



The INTERACT Newsletter

Summer 2012

Message from the Chair

By Jhenifer Morfitt, Department of Fish and Wildlife



Summer is a time of transition for many in state government as we close one fiscal year to start the next. For ICSEW, it is the peak season for change as well. Terms start in July, so we have a wave of members in transition as they pass the torch to new representatives for their agencies. With a diverse mix of new and veteran members this year, ICSEW forges ahead into our 50th year of improving the lives of state-employed women. With this momentous anniversary coming up, we've assessed what we've achieved so far and what we still need to do. ICSEW has taken its first steps to reinforce our focus directly on our policy advising role for agencies and the Governor's office. We are prepared and committed to get back to work.

What is ICSEW doing to get back to work?

Make Policy Our Top Priority:

The Governor has tasked ICSEW with specific duties to improve the lives of state-employed women. These duties center around making policy recommendations to the Governor and advising agencies on developing and implementing the policy or law. For years, ICSEW has successfully offered opportunities for women, especially in the areas of training and career development. As we move into our 50th year, we will begin developing a strategic plan and integrate policy purview into all ICSEW activities.

Provide New Member Orientation Materials:

To make the best use of our resources, members need to have the support, guidance, and tools to start working from their very first meeting. We are developing a new member packet and mentorship program to accomplish this goal. We value the resources agencies commit to ICSEW, and we will work harder to make the best use of their time and resources.

Connect With All State-Employed Women:

Members have been asked to work with their Director,

agency head, or executive sponsor to develop a communication plan to ensure all state-employed women have access to ICSEW information and resources. We encourage agencies to further support employees to participate in ICSEW events and training opportunities.

Revamp Our Outreach Efforts:

ICSEW organizes several charitable drives and events each year to strengthen our community and provide additional support for women. To maximize our efforts and more directly support our Committee goals, we have consolidated the Gifts and Grants, and Events Subcommittees into the Public Outreach Subcommittee. This subcommittee will help ICSEW build lasting partnerships and connect ICSEW with citizens and organizations in and out of state government, in addition to ensuring fiscal sustainability.

ICSEW has a positive impact in all our lives as state employees. I encourage you to participate in ICSEW and share ideas for making Washington the best place for women to work. ■

Inside...

- Interact with the Governor 2
- Follow ICSEW 2
- September is National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month 2
- 2012 Health and Wellness Fair in Review 3
- Back to School 4
- ICSEW 2012 Toiletries Drive 5
- Mrs. O'Sullivan goes to (the other) Washington 6
- Homelessness Happens 7
- Agency in the Spotlight - Employment Security Department 8-9
- Washington Student Achievement Council 9
- Cell Phone Coordinator 10



Interact with Governor Gregoire

Did you know you can: ask the Governor a question, request her or her staff's help, invite her to an event, or even request a meeting with her?

All you have to do is visit her [website](#). Go ahead, give it a try!

The Governor's Office continues to receive budget ideas from state employees and other constituents via her website, email, phone, and letter.

Governor Gregoire appreciates hearing from you and your input is important to her. Thank you! ■



Follow ICSEW on Facebook and Twitter

Don't forget to check us out on Facebook and Twitter to find the latest news on networking, training and event opportunities! Just visit our [website](#) and click on the icons in the menu bar. Remember many state offices do not allow employees to access these sites from work, so follow us from home or from your smart phone.



September is National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month.

Did you know ovarian cancer is the eighth most common cancer among women in the United States and the fifth leading cause of cancer death. A woman's risk of getting ovarian cancer is 1 in 67, and her risk of dying from it is 1 in 95?

Signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer may include:

- Persistent indigestion, gas or nausea
- Changes in bowel habits, such as constipation
- Changes in bladder habits, including a frequent need to urinate
- Loss of appetite or quickly feeling full
- Increased abdominal girth or clothes fitting tighter around your waist
- A persistent lack of energy
- Low back pain

If you have a family history of ovarian cancer or breast cancer, talk to your doctor about your risk of ovarian cancer. ■

2012 Health and Wellness Fair in Review

By, Patty Danner, Department of Licensing

The ICSEW 8th Annual Health and Wellness Fair was held on May 14 at the Labor & Industries Building in Tumwater. The theme was "Head to Toe Health," and featured more than 40 vendors, all dedicated to promoting some aspect of a healthy lifestyle, addressing mental, physical, and financial health.

