



**"The People Company"**

Serving Persons with Special Needs Since 1998

### In this Issue:

**Staff Participate in Continuing Education**

pg 1

**"Getting to Know You"**

pg 2

**News from the Planning Center**

pg 2

**"There's No Place Like Home - No, There's No Place Like Home!"**

pg 3

**ASI Monthly Elective Education**

pg 3

### ***From the Director's Desk ~***

*AmeriServe International strives to be the innovative leader in creating opportunities for a lifestyle of choice, purpose, and value for people with significant challenges. In doing so, we have also chosen to focus on the things that really matter.*

*The challenge may of our people face daily are far greater than most of us can imagine. Yet, they face them with dignity and pride. It is our honor to be a part of their lives and to do what we can to help fill their life with the experiences. That is what makes AmeriServe International "The People Company."*

# The Connector

*Choice ~ Respect ~ Participation ~ Presence*

Volume I, Issue XXVII-IA September 2007

## **AmeriServe International, Inc.**

Making life better tomorrow because of what is done today.

### **Staff Participate in Continuing Education**

A training feature offered to employees at AmeriServe is the opportunity for continuing education. The continuing education option is voluntary, and supplements required training. A unique component of the AmeriServe continuing education program is the manner in which employees are rewarded for participation. Specific programs for continuing education are available for employees as it applies to their respective positions. Each participant who attends the three hour education program receives an hourly increase for each hour worked during the



following month. This month's topic, for example, is Team Decision Making.

While AmeriServe supports continuing education for employees through incentives to attend, the people served benefit through staffs' increase in knowledge and awareness. Those who have attended have made statements such as, "I have gained skills and applied the classroom learning to the real setting." "I think it's great

that we are paid more if we attend the training; it's the first place I ever worked for that does that." "I have found the classes to be enjoyable; time passes very quickly." "I enjoy the opportunity to participate in the class and I learn from others."

Employees are encouraged to take part in this elective fringe benefit. We are convinced, and the employees are a testimony to the fact, that it is well worth their time.

See Page 3 for upcoming scheduled classes.

September - Team Decision Making  
October - Giving and Receiving Feedback

## **What We Do**

### **Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)**

Habilitation, Respite, Consumer Directed Attendant Care, Group homes

### **Day Treatment**

Adult Day Habilitation and Community Integration Services

### **Residential Support**

Supported Community Living, Specialized Living Arrangements

## “Getting to Know You”

There is song in the musical, *The King and I*, called “Getting to Know You.” The only lyrics to the song I can remember are “Getting to know you, getting to know all about you.” The key to any successful relationship is contained in these words. As AmeriServe International strives to be “the innovative leader in creating lifestyles of choice, purpose and value for people with significant challenges,” the key to our success is also contained in the words of that song.

Through our experiences we have grown to know what things are important in our life and in our home. We all, for the most part, have the ability to know and understand what is important TO us and what is important FOR us. Each of us has a “life bucket” that is, for the most part, full of experiences and things that we find important. The more full our bucket, the greater the quality and satisfaction we have with life. If our “bucket” is not full enough we tend to experience less quality and satisfaction. We may act differently toward those around us. Others may perceive us as grumpy, short tempered and just generally not pleasant to be around.

We can generally communicate what we think we need to reduce our

“grumpiness.” We have the control and the ability to make choices as to how we go about maintaining a level of quality and satisfaction. We can generally take action that brings things that are important back into our life. More importantly, we have relationships with others who know us well enough to come to our aide with kindness or consideration. Consequently, our “life bucket” fills up again.

How is this different for people with significant challenges? Well, it isn't. The difference is in how people with disabilities are perceived as they express discontent with how full their “life bucket” is to and for them. They may express their discontent or concern with words, sounds or, in many cases, with their behavior.

Where we may be perceived as “grumpy,” people with disabilities may be perceived as having a behavioral disorder and in need of a program. At AmeriServe we look at that a little differently. Many people come to us with behavioral challenges which we perceive as opportunities to “listen.” People with behavioral challenges are telling us something with their behavior. They are asking for someone to look deep into their “life bucket” to see how full it is. To see what is important TO

them and FOR them and, most importantly, to see what is missing. By helping the person fill their bucket with activities and relationships, a lifestyle of choice, purpose, and value, drastic changes can be achieved.

This simple act may be all it takes to change a person's life dramatically. As we are successful in supporting people to lead fuller, more purposeful lives, many of those “behavioral disorders” seem to fade away. Engaging a person in their own life and connecting with others in the process builds relationships of mutual value and caring. These relationships help keep a person's bucket full enough that quality and satisfaction are present in their lives and the need to use their behavior to communicate discontent subsides.

