



The Torch

The official newsletter for State of Indiana employees

MAY 2023

Hoosier Lottery celebrates beneficiaries

May is a busy time in Indiana. Schools are letting out for the summer, flowers are blooming, and Indiana is hosting the Greatest Spectacle in Racing. May is also a time when the Hoosier Lottery recognizes the many beneficiaries whom we support – retired teachers, police and firefighters. Since our creation in 1989, the Hoosier Lottery has contributed more than \$7 billion to good causes, including \$30 million annually to local police and firefighters’ pensions and \$30 million annually to the Teachers’ Retirement Fund.

Gloria H., a retired teacher from Michigan City, explained: “If I hadn’t had a pension, I probably would not have been able to retire when I did. Knowing that I had money vested by the [school] corporation over all those years and money that was matched made a huge difference. Some of my friends work at places where they don’t have a pension and would love to retire, but they don’t have the pension, so they don’t have the financial security that brings.”

Sarah M. Taylor, Executive Director of the Hoosier Lottery, stated “The Hoosier Lottery is thankful to our beneficiaries for their public service and support of their local

communities. We are proud that our success helps ensure our retired teachers, police and firefighters have a strong and secure retirement.”

Funds from the Hoosier Lottery also benefit citizens throughout the state. Each year, millions of dollars are sent to all 92 counties to help offset the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax. Even if you don’t purchase Hoosier Lottery tickets, proceeds from its sales benefit Hoosiers throughout the state.

To learn how the Hoosier Lottery has benefited your local community or to read additional beneficiary stories, check out Hoosierlottery.com/givingback.

Article submitted by the Hoosier Lottery

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The Torch is published monthly by the Indiana State Personnel Department and is available online at on.in.gov/TheTorch.

Got a story?

Submit your story ideas to: spdcommunications@spd.in.gov

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Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness Month—a month dedicated to increasing public awareness and understanding of mental health issues. Mental health challenges affect all of us, regardless of age, race, gender, position or ethnicity. Some of us may go through

temporary mental health struggles such as stress or anxiety, while others may face more prolonged battles like chronic depression or bipolar disorder. It's crucial to know that as a State of Indiana employee, help is available for all kinds of mental health needs, and there is a range of support resources, including short-term counseling services, medication management and access to specialized care providers for long-term management. Available resources and benefits available to employees are broken down into two areas of care: short-term and long-term.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Can't quiet your mind?

Take a moment to check in with yourself.

Learn more about EAP



OPTUM™

Short Term Care: Optum EAP

Stress and anxiety are a normal part of life and can be caused by various stressors, such as work deadlines, financial issues, or relationship problems. Experiencing stress over an extended period can lead to physical and mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. Life events such as a divorce or breakup, illness or injury, trauma, loss of a loved one, or caring for an elderly parent or small child over a prolonged period can trigger anxiety or depression. Anxiety or depression caused by these situational stressors can last days, weeks or even months.

The [Optum Employee Assistance Program](#) (EAP) program is here to support you as you navigate life's stressors. The Optum EAP is a free service for all full-time state employees and those in their households and can be a critical tool to improve overall well-being. Calling the 24/7 hotline at (800) 886-9747 will immediately put you in touch with an experienced clinician that will help you get connected to counseling resources. Your call is completely confidential. Through the Optum EAP you have access to:

1. Full-time State of Indiana Employees and their households are eligible for up to 8 FREE sessions with a licensed provider through the EAP. To use this resource, find a provider and get your Authorization Code by calling Optum at (800) 866-9747 or by going online to liveandworkwell.com (access code Indiana). Use this code with any in-network Optum EAP provider.
2. Mental Health resources such as in-person therapy, [virtual therapy](#), [Virtual Behavioral Coaching](#) and more.
3. [Substance use support](#).
4. Family and parenting resources and support such as [online coaching for families](#), [Solutions for Caregivers](#), [Access to Back-Up Care](#) and more.
5. Financial and legal counseling and support such as [free and discounted legal consultations](#), [mediation services](#), [financial wellness benefits](#), [identity theft assistance](#) and more.
6. As part of EAP, you also have access to these apps:
 1. [Sanvello](#), an on-demand app to help with stress, anxiety and depression.
 2. [Talkspace](#), 24-hr phone and text resource for extra support from a licensed, in-network EAP provider.

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Mental Health Awareness Month

Long-Term Care and Management: State Employee Health Plan Coverage

The goal of the Employee Assistance Program is to provide short-term support for life’s stressors and to get you on the path toward better mental health and well-being. If you need longer-term mental health treatment, support or medication, members of the State Employee Health Plan have access to mental health coverage through their plan. Anthem can help you understand your coverage and find an in-network provider. You can connect with Anthem by calling (877) 814-9709, by going online to [www. Anthem.com](http://www.Anthem.com), or by using Anthem’s mobile app called Sydney.

Anthem also has case managers to help you understand your condition, develop goals, connect you with resources, and help ensure you are getting all the benefits available under your health plan. These services are free to you as part of the Behavioral Health Resource Care Management Program. Connect with a case manager by calling (844) 792-4151.

For 2023 plan coverage information, see your health care Plan Summary here:

1. CDHP 1 Plan Summary: [Summary of Benefits - CDHP1 \(in.gov\)](#)
2. CDHP 2 Plan Summary: [Summary of Benefits - CDHP2 \(in.gov\)](#)
3. Traditional Plan: [Summary of Benefits - Traditional \(in.gov\)](#)
4. Prescription Coverage: [SPD: Benefits: Prescription Coverage \(in.gov\)](#)

Mental Health Awareness Month is a time to raise awareness and understanding of mental health issues, and to encourage those who are struggling to seek help. The State of Indiana offers a variety of resources to support employees with their mental health needs, including short-term counseling services, medication management, and access to specialized care providers for long-term management. If you are struggling with your mental health, please know that you are not alone, and that help is available. Please reach out to Optum EAP at (800) 886-9747 (24/7 support) or call the INSPD Benefits Hotline at: 317-232-1167 or 1-877-248-0007 (toll-free) for more information about the resources that are available to you.

