



# Employee News

Governor M. Jodi Rell

Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara

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## EAP

Employee Assistance Program

**1-800-526-3485**

**24 / 7 Assistance**

**www.solutions-eap.com**

## DMR

**www.ct.gov/dmr**

**Central Office**  
(860) 418-6000

**North Region**  
(860) 263-2500

**West Region**  
(203) 805-7400

**South Region**  
(203) 294-5049

**STS**  
(203) 586-2000

## *"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](mailto:joan.barnish@po.state.ct.us)

## SEND US YOUR STORIES

### *Employee News contacts:*

North/Linda Schaefer

West/Eunice Rivera

South/Jolie Crescimano-Goss

CO/ Joan Barnish,  
Lori Conchado

## Holiday Luncheon & Celebration

Employee's of the West Region's Cheshire Office recently celebrated the Holidays with their 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Luncheon along with commemorating the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the dedication of the building as the "Waterbury Regional Center."

Back in 1971, the Cheshire building (a former convent for the sisters of "St. Joseph's Novitiate") was purchased by the State Department of Health and transformed in to a "State of the Art Facility for the Mentally Retarded". The building served as a residential facility until 1989 when a fire forced the few remaining residents into community placements. After renovations and repairs, the building has since been used for offices and training.

Numerous old photographs have been kept over the years including a scrap book documenting the news articles of the day and photos of the renovation of the building and grounds completed by volunteers, civic groups & organizations. This also includes photos of the Dedication Ceremony of the building on December 2, 1971. This priceless book along with two bulletin boards are on display in the training room and will remain up for the next month or so for all to enjoy, reminisce, and celebrate just how far we have come as a department, a region and as advocates for those with cognitive disabilities.



(left to right) Suzanne Dobkins, Claudette DiMaria, Gary Durante, Susan LaVallee and Ron Clark.

## Latino Family Forums

Since January of 2006, the Spanish speaking bi-lingual case managers, statewide, have come together to provide DMR information in Spanish to support our Latino consumers and families. Several family workshops have been held across the state to address recent departmental changes and to give Latino families a forum to ask questions.

"The collaborative effort of the our case managers is a display of commitment, conviction and inspiration in serving Latino families in a  
*continued on page two*



(left to right) Cheryl Sousa, South Region Case Manager; Alex Montalvo, Case Manager Supervisor; Assistant Regional Director Christine Rich; Regional Director Mary McKay; Assistant Regional Director Mayri Caple and Maria Rodriguez-Colon, Case Manager hosted Latino Family Night at the New Haven Office.

## Living with Illness Part II

By Vivien Bergl, LCSW, CEAP, Solutions EAP Coordinator



First, what is a chronic illness? It is an illness that creates persistent and recurring physical or mental health problems.

Living with illness affects every part of your life and every significant relationship you have. It takes time to understand your illness, the treatment options available, and how living with illness will affect your life and the lives of your loved ones. If you have an illness that is associated with a stigma, such as mental illness or AIDS, it creates even more of a challenge. Often you need to make daily decisions and choices about every aspect of your life.

If you are still able to work, you need to decide how much you tell your employer and co-workers, especially if your illness requires you to make time adjustments to your work schedule. Saying too much makes you vulnerable to unwanted questions, saying too little may raise questions of 'special treatment' and elicit criticism or even jealousy. When you make decisions about work or treatment options, not only does it affect you but co-workers and loved ones. This is a demanding aspect of living with a chronic illness. You have to deal with limitations and diminished control over your life. The fact is, if you're living with chronic illness you are courageous!

What are some ways to cope with the strain of coping with your diagnosis and the realities of treatment? The following are some ways to reduce or prevent the stress; delegate work, let people know what you need, keep the lines of communication open, cut yourself some slack, don't be afraid to say no, schedule lots of leisure time, listen to your body and be honest about your feelings. The good news is that the majority of people with chronic illness are leading fairly normal lives. Acceptance is a big piece of successfully living with illness.

*Next week we will talk about how you can handle it if you work with someone struggling with chronic illness.*

***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](http://www.solutions-eap.com)***



Correction: The Southbury Training School Appreciation Breakfast was held at Thompson Hall not at Leonardo's Café as published in Employee News Edition 62.

## Family Workshops *continued from page one*

culturally competent way," said Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara. "Our case managers take pride in making sure all of our families receive the guidance they need in understanding our services that enhance their lives."

Commissioner O'Meara, Regional Directors and staff attended the Family Workshops held in East Hartford, Norwich, New Haven and Waterbury. Another one is being planned for 2007 in Bridgeport. If you would like any additional information, please contact your case manager.