DOI) in the Washington metropolitan area attended a Celebration of Work/Life Wellness Programs on January 10, 2001, in the Main Interior Building.

DOI is committed to quality of work life and offers numerous work/life flexibilities to employees such as alternative work schedules, telework, and access to a child care center.

The Department is also demonstrating its commitment by investing currently in multi-year, multi-level renovations to create an even better place for employees to work. Renovations were completed recently in the snack bars and the auditorium, and the fitness center was upgraded.

Lisa Guide, the Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget at the time of the event, said in her welcoming remarks, "We are all struggling to balance our work and personal lives. Some of us have elderly parents with physical challenges. Some of us, like me, have young children at home. We need options and support. Providing family-friendly and quality of work life options increases productivity — it's not an either/or situation. When the employer provides support, it comes back to them. For instance, DOI has a Maternal Wellness



▲ Representatives from the DOI University exhibited at the program.

Room. Well, studies suggest that babies that are nurse-fed are sick less often than babies that are formula-fed. By insuring healthy babies, it's one way the agency can keep the employee productive at work. These programs help us to remain competitive—we can better recruit and retain employees."

Dr. Pat Kinney, Director of the Office of Personnel Management's Office of Work/Life Programs, emphasized the need to understand that work/life applies to every individual no matter what their life circumstances. Those circumstances create a unique set of demands for each person.

Dr. Kinney shared statistics indicat-

ing that workplaces will need to meet greater demands for quality of work life. That is, approximately 30 percent of the full-time Federal workforce will be eligible to retire in five years and one half of senior executives will be eligible to retire in three years. A different generation of employees will replace them.

The 'Gen Xers' - employees in their 20s and 30s - will make up a larger part of the population and they have different needs, said Dr. Kinney. They value flexibilities and ask about them up front in job interviews. They are willing to sacrifice pay for quality of life, she said.

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“There are other compelling statistics that shape the need for work/life programs. Mothers are not in the home like they used to be — 40 percent of infants are in care the first year of their life. Grandparents are not in the home, either. They’re in the workplace. Even the retired are working ‘bridge jobs.’ Another phenomenon to consider is that people are living longer. We’re in the midst of a Longevity Revolution. Of the people aged 65 today, 20 percent will live to see age 100 or more. The work/life programs can help by addressing elder care issues,” said Dr. Kinney.

“Today in the private sector, employers are getting more competi-



▲ Exhibits at the program offered a wealth of information about work/life and wellness.

tive with their offerings. They’re paying attention to personal needs. Studies show again and again that people like to work in those environments and they are more productive. The agencies are responding and they are getting more successful and creative,” said Dr. Kinney. “OPM’s Director’s Award for Work/Life Programs reflects these successes. More and more managers are starting to see them as tools to manage effectively.”

Dr. Wendell Joice, Government-wide Telework Team Leader for the General Services Administration’s (GSA) Office of Governmentwide

Policy, Innovative Workplaces Division, also delivered remarks.

He highlighted several new developments that demonstrate the expansion of telework:

- The current GSA-OPM government-wide policy review will address potential barriers to telework. Newly revised policies should be issued in June.
- Initiatives will expand telework to spouses of employees transferred overseas or to remote locations. This initiative supports spouses who wish to continue their careers and addresses a critical human resources need.
- A new initiative makes telework available to more Federal employees (*see more p. 8*).
- The Department of Transportation

and the Council of Governments’ (COG) joined efforts to expand telework in the Washington metropolitan area (*see more p. 8*).

- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) included telework in their recommendations for the continuation of operations under unusual circumstances.

- A new law creates pilot incentives for telework using environmental credits to trade for other benefits,

monetary and otherwise.

- Agencies are increasing use of telework for ‘hoteling,’ saving on leasing and facility costs.
- GSA’s Innovative Workplaces Division is pushing internally for ‘Anytime, Anywhere’ work, as well as employees’ self-certification of time and attendance.

“Telework is still countercultural,” said Dr. Joice. “Basically, we need all the help we can get. Our office has formed several partnerships with councils and associations that support telework.”

Mr. Darryl Dobberfuhr, Executive

Director, Washington Metropolitan Telework Centers, shared information about the 17 telework centers that serve the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

The centers offer a supportive work environment for teleworkers. Each center has several work-friendly amenities: 14-30 workstations; anytime access using a magnetic card; meeting rooms; private offices; kitchens; fax/copy machines; fast Internet service; technical support located on-site/near-site; handicap access; lockable file storage; proximity to transportation/shopping; and simple, user-friendly simple web-based reservation systems.