Common causes of knee pain & tips on prevention

Tuesday, May 9 | Noon

Join by [clicking here](#), scanning the QR code to the right, or by phone at 323-694-0227 phone conference ID: 431 621 646#



Join Tx:Team Physical Therapist, Alex Strahle, PT, DPT, CSCS for this presentation and learn about:

- Discussion on a few of the common causes of knee pain.
- Exercises to strengthen your legs and reduce risk of injury.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Tips for talking about your mental health

Start a conversation about mental health when there is an open window of time to have an in-depth discussion, and neither you or the person you're talking to will have to cut the conversation short to take care of other obligations. Plan to set aside at least 30 minutes to an hour.



Start with a text if a face-to-face talk is too intimidating.

It could be a plain old text message with a note that says, "I have some important things on my mind and need to make time to talk to you about them."



Find and share info.

Find important information online that might help you explain what you're going through. Print it and bring it with you when you're ready to talk.



Take a screening test at mhascreening.org.

Print out your results to share with the person you plan to talk to.

What if someone talks to you about their mental health?

- **Listen.** Let them finish their sentences and complete thoughts without interrupting. After they have finished you can respond.
- **Let them know if you understand.** If someone has just spilled their guts and you've gone through something similar—tell them. It helps a lot for someone to know they aren't alone. Make sure you don't switch the topic of conversation to your struggles though; focus on their needs.
- **Avoid being judgmental.** Don't tell them they are being weird or crazy; it's not helpful at all.
- **Take them seriously.** Try not to respond with statements that minimize how they are feeling or what they are going through, such as, "You're just having a bad week," or "I'm sure it's nothing."
- **Make yourself available to talk again if needed.** While it can be a big relief for someone to share something they have been keeping secret, mental health struggles usually aren't solved with one conversation. Let the person who has spoken with you know that they can reach out to you again if they are having a tough time. It's ok to let them know if there is a time of day or certain days of the week that you aren't available.
- **Don't turn what you've been told into gossip.** If someone is talking to you about their mental health, it was probably tough for them to work up the nerve to say something in the first place and you shouldn't share what they tell you with other people. Let them share on their own terms.

For original content and more information, visit Mental Health America's website by clicking here



988 is more than just an easy-to-remember number...

988 offers a direct connection to compassionate, accessible care and support for anyone experiencing mental health-related distress – whether that is thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress.

If you or someone you know needs support now, call 988.

For updates on 988 in Indiana, visit [in.gov/fssa/dmha/update-on-988-in-indiana](https://www.in.gov/fssa/dmha/update-on-988-in-indiana).

There is hope.



988 SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

Ivy Tech/State of Indiana partnership introduction

As a state employee, you can take courses at Ivy Tech Community College at no cost to you. Through the Achieve Your Degree (AYD) program, the State of Indiana has partnered with Ivy Tech to pay the cost of tuition directly to Ivy Tech for eligible employees to remove all barriers to continuing your education. As part of AYD, employees will also receive application assistance, academic advising, career coaching and more to help achieve your academic and career goals.

This partnership covers all eligible courses in more than 70 academic programs. You can earn an associate degree, short-term certificate, or workforce certification in numerous fields. Required textbooks may be covered as part of tuition. Tuition reimbursement and assistance is available up to \$5,250, to all State of Indiana employees of executive branch agencies who:

- Have been employed full-time continuously with the state for at least 12 months prior



to submitting their Education Reimbursement program application.

- Have not received a disciplinary action in the 12 months prior to the end of the course.
- Have completed the course with a satisfactory grade of at least a “C” or above (or an equivalent “pass” grade).

If you're interested in learning more, visit [on.in.gov/EducationRP](https://www.on.in.gov/EducationRP) or visit [ivytech.edu/ayd-in](https://www.ivytech.edu/ayd-in).

Visit and fish at DNR properties for free on May 7

The DNR is offering free admission to state parks, recreation areas, forests, and reservoirs on Sunday, May 7, which is also a Free Fishing Day.

On Free Fishing Days, all Indiana residents can fish the state's public waters without a fishing license or trout/salmon stamp. All size and bag limits remain in effect. For public places to fish near you, see [on.IN.gov/where2fish](https://www.on.IN.gov/where2fish).

Free admission provides a great opportunity to enjoy your favorite DNR property or visit a new site. Find [DNR properties](#) across the state and the facilities they offer.



Public Service RECOGNITION WEEK

MAY 7-13, 2023

Celebrate Public Service Recognition Week: May 7-13

Since 1985, the first full week in May has been designated as Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW), honoring those who serve our nation as federal, state, county or local government employees. The Indiana State Personnel Department (INSPD) encourages your agency to celebrate this week with special events and by sharing employee activities on social media.

Join us in recognizing the amazing work of all those who work for Indiana. Here in state government, we'll celebrate our state's public servants from May 7-13, 2023.

Celebrate PSRW 2023 with these events! Share how you are celebrating using #INAppreciation and #PSRW and tagging @stateofindiana on [Facebook](#), @workforindiana on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

MONDAY, MAY 8

Theme Day: Silly Socks

Wear your favorite silly socks!

TUESDAY, MAY 9

Theme Day: Decades

Wear your favorite apparel from the 70's, 80's, 90's, or beyond!

