

# Hats off to HR!

*Pacific-Southwest District School Ministries—Designed for the HR Professional*

## Maintain a High Performance Life

By Susan Gentry

*“Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”*  
Colossians 3:17

A recent sermon series at our church dealt with intentionally allowing God’s presence to empower our daily lives. I never thought about it those terms. Sure, I was intentional about going to church, Bible study, even potlucks but at work? Not so much!

Like many of you I hit the door running when I get to the office (classroom). Emails and phone messages are waiting for answers, co-workers need my attention, students, parents and visitors alike draw me into the world of work. But what is “my work”? I am so blessed to work at a Christian school but it’s also a business and sometimes I have

trouble mixing them up.

“God’s spirit is powerful and sustaining. We do not create the power that maintains and sustains our lives, but we are called to daily open our hearts and lives to that love and power so it can well up from within and propel us along.” Pastor Don Lorfing



So how would you handle things differently if everything you did intentionally allowed God’s presence in it? In Human Resources we often deal with difficult people and situations. Our own frustra-

tions and even anger can make problems worse and damage relationships. Discipline is never easy but one piece of advice I always pass along is to handle the person like you would want to be handled. Speak to them the way you would like to be spoken to. Even a firm hand can carry the love of Christ. We

are stewards of all God has given us and therefore we have great responsibility to make God-pleasing decision. Even if those decisions include termination of employment. Our aim should be for a peaceful resolution.

## California Law Gives Paid Leave to Organ Donors

A new law scheduled to take place in January, 2011 in California is called the Michelle Maykins Memorial Donation Protection Act, SB 1304.

This new law requires private employers with 15 or

more employees to grant up to 30 days of paid leave per year for an organ donation and up to 5 days paid leave per day for bone marrow donors.

The cost to small employers can be a huge impact but if

the law does not provide restrictions or exemptions for church workers then handbooks will need to reflect this change.

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### Did you know?

- ◆ Please note Susan’s new email address: gentrys@fhsemail.org
- ◆ What’s the most satisfying reward you can receive for a job well done? According to those who responded to a “SmartPulse” survey it was:

Cash—30.2%

Praise & thanks from co-workers & customers—29.75%

Handwritten note from leader—27.85%

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Thank you to our contributors:  
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Steve Gruenwald  
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Susan M. Shiller

## How would you handle this?

Each issue will highlight a specific HR issue. Please respond to the editor ([gentrys@flhsemail.org](mailto:gentrys@flhsemail.org)) with your questions and they will be published in future issues.

Drug addiction, divorce, abuse, harassment and all matter of inter-personal conflicts are ugly monsters that can show up at any workplace, including the “church”. To ignore these possibilities, and others, is to invite confusion, and even legal problems. Aside from having access to legal counsel, you need to have steps in place to handle these emergencies. The first step is to be aware of the ADA laws and state and local laws that require specific actions (i.e. abuse).



The next step is to know how you will minister to the individuals in these situations. If two employees get into an angry shouting match, do you give them paid

time off to cool down while you investigate? How do you handle a worker who confesses to an addiction and asks for help? What steps do you take?

What can you require the employee to do? Can you (should

you) terminate them? What does your medical plan have available for counseling in-house or out? Do you know what the PSW District has available for counseling workers in stressful situations like divorce?

Does your area have a mediation group that can help solve conflicts?

It’s important to have a basic written policy to insure equal treatment, and documentation for each step is vital. And while each situation is unique there are general steps to take and those should be followed and documented. It’s important to also know who handles these volatile events—usually more than one person.

Confidentiality is also a key factor. While everyone may be curious about what happened, anything dealing with personnel cannot be shared with anyone not directly involved. “Sharing” what you know or heard with other workers (even family members) can add up to a law suit! Just because someone is on the school board does not mean they need to know. “No Comment” is the best comment.

Waiting until you are in panic-mode is not the time to figure it out how to handle unpleasant issues.

- Susan

## Maintain a High Performance Life Continued from Page 1

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of Christ’s body, you were called to peace.” Colossians 3:15

What would it mean if you did each of these activities in Jesus’ name?

