



The Class of 2005

By John McKay

There were 40 first-time graduates from the new Human Resources Management Certificate Program designed by a group in DAS' Statewide Human Resources Management (SHRM).

The weekly sessions were held over an eleven-week period that covered everything from "Making Appointments within the Boundaries of the State Merit System" to "Employee Leaves of Absence, Separation Types and Exit Interviews" – and everything in between.

Program Manager Shari Grzyb said, "Usually state personnel officers learn their role via on-the-job training – asking questions as they go along. With this program, we cover all the bases of HR, get out a consistent message and develop a network of professionals who can turn to each other when they're faced with unique HR situations."

Trainers and experts from other state agencies also participated, such as OPM's Office of Labor Relations.

Grzyb knew there was demand for this program as soon as the start date was announced; the first six sessions were filled within several days following its posting on the DAS HR Learning Center web page, and five additional sessions are filled as well.

"There's no other program out there designed specifically for state personnel officers so they are looking for answers and training opportunities. This program provides participants with case studies, situational activities and up-to-date reference materials specific to the State Personnel Officer's job," added Grzyb.

The feedback has been phenomenal. Many participants have suggested the program be required of all State of Connecticut HR professionals.



Commissioner Linda Yelmini presents the HR Certificate to 'graduate' Kathy Bruni.

All participants who have completed the program indicated they have learned a significant amount of new information and are excited to have "built" three binders of materials for use back at their offices.

Some participants made special mention that they think the program is "a step in the right direction to promote uniformity of business practices" and that they look forward to additional training by DAS on more HR topics.

In her remarks at the 'graduation' ceremony, Commissioner Linda Yelmini said, "I want you to think of DAS as a resource to use. Don't think of us as a barrier to what you want, we want to work with you in solving your HR issues. I hope this training proves the fact that we are committed to consistent application of HR policies and that we care about HR folks in state government."

A 'second level' program will eventually be offered, but it is not yet known when these courses will begin or how many courses will be offered altogether. If the first level program is any indication, DAS – SHRM will once again have a full schedule of classes to run... probably through the year 2007!

Inside this Issue

Ready?	2
ERP MVP's	2
Kudos	3
Getting Fit	4
AHA Walk	4
Here They Are!	5
Tidbits	6
Diversity	7

DAS Participates in Emergency Management Plan

By Donna Micklus

Connecticut state government will take part in a new FEMA initiative called the National Emergency Management Baseline – Capability Assessment Program.

According to Rich Harris in the Governor’s Communications Office, the assessment will be conducted using the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP - www.emaponline.org).

“We are just beginning the self-evaluation process that goes along with this program. One of the standards that will be assessed is crisis communications and public information,” Harris said.

Harris is chairing the communications segment, and in early October he called a meeting of all Communi-

cations Directors to get general input on how the exercise should roll out. Donna Micklus and Nina Ritson of DAS Communications are on the subcommittee to draft the plan.

“We’re in the early stages right now, discussing how to develop procedures to disseminate and respond to requests for pre-disaster, disaster and post-disaster information. We’re probably ahead of most states because of the Millstone nuclear accident exercises and the TOPOFF drill. Mary Rose Duberek from Homeland Security has the Millstone events down to a science, and a lot of us have worked on those which is a tremendous help,” Micklus said.

Harris said that since this is a state accreditation program, it will involve

all the agencies that would be providing information in an emergency (e.g., DMHAS/DCF - crisis communication materials such as *How to Talk to Children in an Emergency*,” DOT-road conditions; DEP- hazmat info, etc.) and gathering their tools (fact sheets, crisis communications plans, etc.) to present them to the Accreditation Team. The federal accreditation team will rate Connecticut in April of 2006.

“Hurricane Katrina has reemphasized the importance of what we do as public information professionals to protect the health and safety of our residents and visitors,” Harris said.

Ed. Note: It has since been announced that Mr. Harris will become the spokesperson for Governor Rell’s gubernatorial campaign.

ERP Event is a Home Run

By John McKay

Forget A-Rod and Manny. The real question on everyone’s mind is, “Who are the MVP’s of DAS?”

The new season of the Employee Recognition Program kicked off this

month with a baseball theme celebration. Employees gathered to learn more about the program, nominations and how the process works.

“This is very cool,” said a new DAS employee. “We didn’t have anything like this at my other agency.”

There were a few door prizes and lucky Audrey Pinette was on hand to collect her prize of a New York Yankees gift bag that she shared with diehard Yankee fan Mayme Casady.

Nominations are due November 9, and an awards ceremony will be hosted in early December at the Solomon Welles House in Wethersfield.