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10

Professional Development Day

Take advantage of the state's free professional development opportunities from LinkedIn Learning. [Learn more](#) or get started with one of these topics:

- [Mindful moments](#)
- [Upskill to advance your career](#)

Theme Day: Vacation Destination

Show your favorite vacation destination by wearing a shirt from your travels.

THURSDAY, MAY 11

Statehouse Market Opening Day

Featuring some of your favorite local food trucks and artisan vendors, the Statehouse Market's Opening Day is 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Thursday, May 11 on Robert D. Orr Plaza.

Group Photo

INSPD will be taking a statewide group photo to showcase the service-year colors. The group photo will be taken at 11:30 a.m. on the steps of the Statehouse.

Professional Headshots and Team Photos

The Indiana Department of Correction will be offering free employee headshots and fun team photos from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the IGC-S Atrium.

Theme Day: Years of State Service

Wear the following colors that correspond with how long you've been serving Indiana:

0-2 years: Wear Gray

3-5 years: Wear Yellow

6-10 years: Wear Green

11-15 years: Wear Blue

16+ years: Wear Red



FRIDAY, MAY 12

Theme Day: Hoosier Spirit

Show your Hoosier pride and wear anything Indiana! Sports, schools, if it's Indiana, rock your gear.

SATURDAY, MAY 13

Visit a state park for free!

The Indiana Department of National Resources is offering free admission to state employees at all state parks and DNR properties with entrance fees on May 13. Just let the gate attendant know you are a state employee for free admission.

For more details
and up-to-date event
information, visit:
on.in.gov/PSRWevents

Industrial health and safety consultant takes safety training to the next level

Congratulations to Cheryl Kuritz, INSafe industrial health and safety consultant, for becoming a certified Safety Compliance Specialist!

Kuritz recently took her safety training to the next level via the Indiana Chamber of Commerce's Safety Compliance Specialist certification. Those in the program earn 10 credits from seminars and classes that focus on OSHA standards and regulations. The certification takes several years to complete. Kuritz completed the certification in eight years (thanks to a few delays due to COVID-19). At this year's Safety Conference, Kuritz recognized for her achievement.

Kuritz is not new to workplace safety. She's worked for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in the Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program, served

as a compliance safety and health officer with IOSHA, worked for the Environmental Management and Education Program, taught and guest lectured at Purdue, and spent over 23 years in private industry. She's spent the last five years working in the Department of Labor's INSafe division providing on-site consultations, group training and seminars to Indiana employers.

Now, she is applying what she learned to her role in INSafe. "Focusing on safety items helped me better understand areas that were not my strengths," Kuritz shared.

The Department of Labor is proud of Kuritz's accomplishment and supports all of our staff as they find



INSafe industrial health & safety consultant Cheryl Kuritz

continuing education courses and use their knowledge to keep driving the safety, health and prosperity of Hoosiers in the workplace.

Article submitted by the Indiana Department of Labor

Indiana Law Enforcement Academy students assist with tornado cleanup

On April 6, approximately 140 students from the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy assisted with tornado damage cleanup in Whiteland. Students studying to become new police officers recognized the importance of giving back to the community, even if it was a community outside their immediate jurisdiction, and volunteered their free time to help those who had endured the misfortune of tornado damage. Over the course of several hours, the students filled eight (8) large dumpsters and sorted through debris. Students were so struck by the opportunity that they asked to return to assist on a second evening.



Article and photos submitted by the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy



ISBVI Superintendent Durst honored with Thomas C. Hasbrook Award

On March 9, Superintendent Jim Durst of Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ISBVI) was honored with Bosma Enterprises' Thomas C. Hasbrook Award for his dedication to improving the lives of and opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired.

The award's namesake, Thomas Hasbrook was a dedicated public servant in Indianapolis who advocated for individuals with disabilities, and who himself lost his sight in a 1944 explosion. "To be nominated for an award in his honor was incredible," said Superintendent Durst about the recent award, "and to be the recipient of that award was really remarkable for me."

"Tom Hasbrook was an incredible individual," Durst continued, "He was very much an innovative public servant, as a city official and as a legislator. He was a pretty remarkable businessperson and an advocate for individuals who are blind or have low vision—just kind of an all-around good person."

And much of the same can also be said about Superintendent Durst, who has dedicated more than 45 years of his career to educating and empowering students with the tools they need for independence.

Before joining ISBVI, Durst spent 14 years with West Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind. He recalls that while touring ISBVI for the first time, he was impressed with the dedication of the faculty and staff, and the amount of learning he saw happening in the hallways, the cafeteria, and even in dormitories. The dedication of ISBVI faculty and

staff that he saw on that first day convinced him to take the leap and join the school as principal almost 32 years ago.

"What's neat about our school is that everyone is here for the right reasons: they're here to make a difference for kids," says Durst. And that core value of serving children well has been Durst and his leadership team's focus as they've continued to build upon the school's legacy. In 32 years with ISBVI, Durst has seen through many new partnerships and directional changes at the school, but always with a focus on serving children as well as possible.

One notable shift in the school's direction was its deliberate de-emphasis on ISBVI enrollment numbers and a renewed focus on serving more students in schools across the state. Typically, Durst said, school success was measured by how many students were enrolled in the school. But to better embody the mission of ISBVI, the school made an intentional decision to expand its outreach program to partner with Indiana school districts serving blind or low vision students.

"One of the things that has helped us as a school is that we've realized is that we can't be successful if we hide our light under a bushel basket. So, we have done everything we can to do as much collaborating as we can," he adds.

One of the fruits of that collaboration was the enhancement of the Indiana Education Resource Center, a library of resources for blind and low vision students



Superintendent Jim Durst of ISBVI accepting the Bosma Enterprises' Thomas C. Hasbrook Award with his wife Leslie Durst.

through ISBVI. "Braille is very expensive," explained Durst. To give an example of the prior system, he shared that "if a local school corporation, hypothetically, had a 9th grade science student, they would buy a braille book, which was very expensive, and when that student went to 10th grade, that book went into a closet and nobody got to use it again."

