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# Texas Work & Family

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# CLEARINGHOUSE NEWS

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## Behind the Scenes at the Clearinghouse...

is a staff dedicated to helping Texas employers find solutions to work/family needs.

**Sandra Bustamante**, business manager, handles budgets for each funding source and contracts, procurements, and personnel matters.

**Ernestine Q. Sunderland** and **Debra LaCount** serve as program coordinator and grants coordinator, respectively, managing grants for research, school age child care, resource and referral agencies, and employer coalitions.

**John Handy Bosma** is marketing and community affairs coordinator, working with employer coalitions and developing new informational materials.

**Liz Sifuentes**, resource and management specialist, responds to information requests and research, provides up to date work and family materials to organize the resource library.

**Bobbie Cauley** handles communications routing, managing both the switchboard and increasing volumes of mail. ★



*Mike Lacour of IBI, Mary Elizabeth Jackson of Trinity Mother Frances Health System, and Bob Turner, City of Tyler, presented at the 21st Century Workplace Conference in Tyler on March 6. The panel outlined ways successful business coalitions generate income to address community work/family and child care concerns. Agree on the Tyler conference inside. ★*

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**The spotlight's on time off from work for family duties** in Washington, DC. President Clinton has proposed a plan that would allow employees to take up to 24 hours a year in unpaid leave in order to handle family responsibilities, such as attending parent-teacher conferences or taking an elderly parent to a doctor's appointment. Meanwhile, Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison and Sen. John Ashcroft are sponsoring an amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act that would allow employees to choose comp time instead of overtime pay for work in excess of 40 hours. The sponsors say that their plan would allow workers additional flexibility to handle family obligations.

IN BRIEF

**Talent Alliance:** The Philadelphia Inquirer (February 24, 1997) reports that 10 major companies have a new solution to the problems created by downsizing: pool job postings, training programs, and workforce information. Unisys, DuPont Co., GET Corp., and Lucent Technologies, along with six other large companies, say that downsized workers often can be placed because

market shifts and new technologies create jobs as corporations downsize. The Inquirer notes that alliance member AT&T Corp. cut more than 7,000 jobs last year but added about the same number due to Internet and other projects.

IN BRIEF

**The Texas Head Start Collaboration Project** has a new home at the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin. The project, designed to promote cooperative efforts among public pre-kindergarten, Head Start, and private child care programs, also is working to create a professional career development system for early care and education workers. Project director Gwen Chance may be contacted at 512-232-2258.

**Telecommuting:** The IDC/Link Home Office Overview, an annual study of telecommuting, reports that 30 million households now have home offices, up 10 percent from 1995. ★

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# Organizational Downsizing Spurs Renewed Interest in Work/Family Programs

*Dana Friedman of Corporate Family Solutions is a nationally recognized expert on work/family issues. Dr. Friedman spoke at the Jan. 27 meeting of the Coastal Bend Work and Family Symposium in Corpus Christi. Following are excerpts from her keynote address.*

The 1990s [have seen] interesting . . . change[s] in [the] perspective and motivation for company attention to work/family [issues]. It was expected that work and family was going to move to the back burner as companies began restructuring and downsizing, but quite interestingly, just the opposite happened. The most growth and the number of employers addressing family concerns have occurred since 1990.

In a study by the Families and Work Institute in 1991, it found that the strongest predictor of company activity in the area of work and family was [whether] companies had undergone a lot of change, either through downsizing, through a merge or acquisition or a change in CEO.

There were two reasons for that. Number one probably is the concern about the morale of employees who were left after downsizing, where "work and family" could be considered survivor benefits.

. . . [Number two] has to do with the recognition of the scope of the issue. This was not just a subject for working mothers — 87 percent of the work force goes home to somebody else at the end of the day. 87 percent: this is not a marginal issue. This is not, also, about preventing family responsibilities from interfering with productivity. It's about examining workplace statures that inhibit personal well-being, and, ultimately, people's ability to make their full contribution. And that really is the most marked shift — how employers have begun to look at this issue.

I think the shift also suggests that we're not just talking about reducing work/family conflict; we're talking about increasing work family synergy, looking at the fit between the two . . . Companies are realizing they have to reexamine what motivates employees, what makes them use their discretionary effort and go that extra mile for the company. In a world where life-long employment can no longer be guaranteed, where you have to do more with less, be a continuous learner, share more of your benefit costs, be flexible and adaptable, as companies change, restructure, transform on an ongoing basis (not just once) it's critical to know how to harness the energy and commitment that any employer needs for the company to succeed.

This whole concept of full utilization is very important as the motivation for work family today. And it really does speak to employers of all sizes, because you don't have to invest in expensive benefits to make that work. What are the most important things to motivate employees today? In a national study of the changing workforce that I was involved with . . . the top five issues were open communications . . . the way that the job affected family life . . . the nature of the work . . . management quality and supervisor relationships. Those are the things that employees [said] are important in staying in the job that they're currently in. Those people who felt that these needs were being met were far more productive and had a better sense of well-being.