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Linda J. Yelmini Commissioner

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Barrie Prevuznak thanked all **Joe's friends at DAS**. "Words cannot express how touched we were by the memories shared in the special tribute to Joe and the magnificent portrait....Thank you so much for all that you have done. Joe was fortunate to work with such caring and thoughtful people. We miss him, but the kindness you have shown supports us during this difficult time. Thank you again."

Amy Lazzaro in the Governor's Office had high praise for DAS Communications and the Print Shop. "**Nina Ritson, Alex Caceres, Mike Guimond, and Roy Wynne** did a great job on the UConn report. It was much more work than I originally anticipated and they really came through for us." Jean Michael added her thanks for "the great work on the UConn report. It is always nice to be acknowledged for doing a great job as well as providing great customer service."

Peter Hunter provided during the CT DAS Contractor Prequalification Certificate Renewal process. I am new to the Office Manager position at R & R Window Contractors, Inc. The retiring Office Manager was unable to review the DAS Contractor Prequalification Certificate Renewal process with me prior to leaving this position, due to time constraints. Reading the e-mails and reviewing the materials from the 2004 application process I was overwhelmed and terrified of the process and what it entailed. Much of the stress was generated by unfamiliarity and the fear of jeopardizing the company's ability to bid for CT projects. I contacted the Contractor Prequalification Unit...I was fortunate enough to reach Peter Hunter. He quickly allayed my fears with a combination of light humor and straightforward answers to the numerous questions I had. He assisted me...and "held my hand" until I was comfortably working through the process. Peter has provided outstanding assistance and support, and been patient throughout the process. I cannot thank Peter enough and hope he is a valued employee."

On behalf of Commissioner Yelmini, **Joe Giliberto** accepted the Connecticut Quality Innovation Award (CQIA), which the Governor's Office and DAS won for the State's Contracting Portal. The award was presented at CQIA's annual conference on October 20 in Westbrook.

Timothy Howes, Assistant Superintendent of the East Windsor Public Schools was grateful for **Dan Sadowski's** assistance. "I wanted to drop a note thanking you for all your help with our ordering process. We appreciate everything you have done for us as well as your patience with us to get things corrected. We were very impressed with your knowledge of the entire system and commend you on your ability to provide excellent solutions for us. Again, thank you so very much for all your help."

Linda Hubeny also praised **Dan Sadowski**, "He's doing a very good job learning the very complicated Food Distribution Program. Great job, Dan!"

hats off

By Donna Micklus

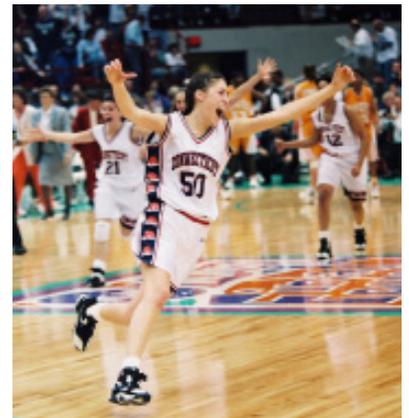
Karen Rakowski and Jerry Lynn thanked **Kathleen Kabara** for all her help with Manager's Day. "This is usually a very cumbersome task every year, but Kathleen made it so much easier because she is so organized and professional. She's awesome and such a pleasure to work with!"

Carlos Velez received the following message of commendation for **Peter Hunter** from Vicki Czahar of R & R Window Contractors: "I wanted to share with you my gratitude and appreciation for the excellent service



Wednesday, November 9
8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
at the fabulous new
Connecticut Convention Center

Guest Speaker
UConn basketball legend
Rebecca Lobo!



Don't Just Talk the Talk...Walk the Walk!

By Donna Micklus and Nina Ritson

Fitness is working its way to the workplace. DAS' Dr. Martin Anderson, Nina Ritson and John McKay recently met with Dr. Pouran Faghri of UConn, Gene Nichols and Christine Parker of the Department of Public Health (DPH) on a program that encourages employees to walk their way to better health and fitness.

ConnectiFIT was developed at UConn and first used in state government at the DPH. Dr. Faghri developed the concepts and components of the program and Nichols and Parker talked about how the program was administered at Public Health, noting that even they were surprised at the level of participation and

overwhelming enthusiasm of their employees.

"We hope DAS employees will actively participate in ConnectiFIT as it will be specifically designed to meet their needs," said Commissioner Linda Yelmini.

"We surveyed employees a while back to gauge their interest, and while we had a good response, I think even more people will join in once the program is up and running," Yelmini said.

