



ERP winners, you ROCK!



Clockwise: Remarkable Innovation: Lisa Chasse and Pauline Mahoney with supervisor Shari Grzyb; Going the Extra Mile: Alina Kalisz with supervisors Mike Felix, Jerry Lynn and Director Jean Michael; Going the Extra Mile (tie): Kimchi Le with supervisor Dan Sears and Director Rick Miarecki; Customer Service: Lisa O'Connor with supervisors Mike Felix, Jerry Lynn and Director Jean Michael; Team Excellence: Nina Ritson, John McKay, Cindy Rusczyk with Director Donna Micklus

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ERP Winners: Profiles in Excellence

By Donna Micklus

It resembled a scene from “Gatsby” as honorees and guests dined on chicken, pasta and salad at the historic Solomon Welles House in Old Wethersfield on a picture-perfect late summer day.

ERP Chairperson Nancy Jones opened the ceremonies and Commissioner Yelmini presented the Employee Recognition Program certificates for Customer Service, Going the Extra Mile, Team Excellence and Remarkable Innovation.

Here are profiles of the winners excerpted from the nomination forms.

Remarkable Innovation:

Lisa Chasse, Pauline Mahoney, Statewide Human Resources



Since the implementation of CoreCT, the Central Audit Unit has lost three

experienced HR professionals. The work that was once shared among five staff is now shouldered by two: Lisa and Pauline. Over the past 10 months, they had to work extremely well together and had to depend on each other to get a very big job done. Given the visibility of the work they do – by agency HR professionals statewide and by the Auditors of Public Accounts – they not only had to work efficiently but also accurately. They took the initiative to develop EPM queries to assist with the post-audits and found that this not only helped the efficiency, it also saved literally tons of paper! For example, using the CoreCT “canned” report generated about 11,000 pages – 22 reams! – of data every two months; using the “custom” EPM Query they developed resulted in more relevant

information and generated only 155 pages of paper for the same time period!

Going the Extra Mile:

Alina Kalisz, Business Office

Alina was transferred to the DAS Business Office from Culture and Tourism during the financial office consolidation move. She has shown an extreme flexibility and willingness to learn what is required to handle new agencies. Most of all, she has an incredible knowledge of how to complete purchasing, payables and receivable tasks. Because of her knowledge, others that were transferred to DAS have flocked to her requesting her help in doing various tasks. Not once has she refused to teach someone how to do something. She has stayed late during the year-end closing not only to insure that work gets done, but also to assist others with theirs. Alina deserves recognition because of her intelligence, willingness to help others, and for staying after hours to lend a helping hand. She helps to create a positive environment that encourages teamwork and a willingness to go the extra mile to help co-workers.



Customer

Service:

Lisa O’Connor, Business Office



Lisa is a very professional, courteous, hard-working individual who does her job to the absolute best

of her ability. Her talents are well-suited in dealing with internal customers as well as the public. Her service delivery is a model of excellence. She is truly a “people person” who is always on hand to assist others in a spirit of willing cooperation and need to get the job done...and done well. She doesn’t think twice about helping coworkers with their workload to meet deadlines; this is especially evident during the hectic time of closing out the fiscal year. She is known for her work ethic which is second to none.

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Going the Extra Mile Kimchi Le, MIS

Under extremely difficult circumstances, Kimchi performed extraordinary work on the different phases of the Law Enforcement Exam; application and test score information, lists of qualified candidates, self scheduling for the physical exam, etc. Following the untimely passing of Bill Skyrme, she went above and beyond the normal duties required to assist in the completion of the Law Enforcement Exam process. In a very small timeframe, she was able to move from one phase directly to the next in order to get each one up on the DAS website by the dates that had been established when the exam was announced in



April. She had a tremendous amount of programming to do based on pieces that had been already created. She not only familiarized herself with the work already done, but was actually able to finish all of the phases early, which gave HR extra time to test the sites. Had she been unsuccessful in her effort, HR would have to revert to manual scheduling of thousands of applicants.