What matters most? The control over hours, supervisor relationships, co-worker relationships, the perceptions of a supportive culture, the chances for advancement, the absence of discrimination. These factors were found to be very, very relevant to those who ended up working harder for the company. They were more loyal, committed, innovative, more satisfied with their jobs, less burned out, more willing to help the company succeed, and had less work/family conflict. . . .

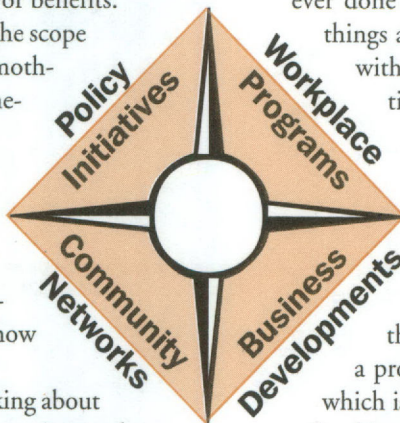
I think that an important lesson from all of this research is that work/family policies and programs, no matter how helpful they are, cannot compensate for unchallenging stressful jobs and insensitive supervisors or a nonsupportive culture. . . . There's a whole range of innovative policies and programs that, yes, in and of themselves make a difference and can help the company start creating that more supportive culture. But it's also important to make sure that you've addressed some of those other more subtle things in the culture, to make those other policies and programs effective.

What I'm talking about [is] flexibility . . . In every study I've ever done inside a company, we've asked about 30 different things a company could do, the top three items have to do with flexible time, control over hours, half-day vacations, time off for taking kids to the doctor, participating in school functions, all of those kinds of things. But we're also talking about communication, making sure that managers are completely aware of why the company made this investment in these policies and programs. It's nice to have the policy on the books, but it's not going to get used if the supervisor is saying, "But wait a minute, I've got a production quota; I can't really deal with that today," which is often what happens.

Looking at a mission statement, make sure it talks about these family concerns, holding up role models of people who have managed to succeed in the organization and have taken advantage of some of the programs the company offers. Management training is really, really key here, but it doesn't work as well unless you've changed performance reviews. Where's the accountability? The company says it's important if I do this, but what happens if I don't? . . .

Work/family is a strategy, and it shouldn't be reserved for special occasions or available only on demand. Work/family policies should be used whenever the occasion and wherever gains can be realized. Far from being rationed, as a strategy it's promoted precisely because the more it's understood and the more that it's used, the more the organization benefits.

Let's face it; we live in a turbulent time. . . . There are no precedents for what we do; we all need support in managing in today's times. But I urge you to be creative and adapt an internal policy and benefits that meet your needs, reaching out to the community to fill the gaps, working in partnership with other employers, government agencies, and community groups to make it happen, and working to get rid of those mixed messages. Your employees know when you're really committed to something. ★



## Corpus Christi, Austin & Tyler Conferences Continue Momentum for Building Employer Coalitions in Texas

Employer coalitions for regional work/family programs continue to build steam all across Texas. The first set of regional planning conferences (see *Clearinghouse News*, Winter 1997) has been followed by equally productive meetings in Corpus Christi, Austin, and Tyler. Due to the success of these meetings, the Work and Family Clearinghouse is looking to help sponsor more regional planning conferences in 1998.

All programs are planned locally with technical and funding assistance from the Texas Workforce Commission's Work and Family Clearinghouse.

*Corpus Christi hosted the Coastal Bend Work and Family Symposium* on January 27. The symposium was headlined by Dr. Dana Friedman, nationally recognized expert on work/family issues. (See page 2 of this issue for excerpts from her keynote speech.) Joining her was a panel of experts on child and elder care services, who followed up on their presentations by fielding questions from the audience. A variety of community organizations set up displays and exhibits for the lunchtime meeting, allowing attendees the opportunity to pick up material for later review.

Symposium organizers included the City of Corpus Christi and the Bay Area Association for the Education of Young Children, with assistance in planning from 12 other area organizations representing private industry, academia, and public agencies, led by Brent Stephens, facility manager for Hoechst Celanese's Bishop Facility, and Linda Ard from Del Mar College. The symposium, Stephens said, was designed "to illustrate how work/family strategies can help you attract and retain a loyal, productive workforce while contributing to the vitality and economic strength of our community."

*Austin presented the First Annual Employer Conference* on January 28 with the theme "Workforce Advantage: Child Care Solutions for Recruitment and Retention." Opening and closing keynote speakers were Dr. Dana Friedman and J.T. Childs, Jr., director of workforce diversity for IBM. In between were workshops on assessing employees' work/family needs, implementing family-friendly work policies, identifying available resources, developing programs for the small business, providing sick-child care, and setting up on-site child care centers.

