

# The Owens Interlink

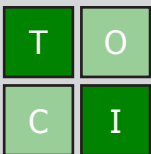
Volume 6, Issue 4, September 2009

There's a chill in the air

**Diana L. Owens**  
President & CEO

**The Owens Companies**  
7415 N. 30 St.,  
Omaha, NE 68112  
Tel: 402 455 1118  
Fax: 402 455 4506

**5800 Cornhusker Hwy.,**  
Lincoln, NE 68507  
Tel: 402 464 0784  
Fax: 402 464 0786



**The Interlink**  
7415 N. 30 St.,  
Omaha, NE 68112  
Tel: 402 455 1118  
Fax: 402 455 4506  
joemowens@gmail.com

## Board of Directors' Focus

By Diana Owens

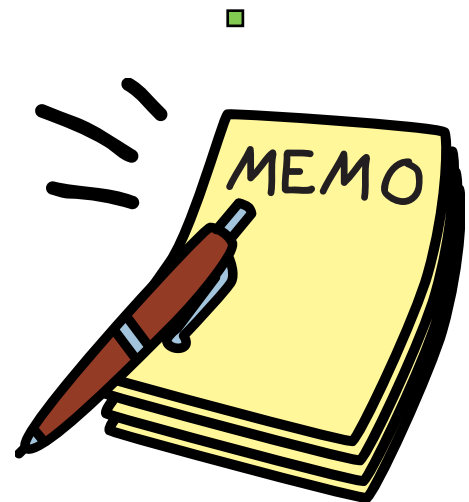
After a presentation by Kevin Ross, Juvenile Services Supervisor, at the September Directors meeting, several questions regarding the various programs were asked as well as ideas that could not only benefit the program but the youth as well. Here are some of the ideas and suggestions that arose from the Board's discussion on how they could assist or what would make the program run more efficiently:

1. setting up a Facebook page for both current and former youth that have been served;
2. establishing bio's for each youth so that Directors and related professionals could possibly mentor the youth;
3. establish a reward or incentive program for youth currently being served as was once done with the former CCIS program;
4. line up various speakers for the youth depending on their level of need including former successful youth who went through the program;
5. look at assuring all those involved with the youth have

background checks completed prior to working with them (with the exception of speakers) and:

6. re-establish a weekly support group where speakers could be brought in to talk to the youth about various experiences or knowledge. (The need for speakers will be posted on the website along with and given to Directors at a minimum of one month notice in advance.)

We are so proud of our Volunteer Board of Directors. Not only do they give so freely of their time, but are always at the top of presenting new ideas to make the programs work better for the youth and families we serve.



## Continuing to Hire Staff

In the past couple months, Owens has hired 18 new employees in Omaha and Lincoln to meet the needs of our client base. This number does not include replacements, but new hires based on case load demand. We do not see this changing in the near future. As our referrals continue, our staff will expand as well.

## Training updates

We know that we have mentioned this issues in the past couple editions, but training for the new contract period is under way. All new staff will be required to attend 15 days of training, and current staff will need to attend and pass a week refresher course in order to comply with the program standards and outcomes of the new reform with the State of Nebraska's Child Welfare.

In addition, staff will need to have a minimum of 12 hours of continuing education through

## First Referral

We have discussed the new pilot program for probation youth in prior issues of the newsletter. Well, we are very please to say, that we have our first new tracker referral from the program. The program is very similar to what was once known as Comprehensive Community Services.

It will also be under the direc-

Families are our priority and in order to meet their complex needs, we will continue to hire and train. To all our new hires, "Welcome to Owens". We trust your employment with our companies will be long and that you will gain a greater appreciation for the needs within our community. ■

out the year. This training is in addition to their annual CPR/ First Aid and Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training, and Safety updates. For those who have started or been part of the new training, their comments range from "oh wow - this is exciting" - to "now we can see the whole picture."