Team Excellence:

John McKay, Nina Ritson, Cindy Rusczyk, Communications

This team produces an extremely high volume of work. They are available for every event, generating news stories and taking photos. Their turnaround time is next to immediate with agency



communications such as newsbreaks and infograms. Their customer service is superior; they always make time to listen, are friendly, accessible and exceptionally responsive to the needs of internal customers. Their knowledge base is a proven asset. They have creative ideas, know their roles well, make excellent recommendations on matters of style, timing, collaboration with other agencies, and other marketing criteria. They have the ability to produce quality pieces such as the DAS Times and Annual Report on CD Rom and are extremely skilled in electronic media, graphics, desktop publishing, website design and marketing. In short, they make their customers look good! This team promises big and delivers big!

hats off

By Cindy Rusczyk

USDA Coordinator Kate Colarusso from Sysco Food Services praised **Sue Miller**: "I would be totally remiss if I did not take the time to thank you for all your help throughout the year. Your attention to detail was the key in making the year such a success. You were instrumental in the development of an excellent plan for processing the final reconciliation. Thanks so much for maintaining a level of excellence. Kudos to YOU!"

DAS summer picnic committee chair Wayne Grant thanked this year's DAS summer picnic committee: **Theresa Anderson, Juliet Colebrook, Aimee Gagnon, Karen Graham, Nancy Jones, Alina**

Kalisz, Lisa O'Connor, Cindy Rusczyk, Katie Pierce, and Carolyn Underwood. "These individuals gave of their time and hard work in doing all the different fundraisers to offset the purchase price of the summer picnic tickets, which resulted in an excellent response and enjoyable time. Without this committee's dedication, the DAS summer picnic could not happen."

Dick Omohundro sends mega kudos to **Brian Halloran** for "restoring two days worth of data for examination. Brian had this accomplished inside a day (no mean feat)! Then when the search of that data proved fruitless, I turned right around and requested another THREE days worth of earlier data. This he had done within a day and a half. I would sincerely like to acknowledge his efforts and quick response to my requests."

Deputy Commissioner Brenda Sisco, Sandra Guerra and Erin Choquette applauded **Nina Ritson** for "taking care of new business cards and letterhead in a very prompt manner. You're the best!"

Barbara D. Aszklar from the Probate Court Administrator commended Garage Supervisor **Ron Johnson** and his **Fleet staff** for "all of your help in connection with the accident involving the Ford Taurus assigned to our office. From our initial call about the accident to the final call informing us that the work was completed, your staff always conducted business in a friendly, professional manner. Should we ever run into problems again while in your service area, we will not hesitate to call for help."

Mike Felix thanks **Steve Soklow** "for his assistance in developing ad hoc CoreCT Financial Reports."

ECSU Officials Praise Tax Intercept Team

By Donna Micklus

Eastern Connecticut State University had a problem. The school was facing a \$2.2 million shortfall in their delinquent students account. Most of that amount was owed by students that were academically dismissed.

Eastern's primary tool of withholding transcripts or other official information until payment was received was of little incentive to former students with poor academic records.

So, what's a university to do?

Enter DAS and the income tax intercept program, which under state law, can be applied to any state debt including student tuition and fees.

From the submission of the outstanding debt list to Collection Services through the notice of refund intercept by the Department of Revenue Services, to the credit of former students' accounts, the process is now entirely automated.

In just the first four months of operation ECSU received \$75,000 in outright intercepts.

And to show their gratitude to the DAS team of Kathy Sobieski, Diane Preble, Mohammed Shiekh, Audrey Pinnette and Brian Halloran who made it all happen, officials from Eastern headed west to Hartford to personally say thank you.

John Sweeney, Associate Vice President for Finance and Administration, opened the ceremony.

“We thought we would never see that money again. And as a result, we were able to set up subsequent repayment plans. This really is the gift that keeps on giving.”

John Sweeney, Associate Vice President for Finance and Administration



Officials from Eastern Connecticut State University join DAS representatives (L to R) Deputy Commissioner Brenda Sisco, Audrey Pinnette, Commissioner Linda Yelmini, Mohammed Shiekh, Brian Halloran and Team Leader Kathy Sobieski for an award presentation. Not present was team member Diane Preble.