The centers feature plenty of cubicles, private offices with doors, and a certain number of “personal harbor” office spaces -- offices shaped somewhat like large phone booths that provide enhanced privacy.

“Homes are not always conducive to work,” said Mr. Dobberfuhr. “Centers offer several advantages over home offices: there are more resources at the center; it’s a professional environment; there are fewer distractions; it’s more structured; and managers seem to prefer employees working at the centers over the home.”

The event featured numerous exhibits. Employees learned about leave options, various types of work schedules, telework, a local child care center and other programs such as transit subsidies and child care subsidies for low-income employees. Other exhibits focused on employee assistance program services, health and safety information, educational and career enhancement opportunities through the DOI University, and exhibits of the Department’s bureaus which showcased their work/life programs and policies. Employees took advantage of free blood pressure screenings offered by the health unit.

Employees toured the new Stress Reduction Lab as well as the new Maternal Wellness Room and the Family Support Room.

The Stress Reduction Lab is a

(continued on page 8)

Child Care Tuition Assistance Legislation Continues

OPM Examines “Lessons Learned” and Looks to the Future

Congress passed legislation that permits Federal agencies to assist lower income employees with child care costs. The law was extended for a second pilot year and will expire on September 30, 2001. Specifically, Sec. 633 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 106-554 by section 101) states that an executive agency “may use appropriated funds (otherwise available to such agency for salaries and expenses) to provide child care, in a Federal or leased facility, or through contract, for civilian employees of such agency.”

One change is reflected in language that permits agencies to draw from funds “otherwise appropriated for salaries and expenses.” Previously the legislation only cited funds appropriated for salaries.

OPM Initiatives Help to Launch Programs

Shortly after the original legislation was passed, OPM’s Office of Work/Life Programs (OWLP) played a key role in helping agencies to implement programs. On March 14, 2000, OPM published final regulations.

OPM’s Guidebook for Implementing Child Care Subsidy Programs provided step-by-step instructions, sample forms, applications, marketing materials, and sample statements of work for administration of the program. These are available on the OPM web site at www.opm.gov/wrkfam/index1.htm.

Last year, OPM held a number of briefing sessions to explain the legislation and how to implement a program.

In a five month period after the legislation was passed, OPM provided consultation to over 500 customers, both agencies and employees. Agencies that received assistance implementing programs rated the assistance OPM provided as very high. Agency feedback indicated that the

technical assistance OPM provided, along with the sample materials, quickened the implementation process.

Lessons Learned from the First Months of Implementation

OPM’s OWLP hosted a “Lessons Learned” meeting in October 2000. Several agencies, at various stages of implementation, benefited from the lessons learned by the pioneering agencies.

Many of these agencies were in the midst of the initial stages of implementing: negotiating with unions; finding available funding; and determining the cut off levels in terms of eligibility (i.e., defining “lower income.”).

An initial challenge the pioneering agencies faced related to the timing of the initiative. Agencies only had 5 1/2 months to implement the program after the final regulations were published. The short timeframe, in combination with the fact there was no new funding for this purpose, most likely restricted implementation for some agencies during the first pilot year.

When deciding whether to apply for a subsidy, parents using unlicensed child care had to decide whether to seek licensed care to be eligible for the subsidy. For those who decided to make a change, they may have experienced difficulty finding an available space for their child.

The “lessons learned” meeting also dealt with union bargaining, marketing, eligibility models, and administration. The following is a summary of “lessons learned” from the pioneers:

Bargaining: Agencies that worked with unions right from the start produced the best outcomes. If both the union and the agency wanted it, it seemed to work better. The hardest piece to negotiate was the eligibility criteria.

Marketing: Agencies used many different marketing approaches.

Models: The types of models discussed varied widely, from complex

to simple.

Administration: Agencies that contracted for the administration of the program reported an easier experience.

For agencies which administered their programs, they reported it as being a very “cumbersome process” — both time-consuming and labor intensive.

Overall, the conclusions of the “lessons learned” meeting were:

- With negotiating, collaboration is best.
- With administration, contracting out is more efficient.
- Marketing should be continual and with a multi-pronged approach.
- Simple eligibility models are best.
- Utilization was lower than expected, but this could change as the program becomes more well-known.