UConn and DPH both emphasized that there are two key ingredients for success: support from the top and a good advisory group to craft the



program and help individuals meet their goals. Once assembled, the advisory group will begin a needs assessment for DAS based on employee input. The results of that assessment will then determine the type of program components best suited to the agency. Yelmini has asked Dr. Martin Anderson to chair the initiative. Anyone interested in serving on the advisory board should contact him. Watch for further details!

Have a Heart

By Martin Anderson

Even though the planned pathway was flooded and the weather was threatening, hundreds of walkers showed up for the Hartford Heart Walk this year sponsored by the American Heart Association (AHA) at the Riverfront Plaza on October 23.

Commissioner Linda Yelmini had asked for volunteers to be team captains months ago, and their combined efforts met with obvious success. The final count is not in but it appears that well over \$2,000 was raised or pledged for the AHA.

Persons walking from DAS included Martin Anderson and his wife Becky, Laura Guilmartin, Lynn Peccerillo, Rob Zalucki, and Aimee Gagnon.

Persons helping collect donations included Ray Bailey, Linda Yelmini, Donna Wadhams, and Rick Miarecki.

Rob Zalucki collected an amazing

amount of money that goes to the AHA's fight against the number 1 and number 3 killers—heart disease and stroke.

There was plenty of activity before the walk began with the registration, the national anthem, a quick set of aerobics and a ribbon cutting ceremony with Comptroller Nancy Wyman.

Then, off went the walkers across the river to East Hartford where they circled the DOIT building twice along the walking path to put in 3K of distance and do more trips as desired.



Despite chilly temps and threatening skies, hundreds took part in the AHA walk at Riverfront Plaza on October 23.

Luckily, no umbrellas had to come out, and there were plenty of Subway sandwiches for the people who returned across the bridge and finished their walk.

Here They Are Now!

Carolyn Underwood

Fresh out of the University of Connecticut, Carolyn Underwood was thrown into the mainstream workforce first as a caseworker and then as a constituent services worker (a euphemism for complaint department!) in the Governor's Office. She then became Director of Appointments to Boards and Commissions before joining DAS' new SMART unit on September 2.

"This is a welcome change of pace for me," Underwood said. "I was so used to working until 8 or 9 at night and coming in on the weekends, that this 8:30 to 5:00 schedule is pretty nice! Sometimes I still stay late, but it's not the hours that I was working before."

Underwood will need the 'newly found' time to prepare for her younger sister's wedding coming up in the near future. She is very much looking forward to being a bridesmaid in the wedding which will be at their church in Simsbury. "I cherish my family - my parents and sisters. I spend a lot of time with them and my niece, Alyssa and nephew, Ralphie."

"I really like it here at DAS. I am a Leadership Apprentice, training to be a Personnel Officer 1. The people are really great to work with. Like the Governor's Office, everyone is very busy - but people do take the time to help when I am unsure of something. Susie Carlson and Verna Plona have been extremely helpful," she said, singing the praises of her coworkers.

Underwood is still considering graduate studies. "My undergrad degree was in Sociology with a concentration on women and the family. I then went on to the UConn School of Social Work, pursuing a Masters in Social Work, concentration in policy and planning."

For fun, she shyly admits to enjoying Karaoke, and playing cards (especially cribbage). She also enjoys travel, although she has not had the opportunity lately, and her new passion - running.

"I had back surgery a few years ago, and as part of my rehabilitation I began to run. Right now I am training for the Manchester Road Race on Thanksgiving - then she smiled as she thought of Thanksgiving at her parents, "then I can eat WITHOUT guilt!"



Where Are They Now?

Kathy Valone

"Working 9 to 5" is not the tune Kathy Valone is singing these days - but tunes ARE in her current job duties.

Our former telephone guru, affectionately known as Ma Bell, retired from the stressful life of telecommunications in 2003 after 31 years in state service. But is Valone at home feeding stray cats and crocheting comforters?

NOT!!

In fact, life has just begun for her now that she reports to duty as an event security officer at entertainment venues such as The Bushnell, The Simsbury Performing Arts Center, Rentschler Stadium and the Hartford Civic Center. Events at these venues include concerts, football games, basketball games, exhibitions and shows.

"I was just thinking today what it would have been like if I had continued working full-time and had to deal with all that stress. Now I go to work and when the shift is over, I leave it all behind. I actually enjoy working nights and having the days free to get in some exercise and do whatever else comes up."

What superstars has Valone met since her new career began?

"It was so funny, I spent an afternoon stationed backstage with the Beach Boys who had a long pause after rehearsal before their evening performance. I got to interact with players from the 1995 UConn women's basketball team at the homecoming football game last weekend. Many of them were there with their husbands and children. I worked the Rolling Stones concert, I chatted with Ray Allen, and was in awe standing next to Omeka Okafor... there have been so many events, it is just a new experience every time!"

