



# DHSS SNAPSHOT

Volume 31, Number 6

November 2015 - January 2016

## Director's Message



*Peter Lyskowski, acting director,  
Missouri Department of Health and  
Senior Services*

As you know, February is Black History Month. To me, Black History Month should be more than just educating and reminding ourselves about the significant roles that numerous prominent African-Americans have played. They are many and their stories are inspiring – they deserve our nation's infinite admiration, respect and gratitude. Their stories, and the celebration of Black History Month, should be also used to look at the challenges of today. There is much that we can and should do, and I want us to focus on what each of us, and together, can do to address the health disparities that exist in Missouri when it comes to our African-American and Hispanic brothers and sisters. Please review the studies performed by our staff and printed and distributed by the Missouri Foundation for Health at <http://www.mffh.org/mm/files/13AfrAmDisparities.pdf> and <http://www.mffh.org/mm/files/13HispanicDisparities.pdf>, even a brief review of the various graphs and graphics illustrate clearly that we have more to do.

Today is Langston Hughes' birthday. This African-American poet was born in Joplin, MO in 1902. From his many great works, there are two of his quotes, steeped in good-ole Missouri simplicity and succinctness, that should inspire our efforts:

"The only way to get a thing done is to start to do it, then keep on doing it, then finally you'll finish." (The Big Sea)

"I will not take 'but' for an answer."

As you know, the Department recently lost a dear friend and employee, Mehari Zehaie. Mehari escaped unrest in Eritrea in East Africa in 1977 and eventually made his way to Jefferson City where he and his family touched many lives, including those of his coworkers. At his funeral, Mehari's Pastor pointed out that unlike Mehari, who traveled halfway around the world to get here, he was born at Memorial Hospital about a mile from the Jefferson City church where the funeral was held. He thanked Mehari's brother Tesfai, Tesfai's wife Turu, and Mehari's other family members, saying that their presence in our community and in his church enriched and strengthened both. Similarly, we should all be thankful for the

blessing of knowing and being able to learn from those who have followed different paths to get to where they are. This diversity makes America what it is, and we should celebrate it unceasingly.

While much has been overcome, the above studies show that there is much yet to overcome, and not just SOME-day, but TO-day. And it is WE – all of us – who shall overcome the inequities that exist in our society. One of the great things about DHSS is that it is full of "doers." You are all hands-on, get-it-done people, and your results show it. Let's use this month to begin a reinvigorated focus on health equity in Missouri. Everyone can do something, no matter how small. A proverb from Ethiopia, near where Mehari's life began, reminds us that "when spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion."

Thank you for all you do!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Lyskowski".

*See page 6 for a brief article on Mehari's tenure at DHSS.*

## Bureau of Home Care and Rehabilitative Standards Safeguards Services for Missourians Needing Care

The Bureau of Home Care and Rehabilitative Standards (BHCRS) was one of the smallest bureaus within the Division of Regulation and Licensure, comprised of 12 staff members in 2002. Fourteen years later, BHCRS has doubled their staff making them the largest bureau in the Section. This growth can be attributed to the passage of the Improving Medicare Post-Acute Care Transformation Act of 2014, mandating that hospices be surveyed at least every 36 months. Since this act was enacted, BHCRS was able to hire nine additional registered nurses to assist with the surveying process. In addition to the increased survey workload for hospices, the home health agencies continued to require a survey at least every 36 months. Even though BHCRS is now fully staffed to complete all of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recertifications for both hospices and home health agencies, it will be approximately a year for these nurses to complete their orientation. The increased staff will ensure that both hospices and home health agencies be surveyed for compliance with the federal and state regulations at least every 36 months. Before the act was passed, the CMS Mission and Priority Document directed state agencies to survey the hospices every seven years.

BHCRS currently oversees 111 hospices and 178 home health agencies throughout the state. The growth in the number of agencies continues with currently 13 pending hospices and 13 pending home health agencies awaiting Medicare certification and state licensure. Due to budget constraints in 2008, BHCRS stopped completing initial certifications. In 2010, it was determined that agencies could use one of the three accrediting organizations for obtaining certification as well as licensure. Since 2010, there has been 37 new home health agencies and 22 hospices come into the program.

In addition to the recertification survey, BHCRS investigates all complaints received. Many of the allegations are of poor quality care and issues with agencies not observing patient's rights.

