

DMR Employee News

Governor M. Jodi Rell

Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara

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EAP

Employee Assistance Program

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24 / 7 Assistance

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DMR

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South Region
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STS
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“Ask the Commissioner”

If you have a question for Commissioner O'Meara, you are invited to e-mail Joan Barnish at joan.barnish@po.state.ct.us

SEND US YOUR STORIES

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Holiday Happenings

The department's regions have been busy gathering to celebrate and spread cheer during the holiday season. Following, are just a few of the many events in which staff, family, friends and consumers joined together to help those less fortunate, offer thanks, and enjoy laughter, good food and company.

North Region Holiday Gala – With sparkling dresses and crisp tuxedos, consumers, families and Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) staff gathered at the La Renaissance in East Windsor for the First Annual Semi-Formal Holiday Gala. Over four hundred people enjoyed the evening starting off with professional photographs, a social hour that included shrimp, scallops wrapped in bacon, stuffed mushrooms and a fountain filled with apple cider. A prime rib dinner was followed by an evening of dancing until the moon moved half way across the starlit sky. Entertainment included an Argentinean Tango performed by the Honorable Judge and Mrs. Burrell and the University of Hartford Jazz Ensemble.



(let to right) Marlene Fein, Lead Investigator; Linda Schaefer, Executive Secretary; and Patrice Peterson, Staff Development Coordinator at the first Annual Holiday Gala

Southbury Training School Management Team Luncheon – The West Region Executive Management Team treated members of the Regional Management Team to a holiday luncheon catered by Leonardo's Bistro at the Pavilion. The event was attended by approximately 60 managers who enjoyed the wonderful food, festive ambiance and good company. The luncheon was in recognition and appreciation for all the hard work they do throughout the year. Guests raved about the delicious food from Leonardo's, which ended with a scrumptious carrot cake. Special thanks to Donna Grillo and staff for their efforts in making the luncheon a huge success.



Regional Management Team members enjoy a lunch catered by Leonardo's

Holiday Happenings, *continued*

Southbury Training School Recognition Breakfast – The Southbury Training School recently held its Annual Employees Appreciation Breakfast at Thompson Hall in Southbury. Starting at the crack of dawn, managers from throughout the West Region catered to over 500 employees who stopped in either after their shift or before.

Commissioner Peter H. O’Meara and Deputy Commissioner Kathryn duPree joined West Regional Director Dimitri Triantafillakis, STS Director Fritz Gorst and Assistant West Region Directors, Eugene Harvey, Kevin McCullough and Jackson Pierre-Louis in serving up omlettes, french toast and coffee.

The floating notes of Music Therapist Meg Chapan’s flute filled the air as employees had time to sit and relax.



Deputy Commissioner Kathryn duPree is surrounded by staff at Leonardo’s Café, who prepared and served over 500 employees

Michele Williams and Dawn Addley, both Mental Retardation AS Instructors have worked for STS for over 20 years, however it is only in the past year that they have become friends.



(left to right) Regional Director Dimitri Triantafillakis, Regional Director Fritz Gorst, MR Program Manager Genevieve San Angelo and Commissioner Peter O’Meara at the STS Recognition Breakfast



Central Office – The Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) Central Office held its Annual Holiday Celebration at the Officer’s Club of Connecticut, Inc. on Tuesday, December 12th. The event, which was hosted by Commissioner Peter H. O’Meara, Deputy Commissioner Kathryn duPree, James Welsh, Director of Legal & Government Affairs; Laura Nuss, Director of Strategic Operations; Vincent O’Connell, Director of Administrative Services Division and Chief of Staff Martin C. Zito, had over 75 in attendance.

The group of Central Office staff, Regional staff, Consumers and Advisory and Planning Committee members gathered to enjoy a buffet of hors d’oeuvres, holiday music and laughter.



Staff members from the Central Office Birth to Three Program gathered at the Connecticut Officers Club for the Annual Holiday Celebration

High School Students Provide Baskets to the Early Connections Program

Linda Bamonte, a Physical Therapist for the Department of Mental Retardation's (DMR) Early Connections Program, contacted Sacred Heart High School in Waterbury after becoming concerned that some of the families in the program would have difficulty obtaining food items for the holiday season. Ms. Bamonte telephoned inquiring if the school might consider donating a few food baskets for the children and families. She and the staff at Freight Street were a bit overwhelmed when Sacred Heart students and staff arrived at the office shortly before Thanksgiving to unload a school bus with 25 extremely large (and heavy!) baskets full of food. Seven student council members and 2 teachers proceeded to fill the conference room to the brim with the baskets. As a result, 25 families in Early Connections, as well as clients in Supported Living and Case



Linda Bamonte, DMR Physical Therapist – Early Connections pictured with students from Sacred Heart High School, Waterbury

Management, received very large baskets, each including a \$20.00 gift card for a turkey at Stop and Shop. The extreme generosity of the students and staff from Sacred Heart High School brightened the holiday for many families and was a wonderful way to begin the holiday season. Thanks and cheers to Sacred Heart High School.



Baskets of donated items are lined up in the conference room at Freight Street awaiting delivery to their recipients.

Dealing with Illness Part I

By Vivien Bergl, LCSW, CEAP, Solutions EAP Coordinator

Solutions
FOR PEOPLE IN THE WORKPLACE

"Tis the season to be jolly, tra la la la"
Or is it?



What if you are suffering from a serious illness, or someone dear to you is, or a co-worker? How do you handle it? What do you do/not do?

Unfortunately people can sometimes be uncomfortable with serious illness and/or terminal illness.

There isn't anyone that is not touched by this, however, and we all need support whether it is yourself going through it or someone near and dear to you.

During this month we will be talking about how you can help yourself if you are dealing with a chronic illness, how you can handle it if it's a co worker or if it's a friend or loved one. We will talk about how to deal with it at work and at home, some of the things that help and some that do not.

If you would like to talk about this or any other issues, please call Solutions Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for free, confidential assessment, short term counseling and referral when needed.

Call Solutions EAP at 1-800-526-3485 for assistance for all of life's challenges.

It's free, confidential and open to your family members.

Check us out on-line at www.solutions-eap.com

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