

Monday, March 3, 2008

River Crest Fund proposals due to Mik Gregoire, Director of Development, by 4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 11, 2008

KenCrest EmployNet Job Shadow Day at Normandy Farms, Montgomery County Community College West Campus, and Phoenixville Hospital, IKEA Conshohocken and Frederick Mennonite Home.

Congratulations to the 2007 Safety Achievement Winner: Carla Mendoza (YAS) won the Safety Incentive Program Grand Prize. She won 3 Eagles tickets to the December 30th game and \$100 to spend that day.



Congratulations to Key Connectors Bev McLean (Lifesharing) & Sandy Meyers (Personal Support Network) on their upcoming retirements. Not only will they be missed by their Key Connector friends, but by their colleagues in their respective service areas, and across the agency.

Be in Touch with your Key Connectors

Questions, comments, concerns about your work life at KenCrest?

Call on us!

- Barb Bonner (YAS)
- Kathy Burns (CFS)
- Denise DiGinto (CSS)
- Kira Gholston (YAS)
- Dawn Graham (YAS)
- Peggy Humphreys (YAS)
- Paula Kadel (CSS)
- Kathy Kohout (YAS)
- Diane Massey (YAS)
- Sandra Meyers (YAS)
- Bev McLean (YAS)
- Maria Owoc (YAS)
- Wendy Pollock (YAS)
- Donna Ruley (CFS)
- Sandie Simmons (CSS)
- Laura Temple (CSS)
- Carla Veno (CSS)
- Samantha Wiley (YAS)

YAS -- Youth & Adult Services
CFS -- Children & Family Services
CSS -- Collaborative Support Services



Opportunity brings ability to life!

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Written by:

Laura Temple



In the Family

KENCREST STAFF NEWSLETTER • VOLUME 27 • ISSUE 1, FEBRUARY 2008

Letter from the Executive Director

The profiles in this issue demonstrate just how important family is to KenCrest. One of the agency's guiding principles is to welcome the involvement of those we serve and their family members in decisions concerning their service.

Our staff highlighted inside these pages find a supportive family of co-workers and become apart of an extended family for the people they support.

Because she knows what it is like to have a child with a developmental disability, Education Supervisor Beth Walsh has a special ability to help other families meet the challenges they face. Robin Whitestone thoroughly enjoys the relationships she develops with the people she supports and says she can't believe she gets paid to do what she does. In 23 years at KenCrest, Wendy Pollock has made lifelong friendships with other staff members.

KenCrest is not just a place to work -- it's a family of staff and the people we support. We are more than a 1,000 employees who provide quality services to more than 7,000 preschool children, school-age youth and adults each and

every year, and what I am most proud of is the way we come together as family.

One of our Lifesharing families has said, "KenCrest is part of our extended family. They have supported us as a family unit for years and are close family friends."

I am grateful to all staff who nurture and grow the KenCrest family every day.

Bill Nolan, KenCrest Executive Director



Meet Your Key Connector: Wendy Pollock, EmployNet

For 23 "adventurous" years, Wendy Pollock has served as an Administrative Secretary for Youth & Adult Services. More recently, she has joined Key Connectors, a group she has been a part of for two years.

Wendy said she appreciates the time she spends being a Key Connector because she learns 'what's new' within the agency.

"It's always very enlightening," she said. "But I also enjoy the camaraderie. The Key Connectors are such a great group of people."

Wendy made it clear what has kept her in the KenCrest staff family for more than two decades.

"It's the people. I've made lifelong friendships," she said. "I'm surrounded by kind, compassionate and entertaining people. My job is never boring, but we are able to laugh every day."



Wendy Pollock

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Beth Walsh, Education Supervisor, Bucks Home/Community, CFS

For Beth Walsh, one of the greatest rewards of her job with KenCrest is being able to show parents there is a light at the end of the tunnel after their child receives a diagnosis of developmental delay, autism, or another type of disability.

“It’s really tough in the beginning for families. We try to reassure them, and then we support them in whatever direction they decide to take after a diagnosis,” Beth said, “because it really does hit them hard.”

As the Education Supervisor for our Bucks Home/Community service area, Beth can draw from personal experience when she meets with some of the more than 200 families to develop a support plan for their children.

Beth, who has been a member of the KenCrest family for nearly nine years, is the mother of an 18-year-old son who has Pervasive Developmental Disorder, which falls on the Autism Spectrum, in addition to Bipolar Disorder.