Surveys consist of making home visits with the agency staff when they go to provide care in the patient's home. This allows the surveyor to observe the staff providing the care. Many times the surveyors stay behind when agency staff exit the home to talk with the patient or their family about level of care. For home health agencies, the staff consists of nurses, therapist (physical, occupational, speech), medical social workers and home health aides. It is not intended that these home health aides provide chore services. If a patient needs someone to provide personal care and chore services to help them remain in their home, they probably need care from an "IN HOME" provider, which is overseen by the Division of Senior and Disability Services. BHCRS oversees "Skilled Home Health" which is usually short-term care ordered by a physician.



*Front Row, L to R: Robin Mills, Sharon Raithel, Suzi Hamlet, Lisa Coots and Fern Dewert. Second Row, L to R: Joyce Rackers, Tonya Strauss, Deanna McCarter, Patti Ott and Robin Swarnes. Third Row, L to R: Judy Morris, Parrie Veo, Leslie Butler, Vicki Heuett, Beverly Rex and David Atkinson. Fourth Row, L to R: Kelly Colwell, Jason Hollandsworth, Pam Yeager, Debi Siebert, Samantha Joiner and Mike Fields. Not pictured is Theresa Bates.*

*continued on page 3*

## Ombudsmen- Advocates for Long Term Care Residents

Ombudsmen are considered advocates for many long-term care residents when conflicts arise between them and the nursing homes in which they reside. Missouri has 10 regional ombudsman offices throughout the state. Whether a problem is big or small, an ombudsman works to resolve complaints by or on behalf of residents. An ombudsman helps enhance the lives of residents.

Missouri's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, located in the Division of Senior and Disability Services, provides technical assistance to the regional offices, fields telephone calls from its toll-free line and compiles statistical and narrative reports each year to the federal Administration for Community Living, which is part of the Department of Health and Human Services. The state office also exhibits at various trade association and health care-related conferences. It uses those opportunities to distribute various printed material, develop awareness of its services and recruit additional volunteers to the program.

"Volunteers, of course, are the lifeblood of the program," explains Kay Dinolfo, state long-term care ombudsman. There are approximately 230 volunteers across the state. The regional offices are responsible for placing volunteers in nursing homes. Some volunteers may be assigned more than one home.

Unlike some volunteer programs, the Missouri program requires 18 hours of training before a volunteer is allowed to make visits. The training covers aspects of problem-solving, an overview of the program, education in the process of aging and also touches on topics such as the survey/inspection process for long-term care facilities. Previous surveys of local volunteers indicate that Missouri's ombudsman volunteers are very serious about the work they do and highly value the residents they visit regularly.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program handled 6,865 complaints in fiscal year 2014. Resolving each of those complaints represents one more step toward making an individual resident's life healthier and happier.

If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering to be an ombudsman, please call 800-309-3282. For more information about the program, visit <http://health.mo.gov/seniors/ombudsman/index.php>.



*Volunteer ombudsman Ruth Maynhart has been active in the Ombudsman program for 19 years, serving in the Clinton, Mo., area.*

BHCRS *continued from page 2*

The hospice survey also consists of visits to the patient's home to observe care. In some instances, the visits are to skilled nursing facilities as the Medicare hospice benefit allows care to be provided there as well as in individual homes/houses. The services provided consist of nursing, medical social services, counseling (spiritual, bereavement, dietary), hospice aides, volunteers, homemaker and physician services. If therapy is needed to assist and prepare the family for transfer, then those services should be covered. Hospice care should be team oriented. The Medicare hospice benefit also covers all equipment and medications needed by the patient related to their terminal diagnosis. There are four inpatient hospice houses in the state. These facilities are used for symptom management and pain control that cannot be taken care of in the home setting. This type of care is short term and after several days in the unit when symptoms are under control, the patient would need to go back to their home.

Both surveys consist of record reviews and interviews at the agency.

*(L. to R.) Vickie Heuett, Mike Fields and Judy Morris, Bureau of Home Care and Rehabilitative Standards, discuss items for their next survey.*



## Public Health in Action!

As 2015 came to a close and 2016 rang in, Missouri experienced yet another historic flood. On Dec. 27, Gov. Jay Nixon declared a state of emergency as heavy rain, flooding and flash flooding continued to impact much of the state. Many creeks and rivers around the state, including the Mighty Mississippi and Missouri, crested to levels not seen since the Great Flood of 1993. Public health was on the forefront as staff geared up to respond to the flooding.