“We at Eastern want to express our appreciation for the wonderful support from DAS and Collection Services. This intercept program is so significant for us,” he said.

Sweeney reported that Eastern has now collected \$80,000 in delinquent student payments.

“We thought we would never see that money again. And as a result, we were able to set up subsequent repayment plans. This

really is the gift that keeps on giving.”

He said that other state universities are now interested in the program, so

it will really benefit all of higher education.

“The money we recovered can now be spent on students, giving them the financial assistance and services they deserve. This never would have been possible without the assistance, guidance and handholding of this great team,” he said.

He then presented certificates to the DAS team.

In a special presentation of a glass sculpture depicting Eastern's signature clock tower to Commissioner Yelmini, Sweeney said, “From Eastern to DAS...this is our way of saying thank you.”

Yelmini expressed her appreciation to Eastern for taking the time to come to DAS for the presentations. “State employees do fabulous work and it is always wonderful when they are recognized for the good work they do.”

Where Are They Now? Here They Are Now!

Larry King

By Nina Ritson

Kimchi Le

If you have ever traveled to the south, you probably noticed how easy it was to pick up a southern accent, even if you're a Yankee. It was even easier for southern-born Larry King of DAS Central Printing, who, upon retiring in 2003, found his way back home to Martinsville, Virginia. "I'm doing pretty good. I always loved coming home to visit – it is so beautiful here - and now I am in the house my momma has had for over 30 years."

King's return to family turned out to be a blessing in itself...and just in the nick of time. Some time after arriving he suffered two back-to-back heart attacks and has since been convalescing under the watchful eyes of his family. "I have five brothers and three sisters and they all live close by. They have been all over me since I got sick, acting as doctors and nurses." King is upbeat about his home confinement but did have some complaints. "Since my heart attack I stopped eating everything I love, even candy. I eat low-fat, low-salt food and guess what? I gained 10 pounds!"

When he first came to Virginia everything was great. "I always wanted to work in a school system, so I got a job serving kids lunch. Well, let me tell you if those kids don't get what they want, they are something else, and they can get real mean! Then I thought I would work at Wal-Mart – that is one big store and they just don't pay well. So then I thought - I always wanted to learn how to type. I know how to use a computer, but I could never type. So I took keyboarding – oh well."

Although his recuperation has slowed him down some, King did get some fun in before he took ill. He treated his whole family to a vacation in Disneyworld. He packed up a bus and drove 15 immediate family members and their children to a week-long stay in Orlando. "And I had to take momma with me – she's put up with me this long."

"You know, when I retired I had three dreams. One was to reconnect with my family and work at a school - I did that. The next was to take my family on a big vacation – I did that. The last was to visit a foreign country – but I'm afraid to fly! Maybe I will take a bus trip to Mexico or Canada."

"I do miss Connecticut," he sighed. "I miss Alex, and tell Diane Preble and all the folks that I said 'hi'." In the next two years, he hopes to return to visit his old friends and coworkers. Then this southern boy got in one last job, "You know it's just wonderful to sit out here on the front porch and watch everybody else go to work for a change! Yeah - I think I am doing very well – a lot better than I expected!"

As thoughts of holiday shopping lurk in your near future, you may be whining about not having enough money to satisfy your materialistic desires. But before you wallow in self-pity take a breath, sit down and count your blessings. We could all learn a lesson of serenity and gratitude from Kimchi Le of MIS, who, since her first day at DAS in April, has already won an Employee Recognition Award for "Going the Extra Mile."

With a gentle reaffirming smile, she told me of her journey to America from Saigon, Vietnam in 1994. She came with her parents, sister and brother. "We came here with only twenty dollars in our pockets and worked very hard to learn the English language, and the culture. It is very different here - especially the food!"

As a teenager in Vietnam, she earned her wages as a hairdresser, but even then her capacity for learning was insurmountable, so she longed to begin college.

"The first five years in this country were very tough. At first we lived in Naugatuck, then on to Waterbury and now Southington. My brother and I attended college at Naugatuck Community College to study Computer Information Systems. I graduated with a GPA of 3.98 and went on to work for an insurance company for six years."

