

Helping American Eat Right March is National Nutrition Month®

As Spring approaches, we will once again be celebrating National Nutrition Month® during the month of March. National Nutrition Month® is a nutrition education and information campaign sponsored annually by the American Dietetic Association. The campaign is designed to promote healthful eating by providing practical nutrition guidance, focusing on making informed food choices, and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. This year's theme is the "Help Americans Eat Right" campaign and the event is designed to encourage all Americans to achieve and maintain a healthy weight to contribute to their overall health and well-being. Experts at the American Dietetic Association say it's never too late to take steps to a healthy lifestyle and that eating right does not have to be complicated. The focus is on eating right at any age and the following tips can help all Americans make healthy changes in their lifestyle.

1 Make a Plan: Adopt a few specific small changes. "When you make a realistic plan, the changes won't seem so overwhelming," says Angela Ginn-Meadow, registered dietician and ADA spokesperson. "A few small healthy changes, such as adding one piece of fruit to your diet each day, aren't difficult to do and can make a huge difference in your health."

2 Focus on your food: "Plan out your meals so you aren't forced to make unhealthy decisions based on convenience," says Ginn-Meadow. "Making sure you eat balanced meals

with appropriate portions will help you manage your caloric intake."

3 Make Calories Count: "Make meal choices that focus on nutrient rich foods," says Ginn-Meadow. The majority of your food choices should be packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients. Be a good role model for your children.

4 Increase Physical Activity: Regular physical activity is important for overall health and fitness. *The Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend that adults be physically active for about an hour a day. Vary the activities and make them a fun family affair.

5 Play it Safe: "Even the right food choices can affect your health if you don't follow food safety rules," says Ginn-Meadow. Always clean hands and food-contact surfaces, keep raw and cooked foods separate, cook foods to a proper temperature and chill leftovers promptly to avoid illness. Teach your children these food safety rules.

6 Be aware of Special Needs: Nutrition needs change depending upon your age and overall health. Children have specific needs at all ages of growth and development which parents need to know. As well, "older adults need more vitamin D and calcium to help maintain bone health," says Ginn-Meadow. "It's important to check with a registered dietitian to figure out what your specific nutritional needs are."

~Submitted by:
Amy Schmidt, MS, RD, LDN

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*An informational newsletter
for GECAC employees*

Georgia Del Freo, Editor

Employee of the Month



Pamela Koszewski

March's Employee of the Month is **Pamela Koszewski**, Workforce Development Services Division. Pam is described by her nominator as being "professional, dedicated, hard working, dependable, and flexible in taking on new challenges... It takes a special person with many different skills to be able to meet with employers, discussing employment issues, and with job seekers, some with many barriers to employment and still communicate effectively with both. She does this with respect and sincere regards to everyone she is working with."

*Way to go Pam, GECAC
Employee of the Month!*

Save the Date! Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield will present the Walk for a Healthy Community on Saturday, June 6, 2009 at Presque Isle State Park. The walk benefits 26 local health and human service organizations, including GECAC. For more information, visit www.walkforahealthycommunity.org.

GECAC Gazette—Unit News

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Aging — Rep. Lauri Jewell

Amy and Kris **Hromek** became proud parents of a beautiful little girl on Tuesday, February 10, 2009. Her name is Gabrielle Elizabeth Hromek, and she weighed in at 8 pounds even and 20" long.

Gertrude **Simmons**, **Lauri Jewell** and **Karine Grigoryan** received a thank you letter from the St. Pascal Gray Food Pantry at St. Patrick's for the information and assistance they provided at the pantry on February 24th.

Pennsylvania is proposing to create a new cabinet level department that combines the PA Department of Aging with the Office of Long Term Living which is currently under the Department of Welfare. If the legislature agrees, the new department would become the 3rd largest in PA (behind Welfare and Education) with an annual overall budget of nearly \$6 Billion (yes, billion). This would include all the medical assistance and other funds that go to support long term care and independent living needs.

March is **National Social Worker's Month**. The Geriatric Social Workers will have a recognition luncheon on March 12th.

The Home Plus Program coordinated a USO-style performances on March 3rd and 12th that included staff **Lynn Yusz** and several residents from the housing authority buildings.

ET&CS — Rep. Linda Waid, Jill McIntyre

Jill McIntyre, **Martin Senger** and **Mary Kay Peters** attended the PAACE midwinter conference in Hershey, PA from February 10th to February 13th.

Child Development — Rep. Mae Roberts

Thank you to all the GECAC staff who supported the Jeans Day fundraiser for Head Start. Your contributions enable each Head Start child to receive a picture at no cost.

Head Start is busy preparing for the federal On-Site Review, which will be conducted the week of April 12th.

Head Start participated in the March 6th "Consumer Fare" at the Millcreek Mall.

Applications for Head Start children are being accepted. Call **Lisa Bryant** at ext. 490.

Executive/Finance — Rep. Vivian Williams/Linda DeFelice

Bettie **Vincent** was one of twelve Erie Women selected for the Mercy Center for Women's Women Making History award. She will be honored on April 14th at the Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center. Congratulations Bettie!

Mr. **Steele** attended the National Community Action Foundation's annual Legislative Conference from March 4-6th in Washington DC.

Workforce Dev. — Rep. Sue Van Slyke

Congratulations to **Pam Koszewski**. She is GECAC March Employee of the Month!

GECAC WIA Staff and other CareerLink partners are offering a new workshop called, "Resume Rescue," each Thursday at 1:30pm at the Erie Career Link. For the job seeker, preparing a resume is the first opportunity to market oneself. Staff will concentrate on assisting job seekers to prepare a resume on the PA CareerLink website that is a written portrait of their skills, work experience, achievements and interest. For more information and to sign up, contact the Erie CareerLink at 455-9966.

GECAC Activities News

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to Jeans Days in January and February to purchase class photos for Head Start children. Thanks to your support, \$1532 was raised.

March is open enrollment month for activities. See any representative for details on joining.

WE WANT TO PUBLISH YOUR RECIPES!



Do you have some favorite recipes that friends and family rave about when you cook them? Maybe they've been passed down between generations, you've clipped them from magazines or old newspapers, or you've concocted them all on your own. If so, we want to publish them. GECAC Activities is preparing a *taste-tempting cookbook* featuring favorite recipes from GECAC employees and their families.

Go to www.typensave.com and use the group login 'gecacactivities' and the password 'member' to contribute your recipes. If you don't have internet access or do not have time to type the recipes yourself, turn them in to Georgia Del Freo or any activities member. **Submit all recipes by March 27th.** All proceeds from the cookbooks will benefit GECAC's Walk for a Healthy Community team.