The Office of Emergency Coordination (OEC) was soon receiving requests through WebEOC. On Dec. 28, OEC staff began working 24/7 fielding calls to leadership and program staff. Such calls included assisting local agencies in response to the recent flooding. The Center for Local Public Health Services also assisted with gathering information from local agencies for DHSS situational awareness of the flooding impact. The Bureau of Environmental Health Services and local agencies evaluated regulated facilities such as motels, child cares and restaurants to assure that the facility can operate in a safe fashion after the flood waters recede. Public health staff examine food safety, potable water supply, waste water function, and condition of the structure before these facilities are allowed to open to the public again.

The Bureau of Immunizations also received numerous questions from local public health agencies regarding vaccine recommendations for those responding to the flooding disaster. Most important is the tetanus/diphtheria (Td) or tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis (Tdap) vaccine. While exposure to flood waters does not increase the risk of tetanus, the ensuing cleanup increases the risk for wounds and infection. The Bureau continues to work with local communities to ensure cleanup workers are up to date with their tetanus vaccination (having a tetanus booster within the past 10 years). As of noon on Jan. 5, the Bureau ordered 1900 Td and Tdap vaccines for nine LPHAs. Most of these vaccines were all ordered, shipped and received within 24 hours of receiving the request.

The Division of Regulation and Licensure (DRL) received only one notification of a rural health clinic in Hermann, MO that evacuated. Most child care facilities were closed due to the holiday season.

“We were fortunate that more of the facilities we regulate were not affected by the flooding,” said Dean Linneman, deputy director of DRL. “The increase in training and planning for emergencies has really benefited.”

The Missouri State Public Health Lab (MSPHL) performed drinking water testing for various biological or chemical contaminants that may have resulted from the recent floods. The MSPHL temporarily waived private drinking water testing handling fees during the declared state of emergency to facilitate any necessary water testing associated with the floods.

The OEC was also in constant contact with the Division of Senior and Disability Services regarding the status of Missouri’s most vulnerable adults. DSDS staff maintained contact and collaboration with the Area Agencies on Aging and the

*continued on page 5*



*Top: Theresa Driver, duty officer in the OEC fields calls during the flood.*

*Bottom: Rachel Kuster, was one of many environmental health specialists in the Bureau of Environmental Health Services assisting with inspections of motels, child care facilities and restaurants.*

*Public Health in Action continued from page 4*

Federal Administration on Aging/Administration for Community Living.

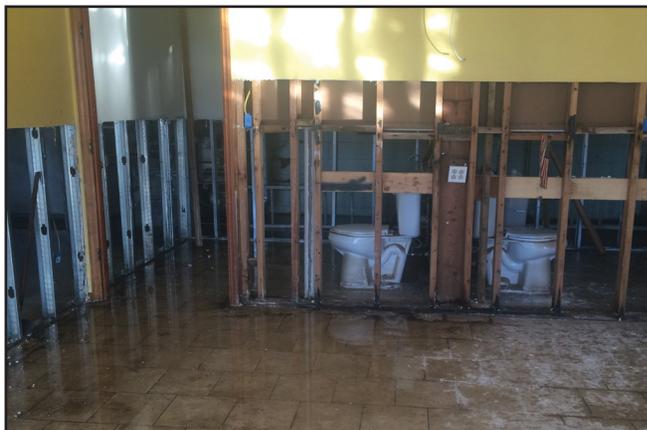
DSDS continues to collaborate and partner with the Missouri Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster and the Partnership -Governor's Faith-based and Community Service Partnership for Disaster Recovery. DSDS staff will have a presence at the multiple multi-agency resource centers (MARC) that will be set up in communities to help those affected by the floods. MARCs provide a "one-stop shop" for disaster survivors to get information and resources that will help them in the recovery process.

"A MARC allows survivors to go to just one place to get needed resources rather than needing to travel to multiple different offices," said Charity Hunter, disaster response coordinator for DSDS. "This is especially helpful if they have lost their transportation and are trying to remember what documents they need to replace."

Each MARC is tailored to the local community's needs; however, most include agencies such as American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, local, state and federal agencies; among many others.

"In one location, survivors can receive access to a hot meal, assistance from voluntary organizations, answers to legal questions, tetanus shot from the local health department and replace their lost food stamps," added Charity.

