

The Owens Interlink

Volume 5, Issue 8, September 2008

Are you ready for some football?

Staff news

By Diana Owens

Births:

We want to congratulate the following Omaha employees on the birth of their new babies: Jennifer Crager a son and Robert Holmes a son. Best wishes to the parents and their newborn sons.

Condolences:

Our heart felt sympathy to Michelle Smith and her husband Luke on the passing of Luke's father. Luke was a former Board Member of OES, and Michelle is an administrative assistant in Omaha.

Welcome New Employees:

The Owens Companies wants to send a hearty "welcome" to: Jennifer Owens, Program Assistant Omaha/Lincoln, Constance Abram (Omaha)- Family Assistant, Tiffany Duncan (Lincoln) – Family Part-

ner, Scott Gilbert (Lincoln) –Family Partner, Sara Hansen (Omaha) – Family Assistant, Stewart Hehn (Lincoln) – Family Partner, Scott Morrill (Lincoln) – Family Partner, Kelli Morris (Omaha) – Family Partner, Tracy Morrison (Omaha) – Family Partner, Michael Osberg (Omaha) – Family Partner, Katrina Reed (Omaha) – Family Partner, Alice Shaff (Omaha) – Family Partner, Megan Sweet (Omaha) – Family Assistant, Brandon Wiebelhaus (Lincoln) – Family Partner, Dallas Lane (Omaha) – UA Tech and Todd Myers (Omaha) – Drug Tech.

We are glad you are with us and hope you will find your responsibilities both challenging and rewarding.



Diana L. Owens
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New computer server in the works

Edited by Joe Owens

Under the direction of our internal IT Specialist, Andrew Real, Owens is transferring from individual computers to a main server. This writer does not pretend to know what all is transpiring, but we do know that when complete – it will be wonderful – rite Andy?

This change has been brought about as most everything we do or must report on is now done electronically. We are so appreciative of the night and weekend time Andy is putting in to get the job done. ■

Training

By Diana Owens

All our present employees will have successfully completed defensive driving, CPR/First Aid, Blood Borne Pathogen, and Mandt training by September 30th.

Our cycle of training has been intent along with other required components, but we have such a resilient staff, that they are taking it all in stride and doing an excellent job of completing the training. ■

Lunch and learn

Edited by Joe Owens

Under the guidance of Jennifer Owens, staff will have an opportunity on a monthly basis both in Omaha and in Lincoln to bring their lunch and have an hour of informational training on specific topics that relate to their job.

The October topic is “Engaging the Family”. Jennifer will be

sending out emails to all our employees on a monthly basis with the new topic of discuss. These learning lunches are open to any Owens employee. Jennifer is also available for any one on one tutoring for any employee who may be having with difficulties with program specifics. ■

Holiday gift drive

Plans are already underway in the preparation of our annual holiday gift drive for families in need. It may seem to many that this is early – but there are lots of planning and preparation that needs to be done so that we can assure all of our supporters that the families they adopt are truly in need. If you sponsored a family last year and want to do so again this year, please contact any of our supervisors or Diana. ■

Reporting center

Edited by Joe Owens

Diana is in discussion with the Douglas County Probation office to look at ways to fund the re-opening of the traditional Reporting Center. With restructuring in state and local government agencies, Probation Officers are left with no progressive alternatives for youth on probation.

This means that when probation has an out-of-school youth, a youth that has committed a non-violent offense, etc. – pres-

ently there are limited alternatives but to incarcerate them. The dollars that are spent for one day in the youth center can support three youth in our traditional reporting center.

As horrible as it may seem, money/funding is standing in the way of moving forward on this project. We will keep you up-dated as we look at various funding sources.



Human services: general reminder

Edited by Joe Owens

With the financial concerns facing more and more Americans, Omaha, NE is not exempt. The economy has or could have a definite impact on families and their ability to stay afloat. One aspect of the economy is what it can do to families.

More and more people are in need of assistance with housing, utilities, food, medicines and mental health services. Families who historically would not have been part of the “system” are now finding themselves right smack in the middle.

The trauma that this can cause families, may lead to abuse or neglect of children. Parents find

themselves in a quandary of many sorts – at times leading to drug/alcohol abuse – and then on to child abuse.

If you suspect abuse or neglect, contact Health and Human Service Hotline at 1-800-652-1999. You do not have to leave your name to report possible abuse or neglect. You may know of someone who is experiencing extremely difficult times either financially, physically or mentally.

Be a good neighbor or family member and check in to see that they are not taking the situation out on their children or other family members.

HR: Employees and political free speech

Edited by Joe Owens



As election times draws closer, companies may need to be a “referee” to political

debates in the workplace. Squelching or putting a “gag order” in place on political speech can prove to be an unfavorable move. Still, employers have the right to control employee’s activities on the job – that includes stopping political activism and solicitations.

If your company has a clearly defined “no-solicitation” policy, enforce it consistently and fairly across the board. Allowing some solicitation of various events or things and not allowing political solicitation can be a headache and could lead to possible legal issues.

New director

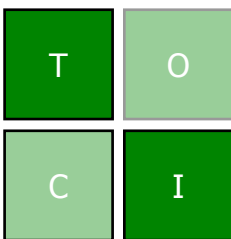
Edited by Joe Owens

The Board of Directors would like to welcome Mary Zukaitis to its directorship. Mary has been serving for almost six months in the capacity of Associate Director and assisted with the Annual Fund Raiser in August. We look forward to your ideas and dedication on the Board Mary.

Best bet is to have a policy in place that minimizes all distractions while allowing free speech. Restrict only those political expressions that might affect productivity or customer relations – such as campaign buttons or posters. Clearly tell employees that all workplace speech must be respectful, accommodating and tolerant of the other views.

Never press employees to vote for a specific candidate – almost every state in the union forbids an employer from using employment consequences to influence an employee’s vote. No employee should ever be discriminated against because of their voting pattern, or for not voting, or any other reason related to the legitimate exercise of the right to vote.

If in doubt about your policies, contact us for review.



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