- Attendees were able to have screenings for eye health, spine, blood pressure, and BMI. They were also provided the opportunity to practice their CPR skills.
- Participatory physical activities included self-defense, zumba, and yoga.

- Chef Tse demonstrated healthy cooking presentations, with tasty samples provided by Bien Venue Café.
- Low cost reflexology and massage appointments available
- Local produce and bakeries participated in the event, including gluten free options
- State agencies presented health and financial information

The event marked the National Women's Checkup Day and kicked off the National Women's Health Week, which is an effort to educate and encourage women to make their physical and mental health a

priority. It encourages women to take positive steps to stay healthy:

- Visit a health care professional to receive regular checkups and [preventive screenings](#).
- [Get active](#)
- [Eat healthy](#)
- Pay attention to [mental health](#), including getting enough sleep and managing stress.
- Avoid unhealthy behaviors, such as [smoking](#) and not wearing a seatbelt or bicycle helmet. ■



Special thanks to all the ICSEW volunteers and to all our Vendors: 8 Arms Bakery · Al-Anon Family Group · Alcoholics Anonymous · Amy Harroun · Bien Venue Café · Clarus Eye Centre · Costco · Dept. of Retirement/Deferred Comp · Dept. of Financial Institutions · Dinners Done Right · Dept. of Health · Emergency Mngmt. · Employee Assistance Program · Fairie Herb Gardens · Finnigan Chiropractic · Fitstop 24 · Foot and Ankle Surgical Associates · Get In Touch Massage · Gluten Intolerance Group · Group Health · Grub Garden · Heal and Toes Therapeutic · Health Care Authority · ICSEW · Labor & Industries · LA Fitness · Laurie Dils · LMTAAA · Miranda Harding · National Alliance of Mental Illness · Office of the Insurance Commissioner · Oly Food Co-op · Oly Swing Dance · Oly Vision Clinic · Parisian Picnics · Planned Parenthood · Progressive Body Training Systems · Providence St. Peter Hospital · Queen Bee Coupons · Radiance Herbs and Massage · Regence · Sacred Awakenings · South Sound YMCA · Thurston County Health Dept · Tumwater Chiropractic Center · Tumwater Farmers Market · Tumwater Fire Dept · U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services · WA State Patrol · Weight Watchers · World Martial Arts · WSECU · WSU-Germ City · YWCA · Ziegler Chiropractic

Back to School!

It's that time of year again when we start planning for back to school! Whether parents like it or not, we are our children's reflectors. How we react to potentially stressful situations like the first day back to school can reflect the way they react. We need to show our children that we believe in them and know they can tackle any challenges that come up during this new school year.

Ease back-to-school stress. If back-to-school time has your child wound up, you can help him adjust by slowly switching to an earlier bedtime and displaying a calm, positive attitude.

During your child's school career, there will be many new beginnings he/she will have to face. From those first anxious moments when they wave goodbye to you from the preschool door to when they enter the hallways of a new middle or high school. Change and resiliency will be key factors in

how they handle the stress of any new chapter.

The transition from summer fun to school rules can stress out kids and parents alike. So before school starts, don't forget to complete basic tasks like:

- Check to see if your child needs a physical exam.
- Evaluate extra-curricular activities.
- Know your child's bus routes and times.

Also you might check to see if your child's school has a dress code. Middle school students especially like to push the limits of the dress code; that's expected from adolescents when they are trying to discover who they are and who they would like to become as they mature into adults. But, each school has its own dress code and its own methods for interpreting the code.



Find your local library, in addition to wonderful books, today's libraries offer multimedia options, community events, fun activities, and more—and all for free.

Did you know there is an online [teacherslist?](#)

For most parents, back to school also means a return to making school lunch every day. But what to make that the kids will eat? [School lunch menu ideas.](#)

Good luck and have a safe and happy school year! ■

2012-2013 Executive Board

Chair

Jhenifer Morfitt
Department of Fish and Wildlife
jhenifer.morfitt@dfw.wa.gov

Vice Chair

vacant

Executive Secretary

Amy Teshera
Office of the Insurance Commissioner
amys@oic.wa.gov

Information Secretary

Anna Gill
Utilities and Transportation Commission
agill@utc.wa.gov

Treasurer

Teresa Reno
Department of Ecology
teresa.reno@ecy.wa.gov

Communications

Tammy Risner
Office of the State Treasurer
tammy@tre.wa.gov

Conference

Jamie Daniel
The Evergreen State College
danielj@evergreen.edu

Health and Wellness

Janice Taylor
Department of Health
janice.taylor@doh.wa.gov

History

vacant

Legislative

Lonna Hocker
Department of Revenue
lonna.hocker@dor.wa.gov

Membership

Janet Kurz
Washington State School for the Blind
janet.kurz@wssb.wa.gov

Professional Development

Mary Hougan
Department of Agriculture
mhougan@agr.wa.gov

Public Outreach

Samantha Smithingell
Department of Social and Health Services
samantha.smithingell@dshs.wa.gov