Looking Ahead

Currently, the legislation is in effect until September 30, 2001.

This year, more agencies are getting on board. Before the end of the fiscal year 2000, only six months after regulations were issued, five agencies and two components of one agency had implemented the law. OPM has been notified that 17 agencies and two components of one agency will implement programs during Fiscal Year 2001.

OPM will submit a report to Congress on March 15, 2001. The report will discuss the successes and problems experienced in the first year of implementation, as well as the structures and types of eligibility models, anecdotal stories, and plans for the future.

Certainly more “lessons learned” will evolve as more agencies implement their programs. OPM has revised the *Guidebook for Implementing Child Care Subsidy Programs*. Information about agency programs and forms are available on the OWLP web site on www.opm.gov/wrkfam.

For more information, call the OWLP at (202) 606-5520. **F**

CONTRIBUTOR'S COLUMN



◀ *Chuck Reynolds, Principal and President, Employer Health Management Practice—The Benfield Group, is the author of this month's column.*

Chuck has an MS in Health Fitness Management from the American University and applies his near-20 years experience to helping employers develop and implement strategies to

improve the health and productivity of their employees.

The Health and Productivity Buzz: Opportunities for Federal Health Promoters

The past two to three years have seen the emergence and steady growth of productivity as a focal point for health promotion professionals in the U.S. Consider:

- **The Institute for Health and Productivity Management (IHPM).** Having quickly and firmly taken root among large corporations and pharmaceutical firms, IHPM found support for establishing the value of employee

health as a business investment in corporate success. See www.ihpm.org.

- **The Health Enhancement Research Organization (HERO).** HERO shifted a significant proportion of its health promotion research efforts to the health and productivity arena. This year they sponsored their first International Health and Productivity Conference. See www.the-hero.org.

- **The American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM).** The spring 2000 conference saw the emergence of health and productivity as a prominent topic in both formal sessions and informal hallway discussions. ACOEM's January 2001 *Journal of Occupational and Environment Medicine* focused exclusively on the health and productivity topic, with contributions from over a dozen well-known experts in the field.

What is the driving force behind this enthusiastic embrace of health and productivity? Where is the movement going? And most importantly, what should Federal health promotion practitioners do to take advantage of the momentum behind this movement? These are the questions that frame the remainder of this article.

The Motives Behind the Movement

Certainly, the concept that health and productivity are related is not new. So, why the renewed interest? Who's behind the movement, and what is driving them to dedicate limited time and energy to perpetuating it? First, the issue of why... why the interest now? For the sake of brevity, I'll focus on two reasons:

1. Aging Workforce/Declining Work Capacity. The workforce is getting older, less well and less fit. This means that the work capacity of the population as a whole is in decline, which reduces the ability of corporations and the national economy as a whole to grow to its potential.

2. Changing Nature of Work: Expansion of the Knowledge Economy. Simply put, in a knowledge economy where the "tools" are creative concepts, words and new ideas, the relationship between health (physical, emotional, mental and spiritual) and productivity is even more sensitive. In the old economy, a sinus infection may reduce an individual's output on a drill press by 20 percent. In the knowledge economy, it may mean missing a critical idea in the development of a path for a new software program. Or the activities and output of entire teams are significantly disrupted.

Additionally, with respect to who is behind the movement, it is important to recognize that the health and productivity movement is in part a response to a national agenda regarding health that has been dominated by concerns over the cost of care. While not denying that cost control is essential, health and productivity advocates seek to emphasize that lower health care costs do not necessarily produce the best total financial outcome for a company, the government or an economy as a whole.

Focusing on the full impact of treatment alternatives—including the ability of patients to resume a productive life—advocates are seeking to balance the health care debate, and to

The Contributor's Column is an ongoing feature in FOCUS. Experts and representatives from various fields relevant to employee work/life and wellness may use this space to let readers know about initiatives and resources, or to share a perspective. The column may or may not appear in every issue. Please contact the FOCUS editor if you'd like to contribute to this column.

create a more rational discussion about the costs and benefits of care decisions. Who are the advocates? Among them are corporate medical directors, employer-based health management professionals, prevention-minded physicians, consultants and pharmaceutical manufacturers.

Where the Health and Productivity Movement is Headed

We continue to see increasing levels of interest and support for the movement as the fundamentals are more widely understood. The coming months will see the following:

1. Stronger base of support: As more and more health management professionals, including Federal health promotion practitioners, understand and embrace the health and productivity concepts, the base of support will broaden and strengthen.