Through the resource center, Indiana school districts can now borrow resources as needed, and then return them to the library for another district to use. This program has led to estimated savings of up to \$900k to \$1M for the state and local districts.

Under Durst, the school also entered into a cooperative agreement with the Indiana Department of Correction's Miami Correctional Facility to transcribe braille books

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ISBVI Superintendent Durst honored with Thomas C. Hasbrook Award

and develop digital formats for the school and the resource center—one more of many successes during Durst's tenure as superintendent.

Yet, Durst gives the credit for the school's success to each and every member of the ISBVI family. "A school is only as good as the folks that are providing the services," he states. "We as a school have a national reputation for excellence. That national reputation for excellence isn't based on Jim Durst the Superintendent—it's based on all of our faculty and staff including our teachers, our outreach folks, the healthcare that's provided, the programs, thinking outside of the box and doing things differently."

According to Superintendent Durst,

the quality that makes a good leader is one's ability to surround themselves with good people—and in his words, he's been fortunate to be surrounded by incredible people. "I have an exemplary administrative team, I have a wonderful faculty and staff, I have a dedicated school board, and the school has a student body that I am inspired by and learn from every day."

"My goal is to bring out the best I can of all the people that I'm surrounded by," he shares. And by leveraging his team's experience, Durst can see into his own blind spots and position the school to better serve its students.

Explaining his take on leadership, he shared, "the school can run based

on my 32 years of experience, or the school can run based on the thousands of years of experience we have. So being able to capture good ideas and suggestions and supporting those kinds of ideas for success I think is why we have a good reputation at the school."

And Superintendent Durst's legacy of great leadership will continue with ISBVI into the future as his team continues to follow his example of exceptional leadership and look for new and better ways to serve their kids.

Article submitted by the Indiana State Personnel Department

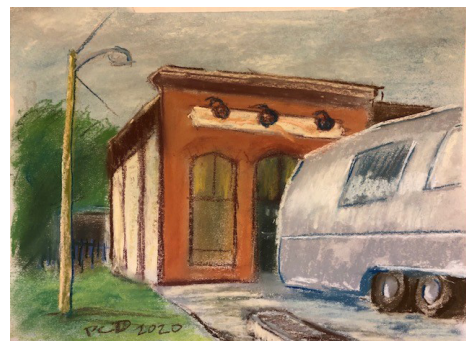
Artwork below by Cynthia Woltjer (Indiana Department of Workforce Development)



Artwork below by Deepshikha Singhal (Indiana Department of Health)



Artwork below by Paul Diebold (Indiana Department of Natural Resources)



State employee celebrates service dog's retirement, shares best practices for interacting with service animals in the workplace

“Being able to have them at work has been so valuable to me. It allows me to do my job effectively and with confidence.”

In 2022, state employee Allison Wymer began training her new service dog, Apple, in preparation for the retirement of her long-time companion, Daisy. Allison and Daisy have trained and worked together for seven years, going all the way back to Daisy's first trainings in 2016.

And while Daisy trained, Allison was in training too. “I had to work with the trainer and I had to take time to do homework, to walk with the trainer and learn how she was doing things,” Allison recounts. “It was not casual: Training service dogs to “task,” or work for their handler, is a ton of repetition, tons of positive reinforcement. It's hours and hours of work every single day. It's not something like having a pet and teaching them how to sit. I take it very seriously.”

Following Daisy's first year of training, she was also certified by AKC as a Canine Good Citizen (CGC), meaning she's been through very rigorous obedience training. CGC training is an expert-made training program designed to help an owner and their dog be the best they can be, and to help owners and their dogs together. Using the skills gained during Daisy's training, Allison is now training Apple with the same obedience skills and tasks Daisy learned.

“You can tell the difference between a service animal and a dog,” says Allison, “because a service animal will not be acting like a regular

dog: They won't jump up on you or use the bathroom indoors, they'll be tasking, they will be working with their owner.” A service animal is also trained to task while they're not in a harness.

“There's a big difference between being in the harness and on the leash and being without all the equipment, at least for the training I do with my dogs,” says Allison. Service dogs know that when they're on a leash, they're working; and to do their job well, a service animal needs to keep their full attention on the job.

As a state employee, Allison is working to create a positive and welcoming work culture, and she asks fellow employees to engage in learning to better understand what service animals do and how to interact with them appropriately in the workplace.

“I think what people should know is that [service animals] are working. And it's not okay to pet a service dog or try to get their attention while they're working because it takes away from what their job is and what they're trying to do. Unless



Allison Wymer with retiring service dog, Daisy (right) and her new service dog, Apple (left).

you ask the handler and they say it's okay.”

But even more importantly, a person's focus should always be on the handler, not the service animal. “Even though they look cute, they're there for a purpose,” she shares. “As much as you'd like to pet them or look at them, try to keep that as an inside thought and not say it out

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State employee celebrates service dog's retirement, and shares best practices for interacting with service animals in the workplace

loud. Because it really does make it hard for the handler to do their job and it makes it hard for the service animal to do theirs."

Another thing to understand about service animals is that each one is trained with their handler to complete specific tasks, and the array of tasks service animals can complete are as diverse as the animals themselves.

Oftentimes, when we think about service animals, we think first about guide dogs, also known as seeing-eye dogs. But service animals can also be trained to identify seizures or diabetic emergencies, fetch medication, prevent falls and more. So, it's important to understand

that service animals, unlike pets, accompany their handler to help complete necessary tasks, and they empower their handler to live as a whole person.