"This was the first really big event that the OEC worked in virtual mode," said Jody Starr, OEC coordinator. "And it was very successful. Once again, DHSS staff pulled together to respond to an emergency and in this case it was flooding. Even though many people were out of the office due to the holidays, the response from leadership and program staff was remarkable."



Above: Photo of a restaurant in Franklin County damaged by the flood. Right: Leon Luebbering, laboratory manager B1, State Public Health Laboratory, conducts water testing.



## HR Corner

**Laughter is healthy** and beneficial for everyone in the office provided it is respectful of your co-workers and appropriate for the workplace.

### Leaders use laughter to create a fun culture

Great leaders know that humor is an excellent way to connect with people. If you want to communicate and build trust, humor is an excellent tool for breaking down the barriers that are assumed between people of different ranks in an organization. A good sense of humor shows that you have a clear understanding of what others are expecting.

### Laughter is healthy for you - and it's contagious

Laughter is known to reduce stress levels, lower blood pressure and boost your immune system. Exactly what we need at work!

### Laughter goes hand in hand with innovation

The most essential ingredient to innovation is idea sharing. Without ideas, you don't have innovation. A culture that embraces laughter breaks down so many barriers that it also removes the block that prevents contribution.

### Laughter is optimal for learning

Laughter makes the mind more open to new ideas, so it optimizes learning. Psychologists and neurologists have known for years that anything that has an emotional component is more likely to be remembered than a pure list of facts without context.

*Information for this article was taken from Eve Ash, a psychologist, speaker and filmmaker who specializes in communication behavior, motivation and leadership.*

## Missouri State Employee Charitable Campaign exceeds \$1 million for 12th consecutive year, achieves more total donations than any year since 2009

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Missouri State Employee Charitable Campaign (MSECC) exceeded donations of \$1 million for the 12th consecutive year. The 31st year of the campaign achieved more total donations than any year since the 2010 campaign, and state employees donated more than \$1,089,249.00 to 885 Missouri charities. This brings the 31-year total for the campaign to over \$28 million.

“The kindness and generosity shown year after year by Missouri state employees and their families, and the impact the annual charitable campaign has on organizations across the state is truly touching,” Office of Administration Commissioner Doug Nelson said. “To exceed the \$1 million mark every year for more than a decade is a true testament to the generosity of state employees and will unquestionably make an impact on those in need across Missouri.”

A fact sheet can be found at [www.msecc.mo.gov](http://www.msecc.mo.gov).



Missouri State employees donated \$1,089,249.00 to 885 charities during the 2015 Missouri State Employee Charitable Campaign. Stacy Kempker and Lorraine Tappel of the Division of Community and Public Health were among the State's coordinators.

## In Memory



Mehari Zehaie, age 61 years, of Jefferson City, Mo. passed away Saturday, January 23, 2016 at the Capital Region Medical Center.

Mehari worked as an account executive in the Financial Services Unit of the Division of Senior and Disability Services beginning there in July 2004. From May of 2005 to May of 2007, he worked in the Division of Community and Public Health Office of Fiscal Support.

“Mehari will be truly missed,” said Tanya Dixon, Mehari’s supervisor and friend. “He was one of the nicest and kindest people I have known. He was dedicated, loyal and had a gentle spirit.”

Mehari was born in Mendefera, Eritrea in East Africa and moved to the U. S. in 1980. He lived in Washington D.C., Dallas, Texas and then settling in Jefferson City for the last 27 years.

An avid sporting fan, Mizzou, the KC Royals and the KC Chiefs were among his favorite teams. He enjoyed working at DHSS and thought of his coworkers as his friends. He cherished his time with his family, especially his three sons whom he talked about often.

[Click here to read Mehari’s obituary.](#)



# Star Performance

Kate,

I received a verbal compliment to pass onto you. Marie, a nurse employed with All Family Care, said you are fantastic! She said you have been courteous, efficient, firm when necessary, and a great patient advocate.

Thank you presenting a positive image to our partners and clients. Your effort enhances our relationship with our providers and in turn helps us provide efficient and effective service to our clients.

Best Regards,  
Terry Black, chief  
Bureau of Home and Community Based Services



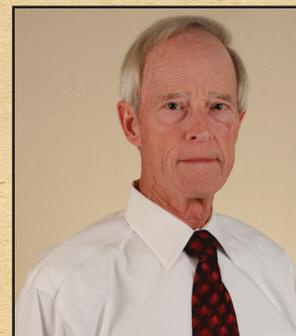
*Kate Bilyeu, long term care specialist, Bureau of Home and Community Services, Region 3 (St. Louis)*

“ You have been courteous, efficient, firm when necessary, and a great patient advocate. ”

Dr. Pue,

Thank you so much for your assistance with the City of St. Louis regarding our agriculture event last weekend. It was a big success! Your guidance was very helpful. We now know exactly what we need to do next time and plan to host another FarmScape in St. Louis in 2016.