We anticipate having a minimum of two Visinet workers in each of our locations to assist in the case management of the referrals. Now to just find the space - but we always do. ■

tion of Kevin Ross - the current Juvenile Justice Supervisor for the on-going contract with the State. I am confident that the Probation staff will be just as excited as our present referral sources with the trackers we have on staff. They are dynamite. ■

## Owens Facebook Being Set Up

Joe Owens, the editor of our monthly newsletter offered to assist us in establishing our first Facebook for OES. We hope to gain input from the youth as to what needs to be added or done with the Facebook page.

The purpose of the Facebook is to be able to reach and identify youth you have participated

in our programming, find out where they are in their lives, as well as have a pool of mentors for our current youth. Who more appropriate to help our newer clients than those who have been there and have seen how change can be a positive for their lives.



## But Facebook in the Workplace?

It may sound contradictory based on the article above, but did you know that Facebook costs employers 1.5% of the day's productivity? There are over 200 million registered users of Facebook, and while it may not seem to be a problem, employees using it at work said that 87% of their usage of Facebook could not be justified as business.

If you do not have a policy covering social networking, now is the time to do so. It can help insulate you from ill-advised Facebook postings your employees may make. It can also give you grounds for disciplining workers who abuse social networking sites at work. Seven key questions when drafting your policy:

- 1.How far do you want to reach? Since there are many different networks your policy should cover all social networking sites or specifically state which ones are appropriate.
- 2.Do you want to permit social networking at work at all? If you do, remember that you will then limit the benefit of business-related networking.
- 3.If you prohibit social networking, how will you monitor it? Just establishing a policy is a small part - how to monitor is the key. How much time and resources can you afford to watch what employees are doing online?
- 4.If you permit social networking at work by your employees, or just permit limited personal use? This will depend on how you balance productivity versus marketing returns.
- 5.Do you want your business to be identified by your employees when networking online? Employees should be held accountable for negative portrayals of your business online.

**Facebook cont'd. on pg. 4**

## Facebook cont'd.

6. How do you define “appropriate business behavior” online? Whatever is posted online is public and there are no privacy rights in what they put out for others to see. Anything of a negative nature can be grounds for disciplinary action whether done at work or outside of work.

7. How will social networking intersect with broader harassment, technology and confidentiality policies? Employees can violate any number of other corporate policies when online. Drafting your policy is a good time to update other policies.

If you need help in drafting your policy, or would like it reviewed, please contact our office.



## Dealing with Habitually Late Workers

Employers expect employees to be to work on time. Occasional situations can cause anyone of us to be late at one time or another. But chronic tardiness is another thing. You need to do more than merely track attendance – written policies should be in place to handle the situation. No policy is going to remain effective unless it is applied consistently and fairly to all employees.

When faced with an employee who is chronically late or absent (which should be defined in your policy), the following steps can apply:

1. Oral reminder. This stage of discipline is a “counseling” session that lets employees know the importance of attendance and productivity.

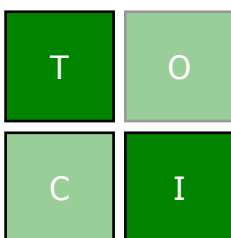
2. Written warning. If the problem continues, a second session between the employee and their

supervisor needs to occur. This is where a written reprimand spells out the problem and the worker is engaged in solving the problem. The stage of discipline should be well defined as far an amount of time between this occurrence and any future occurrences.

3. Decision-making. If the problem still exists after the written warning, the supervisor has to decide whether or not to maintain the relationship or terminate the employee. An option to termination is an unpaid suspension giving the employee an opportunity to decide if they want to maintain their employment.

As stated above, consistency and fairness to any policy is the key in enforcement.

Questions regarding a realistic, enforceable policy....contact our office for assistance.



The Interlink  
7415 N. 30 St.,  
Omaha, NE 68112  
Tel: 402 455 1118  
Fax: 402 455 4506  
joemowens@gmail.com