"They are a part of me being a whole person, so I needed to have them here."

"If I don't have them here with me, I'm only going to be 75% me, and that's not a great person," Allison shares. "Being able to have them at work has been so valuable to me—it allows me to do my job effectively and with confidence."

Interview with Allison Wymer, Governor's Council for People with Disabilities (GCPD)



Allison's retiring service dog, Daisy.

The Do's and Don'ts of engaging employees who work with service animals:

Do:

- Smile and greet the employee.
- Respect the employee by acknowledging them first, not the service animal.
- Learn to recognize service animals by the vest they wear and/or their demeanor.
- If you have a question, ask the handler about their service animal when appropriate.
- Respect a no if the employee is not comfortable discussing their service animal.
- Understand that service animals are not perfect and can sometimes make mistakes.
- Engage in learning about the many types of service animals.



Don't:

- Pet a service animal or call them over to you, unless you ask the handler first.
- Ask an employee about their disability and/or why they need a service animal.
- Be afraid to engage with an employee who works with a service animal.
- Ignore an employee with a service animal.

If you want to learn more about service animals, visit [ada.gov/topics/service-animals](https://www.ada.gov/topics/service-animals)

Calm after the storm: ‘One-stop shops’ help tornado victims with variety of state services under one roof

When tornadoes touched down in multiple Indiana counties in the late evening of March 31, they left a trail of death, damage, and destruction across the Midwest, Southern, and Eastern parts of the country.

The massive line of severe storms hit some Indiana communities especially hard, such as Sullivan and Whiteland, prompting multiple state agencies to spring into action to help. Shaleen “Shay” Johnson and Rosalie Conley of the Indiana Department of Health’s Vital Records division were among those who assisted storm victims and others through a pair of collaborative “one-stop shops” intended to aid, in a variety of ways, people affected by the disaster as they recover and rebuild.

Johnson and Conley were part of the shop in Sullivan, a community of about 4,200 that was among the hardest hit. News reports stated three people were killed and several more were injured when an EF3 tornado ripped through Sullivan County, destroying or damaging an estimated 200 buildings just as March turned to April. The “one-stop shops” involved representatives from the Family and Social Services Administration, Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Indiana Department of Workforce Development and more who visited the Sullivan and Whiteland communities at a central location to offer as many services as possible at once for those who need them.

The Vital Records employees were joined by members of the division of Immunization and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and sought to provide something sorely needed alongside the services they give through their jobs: hope.

It was an eye-opening experience for Johnson and Conley. The latter described the experience of helping individuals and families visiting the shops as “awesome” because they were able to help people who’d experienced tragedy.

“We have seen tears and devastation, hope, and frustration from the folks who have lost everything — folks not knowing where to start or what to do next,” Conley said. “This is a real eye opener for being thankful and grateful and appreciative for what we have.”

She also spoke of the variety of services that were offered, which included access to birth and death certificates. Indiana BMV provided vehicle titles and driver licenses as well. The American Red Cross was also on hand to assist families, and Tdap vaccines (for the prevention of tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis) were provided by the IDOH Immunization team. The people most affected by the storms are close to Conley’s heart and never far from her thoughts.

“We wish nothing but the best for the people touched by the tornado, and we pray for them daily,” she said.

Johnson found her time in Sullivan to be rewarding, noting that it reflected a steadfast Hoosier value: neighbors helping neighbors.

“We enjoy helping and serving our fellow Hoosiers in their time of need,” said Johnson. “The residents of Sullivan County have shown us the warmest welcome even during their emotional and financial state. This is the true meaning of Hoosier hospitality.”



Rosalie Conley (left) and Shaleen “Shay” Johnson of the Division of Vital Records were among the IDOH and other state of Indiana employees who assisted Hoosiers impacted by devastating tornadoes earlier this month.

WIC Director Laura Chavez lauded her team’s work as well and indicated she feels much the same way as Conley and Johnson.

“Indiana WIC recognized very quickly the need for increased access during the tornado recovery,” Chavez said. “Impacted local agencies implemented their disaster plans and were connected with the IDOH’s response team to ensure that families could access WIC benefits or get replacement benefits as needed. We are grateful to our local agency staff in Sullivan County, Johnson County and Monroe County for taking good care of families in need during this difficult time.”

Article submitted by Brent Brown, Indiana Department of Health

Free electronics recycling event at Lucas Oil Stadium

Ever wonder what to do with your old electronic products that have been sitting around in your basement or garage? You may have known not to put them in the trash for the landfill because the material inside these items was harmful to the environment, but were not sure how to dispose of them safely. Now is your chance to clean up before the summer and do your part for the environment!

Saturday, May 13, 2023

9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Lucas Oil Stadium (South Parking Lot)

Simply load up your unwanted electronic items into your car and drive them to the stadium. We will help you unload your vehicle and safely dispose of the items at no cost! The event's local electronics recycling company, Tech Recyclers, is certified, is 100% landfill-free and guarantees data destruction of YOUR data. Technology Recyclers is compliant with DoD, R2, RIOS, and NAID practices, is licensed with IDEM and is an Indiana veteran-owned small business.

As a bonus for recycling your unwanted electronics, the first 400 cars will receive a gift bag with a Colts hat and other merch. Each participating car will also receive one entry into a drawing for a chance to win an autographed Colts item. Participants can also visit the Colts Team store, open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., for exclusive discounts, or visit with the Colts mascot Blue and the Colts cheerleading team! This event is FREE for consumers and businesses to attend and helps our local environment!

The following items are eligible for collection, no matter how old!