Thanks again!  
Misti Preston  
Director of Strategic Initiatives  
MO Dept. of Agriculture



*Howard Pue, DVM, MSVPM, State Public Health Veterinarian*

“ Thank you so much for your assistance with the City of St. Louis regarding our agriculture event last weekend. ”

# Welcome New Employees



Top: New employees who attended the New Employee Training offered by the Office of Human Resources on Nov. 17-18.

Bottom: New employees from the Dec. 29-30 training. To view a listing of new hires click on the [Personnel Action Report](#) on the intranet under Employee Information.



## DHSS Holds Annual Holiday Luncheon

It was a joyous occasion at the Department of Health and Senior Services holiday luncheon on December 3 at the Wardsville Lions Hall. Acting Director Peter Lyskowski welcomed everyone and thanked employees for their dedication throughout the year. "I am fortunate to be back among friends," said Peter. "The holidays are a special time to enjoy with family and friends, and I consider DHSS part of my family." The microphone was then handed over to Mary Menges, assistant lab director for the Missouri State Public Health Laboratory, who emceed the event. Mary shared lots of laughs and kept the event light hearted.

Over 300 employees joined in the festivities that included a meal, games, cash drawings and entertainment by the Lincoln University's Jazzy Ensemble who filled the hall with holiday music.

A canned food drive was also held in conjunction with the luncheon, and nearly 20 boxes of canned good items were collected to benefit the Jefferson City Samaritan Center. Fundraisers are held throughout the year to help pay for a portion of the meal for those attending, prizes and other items associated with the luncheon. Larraine Tappel won the grand prize which was \$100.

[Click here for additional photos.](#)



*Peter Lyskowski, acting director, gives Larraine Tappel the grand prize of \$100 during the holiday luncheon.*



## DHSS Adopts Three Local Families for the Holidays

It was an extra special holiday for several families in Jefferson City as the Department of Health and Senior Services Jefferson City Offices adopted three local families. The families were adopted from a local charity, Hope for Christmas-Jefferson City. Each of the families involved with Hope for Christmas is referred to the program by local professionals due to tragedies suffered during the past year. Each of the families is larger sized making them more difficult to get adopted. All three of the families have been affected by cancer.

“Most of the families are referred to us by doctors, nurses or local churches and don’t qualify for assistance from other agencies,” said Vicki Bullock, founder of Hope for Christmas-Jefferson City. “I take time to personally interview each family to make sure they are not receiving charity through other organizations. It takes more time, but I feel we can reach more families in our community.”

DHSS adopted three families for a total of twenty-one family members. The first family consisted of eight family members. This family lost the father to cancer in March and the 7 year old daughter has now been diagnosed with leukemia. In addition to the mother and 7 year old girl are three other girls, ages 4 months, 5 and 16 and two boys, ages 8 and 16. The mother had to return to work after being a stay at home mother for the past 18 years.

The second family consists of seven family members. The mother has been diagnosed with terminal cancer and is experiencing her final Christmas with her family as doctors have said she has less than one year to live. This family includes two boys, ages 1 and 8, and 3 girls ages 4, 9 and 14.

The third family, consisting of six family members, lost their father to cancer this past October. The family includes the mother, three girls, ages 12 and 18 and a newborn, and two boys, ages 16 and 18.

All of these families are suffering financially due to overwhelming medical bills. The department staff donated over \$2,800.00 and bought presents for the families. An anonymous donor matched donations raised during the first three days of the project and a local retailer agreed to also match the donations raised during that time period. The match amount raised by the department was \$2,761.00. This equates to a donation of \$8,283.00. There were so many gifts donated that each family member received multiple gifts and it took three vehicles to deliver them all.