- ◆ Waking up each morning
- ◆ Greeting those you see first thing in your day
- ◆ Eating, driving, shopping, reading
- ◆ Working, caring for children and co-workers
- ◆ Getting ready for bed, going to sleep.

I can almost hear those of you with young children laughing! I remember those days. Of course if you drive a freeway to work that “driving” one is going to be a challenge! But perhaps with Jesus as our focus, our day will

be less stressful and we can let that peace grow in our heart. My prayer for you is for God to walk with you throughout your day, direct your ways and give you peace.

Peace! Merry Christmas and blessings for a wonderful New Year.

—- Susan



## SHRM Convention, Seminars & More

- ◆ It's time to focus on training! Anyone involved in the HR portion of an organization must keep up-to-date on the ever-changing laws. Those in the PSW District have a wonderful opportunity to attend the Annual SHRM Convention in Las Vegas this summer—June 26th—29th. Featured speakers are Sir Richard Branson (Virgin brand), Michael J. Fox, and Barry Rand, CEO of AARP. What is even better is that volunteers earn FREE days to this exciting event. First, you must be a member of SHRM (You are, aren't you?) Those in Las Vegas get first priority at volunteering by checking in with SNHRA.org. Once those assignments have been made, which should be happening soon, they will open up more spots to the neighboring states. The last time SHRM held their convention in Las Vegas (4 years ago?) I attended the entire convention free by volunteering 3 times! Early Bird member fee is \$1125. Regardless, it is one convention you should make!
- ◆ Padgett-Thompson is scheduling *Human Resources and the Law 2011* 2-day workshops in Arizona (Phoenix) February 3rd & 7th . Event #1834184; California (San Diego) April 20th & 21st Event #1834629; Nevada (Las Vegas), February 1st & 2nd Event #1834183. The cost is \$299 for both days so it's a great deal. Check out the topics at [www.NationalSeminarsTraining.com](http://www.NationalSeminarsTraining.com) or call 800-258-7246. If you register 3 people the 4th is free.
- ◆ Education is so important. Joining SHRM will put tons of information at your fingertips. But you should also check out your local community colleges, junior colleges and universities for specific classes or certificate programs in Human Resources. Also, local law firms give FREE seminars. Contact law firms that deal with personnel

litigation and see if they offer any seminars for employers. Jackson Lewis, who is in several states, will be posting their 4-6 seminar schedule in January. These are free and have excellent information and opportunities to ask questions. It doesn't matter what level you are at, the information will be helpful.



## THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

My husband and I had been happily married (most of the time) for five years but hadn't been blessed with a baby. I decided to do some serious praying and promised God that if he would give us a child, I would be a perfect mother, love it with all my heart and raise it with His word as my guide.

God answered my prayers and blessed us with a son. The next year God blessed us with another son. The following year, He blessed us with yet another son. The year after that we were

blessed with a daughter. My husband thought we'd been blessed right into poverty. We now had four children, and the oldest was only four years old.

I learned never to ask God for anything unless I meant it. As a minister once told me, "If you pray for rain, make sure you carry an umbrella." I began reading a few verses of the Bible to the children each day as they lay in their cribs. I was off to a good start. God had entrusted me with four children and I didn't want to disappoint Him. I tried to be patient

the day the children smashed two dozen eggs on the kitchen floor searching for baby chicks. I tried to be understanding...when they started a hotel for homeless frogs in the spare bedroom, although it took me nearly two hours to catch all twenty-three frogs. When my daughter poured ketchup all over herself and rolled up in a blanket to see how it felt to be a hot dog, I tried to see the humor rather than the mess..

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## Notes from Concordia Plan Services By Ralph Simon

### Aging Family Members Look To You For Help

They've taken care of you or have been supportive of you all your life, now elderly family members are turning to you for support of their physical and emotional needs. It can be a very different world once the tables are turned, and you may want help understanding how to provide the best care possible.