It takes time and significant effort to know someone well enough to do this, but at AmeriServe that is what we do. We believe that the words “getting to know you” really are the key to creating lifestyles of choices, purpose and value. Every day we are presented with opportunities to fill up someone's bucket or empty it out. Just the act of getting to know someone goes a long way toward keeping that person's bucket close to the “full” mark.

## News From The Planning Center

**T**alk about atmosphere! Those who have been coming to the Planning Center have taken notice that there are some rather large atmosphere changes taking place! There are large flowers on the windows, special paintings made by the clients, colorful designs and TREES! The place is literally coming to life.

Along with these new and exciting in-house adventures, we

are excited to add Hillcrest Health and Rehab to our regular volunteer list. Hillcrest Health and Rehab is a long-term nursing and rehabilitation community located in Bellevue, Nebraska, where each Thursday several of the clients volunteer in the activities department.

Billy Allen is also enjoying his new position at The Center, where he has been invited to have lunch twice a week

and help clean the tables at the completion of the noon meal. The Center is a beautiful activity center for individuals over 50 located in downtown Council Bluffs. Through his volunteering experience, Billy is making new connections with other adults in the community while playing an active role in helping others.

See Sign-up sheet  
at your work location.

## ASI Monthly Elective Education

Training provided by  
American Institute of Management.

### Team Decision Making

**Thursday, September 13th 3:30 - 6:30pm**  
**Friday, September 21st 12:00 - 3:00pm**

The purpose of this program is to improve interpersonal communication skills of team members and give them tools to collaborate, make decisions and solve problems more effectively.

#### Attend the session to:

- Discuss barriers to group decision making
- Learn about methods of group decision making
- Practice consensus decision making
- Identify how your team will improve its group decision making
- Review who is responsible for current team decisions
- Identify team decision issues to be addressed

### Giving and Receiving Feedback

**Thursday, October 11th 3:30 - 6:30pm**  
**Friday, October 19 12:00 - 3:00pm**

The purpose of this program is to develop skills in one and two way communication to better facilitate how we give and get responses..

#### Attend the session to:

- Learn what feedback is
- Discover how open or closed you are to giving and receiving feedback
- Learn to give effective feedback to others
- Learn how to receive effective feedback from others
- Practice giving a receiving feedback from team members

## "There's No Place Like Home - No, There's No Place Like Home!"

These were such heartfelt words that Dorothy was communicating as she shared her love and longing, for her home in Kansas. This is the very same feeling that we strive to create within the hearts of the men and women we have the opportunity to serve.

Much time and effort goes into the observation, planning and implementation of programs, activities, structure and atmosphere that helps make their houses their homes. Not many people would be able to feel very excited about their living situation if their home environment didn't afford them the opportunity to make choices. We sometimes forget about the many choices we make in our own lives daily. It is these choices that let our lives be filled in such a manner that we feel like we have a great life.

What choices do those we serve need to be able to have the chance to

make? Choices such as "where can I go, what can I do, who can I see, and when can my friends come visit me? What are my meal choices, what does my home look like, and what's my wardrobe like?" These are just a few of the many opportunities for making choices. But, the most important factor that makes my house the home that I want to come back to each day is the atmosphere.

Is the atmosphere in my home a pleasant, caring, sharing atmosphere where kindness abounds? Is it a place where requests are made, not demands given? Where assistance with challenges is always graciously present? Is my home staffed with people that bring joy, love and heartfelt support with them when they come into my house? So, just as Dorothy longed for her home in Kansas, this is the goal we are shooting for – to assist those we serve make their house a home.

## Support Options

1. In-home Support—training to increase self-help, socialization, and adaptive skills within the home and community.
2. Day Treatment— specialized sensory-motor, cognitive, communicative, social, interaction and behavioral support.
3. Residential— designed to maximize consumer successes through the use of habilitative therapies, special developmental skills, participative enhancement, and sensory-motor development in the group home or specialized living setting.

**Call for more  
information today!**

**AmeriServe International, Inc.**  
**712-322-0272**



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### Making a Difference

AmeriServe International, Inc. carefully selects all personnel to ensure that they possess beliefs, experiences, skills, and knowledge that will assist persons with special needs in exercising a quality of life of their choice. If you or someone you know is interested in doing the right things, in the right way, for the right reasons, at the right times, we are looking for the right people.

Please call **712-322-0272** to find out how you can make a difference.



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