Cell Phone Coordinator

Cindy Blakley
Department of Health
cindy.blakley@doh.wa.gov

ICSEW 2012 Toiletries Drive

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2012 ICSEW Toiletry Drive benefiting the YWCA The Other Bank and similar organizations across the state!

And the numbers are:

- 27 state agencies participated
- 41 volunteers
- Over \$8,800 in donated items

Remember, it's not too late to gather your donations. The Other Bank and similar organizations across the state accept toiletry donations all year round! Watch for the next ICSEW drive in August 2013! ■



Thank you to the following for your assistance with this year's drive:

Rica Helberg, Office of Administrative Hearings · Mary Hougan, Department of Agriculture · Andrea Baker, Attorney General · Jacque Hawkins, State Auditor's Office · Rachelle Parslow, Criminal Justice Training Commission · Sheila Johnson-Teeter, Employment Security Department · Melynda Campbell, Department of Enterprise Services · Jamie Daniel, The Evergreen State College · Jeannette Terry, Department of Financial Institutions · Priscilla Martinez-Mejia, Office of Financial Management · Rachel Glover, Department of Fish and Wildlife · Jhenifer Morfitt, Department of Fish and Wildlife · Samantha Smithingell, Department of Fish and Wildlife · Lynn Clevenger, Washington State Gambling Commission · Nancy Elliott, Office of the Governor · Cindy Blakely, Department of Health · Annie Merritt, Department of Health · Terry West, Department of Health · Janice Taylor, Department of Health · Denise Ross, Health Care Facilities Authority · Jennifer Noble, Office of the Insurance Commissioner · Amy Teshera, Office of the Insurance Commissioner · Tracy Thornburg, Office of the Insurance Commissioner · Lena Wang, Department of Labor and Industries · Angela Brunetti, Washington's Lottery · Susan Miles, Military Department · Denise Roush-Livingston, Department of Natural Resources · Jessica Bradley, Public Employment Relations Commission · Emily Martin, Public Employment Relations Commission · Sandra Ethridge, Department of Retirement Systems · Bonnie Rose Pffingston, Department of Retirement Systems · Teresa Baxter, Department of Revenue · Lynn Corbett, Department of Revenue · Lonna Hocker, Department of Revenue · Julie Blecha, Office of Secretary of State · Ellen Drumheller, Department of Services for the Blind · Jenny Grayum, Department of Social and Health Services · Sue Aschenbrenner, State Patrol · Betsy Hagen, Washington Student Achievement Council · Amanda Mount, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction · Tammy Risner, Office of the State Treasurer · Chuck Johnson, Department of Transportation · Heidi Mabbott, Department of Transportation · Alvina Mao, Department of Transportation · Teresa Reno, Department of Ecology

Mrs. O'Sullivan goes to (the other) Washington

By Genevieve O'Sullivan, Past Chair of ICSEW



Mrs. O'Sullivan and Mr. O'Sullivan

Greetings from Washington D.C.! In the past I've written many articles and blog posts addressing transitions and change, but I can honestly tell you nothing prepared me for taking such a huge leap earlier this year.

As many of you know, I resigned my Chair position in March anticipating huge changes in both my career and personal life. I just didn't know what 'huge' meant yet. I found out in mid-April I had been offered the position of Communications Director for the National Association of State Foresters in Washington D.C. (DC). My husband Conan and I were planning on moving to DC to pursue our dream of starting a cheese business and the job offer came a little early, but fit our vision well. So, within a week of the job offer, I was on a plane to DC.

Then two things occurred I hadn't counted on. First, three days before I left to start my new job, my grandmother, who lived with my family while I was growing up, had a major stroke. Second, Conan

had to stay in Washington state to finish his job for an additional month. Although I was excited, the first month in DC turned out to be one of the hardest and most stressful times of my life. Not only had I moved away from my support network of friends and family, but the daily ups and downs of my

grandmother's health made everything much worse.