2. Break through to executives: The choir is well-versed in the health and productivity hymn. In the next 12 months, we'll see the message delivered more and more to human resource senior executives. The fundamental message? Health is a strategic asset that your organization can better manage for competitive advantage.

3. User-Friendly Assessment Tools: An important challenge in the health and productivity movement is measuring individual productivity. Public and private researchers have been busy developing and validating self-assessment tools that will be used alone or in combination with health risk assessments to provide relative and consistent measures of productivity. This, of course will lead to a host of opportunities to tie the impact of spe-

cific interventions to productivity outcomes.

What Should Federal Health Promotion Practitioners Do?

To prepare and engage your organization in the health and productivity movement, start with these four steps:

1. Educate and Equip Yourself: Simply put, you need to dig into this stuff. I suggest starting with the IHPM

Health is a strategic asset that your organization can better manage for competitive advantage.

and HERO web sites identified above, and go from there. Look for copies of October, November/December 2000 issues of Business and Health on their web site, which have excellent articles. Of course, the January Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine is loaded with information. Finally, if you can get information about what came out of the HERO meeting in Washington, DC in February, get that. Information from the meeting will provide an outstanding opportunity to immerse yourself in both theory and practical examples of what's going on. One final resource I should probably mention (in a self-serving way) — the Benfield Groups' Employer Health Management

eNewsletter. Send me an email at chuckr@benfield.com to be put on our monthly distribution.

2. Communicate Up: As you become comfortable with the fundamentals, begin to scan for articles in the trade press and business magazines that pertain to health and productivity. Highlight and forward items of interest to key managers. Slowly, steadily and continually feed information about the link between health and productivity and about health as a strategic asset that can be managed.

3. Communicate Out: Begin to educate your employees about health and productivity. They likely won't be concerned about it on an organizational level, and may not be worried about work productivity, but will be able to see immediate connection to their ability to enjoy leisure time, keep up with their kids, volunteer in their community, etc. Remember that these messages will also be going to your managers, reinforcing their perceptions.

4. Repackage Programs: Look at your programs through health and productivity lenses. What can be done to modify them in a way that emphasizes the impact on personal productivity.

A final thought: for me personally, the health and productivity connection is the strongest personal motive I've had in nearly 20 years in the profession. What higher purpose to the health promotion profession is there than helping people acquire and sustain the capacity they need to fulfill their personal and professional mission in life? It is very exciting and important work. **F**



Sister to Sister: *Everyone Has A Heart*

Washington, DC Mayor Anthony Williams and wife, Diane Simmons Williams, presenting the proclamation declaring February 23rd as "Woman's Heart Day" to Irene Pollin, Chairperson, "Sister to Sister: Everyone Has A Heart" Foundation.

*Event
Focuses on
Heart Disease
Awareness
for Women*



Everyone Has A Heart



Approximately 2000 women attended the "Sister to Sister: Everyone Has A Heart" event on February 23. Nearly 500 women were screened for heart disease. The event featured other free screening exams such as measures for bone density and body composition analyses.

U.S. Surgeon General Forms National Strategy to Deal with Obesity

Workplaces Targeted in the Plan; Federal Agencies Strategize

Surgeon General David Satcher announced on January 8 preliminary efforts to form a national strategy to deal with the epidemic problem of obesity in the United States.

Satcher unveiled a year-long plan to integrate schools, workplaces and healthcare clinics into Federal efforts to lower rates of overweight and obesity. More than 60 percent of American adults over 20 years of age were overweight or clinically obese in 1999, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. Rates have more than doubled since 1980, he said.

"It is also increasing in both genders and among all population groups of adults," Satcher said in a statement released by the Department of Health and Human Services.

While Americans are taking in fewer calories per day over recent years, experts attribute the rise in obesity to an overall high-calorie, high fat diet coupled with decreasing rates of physical activity. Obesity is thought to cost the American economy over \$100 billion per year in healthcare and related costs, according to the Department of Health and Human Services.

The agency has already convened meetings of public health experts and researchers to begin the process of coming up with a nation-

al action plan. Other events are scheduled for 2001, including more public meetings between Federal agencies to come up with a single government strategy, Satcher's statement said.

The plan is expected to go forward through David Satcher's term as Surgeon General, which lasts until February 2002.