- CRT monitors
- Tube TVs, all TVs
- LCD displays
- Computers, laptops, tablets
- Cell phones, desk phones
- Calculators
- Printed circuit boards
- Microwave ovens and most small appliances with cords that plug in
- Telecommunication equipment
- Cables, wires, chargers
- Medical electronics
- Fax machines
- UPS equipment
- All batteries (any kind or size)
- Industrial electronics
- Television production equipment
- Office copiers
- Printers
- Satellite TV equipment
- Electrical equipment
- Laboratory equipment
- IT equipment (hubs, switches, etc.)
- Consumer electronics, including DVD players, stereos, radios

Items that are NOT accepted include: paint, toxic chemicals, furniture, wood, tires and clothing. For more information, please visit Tech-recyclers.com.



100 Days to Indy

The drama starts before the green flag and continues well after the checkered flag. Tune in to the CW Network to watch the docuseries that will deliver an inside look into the drivers' seats as they compete for racing's greatest prize: the Indianapolis 500.

Episodes available the next day on the CW App



New functionalities coming to PeopleSoft HCM this month!



Great news! This month, updates to PeopleSoft HCM will provide a new look along with new functions, including the ability to update your direct deposit account information, tax information, and initiate changes to your health and life plan coverage.

Important dates to note:

Friday, May 5 at 4 p.m. EST - Monday, May 8, at 7 a.m. EST | PeopleSoft will be shut down and will not be available to Employees, Managers, HR and Payroll staff. This outage does not affect PeopleSoft Financials.

Monday, May 8 | PeopleSoft HCM homepage screens and navigations will be updated with a new look! [For an overview of these changes, please see this visual document.](#)

Monday, May 22, 2023 | Additional functions will go live in PeopleSoft. You will now be able to complete the following in the Employee Self Service (ESS) homepage:

- Enter or change your direct deposit account information.
- Enter or change your tax information on Forms W-4 (federal) and WH-4 (state).
- Initiate changes to your health and life plan coverage based on qualifying events such as birth, adoption, marriage or divorce.

Employees and managers will be provided additional information, job aids and communications to help you take advantage of these new functionalities. An overview of the user interface updates and instructions for the new functions will be available in ESS starting on Monday, May 22, 2023. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding as we make these updates to improve our systems.

An advertisement for Indiana Unclaimed Returns. At the top center is the logo for the Office of the Attorney General, Indiana Unclaimed, with the tagline "What will you find?". Below the logo, the text reads "INDIANA UNCLAIMED RETURNS" in white, "\$1 MILLION" in large yellow letters, and "IN UNCLAIMED PROPERTY TO HOOSIERS EVERY WEEK" in white. A yellow banner contains the text "SEARCH NOW FOR YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES!". At the bottom, a red button says "START MY SEARCH". The background is a dark blue image of the Indiana State Capitol building.

Register for Pre-Retirement Seminar

If you are serious about retiring from state employment, register now for the upcoming Pre-Retirement Seminar, sponsored by the Indiana State Personnel Department (INSPD). This day-long workshop is 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on June 22, 2023, in the IGC-S Auditorium. An hour break for lunch is also included.

This program is designed to assist state employees with advance retirement planning by providing information useful in making informed decisions. The recommendation is for an employee to take this training if they are planning to retire within the next year. A sound retirement requires careful planning involving numerous topics, including:

- Public Employees' Retirement Fund
- Social Security information and options

- Insurance – options for both life and health insurance
- Benefits obtainable through Social Security and Medicare
- Hoosier S.T.A.R.T. – pros and cons of different types of investments for future retirement security.
- Key elements in estate planning, including: last will and testament, living will, health care authorization, durable power of attorney and death taxes.
- The Indiana Long-Term Care Program as an element of retirement planning.

This workshop is free of charge. Employees may attend the seminar on state time one (1) time in their career as a State of Indiana employee.* Your supervisor's approval is required to attend. SuccessFactors automatically sends the supervisor an email asking him/

her to approve your enrollment in this seminar. Neither travel time, mileage, nor vehicle allowance is paid/allowed.

- Click here to [REGISTER](#). Your spouse is welcome to attend, but registration is not necessary if they are not a state employee. Registration is required to attend and seating is limited. Reserve your seat today by self-enrolling into the seminar. Please note: your spot is not reserved until your supervisor approves.

Questions may be directed to INSPD Learning & Development at spdtraining@spd.in.gov

* Should employees choose to attend additional sessions of this seminar, they are expected to use their own accrued leave time.

Benefits changes after Public Health Emergency expires

After the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency expires on May 11, certain relief measures will end. Consequently, the State Employee Health Plan will be changing coverage for some services/supplies. Please see this list of changes to our plans:

- At-home COVID-19 test kits will no longer be covered by the plan starting May 11.
- COVID-19 testing done during a physician, urgent care, emergency room or hospital visit will be subject to the plan deductible and limits, like other diagnostic visits or tests, effective May 11.

*COVID-19 vaccines will still be covered 100% as preventive, just like other vaccines recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

If you have any questions, please reach out to benefits at spdbenefits@spd.in.gov or call the INSPD Benefits Hotline at: 317-232-1167 or 1-877-248-0007 (toll-free).

State employee serves on Indy Launch Board for expanding volunteer organization, Seeds of Caring

“For me, Seeds of Caring has such an important role in connecting with kids through service. By empowering kids to volunteer at such a young age, it allows them to build their identity and self-image around community service,” says state employee Andrew Sherman.

Seeds of Caring is a not-for-profit organization that creates meaningful, age-appropriate volunteer and service activities for kids aged 2-12. These activities are designed to empower kids to be kind, to give them the confidence to engage in their community and, to choose kindness.

“I heard about Seeds of Caring from my brother Phil, who saw post on LinkedIn that Seeds of Caring was expanding to Indianapolis. After a couple of phone calls and Zoom meetings with board members and the Executive Director, Brandy Jemczura, I was sold on the mission

and vision of bringing kindness to Indy. Brandy then asked me to consider joining the Indy Launch Board as an advisory board member, which I did officially in January this year.”