When asked if she missed state service she responded, "I really loved working in telecommunications. I do miss the daily involvement that I had with fellow state employees as well as with the telecommunications vendors. But I love my life now. Working these little fun 'gigs' is really the best."

When not watching over celebrities in town, Valone says she has done some traveling, including a recent cruise, and still gets together on occasion with other retirees from DAS. She's looking forward to a cross country trip in the next few years.

Valone offered these words of wisdom from her experience of contemplating retirement, "The hardest thing about retiring was stressing so much making the decision to retire. Once it was made it was WONDERFUL!"

"Here They Are Now!"... "Where are they now?" is a new feature that will appear bimonthly in the DAS Times. Many folks are curious not only about new DAS employees, but about our retirees as well. We're tracking them down and bringing you the latest news. If there is a particular DAS alum that you are curious about, tell us...or better yet, let us know if you want to make the contact yourself and send us your comments! As always, your feedback is welcome!

News Bits

On September 30, Deputy Commissioner Anna Ficeto went on a tour of the new Connecticut Convention Center and the adjacent Marriott Hotel.

Of particular interest to the Deputy Commissioner was the work done on both the Convention Center and the Marriott by small business and minority- or woman-owned businesses.

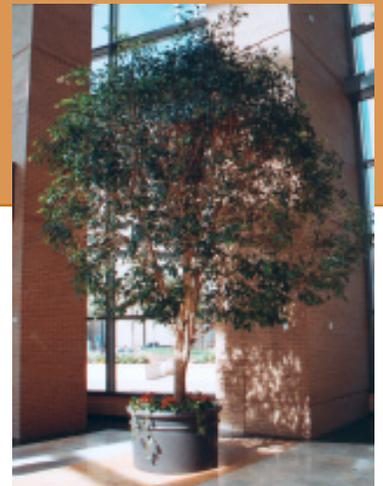
Meg Yetishefsky, Director of DAS' Supplier Diversity Program, said she was very pleased with the work done by DAS-certified small businesses, one of which was MacKenzie Painting Company, Inc. (a minority-owned business enterprise) who was contracted to do a majority of the interior painting in the Marriott Hotel. "In addition, several city residents were hired and trained through a special program, called Capitol Workforce Partners, Hartford Jobs Funnel, to do skilled labor at the site," Yetishefsky explained.



L to R: Annette Sanderson, Exec. Director of CCEDA, Carol Wilson, Director of Procurement, Meg Yetishefsky, Director of Supplier Diversity, Cassandra Hill, Regional Alliance for Small Contractors with another representative from Regional Alliance for Small Contractors, Deputy Commissioner Anna Ficeto, and Earle Walker, Exec. Director, Regional Alliance for Small Contractors.



The lobby of the Marriott Hotel was custom-painted by MacKenzie Painting Company, Inc.



All plants throughout the Convention Center were furnished by a woman-owned small business, "By the Seeds of My Plants."

Book Fair a \$uccess

Bargain hunting shoppers peruse the October 25 Book Fair offerings. Proceeds brought in \$265 to offset the ticket cost for the DAS Holiday Party.



Rosa Parks, Pioneer of Civil Rights

February 4, 1913 - October 24, 2005



Rosa Parks, the “mother of the civil rights movement,” was one of the most important citizens of the 20th century.

Mrs. Parks was a seamstress in Montgomery, Alabama when, in December of 1955, she refused to give up her seat on a city bus to a white passenger. The bus driver had her arrested. She was tried and convicted of violating a local ordinance.

Her act sparked a citywide boycott of the bus system by blacks that lasted more than a year. The boycott raised an unknown clergyman named Martin Luther King, Jr., to national prominence and resulted in the U.S. Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation on city buses. Over the

next four decades, she helped make her fellow Americans aware of the history of the civil rights struggle. This pioneer in the struggle for racial equality was the recipient of innumerable honors, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Nonviolent Peace Prize and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Her example remains an inspiration to freedom-loving people everywhere.

When asked if she was happy living in retirement, Rosa Parks replied, “I do the very best I can to look upon life with optimism and hope and look forward to a better day, but I don’t think there is any such thing as complete happiness. It pains me that there is still a lot of Klan activity and racism. I think when you say you’re happy, you have everything that you need and everything that you want, and nothing more to wish for. I haven’t reached that stage yet.”

Mrs. Parks spent her last years living quietly in Detroit, where she died at the age of 92.

Thank you to the Academy of Achievement for this information about Rosa Parks. <http://www.achievement.org/>

- Maureen Friedman



PIONEER OF CIVIL RIGHTS



“THE only thing that bothered me was that we waited so long to make this protest.”

- Inducted: 1995 -