“Because I have gone through and continue to go through some of the same experiences that KenCrest families are, I enjoy working with them to help them and their children get over the hurdles they may see in front of them,” she said. “It’s a huge asset that families trust you and see you as a viable resource because you’ve been there.”

Beth, who holds a Bachelor of Science degree from

Temple University in Early Childhood and Special Education, said her bond she develops with the families really makes her job worthwhile.

“I just love seeing the kids out in the community, especially when they recognize you,” she said. “You really become a part of their family.”

Prior to coming to KenCrest, Beth held several preschool positions, in addition to serving as a Therapeutic Support Staff in Bucks County. She said, however, she seems to have found her true niche here.

“I can definitely see myself here at KenCrest for the duration (of my career),” Beth said. “Being out in the field, working with the children and families, that is what makes coming to work each day so great for me.”



Beth Walsh (left) with her supervisor, Joan Hanley

Robin Whitestone, Personal Support Network, Youth & Adult Services

The five individuals Robin supports have become so much a part of her life as a Support Staff for our Personal Support Network, she can hardly believe what she gets to do each day would be considered a job.

“I just can’t believe I get paid to do what I do every day,” she said. “I have developed relationships with the people I support. I don’t see them as clients or consumers, just people I am lucky to spend time with each day.”

In the less than two years Robin has been with PSN, she has really come to grasp the Positive Approaches Philosophy of our agency and the way we provide services for each individual.

“Mark Bernstein has really been an inspiration to me,” Robin said. “He has really provided me with the tools to manage the rigors of our schedules and to truly feel blessed to be in this job with these people.”

Robin, a mother of three, said she has always felt called to help people with special needs, initially receiving her undergraduate degree in Elementary Education/Special Education from Millersville University.

“One of the best parts of my job is getting to see the progress the individuals make. Sometimes they’re smaller steps, but they’re steps towards their goals, nonetheless.”

Robin’s affinity for helping others doesn’t end with her KenCrest responsibilities. She serves as a one-on-one aide for individuals with developmental disabilities in Sunday School classes at her church. In addition, she has worked with the Sellersville Theatre to secure a volunteer opportunity for one of the people she supports.

“Robin stands out in her position because she always seeks to understand the individual and their family dynamic. She works very hard to get all of the individuals she works with connected and involved with activities in their local community,” said Jeanne Ashe, Robin’s supervisor with PSN.



Robin Whitestone

News you can use...from our Human Resources Staff

We want to remind staff (who work over 20 hours/week) that they have access to an important benefit called "**Health Advocate.**" Health Advocate is a 24/7 service that offers a variety of assistance with insurance related issues such as resolving claim or billing issues, finding the best services and providers, researching treatments for medical conditions, obtaining second opinions, working with your insurance company to obtain approvals, locating eldercare services, and much more. Health Advocate is staffed by medical professionals who understand the healthcare/ insurance system and how to navigate through it, saving you valuable time, effort and stress. Health Advocate covers all members of your household, including the parents of both you and your spouse. This benefit can be used more than you think, so don't hesitate to call them at **1-866-695-8622**. If you would like a brochure with a wallet card, contact **Barb Wood at 610-825-9360 x425**.

For staff enrolled in the 403(b) plan, Guided Portfolio Services (GPS) is a service, paid for by you, the employee, that is being offered through AIG Valic to KenCrest employees. While the AIG advisors can assist you with selecting funds that perform well and fit your risk tolerance, GPS goes far beyond that level of service. GPS utilizes the expertise of the respected financial firm of Ibbotson Associates and monitors each participant's funds on a quarterly basis. It's like having your own personal financial advisor. For much more information or to enroll in the 403(b) plan or this service, please contact your AIG Retirement Representative - Maria Deysner (PA & DE): 610-299-8869, or Vicky Moliken (PA): 484-322-0392. Keep in mind that any employee is eligible to enroll in the 403(b) plan - there is no waiting period or work hour minimums. The Advisors can meet with you at home or work, or elsewhere - and any time of the day or night.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT KENCREST CARES IS?

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE...

1. A Frank Sinatra ballad written for Sister Grace in 1945 but just discovered in a trunk in a Kensington attic
2. A new line of scented toilet paper
3. A new opportunity for staff and people we support to work side-by-side with KenCrest volunteers to give back to the community
4. The Super Bowl commercial that was supposed to be on at halftime but got cut because it took Tom Petty and the Pacemakers so long to finish their songs