The Surgeon General recently held a "listening session" on overweight and obesity at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, MD. At the meeting, entitled *Toward a National Action Plan on Overweight and Obesity: The Surgeon General's Initiative*, five panels of experts presented their views on pri-

orities for obesity prevention efforts. Co-sponsors of the event included the NIH, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of Public Health and Science.

"The participants at the meeting brought fresh and exciting ideas to the table," said Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health Randolph F. Wykoff. "Overweight and obesity represent one of ten leading health indicators included in Healthy People 2010, the Nation's health objectives for the next decade. With the continuing input from these participants and the groups they represent, we stand to have a real impact on an important public health problem."

Several follow-up events will continue the efforts to develop a national action plan.



▲ Surgeon General David Satcher

Some facts on obesity:

- The number of overweight children, adolescents, and adults has risen over the past four decades.
- Overweight and obesity substantially raise the risk of illness from high blood pressure, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke, gallbladder disease, arthritis, sleep disturbances and problems breathing, and certain types of cancers.
- On average, higher body weights are associated with higher death rates.
- Total costs (medical costs and productivity) attributable to obesity alone amounted to an estimated \$99 billion in 1995.
- During 1988-94, 11 percent of children and adolescents aged 6 to 19 years were overweight or obese. During the same years, 23 percent of adults aged 20 years and older were considered obese.

TELEWORK UPDATES

Telework Policies

On February 13, 2001, Virginia Congressman Frank Wolf convened a meeting of Federal agency representatives to urge them to develop policies and dramatically expand their use of telecommuting. Mr. Wolf cited numerous benefits of telecommuting to the employer, the environment, and the employee.

Maryland Congresswoman Connie Morella, Virginia Congressman Jim Moran and West Virginia Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito echoed Mr. Wolf's remarks and urged agencies to market telecommuting as a sensible work alternative.

OPM will convene an all day conference, provide agencies with guidance on telecommuting, and track the progress of policy development and utilization rates. OPM recently sent a letter to agencies that included a reporting form to collect information regarding telecommuting policies and utilization rates. Congresswoman Morella noted there will probably be hearings on Federal telecommuting in the coming months.

While several agencies have utilized telecommuting effectively, Mr. Wolf believes that managers continue to resist implementing this work alternative. OPM plans to develop training materials for managers as well as revised policy guidance. OPM and GSA conducted a governmentwide study of policies that need clarification and an interagency working group is addressing those issues. New guidance will be issued in the spring.

For further information about telecommuting in the Federal government, click on www.opm.gov/wrkfam/opm-gsa/index.htm.

DOT Assists Regional Efforts to Expand Telework

Former Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater, in a memo dated October 23, 2000, called on the heads of each agency and department in the Washington DC, metropolitan area to "join the U.S. Department of Transportation in supporting the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments' (COG) efforts to achieve a telecommuting goal of twenty (20) percent of the eligible workforce in this region by 2005."

Effective participation in the COG goal by 2005 could increase the number of telecommuters in the region to 68,000 making "a tremendous contribution to reduced air pollution and congestion," the memo said.

Slater's memo asked the agency heads "to take the steps necessary to increase the proportion of employees who could take advantage of a telecommuting option."

DOI WORK/LIFE EVENT (continued from page 2)

quality of work/life initiative that is designed to help employees manage stress and improve stamina and performance. This facility is available by appointment only. An employee can schedule an appointment with a counselor who will meet with the employee and recommend strategies for relaxation.

The Stress Reduction Lab is a quiet

**Providing
family-friendly
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room featuring an ergonomic "stressless" reclining chair and audio and video equipment. An employee can select from written materials, audio tapes, or video tapes to learn about stress and related topics and practice strategies for relaxation.

The Maternal Wellness Room is a private room dedicated to nursing mothers. The room is equipped with a medical grade breast pump, sink, and comfortable furniture. This room is located next to the Family Support Room, which opened in 1996. This is a temporary office for employees to use when an unexpected need to care for a family member arises and the employee needs to continue work on an important assignment. These rooms, too, are available by appointment only.

DOI is enthusiastic about supporting quality of work life initiatives. By creating an even better place for employees to work, the Department is better able to carry out its mission. **F**

Volunteerism Program at Robins AFB Thrives; Perceptions of Quality of Work Life Enhanced

As an expansion on quality of work life efforts, more and more Federal agencies are opening the doors for employees to be engaged in volunteer activities during the work week. Many employees *want* to volunteer their time to worthy causes but work hours preclude their involvement, at least during the work week.