The CIGNA Employee Assistance Program has developed a telephone seminar, "Caring For Aging Family Members," to address the needs of those caring for aging relatives. A recording of the seminar is available by dialing 888-348-4629. Use the Passcode 411904 to access the recording.

To see a list of planned telephone seminars complete with access information, visit [www.cignabehavioral.com](http://www.cignabehavioral.com). Click on Login to access your benefits/Visit Our Education & Resource Center/EAP Telephone Seminars.

### Concordia Plan Services Introduces New Board Members

Concordia Plan Services welcomes two new board members:

□ **Mr. James "Jim" Jaacks** – Jim is Executive Vice President – Finance for Sisters of Mercy Health System. He has held various financial roles for Mercy since 1991. Jim is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, as well as the Healthcare Financial Management Association. He is a member of Christ Memorial Lutheran Church in St. Louis, Missouri.

□ **Ms. Judy Koch Stromback** – Judy is the retirement actuarial practice leader for the Deloitte Consulting LLP office in Minneapolis and Chief Pension Actuary for the Deloitte Human Capital – Total Rewards national practice. She has more than 25 years of experience as a consultant to private and public sector employers. Judy is a member of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Corcoran, Minnesota.



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### Help Stop the Spread of Viruses Provided by Steve Gruenwald

We are about to enter the dreaded months of the cold and flu season – are you prepared? Actually, are you doing your part to help reduce the spread of viruses at home and at school? All it takes is a little vigilance when it comes to practicing healthy-hygiene habits. So, please consider taking these necessary precautions:

- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Do the "Dracula Sneeze" by sneezing into your elbow. (Picture the fictional Dracula with an arm - enclosed in a cape - draped over his mouth.)

- Wash your hands right away if you end up coughing or sneezing into them.
- Wash your hands right away after blowing your nose.
- Don't lick your fingers before handing out memos or other pa-



pers (you pass along your germs in your saliva to others who touch that paper).

- Wash your hands after using the bathroom.
- Wash your hands before and after lunch.
- If you experience flu-like symptoms (fever with either cough or sore throat, muscle aches, etc.) you should stay home.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that you stay at home until the fever is gone for at least 24-hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

## Renaming of Options Blue HSA, Options Blue HRA

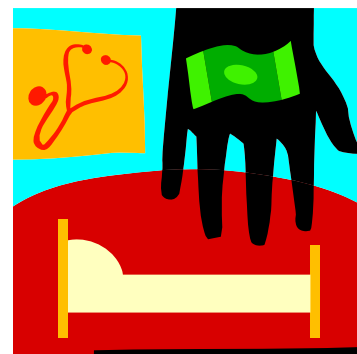
Concordia Plan Services is always looking for ways to make it easier for members to do business with us—right down to a simple name change

Because of the unique plan design of the Concordia Health Plan's qualified high-deductible health

plan option (HDHP), Options Blue HSA, and some confusion the names caused for employers and members who were interested in using personal spending accounts with both of these consumer-directed health plan options, we are changing the options' names for clarity.

Options Blue HSA will be named Option HDHP and Options Blue

HRA will be renamed Option E.



## Are you Verifying Eligibility for Employment?

Contributed by Susan M. Shiller

There are a number of required forms that employers in the United States (US) must complete when hiring new employees. One of these forms is the "I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification" form.

All US employers are required to complete and retain a form I-9 for each individual they hire for employment in the US. This includes both citizens and noncitizens. Noncitizens include permanent residents, and temporary foreign workers. Along with completing the form, the school or church (employer) must examine the employment eligibility and identify documents that the employee presents to insure that the documents are genuine and belong to the individual on the form

This form does not need to be filed with the US Immigrations and Customs Enforcement. The form must be kept by the employer for three years after the date of hire or for one year after employment is terminated, whichever is *later*. This form must be available for inspection by the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Labor, Department of Justice or other authorized US government officials

When an employer or employee completes the I-9 form, it must be the latest version of the form. The I-9 form is available in both English and Spanish. However, the English version of the form must be completed unless the employer and the workplace are in Puerto Rico. All US

and US territories *must* complete the form *in* English.