*Over 150 gifts, , three trays of decorated sugar cookies, two trays of food and a donation of \$2,761.00 (equalling \$8,283.00 in matched funds) was given to Hope for Christmas-Jefferson City.*



*Division of Senior and Disability Services employees, Michael Brewer, Mindy Ulstad, Wendy Bruemmer and Kayla Curry unpack gifts for three local families that have suffered tragedies during the past year. Assisting the DSDS staff are Vicki Bullock (far left), founder of Hope for Christmas-Jefferson City and Julie Smith (right), volunteer.*

**[Click here to view photos.](#)**

## SEPH Brings Joy to a Family in Need

In November, the Section of Public Health (SEPH), which consists of the Bureau of Environmental Epidemiology and the Bureau of Environmental Health Services, contacted Jeff City Rape and Abuse Center (RACS) to help provide Christmas for a family that was out of the shelter and trying to establish a new life. The family adopted consisted of a mother, 16-year-old twins and a 10-year-old child. The main item on their list was clothing.

Due to the generosity of the staff in SEPH, they were able to provide over \$1,000 worth of new clothes, including numerous pairs of jeans, tops, sweaters, hoodies and boots. One donor provided a generous gift card from Hy-Vee so the family would have delicious meals on during the holidays.

On December 15, the Section delivered the gifts to RACS.

“The RACS staff was so thankful to see the great Christmas we were providing for the family,” said Joyce Krattli, SOSA, Bureau of Environmental Epidemiology. “But most of all, our staff were excited to help a family in need this Christmas.”



Sharon Talken, Randy Maley, Sharon Odom, Joyce Krattli, Angie DeBroeck and Sonya Henson in the Section of Public Health help a family in need.

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## DRL Shares Holiday Spirit

The Division of Regulation and Licensure made the holidays a little brighter by spreading some cheer for a family of six. The family was adopted through Osage Caring Projects in Linn, MO. The father lost his job after 17 years. It became difficult to provide for his wife, two daughters age 11 and a newborn and two sons, ages 17 and 7.

“It is a heartwarming feeling to help those experiencing difficult times,” said Heather Hutchison in the Survey and Compliance Unit. “Once again this year, DRL responded generously to make this a very special Christmas for this family.”

Items donated included toys, clothing, hygiene products, food and gift cards for the entire family.

*Heather Hutchison, Survey and Compliance Unit, is the coordinator of the Employee Activities Committee. She organized the Adopt-A-Family for the 2015 holiday season.*



# DHSS Employees of the Month



*Carol Braun*

**Carol Braun** has been selected as the Department's November Employee of the Month. Carol is an epidemiology specialist with the Bureau of Environmental Epidemiology.

Carol successfully negotiated and coordinated the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The purpose of the MOU was to formalize a working relationship between OSHA and DHSS in order to reduce work-related illnesses from lead exposure and ensure safe and healthy workplaces. DHSS collects blood lead surveillance data and the identity of employers whose employees have elevated blood lead levels. Since the signing of the MOU, Carol has referred seven companies to OSHA.

One recent illustration of this successful OSHA/DHSS collaboration was the Martin Foundry Company, Inc. investigation. In this investigation, OSHA investigators attempted to inspect the foundry March 27, after the DHSS reported an employee had an elevated blood lead level. The company owners refused to allow inspectors into the foundry, leading agency officials to obtain a warrant and return April 7 to complete the inspection. At that time, a foundry owner, and representatives from the foundry's compliance consulting group again refused entry in violation of the warrant. Inspectors returned with U.S. Marshals, but they still did not cooperate. OSHA was only able to complete the inspection after U.S. Departments of Labor and Justice attorneys initiated contempt proceedings.

Carol and her husband, Bill, live on a farm near Mary's Home. They have two daughters, Sharon and Catherine.



*Nicoshia Roadruck*

**Nicoshia Roadruck** is DHSS' December Employee of the Month. Nicoshia is an accountant I with the Fiscal Unit at the State Public Health Laboratory.

Jessie Bauer, the nominator wrote, "Nicoshia is an extremely hard worker and is very dedicated to performing her job at the highest level. No matter what else she may have going on; she is always ready and willing to help me whenever I need it with a smile on her face and a positive attitude that is absolutely infectious!"

"Nicoshia does an amazing job of keeping track of contracts and renewals for every unit in the building, being a helpful source of information for all things fiscal, and keeping us all on task while navigating the purchasing process. Not only does she do all that (and more, no doubt!), she does it with a smile," said Jessie.

Nicoshia truly exemplifies the qualities of an outstanding employee. She often serves as the liaison between procurement staff and the lab, and ensures that purchasing requests are complete to make the process as seamless as possible.

Nicoshia and her husband have an 8-year-old daughter. They live in Holts Summit.