In response, more employers, including Federal agencies, are allowing schedule flexibilities for volunteerism. This allows employees to be involved with activities they find rewarding for a few hours a month and at the same time gives employees better perceptions about their quality of work life. Because employees make up the hours they spend volunteering, work is not sacrificed. The community benefits, the employee benefits, and the workplace benefits.

Robins Air Force Base in Houston County, GA, sponsors a volunteer mentoring program called Raising Education Achievement for Children (REACH). Available to all civilian and military personnel base-wide, the program is structured to allow employees to contribute to their community during the work days, rather than during weekends or weeknights.

Volunteers work with a student one hour a week during the school year in reading, math, and other subjects suggested by the student's teacher. In addition to encouraging and reinforcing the learning process, volunteers serve as positive role models and friends.

Employees who volunteer as mentors in the REACH program are expected to make up the work hour spent mentoring, but employees have the flexibility to use any part of the work day to mentor. For example, an employee might mentor from 11 a.m.

until noon during the work day, but work an hour later in the evening.

The objectives are to help students to improve school attendance, improve academic performance and reduce disciplinary problems.

Mentors help children to focus on the importance of school work and demonstrate to students that someone cares about their well-being. Mentors provide praise and support in other ways to help students to realize their potentials.

Ultimately the program hopes to reduce student drop-out rates — 37 percent of students in the County are at risk of dropping out of school before graduation. Another 62 percent



most from having a mentor. Ongoing requirements are that the mentor be consistent with weekly contacts and attend mentor meetings.

Feedback from teachers indicate that children who have mentors get better grades, become more focused, more verbal, and improve their class

▲ Mentors work with students weekly throughout the school year.

Because employees make up the hours they spend volunteering, work is not sacrificed. The community benefits, the employee benefits, and the workplace benefits.

of County eighth graders have minimal or inadequate scores on writing tests. The mission of REACH is to turn these numbers around.

To become a mentor, a volunteer must submit to a background check by the County police department, provide two references and attend one training class sponsored by the County Mentoring Program. The volunteer must also commit to work with the student for the entire school year.

Once the volunteer chooses an age group, program coordinators at the elementary schools match the volunteer with the student. Teachers choose those students who would benefit

participation. Some students seem to gain more confidence. Employees report that the experience is enriching.

FOCUS spoke with a REACH mentor, Marlene Humphry, who has been volunteering since the opportunity first became available four years ago. "I have benefitted from this program and I continue to benefit from this program. I am now with my third child. Because I am a former high school teacher, at first I chose a child at the oldest grade level that we are allowed to mentor — 5th grade. But I found that it's difficult to end a rela-

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tionship, so the child I've had this year is a third grader. I'd hoped to establish a longer term relationship, but she may move. This breaks my heart because my interest in her progress continues and she has been doing really well," she said.

"This is a great program. The children who are mentored do have academic problems, but I think many of their problems are about self-esteem," said Marlene. "The schools are so appreciative for having the mentors because they know these children need more attention but the schools do not have the extra time to devote to them."

Marlene thinks the good feelings she derives from being involved as a mentor are carried over into her work. "The fact that Robins facilitates our participation in this provides mutual benefits. It really boomerangs. We feel good about ourselves and this reflects in our work ethic," she said. "I'm busy outside of work, so even though I make up the time at work that I spend mentoring, doing this during daytime hours makes it possible for me to par-

ticipate in the program."

When the REACH program first started, it was open to one organization on base and served one elementary school. Each year it has extended to more employees and expanded to more elementary schools. Currently, the REACH Program has 124 employees participating as mentors and supports five elementary schools in Houston County.

In the 2001 school year the goals are to expand the number of volunteer mentors from 124 to 150 and to increase the number of schools the program reaches. Marketing methods used to recruit volunteers include email messages, articles in the base newspaper, flyers, and word-of-mouth.

The program could easily be replicated by other agencies since, according to agency REACH representatives, it involves little if any overhead costs and is not a burden administratively.

To learn more about the REACH mentoring program at Robins Air Force Base, contact Kelly Queen at (478) 926-5236. **F**

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E-mail to: TELONG@OPM.GOV.
Otherwise, call (202) 606-1638 or write to: **Room 7425, 1900 E Street, NW., Washington, DC 20415-2000.** (OPM disclaims any reference to resources or organizations featured in FOCUS as an endorsement).