One month after moving to DC, I headed back to Washington State to officially move everything out to DC. I had the opportunity to talk at length with my grandmother, who passed during the week I was home, and was able to spend time with family and friends. I returned to DC exhausted, but recharged from the time I was able to spend with my support network.

Fast forward two-and-a-half months and things are finally starting to settle a bit. Conan moved out with me in June and we have found our first official city apartment! This may sound like a small detail, but it's wonderful to have an official DC home. We also found a possible location for our business, and fingers crossed, the lease negotiations will go well and we can start build-out soon. My not-so-new job is challenging and I have had a great time traveling and meeting State Foresters around the country.

Although there was a lot of heartache and stress attached to this huge leap, I don't regret any of it. I still expect most of my friends and family to make a similar leap and join me in DC (just joking... well, kind of joking). I miss everyone back in Washington state, but this is the greatest adventure I've ever embarked on and with my best friend/husband by my side, I can't wait to see what the future holds! ■

"The best thing you can do is the right thing; the next best thing you can do is the wrong thing; the worst thing you can do is nothing." - Theodore Roosevelt



If you are ever in the DC area or just want to contact me, I can be reached at bearacheese@gmail.com.

Homelessness Happens

By Janet Kurz, Washington State School for the Blind

When my daughter Amy informed me she was going to do her senior project on the effects of drug and alcohol, I thought... 'what a good choice.' However, when it came time to fulfill her volunteer/community service hours relating to her senior project, it became a challenge.

Like most teenagers, I was having a difficult time getting Amy to meet her deadlines to complete her project. She was given several choices for her volunteer hours and decided she wanted to fulfill these at the Portland Family Homeless Solutions organization. Realizing this process was a bit overwhelming for her, mom (me), offered to volunteer with her.

Amy and I signed up for four different volunteering opportunities (totaling 30 hours). The first was Afternoon Hosts. We located the Goose Hollow Family Shelter and got there just in time.

Our duties consisted of hanging out with the families in the family room, entertaining the kids (i.e. give the parents a break!), coloring with the younger kids, helping the school-aged kids do homework, prepare snacks, clean and put dishes away, and just simply be there for the families. The kids were so incredibly affectionate, which made this particular shift very gratifying.

The second volunteer opportunity we signed up for was called Overnight Hosts. This shift requires volunteers to be on duty from 7:30 p.m. until 7:30 a.m. the next morning. Amy and I set up our beds,



which consisted of thin mats and sleeping bags on the gymnasium floor. We were responsible for helping clean up after dinner, prepare the 'pods' for the families to



sleep in, get the bedding out, supervise the laundry areas, secure the building at 10 p.m., and then

at 6 a.m., we were up, preparing breakfast for the families and helping them get out the door promptly at 7:30 a.m. to start their day.

The families staying in the shelter can live there up to 60 days. They are given a place to stay, warm meals,



assistance finding public aid, help finding a job, and help locating a place to live. There were families with one child up to a family with four children. All of their belongings were in a locker, no bigger than what I remember having back in high school. Their situations for needing temporary shelter varied from domestic violence, to moving to the Portland area hoping to find employment, to addiction, to losing a job they had for 30 years.

I cannot express or accurately put into words what this experience meant to both Amy and I. I remember getting into my car after our first shift, thinking "this is my car, I am going back to my home and making dinner for my family in my kitchen and then I get to go to my bed at night." I couldn't help but think of all the things I take for granted every day. I feel so fortunate to have the job I have, to have an awesome support system in my friends and family, and to know they are there should I ever need them.

When Amy presented her final project to a panel of judges, they asked her what she took back from this experience; her response, "Homelessness Happens." We are all so very fortunate to have what we have. ■

Agency in the Spotlight - Employment Security Department

By Terri Palumbo, Employment Security Department

The Employment Security Department is a part of many people's lives, supporting their families during periods of unemployment and helping people to find work. I was one of many who have benefited from their help.

Employment Security:

- Pays unemployment benefits.
- Collects unemployment taxes from employers.
- Manages the unemployment-insurance trust fund, which is used to pay benefits.
- Matches job seekers to employers and employers to job seekers.

When I received benefits through the unemployment-insurance system, I learned there is a pervasive misconception which still remains today - employees pay taxes for unemployment insurance. This is simply not true. Employers pay unemployment-insurance taxes that cover benefits for their former employees.

State law governs employer tax rates. Employment Security manages the collection of those taxes. The agency ensures employers pay their fair share and unemployment-insurance benefit claims are paid accurately and timely. This helps the unemployment-insurance trust fund remain healthy.