Le is now married to Hoang Le, a computer specialist for the Department of Correction, and they have two children, Kevin, 3 and Alex, 6. "I still have one more sister in Vietnam and we hope she will be coming to live with us here next year."

From the minute she arrives at work, Le's plate is quite full. Although she thrives in a multi-task arena, you would never know it to talk to her. Her calm demeanor and willingness to jump right in and solve any problem is so refreshing. How does she do it? "I learned Tai Chi 14 years ago – I do it every morning and I practice meditation. I love to do this – it keeps my mind clear and free of stress – a healthy mind."

Le hopes to return to college someday to earn her Master's Degree. Always thirsting for knowledge, she described her home computer system, "I have a server at home so I can test programs. This way I have no risk of compromising the system here."

Eager to achieve and always positive - traits that have served Kimchi Le well personally and professionally.



Supplier Diversity Office Holds Training Sessions

By John McKay

For three days the Legislative Office Building was the site of an intensive training session on reporting information to DAS' Supplier Diversity Office.

A representative from each state agency and political subdivision was required to attend as Program Director Meg Yetishefsky reviewed the requirements, forms and tools needed to successfully report their information.

The primary mission of the Supplier Diversity Office is to improve economic opportunities for the State's small- and minority-owned businesses.

With improved management techniques and their new online application, the Supplier Diversity staff strive to make the experience relevant, accessible, and user-

friendly for customers.

"Our overall goal was to teach the agency representatives how to clearly understand and set attainable small- and minority- business goals," said Yetishefsky.

"We went step-by step, line-by-line in educating everyone involved."

Not only was there the explanation, but also an overview of the tools DAS supplies.

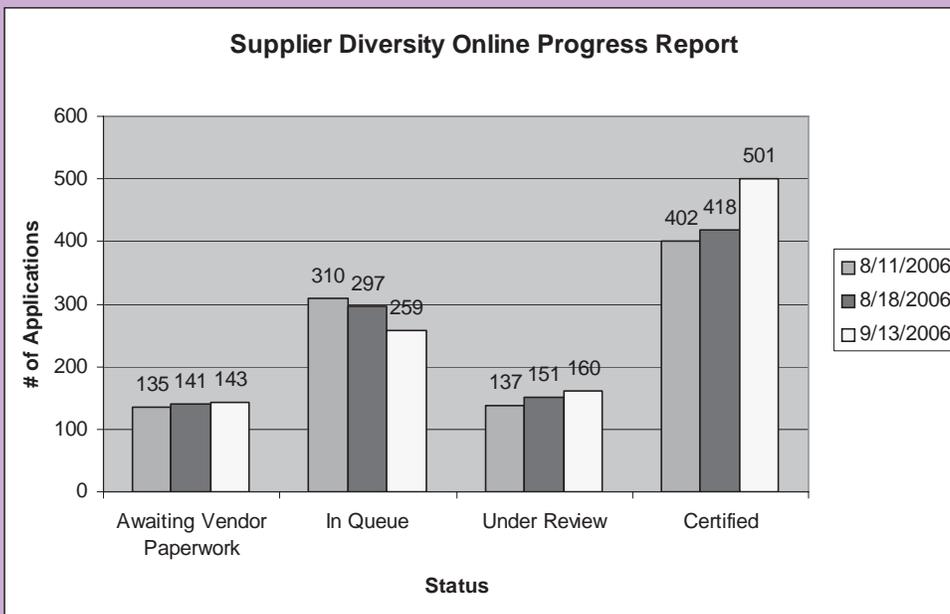
"DAS' Joe Giliberto gave an overview of the DAS State Contracting Portal, Kerry DiMatteo the P-Card, and Joann Bellamo talked about Core-CT. Each part is a necessary tool in attaining individual agency goals," added Yetishefsky.

DAS Commissioner Linda Yelmini welcomed attendees on day one of the training.