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NOTICE About Changes in FOCUS

FOCUS recently changed its name and its issuance schedule.

The name is changed from

FOCUS on Federal Employee Health and Assistance Programs

to

FOCUS on Federal Work/Life and Wellness Programs.

The issuance schedule has changed from bi-monthly (six issues per year) to quarterly.

Questions? Call the FOCUS editor, Tracey Long at (202) 606-1638.



OPM's Office of Work/Life Programs:

Providing Leadership on Work/Life and Wellness Programs for the Federal Government

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Dependent Care

- Child Care
- Elder Care
- Adoption
- Lactation Programs
- Fatherhood
- Kinship Care
- End of Life

Alternative Ways to Work

- Telework
- Alternative Work Schedules
- Part-time Employment and Job Sharing

Worksite Physical Health

- Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
- Physical Fitness
- Smoking Cessation
- Preventive Screening
- Occupational Safety and Health
- HIV/AIDS in the Workplace
- Worksite Health Promotion

Worksite Mental Health

- Employee Assistance Programs
- Workplace Violence Prevention and Response
- Domestic Violence Issues at Work
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- Drug, Alcohol and Substance Abuse Treatment

OWLP Activities

Governmentwide Program Policies

Guidance and Technical Assistance

- Agency Consultations

Information and Resources

- Publications, Seminars, Conferences
- Special Web Sites, Training Modules
- Interagency Working and Advisory Groups
- Quarterly Newsletter

Mission of the Office:

- to promote work/life/wellness programs for the Federal community that help employees manage their personal and job responsibilities;
- to develop policies and provide guidance on work/life/wellness programs and personnel flexibilities for Federal employees;
- to provide technical assistance to Federal agencies and employees on work/life wellness programs and initiatives;
- to provide EAP services to the New England Federal community.

Staff consists of a director, several program specialists, including senior specialists, a psychologist, and support staff. The Director of the Office is Dr. Pat Kinney. The Boston Federal Employee Assistance Program, serving the New England area, is headed by Catherine Weisbrod.

To Reach the OWLP Offices:

For Work/Life Information

Phone: (202) 606-5520
Fax: (202) 606-2091
Email: workandfamily@opm.gov
Web site: <http://www.opm.gov/wrkfam>

For Employee Health/Assistance Information

Phone: (202) 606-1269
Fax: (202) 606-0967
Email: ehs@opm.gov
Web site: <http://www.opm.gov/ehs>

For the Boston Federal Employee Assistance Program (serving the New England area)

Phone: (617) 565-6533
Fax: (617) 565-8249
Email: fedeapopm@erols.com

OPM Gives Director's Awards for

The ceremony and reception for the OPM Director's Award for Outstanding Work/Life Programs took place on Tuesday, November 14, 2000. The Awards program has been in place for seven years now, but recently adopted "Work/Life" into its title to reflect the more inclusive nature of the program.

The following winners received the Director's Awards at the OPM ceremony:



▲ Department of Energy
Washington, DC



◀ Defense Supply Center Richmond
Defense Logistics Agency
Department of Defense
Richmond, VA

Department of Health and Human Services
Program Support Center
Rockville, MD ▶



Outstanding Work/Life Programs



◀ *National
Imagery and
Mapping Agency
Department of
Defense
Bethesda, MD*



◀ *Department
of Energy
Washington, DC*

**The following agencies
received Honorable
Mentions plaques:**

Defense Threat Reduction Agency
Department of Defense
Dulles, VA

Food and Drug Administration
Department of Health and Human Services
Rockville, MD

Defense Security Cooperation Agency
Department of Defense
Arlington, VA

“Expanding the EAP Worldwide” Conference and Exposition

VANCOUVER CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTER

October 28-31, 2001

Celebrate 30 years of developing the Employee Assistance Industry at the Employee Assistance Professional’s Association’s (EAPA) first annual conference outside of the U.S.

Some Program Highlights:

- dynamic keynote speakers
- larger and improved “tech-know” labs
 - e-business solutions
 - pre-conference trainings
 - CECHs and PDHs available
 - exhibit hall

*Visit the web site at www.eap-association.org
or call the EAPA Conference department at 703-387-1000.*

OPM Issues Preventive Health Services Guide

OPM has just published *A Federal Workplace Guide to Preventive Health Services*. The Guide can help agencies to provide preventive health services at the workplace through a variety of mechanisms. It answers many of the administrative questions agencies might have in implementing preventive health programs and provides relevant examples and lists of resources.