“As a member of the Indy Launch Board, my goal is to come alongside the staff at Seeds of Caring and try to find opportunities and make connections as they expand to Indianapolis.” He adds, “there is so much potential for kids to serve all over the city. I just hope to spread awareness about the Seeds of Caring mission, connect adults with opportunities to bond with kids through service, and provide any guidance or help that is needed.”

Seeds of Caring reaches kids early, while they are still forming their attitudes and behaviors toward others. The service activities kids participate in help plant the seeds of kindness, compassion and



Andrew Sherman, Indiana Department of Agriculture, serves on the Indy Launch Board for Seeds of Caring.

generosity at an early age.

“I think that if we can be intentional about the types of behaviors that kids learn and exemplify, then we can open the door for those kids to choose kindness for themselves and for others each and every day. For a young kid to say, ‘I am a member of this community, and I volunteer when people need help’ is such a big life-changing decision. I want the kids in my life to feel like nothing can get in their way when they want to make a change happen in their community.”

Any adult who has a kid in their life age 2-12 can register for an Anywhere Project through Seeds of Caring. While most adults that register are leading activities for their own kids, you can also do these projects with any young kids in your life.

Consider signing up today for a Seeds of Caring project to help kids choose kindness. Check out this link for more information on upcoming Anywhere Projects: www.seedsofcaring.org/indianapolis.



Join our
AMBASSADOR TEAM!



Register to be an
Ambassador today!



May 6, 2023

Weed Wrangle | Tippecanoe River State Park

More details to come.

[More Information >](#)

Mission Adventure Race | Versailles State Park

The MISSION is Indiana's longest-running annual adventure race, one of the region's most competitive and challenging. DINO has produced the popular MISSION Adventure Race, typically in southeastern Indiana, since 2003.

The MISSION Lite offers beginner adventure racers a chance to see what it's all about. A shorter, 4-hour cutoff; less complex navigation; and reduced gear list allow an introductory taste of AR.

[More Information >](#)

Abe's Neighborhood Walk/Run | Lincoln State Park

This 5k event helps raise money for the Friends of Lincoln State Park. Check out the Friends of Lincoln State Park web page for registration details.

[More Information >](#)

Morel Mushroom Festival | Brown County State Park

Brown County State Park has a day full of mushroom activities! It's morel mushroom season, and we're offering a series of programs.

[More Information >](#)

May 27, 2023

Floating Campfire | Chain O'Lakes State Park

Meet at the beach and be prepared to wade out to the fire in the water and roast your s'mores. We will provide s'mores fixings and roasting sticks as supplies last, but feel free to bring your own goodies to cook. This is a fun time for all ages!

[More Information >](#)

Bike Parade in the Campground | Summit Lake State Park

Come decorate your bike from 11:30 till noon. At noon, we bike around the campground for our bike parade! Decorations provided!

[More Information >](#)

Memorial Day Cornhole Tournament | Whitewater Memorial State Park

Join us for our annual Memorial Day cornhole tournament at Poplar Grove Shelter.

[More Information >](#)

Memorial Day Cornhole Tournament | Quakertown State Recreation Area

Join us for our annual Memorial Day cornhole tournament at Quakertown Shelter House.

[More Information >](#)

May 28, 2023

Memorial Day Cornhole Tournament | Mounds State Recreation Area

Join us for our annual Memorial Day cornhole tournament at our Camp Store.

[More Information >](#)

May 20, 2023

National Kids to Parks Day

Kids to Parks Day is a national day of outdoor play celebrated annually on the third Saturday of May. The day connects kids and families with their local, state, and national parks and public lands through thousands of park events that promote discovery and exploration in the great outdoors.

Join the Indiana Department of Natural Resources at one of these State Parks on Saturday May 20 to celebrate Indiana's amazing resources! Each park will be offering different activities, so be sure to check for more information!

Chain O'Lakes State Park

[More Information >](#)

Starve Hollow State Recreation Area

[More Information >](#)

Salamonie Lake

[More Information >](#)

Summit Lake State Park

[More Information >](#)

Mississinewa Lake

[More Information >](#)

[View all DNR special events >](#)

This Month WITH



May 6, 2023

Mother's Day Teatime | Gene Stratton-Porter State Historic Site

Join us at the beautiful gardens of Gene Stratton-Porter as we celebrate mothers. Learn about Gene and her daughter Jeanette who lived nearby and raised her daughters spending time in Gene's gardens, as well as the amazing mothers of the animal kingdom. Enjoy high tea and food (included with admission) and come dressed in historical or contemporary high tea attire if you like!

[More Information >](#)

Hootenanny at the Mill | Whitewater Canal State Historic Site

Metamora has almost always had two things: mills and celebrations. Join us as we combine the two for a rollicking evening at the Grist Mill! Be a part of the main event of the night – the cornbread contest – by submitting your homemade cornbread for judging. Enjoy the traditional folk sounds of music group Patchwork.

[More Information >](#)

May 13, 2023

Navigation - The Art of Finding Yourself | Angel Mounds State Historic Site

Learn how to navigate using both conventional and non-conventional tools including the sun, moon, stars, trees, plants, erosion and animals to determine direction and time and to find resources like food and water.

[More Information >](#)

Hands-On History: Games and Gardens | Lanier Mansion State Historic Site

Have fun playing historic lawn games, chat with our gardener and learn some tips and tricks to use in your own garden.

[More Information >](#)

Whitewater Canal Guided Tour | Whitewater Canal State Historic Site

Enjoy a guided walking tour of the historic Whitewater Canal and discover the ways canals were instrumental to early America in transporting people and goods.