The form is not required if the employee:

- was hired before November 7, 1986
- is a casual employee performing irregular domestic service in a private home
- is an Independent Contractor
- is a worker that has been provided by contract services such as temporary agencies

The employee must complete Section 1 – Employee Information and Verification. The employee must attest that he or she is a US citizen or national, a lawful permanent resident or is authorized to work for the employer in the US. The employee must also present documents to the employer. The acceptable documents are listed on the I-9. The documents must be either; *one* document from *list A* or *one* from *B* and *one* from *C*. The employer must physically examine the original document. A photo copy is not acceptable for examination. If a document has been lost, stolen or damaged, a receipt is acceptable for examination as long as the new document is shown within 90 days. A newly hired employee should complete and sign section 1 no later than the first day of employment.

The employer must complete and sign section 2 of the form within 3 business days of the employee's first day of employment.

Section 3 should be completing when updating and reverifying is required. If the employee is a US citizen or permanent residents, Section 3 is not required.

It is not permissible for an employer to tell an employee which documents to present for I-9 purposes. The employer may only direct the employee to the list of acceptable documents on the I-9 form. Only if the employee presents a document that is not on the list can an employer ask for additional proof or identify. An employer is not required to know if the document is genuine or false. The law only requires that the employer examine the documents and make a good-faith decision.

If you comply with the verification requirements when hiring but later discover the employee is an unauthorized alien, you may *not* continue that person's employment. If you need more information regarding this form or any HR forms, please feel free to contact me.

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I tried to be patient the day the children smashed two dozen eggs on the kitchen floor searching for baby chicks. I tried to be understanding...when they started a hotel for homeless frogs in the spare bedroom, although it took me nearly two hours to catch all twenty-three frogs. When my daughter poured ketchup all over herself and rolled up in a blanket to see how it felt to be a hot dog, I tried to see the humor rather than the mess..

In spite of changing over twenty-five thousand diapers, never eating a hot meal and never sleeping for more than thirty minutes at a time, I still thank God daily for my children. While I couldn't keep my promise to be a perfect mother -I didn't even come close...I did keep my promise to raise them in the Word of God.

I knew I was missing the mark just a little when I told my daughter we were going to church to worship God, and she wanted to bring a bar of soap along to "wash up" Jesus, too. Something was lost in the translation when I explained that God gave us everlasting life, and my son thought it was generous of God to give us his "last wife."

My proudest moment came during the children's Christmas pageant. My daughter was playing Mary, two of my sons were shepherds and my youngest son was a wise man. This was their moment to shine.

My five-year-old shepherd had practiced his line, "We found the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes." But he was nervous and said, "The baby was wrapped in wrinkled clothes." My four-year-old "Mary" said, "That's not 'wrinkled clothes,' silly. That's dirty, rotten clothes."

A wrestling match broke out between Mary and the shepherd and was stopped by an angel, who bent her halo and lost her left wing. I slouched a little lower in my seat when Mary dropped the doll representing baby Jesus, and it bounced down the aisle crying, "Mama-mama." Mary grabbed the doll, wrapped it back up and held it tightly as the wise men arrived.

My other son stepped forward wearing a bathrobe and a paper crown, knelt at the manger and announced, "We are the three wise men, and we are bringing gifts of gold, common sense and fur."

The congregation dissolved into laughter, and the pageant got a standing ovation.

"I've never enjoyed a Christmas program as much as this one," laughed the pastor, wiping tears from his eyes. "For the rest of my life, I'll never hear the Christmas story without thinking of gold, common sense and fur."

"My children are my pride and my joy and my greatest blessing," I said as I dug through my purse for an aspirin.

Jesus had no servants, yet they called Him Master. Had no degree, yet they called Him Teacher. Had no medicines, yet they called Him Healer. Had no army, yet kings feared Him. He won no military battles yet He conquered the world. He committed no crime, yet they crucified Him. He was buried in a tomb, yet He lives today.

Feel honored to serve such a Leader who loves us.

*(This was sent to me via email but I have no author to give the credit for. Although...I could've written my own version as I am sure many of you could! – Susan)*