OPM recently sent copies of the Guide to agency and department heads and electronic copies to human resources directors. The Guide may be downloaded from the OPM web site at www.opm.gov/ehs/health3/htm.



Orlando Work/Life Conference

In February 2001, OPM's Office of Work/Life Programs provided a pre-conference to the Alliance for Work/Life Professionals (AWLP) conference in Orlando, Florida. Over 90 Federal work/life program managers and staff attended this pre-conference session. The AWLP regular conference included 675

attendees with sessions on research, current work/life practices, and trends in work/life and wellness

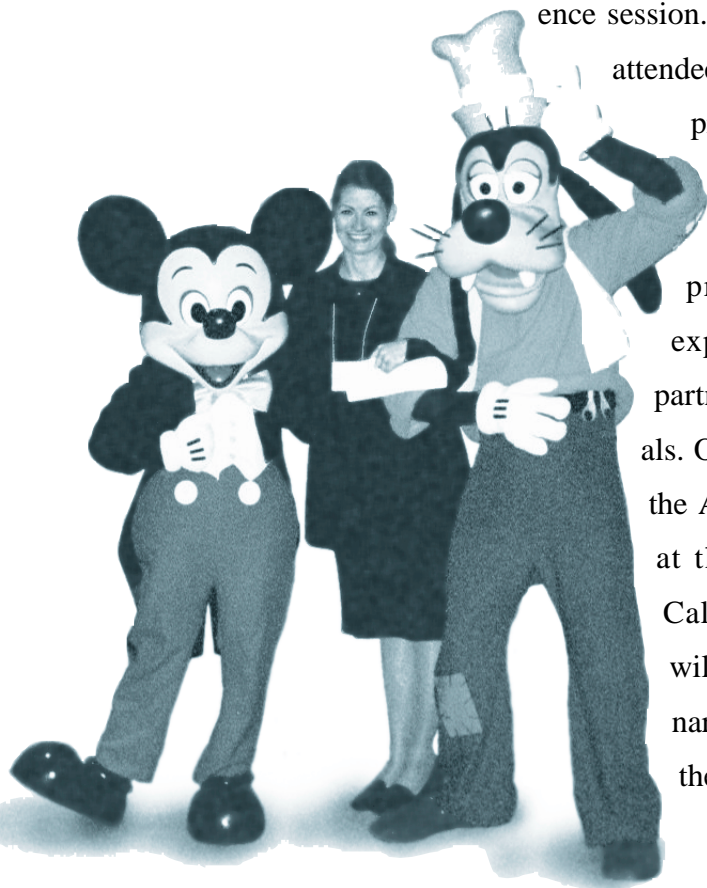
programs. Evaluations of the OWLP-sponsored portion of the conference rated the preconference very favorably. Attendees

expressed appreciation for the opportunity to partner with private sector work/life profession-

als. OWLP has made arrangements to partner with the AWLP for the 2002 conference February 6-8 at the Embarcadero Hotel in San Francisco,

California. The OWLP preconference portion will take place on February 5. The all-day plenary will address cutting edge issues and share

the latest developments about new policies. **F**



FOCUS on Upcoming Events

SPRING AND SUMMER 2001 OBSERVANCES

April Observances

Alcohol Awareness Month
Cancer Control Month
Counseling Awareness Month
Women's Eye Health and Safety Month
1-7 National Building Safety Week
2-8 National Public Health Week
4 Kick Butts Day
7 World Health Day
15-21 National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week
17-23 National Minority Cancer Awareness Week

May Observances

Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month
National Arthritis Month
National Digestive Diseases Awareness Month
National High Blood Pressure Awareness Month
National Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month
National Mental Health Month
National Stroke Awareness Month
National Trauma Awareness Month
Older Americans Month
7-13 National Mental Health Counseling Week
17 National Employee Health and Fitness Day
30 National Senior Health and Fitness Day
31 World "No Tobacco" Day

June Observances

National Safety Month
Fireworks Safety Month (through July 4)
3 National Cancer Survivors Day
3-9 National Headache Awareness Week
11-17 National Men's Health Week
28-July 5 Eye Safety Awareness Week
30-July 4 National Sobriety Checkpoint Week