The conference was sponsored by the Austin Employers' Collaborative, a consortium of 19 Austin-area public and private-sector organizations and nonprofit associations organized together to promote high

**"A business coalition allows employers to pool their efforts to tackle child care issues that they could not deal with by themselves."**

quality, affordable, and accessible child care. Strategies to promote this mission include "providing information and resources to the business community, enabling employers to make educated decisions regarding child care options, promoting community education and awareness, creating an alliance between business, consumers, and child care providers, and cultivating community/business resources to fund child care solutions."

*Tyler conducted a strategy session on the 21st Century Workplace* on March 6 that focused on "child care solutions for increased workplace profit and productivity." The conference was organized by Smith County Champions for Children, a new coalition of 34 local corporations, organizations, and agencies formed to promote available, affordable and quality child care programs to meet the needs of East Texas children, employees, and employers. C.C. Baker, vice president for development with Trinity Mother Frances Health System, chairs the coalition and served as conference chairman along with Tom Mullins, chief executive officer for the Tyler Economic Development Corp.

Keynote speakers were Jim Dagnon, senior vice president for employee relations at Burlington Northern-Santa Fe, and Phyllis Jack Moore, well known Texas work/family strategist. "To grow and prosper," Dagnon pointed out, "we as employers need the best possible workforce — employees who are reliable, attentive, productive, and loyal. Well planned child care assistance for our employees, as well as other work and family programs, can help you attain your business goals. Ignoring the need for child care, on the other hand, may put you at a competitive disadvantage."

Dagnon also identified a number of advantages to joining forces through a coalition rather than going it alone. These include:

- sharing costs and liabilities that might be too much for a single employer;
- enjoying protection from underutilization of services;
- participating in opportunities to make a wider range of services available to employees;
- strengthening relationships with other employers; and
- exerting a positive influence on the community.

"A business coalition," Dagnon said, "allows employers to pool their efforts to tackle child care issues that they could not deal with by themselves." ★

## General Information

The Texas Work and Family Clearinghouse was created by the Texas legislature to supply information to employers about workplace policies and dependent care benefits. Through one-stop centers of the Texas Workforce Commission offices, the Clearinghouse provides a database of dependent care resources for job applicants. For more information about articles in this newsletter or other work/family issues, contact us at:

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## Clearinghouse Newsletter

The *Clearinghouse News* is a quarterly newsletter produced by the Work and Family Clearinghouse with information and news about work/family programs including flextime, resource and referral services, child care and eldercare. Subscriptions are available free of charge by contacting the Clearinghouse at (512) 936-3221.

## Internet Homepage

The Clearinghouse maintains a homepage on the Internet with up-to-the-minute information on Clearinghouse activities and work/family resources and projects in Texas. The homepage also features fact sheets on areas of interest, the *Clearinghouse News*, background on the Clearinghouse advisory committee, free resources order form, and much more. Access via www.twc.state.tx.us/wrkfrdev/wfchp.html.

## Work & Family Clipping Service

The Work and Family Clipping Service is a quarterly compendium of the most recent news articles covering the work and family field. If you would like to be receive the clipping service free of charge, call (512) 936-3228.

## Dependent Care Database

The Dependent Care Information and Referral Database is a listing of resources for dependent care, organized by Texas counties. Information on where to find services for child care, eldercare or care for disabled dependents can help job applicants find the support services they need to work. The Dependent Care Database is accessible through the mainframe computer in one-stop centers of the Texas Workforce Commission throughout Texas. Check your local listings for the number.

## Resource Library

The Clearinghouse maintains a library of resources including books, newsletters, magazines, videos, brochures and articles. The library is

continually updated and expanded to include current information on work and family topics. The library materials are catalogued in a computer database for easy search and retrieval. The Clearinghouse staff welcomes library users during regular business hours. For further information, call (512) 936-3228.

## Research

The Clearinghouse staff will research and collect information on requested work-family related topics and compile customized information packets. The Clearinghouse works with state agencies, colleges and universities to conduct original research and to compile existing statistics and reports relating to work-family issues in Texas. Call (512) 936-3228 for a research report bibliography.

## Networking Opportunities for Employers

The Clearinghouse acts as an information broker about work and family issues among employers and between employers and professional consultants working in the field. Through conferences, workshops and quarterly meetings, the private sector advisory committee to the Clearinghouse sponsors networking activities among employers to highlight best practices and encourage new initiatives. The Clearinghouse also maintains a database of Texas consultants, along with advice about working with consultants. Call (512) 936-3228 to request this listing. ★

### Texas Work & Family Clearinghouse Advisory Committee 1997

#### Bruce Aumack

Austin Education Manager  
IBM Corporation

#### Michael Catalani

Manager, Human Resources  
VIA Metropolitan Transit

#### Ramiro Cavazos

Community Affairs Director  
Levi Strauss Foundation

#### Glenna Pierpont

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#### Gloria Villarreal

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Dow Chemical Company

#### Jeannette Watson

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#### Mike Wells

Partner  
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#### Tracy Wolff

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