"Reporting the numbers correctly on small-, women- and minority-owned businesses is the best way to see where we were, where we're going and where we need to improve. And DAS' Supplier Diversity Unit has made things easier for everyone with their electronic reporting system. Filling in the numbers and emailing them to DAS is about as easy as it can get," Yelmini said.

"It was definitely a success!" said Yetishefsky.

"Each day, there wasn't an empty seat, everyone had good questions and comments and you could tell many attendees really appreciated the time we took to explain what is required of them."



"With the introduction of the new online certification system this year, to say the least, your program team has had an uphill challenge to transition and keep up with the growing workload. As expected, you have been meeting this challenge with success, as reflected in the stats below...a 25% increase in companies certified in the last month! Congratulations to all of you for this remarkable progress. I envision future positive results as everyone gets more accustomed to the new system. Great job!"

**Carol Wilson
Director
DAS Procurement Services**

Jim Gotta, Outstanding in the Field ...Literally!

By John McKay



he Food Advisory Committee meeting turned into a picturesque road trip for DAS' Jim Gotta.

The Committee consists of the states' largest consumers of state-grown food – Departments of Correction, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Children and Families, Veterans' Home and Hospital, Education (Technical Schools), and the Southbury Training School, all of whom promote and support the *Connecticut Grown* program. DAS, as the state's food contracts administrator, also sits on the Committee.

They meet monthly to discuss issues affecting the food contract as well as to network with one another and share ideas.

"We're at the peak of the growing season, and it was suggested we tour some of the farms to really get a feel for where Connecticut-grown food comes from, and hear firsthand from the farmers about their successes and potential obstacles," said Gotta.

"Plus, administering state food contracts, this really gave me the broad spectrum of where everything starts to where it ends in state procurement," he added.

Bob Pellegrino and Rick Macsuga from the Department of Agriculture, Jay Kelleher from SYSCO Foods and Frank Musto of M&M Produce arranged and attended the tour.

The committee's consensus was that the tours of Botticello Farm in Glastonbury and Blue Hills Orchard in Wallingford, were valuable learning experiences.

"The feedback we got from the farmers gave us some new perspectives," Gotta added.



Jim Gotta, center in the red cap, is joined by committee members and farmers on a recent trip to farms in Glastonbury and Wallingford



ConnectiFit . . . The Sequel

By Nina Ritson

Back by popular demand, ConnectiFIT 2 kicked off on August 21, 2006 in the South Mechanical Room. The room was filled with 'seasoned' walkers and some beginners, too.

New to DAS, but not new to the benefits of exercise, Deputy Commissioner Brenda Sisco had this to say about

ConnectiFIT, "I am excited about this. I think the pedometer itself is an incentive to get out and walk. After CTFIT1 ended and I handed it back in – I didn't walk as much. I am actually counting steps as of today!"

"Walking to Hawaii" is the theme for the next ten weeks, and who could say that better than Dr. Martin Anderson sporting a lei while strumming a ukulele in the marketing materials.

Anderson had some additional information for walkers trying to reach their walking goals.

"Did you ever wonder how far different distances might be for walks you would like to try? Check www.ask.com when at your home computer. Click on "Maps and Directions" and enter your starting location for a map. On this website you can simply drag a pushpin icon to your destination. Check it out!" he suggested.



Lois Johnson of Human Resources said, "We're so happy they are doing this again. I missed it in between programs – I missed my pedometer. Actually, my physician heard about it and thought it was great that DAS is doing this!"

Joanne Cusano, new to

Not everyone is pounding the pavement to stack up the miles – some are exercising to simply feel better, like Juliet Colebrook who said, "I am joining again because this is really good – it made me feel better in general."

Katie Pierce echoed those words, "I'm very excited to be able to participate in this program. I just found out what my blood pressure is at the kickoff!"



How far have they walked to date?

"Counting steps and the step equivalents like biking, treadmills, dancing, etc., the rough numbers indicate that DAS walkers have already walked 2.7 million steps and step equivalents. This translates to over 1,300 miles!" Anderson said.

He also wanted to remind walkers, "please don't forget to turn in your sheets in any of the boxes you find on the fifth floor in Strategic Resources Management and Collections. Take care, and keep walking!"