[More Information >](#)

Mommy and Me Mother's Day Tea | Culbertson Mansion State Historic Site

Celebrate Mother's Day with a tea party in the formal parlor followed by a guided tour of the mansion where you'll learn about the wonderful mothers in the Culbertson family.

[More Information >](#)

May 20, 2023

Meeting the Golden Troupe Family | New Harmony State Historic Site

Join us and the Posey County Historical Society for an informative lecture on the Golden family, the famous traveling thespian family who called New Harmony their home. Learn about American entertainment culture at the turn of the 20th century and the people who made it so special.

[More Information >](#)

May 27, 2023

Colonial French Day | Vincennes State Historic Site

Discover the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of colonial French Vincennes. Learn about the daily life of a French fur trader while taking a tour through the Old French House, explore what early life was like in the area, find out about old French gardening techniques and more.

[More Information >](#)

Eat the Invasives - Garlic Mustard Workshop | Angel Mounds State Historic Site

Discover wild edible plants while helping ecology in this family-friendly program. We will be harvesting the invasive (and delicious) garlic mustard plant to make into pesto and pizza. All attendees will have a chance to try a garlic mustard pizza and will leave with a delicious pesto recipe and pizza dough recipe from a seasoned forager and cook. *The recipe contains nuts.*

[More Information >](#)

Canal Field Day | Whitewater Canal State Historic Site

Join us for a series of games to celebrate the start of summer! Families can compete in games of the past and present, from trying to "jump the canal" and haul a canal boat to vintage amusements like graces and quoits.

[More Information >](#)

View all Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites events >



Social Security: the choice of a lifetime

Your choice on when to file could increase your annual benefit by as much as 77%.¹

At our upcoming seminar, you'll learn key filing rules and strategies to help you make the choice that fits with your overall retirement income plan.

Please bring a recent Social Security statement to this seminar. Download your statement from ssa.gov/myaccount.

¹ The percentage compares the difference in benefits begun at age 62 vs. age 70. "When to Start Receiving Retirement Benefits," ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10147.pdf (January 2021).

This material is not a recommendation to buy or sell a financial product or to adopt an investment strategy. Investors should discuss their specific situation with their financial professional.



Join us for our Social Security, "The choice of a lifetime" in-person presentation or virtual webinar

We'll break down and simplify some of the biggest issues that retirees face. The discussion on May 10 will help you make informed decisions and receive consultative support for advanced questions.

Join us in-person or virtually on

May 10, 2023

From 1:00 - 2:00 ET

Indiana Government Center - South Auditorium
302 West Washington St
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Hoosier START Indianapolis Office
317-810-4266
combsk7@nationwide.com



Scan this code to Register your
IN-PERSON seat or VIRTUAL SEAT.

NRM-13475AO.7 (01/23)



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Self-Care to Manage Stress

Stress is a part of life. If you don't cope well with stress, it can worsen your health and quality of life. Take time for breaks, hobbies or activities that you find relaxing. You may find that this helps you stay in balance¹.

Self-care doesn't need to be a total lifestyle makeover. Even small changes to your routine can have a positive impact on your well-being². Here are some tips¹:

- Block time to just relax. You don't always need to multi-task. Discover what calms you.
- How you unwind might be different from others, so find what works for you².
- Set boundaries. Say no to unnecessary requests when you're too stressed to add tasks to your plate.
- Avoid unhealthy ways to relieve tension, like smoking or drinking alcohol.
- Get support when you need it. Talk to a friend or therapist, or join a support group¹.

Wellness Webinar Series

Make your emotional health a priority: Emotional or mental health is an important part of your whole person health and wellness. In this session, we'll talk about what emotional health is and how you can improve it.

May 16, 2023 | 10:00 AM, 12:30 PM and 4:30 PM, ET

[Click to Register](#)



Use your camera app to register

1. CDC: "Taking Care of Your Mental Health." April 2022.
<https://www.cdc.gov/populationhealth/well-being/features/how-right-now.htm>

2. National Institute of Mental Health: "Caring for Your Mental Health." December 2022.
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/caring-for-your-mental-health>



Coach's corner

with **Coach Patricia, MS, RD, LDN**

"It is exciting to help members discover ways to meet their health and wellness goals by discovering small steps they can make in their everyday habits that lead to big changes and lifelong success."



Patricia's well-being tips:

Both your mind and body need to take breaks. Checking emails or social media all evening may ramp up stress. Here are some ways to unplug and recharge:

- Set limits on screen time. Check the news after work, then log off for the night.
- Unless it's an emergency, reply to work emails the next day.
- Turn off alerts on your phone from social media or news apps.
- Leave any social media group or thread that upsets you¹.



BBQ Chicken Tacos with Red Cabbage Slaw

This tangy taco dinner is easy to prepare and serve after work. The colorful slaw adds fiber and satisfying crunch. Serve with wedges of fresh lime.

MyActiveHealth.com > Resources > Learning Center.

Start a journal

Keeping a journal is one way to help manage stress. Record your thoughts and experiences. Look for stress triggers and what helps you relax. Here are a few tips²:

- Pick a quiet place to focus and write.
- Write at the same time each day, so it becomes a habit.
- On the go? Toss your journal in your bag or use the notes app on your phone.
- Be open and honest. Don't hold back.
- Don't worry about grammar or spelling.
- Include doodles, lyrics or quotes if you like.



For more tips on how to manage your well-being, visit [MyActiveHealth.com](https://www.MyActiveHealth.com)

1. CDC: "Taking Care of Your Mental Health." April 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/populationhealth/well-being/features/how-right-now.htm>

2. National Institute of Mental Health: "Caring for Your Mental Health." December 2022. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/caring-for-your-mental-health>