The local tax offices provide information and technical assistance to employers. The office provides information about the importance of accurate and timely reporting, how to keep tax rates low, and other tax-related information employers

should know. They also conduct audits to ensure employers are reporting all of their employees and paying the appropriate amount of taxes.

Another interesting program administered by Employment Security is called Shared-Work. This program allows employers to reduce the hours of their full-time employees by up to 50 percent, while the workers collect partial unemployment benefits to make up for some of the lost wages. This translates into immediate payroll savings for participating businesses and prevents the loss skilled employees.

In 2004, my journey with Employment Security continued as an employee in the the Spokane WorkSource Center.

WorkSource is a statewide partnership of Employment Security. They work with other state agencies, local governments, colleges and nonprofit organizations to provide employment and training services to job seekers and employers. Some of those partners include the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and local workforce development councils.

WorkSource exists to help job seekers find jobs and help employers find qualified workers. The staff do this by providing skill assessments and workshops on topics such as:

- Résumé-writing and interviewing skills.
- Referrals to job training.



- Career counseling.
- Labor-market information.
- Job clubs.
- Resource rooms with computers.
- Phones and fax machines.
- Hiring events.

They provide special services for veterans, dislocated workers, welfare recipients and other targeted populations, etc. Statewide, WorkSource serves more than 23,000 job seekers each month.

Employment Security has an interesting history. It began when President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Wagner-Peyser Act (WPA) into law on June 6, 1933.

Initially, employment services in Washington were provided under the federally operated National Reemployment Service, until the state passed enabling legislation in 1937. That same legislation established the state's first unemployment-compensation program. Unemployment-insurance taxes were collected for two years prior to the first unemployment benefit payments in 1939.

(continued on page 9)

(Agency in the Spotlight continued)

Today, Employment Security's staffing levels continue to change. During the recent recession, it ramped up staffing with increased federal funding to accommodate the large increase of unemployed people, as well as to serve high numbers of returning veterans.

Now, the funding sources and staffing levels are leveling off, and in some cases declining, even though the need for assistance remains high. Employment Security is always evaluating the effectiveness of staff, programs, and outcomes to offer the best

customer service with the resources available.

Governor Gregoire recently sent a letter to Employment Security staff, congratulating them for an exceptional job! ■

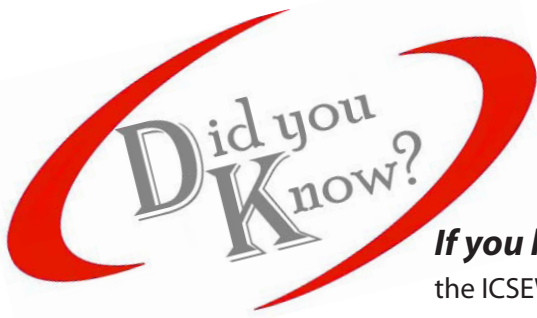


Washington Student Achievement Council

August 7, 2012, Governor Chris Gregoire announced the newly created Student Achievement Council. The council, called for in House Bill 2483, assumes many of the duties of the Higher Education Coordinating Board, and will focus on raising educational attainment in Washington state.

Check out their new [website](#) and email addresses. *(The old "hecb" links are set up to redirect to the new URLs and email addresses for the next several months.)*

More information about this newly created agency is on the website at: www.wsac.wa.gov/AboutTheCouncil



ICSEW accepts articles from non-representatives!

If you like to write, or have something you would like to see published in the ICSEW *InterAct* and are not a member of the ICSEW, we welcome your contribution. All persons interested in submitting articles or ideas to this publication should contact their agency's ICSEW representative **or** any member of the [Communications Subcommittee](#).

Note: Submission deadlines and writing guidelines are available on our website.

Don't forget to recycle your old cell phone with battery charger and cords to the ICSEW's on-going cell phone drive. For further information contact:

Cindy Blakley

cindy.blakley@doh.wa.gov



The *InterAct* is published by the Communications Subcommittee of the Interagency Committee of State Employed Women (ICSEW). Photocopying, distributing, or posting of this publication is strongly encouraged. Views stated in re-printed articles are informational and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICSEW. All persons interested in submitting articles or ideas to this publication should contact their agency's ICSEW representative or:

Tammy Risner, Chair/Publisher
Office of the State Treasurer
(360) 902-9008
tammy@tre.wa.gov