Procurement, was thrilled to join ConnectiFIT, "I like this – it gives me an opportunity to socialize with coworkers I normally wouldn't see."

An Unlikely Hero

By Dr. Martin Anderson

Cradled during the week between the Jewish New Year 5767 and Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, we learned some lessons about the difference that one person can make; even an unlikely hero.

The DAS Diversity Council hosted a presentation by Dr. Michael Good of Durham, Connecticut who was recommended to the Council by Martin Anderson, DAS Director of Administration and fellow Durham “townie.” The basis of Dr. Good’s talk was the research he conducted that culminated in the publication of *The Search For Major Plagge: The Nazi Who Saved Jews* published by the Fordham University Press.

Michael Good, the son of two Jewish immigrants from Vilna, Poland, was born in Southern California in 1957.

Major Plagge was a figure that played a major role in Dr. Good’s life even though Plagge died in 1957 in Germany...ironically, the same year that Dr. Good was born in the United States. The reason was that this Major in the Nazi army of World War II was directly responsible for saving one of the largest groups of Jews from the genocide of the Holocaust by handing out work permits and employing Jews as mechanics and clothing menders to keep them out of the hands of the SS. Among the members of that group that Plagge saved was Pearl, Dr. Good’s mother, who was living in what is now Vilna, Lithuania—and who narrowly escaped her own death by hiding during what was called the *kinderaktion* where Jewish youngsters were rounded up to be killed.

Part of Dr. Good’s personal story came from the tales his mother told of Major Plagge. Like many Jewish Americans of his generation, he didn’t want to hear any more stories about this dark spot in human history.

But after a visit to Vilna in 1999 with his parents, wife and children, Dr. Good became very interested in learning more about this Major as he stood in the Vilna Jewish ghetto that still remains uninhabited, among the buildings where the Jewish workers made repairs to trucks and tanks. Even though many had absolutely no skills for this kind of work, Plagge saw to it that they had jobs, which saved them from the death squads. Being a young girl at the time, Mrs. Good only knew him as Major Plagge and had no first name or other identifying information.

What ever happened to him?

Unfortunately, Dr. Good’s initial attempts to get any facts seemed to be one dead end after another until the power of the Internet got him key pieces of information. Additional information fell into place through a contact in Germany who helped locate and gain access to dusty boxes containing the trial transcripts from when Plagge had been charged with, and exonerated of, war crimes against Jews during the Nuremberg trials.

The transcripts led to a wealth of information and more Internet contacts Dr. Good made in Germany, Poland, Lithuania, and the USA.

The rest of the story had to do with what Dr. Good learned about the enormous efforts of Plagge to save as many Jews in Vilna as he could and the lengths he went to assist them with basics like food to supplement the starvation diets imposed on them. Plagge deeply regretted what he saw happening around him and, despite his heroic efforts, he never forgave himself for having been a part of the movement that brought the Nazi party into power in the 1930s.

Through Dr. Good’s repeated efforts, in 2005, in Jerusalem, Karl



Martin Anderson with author Dr. Michael Good at the September 28th Diversity Council event.

Plagge joined Oskar Schindler and some 380 other Germans honored as a “Righteous Among the Nations” hero by the State of Israel for protecting and saving Jews during the Holocaust.

Dr. Good closed with a passage from a letter he had obtained that was written by Plagge himself.

“I believe that the time has come for all right-minded, well-disposed people to extend their hands to each other across national boundaries to form a community of ‘the solitary among the nations.’ For whoever seeks truth and justice nowadays remains solitary in the midst of a blind multitude crying for power and violence.”

The author and his two siblings grew up in West Covina, California, a suburb just outside of Los Angeles. Michael attended Occidental College in Los Angeles where he majored in Political Science. After college, he decided to pursue a career in medicine and attended the University of Rochester School of Medicine in New York. After graduating from medical school, he and his wife Susan moved to Middletown, Connecticut where Michael entered the Family Practice Residency program at Middlesex Hospital. After completing his residency he helped found Middlesex Family Physicians with two of his classmates, and together they have been caring for patients for twenty years.



...our strength is in our difference