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Spring 2008 All-Staff meeting

The theme of this spring's all-staff meeting, held April 29, was Past, Present, and Future.

Director **Phil Stoddard** opened the meeting by sharing his appreciation of ORS staff: "This organization is rich in generosity and caring" He cited many examples of ORS support to fellow coworkers. "I was impressed with the outpouring of support that was given to **Erik Ferden** ... I think I felt this building move when we all heard the news that he was out of surgery and the prognosis was excellent."

Phil went on to cover ORS's future work in nine DMB initiatives, including Focus on Process, Workforce Development, and Cultural Diversity and Inclusion. [View Phil's entire speech now.](#)

Phil introduced DMB Director **Lisa Webb Sharpe**, who congratulated **Laurie Hill**, **Tim McCormick**, and **Anthony Estell** on their recent promotions, and congratulated ORS for receiving multiple national awards and recognitions.

"Mentoring changes lives two at a time."

The theme of generosity continued as guest speaker **Musette A. Michael**, Executive Director of the Michigan Community Service Commission, introduced the Mentor Michigan Initiative and invited ORS to become ambassadors to volunteerism. [For information on the Mentor Michigan Initiative, click here.](#)

ORS Excellence Awards

Awards were handed out to our 2008 ORS Excellence Award winners. Nominated by their peers, the winners are **Kay Johnston**, **Charles Leik**, **Kris Morris**, **Lois Musbach**, and **Angela Schrauben**.

Congratulations to Kay Johnston, our 2008 Customer Service Excellence Award winner.

"Kay regularly proves she is a customer's best friend. She is always willing to go the extra mile and accomplish the task ..."



DMB Director Lisa Webb Sharpe addresses ORS staff at the Spring 2008 all-staff meeting. [View more photos from there meeting now.](#)



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On the Horizon

- 18th Annual ORS Golf Outing - August 28
- Fall All-Staff Meeting - October 7

Quick Links

- [ORS Member Website](#)
- [ORS Employer Website](#)
- [Knowledge Library](#)

Commonly Used Acronyms

AST	Application Support Team
BLA	Business Leadership Assembly (<i>EPC, BPOs, and BPLs</i>)
BPD	Benefit Plan Design
BPL	Business Process Leader
BPO	Business Process Owner
CE	Customer Education
CSC	Customer Service Center
DB	Defined Benefits
DC	Defined Contributions
DIT	Department of Information Technology
DMB	Department of Management and Budget
EPC	Executive Process Council (<i>Phil, Laurie, Tim, Anthony, and Kathy</i>)
EPO	Executive Process Owner
ER	Employer Reporting
ORS	Office of Retirement Services
PRIM	Preretirement

She not only provides exceptional service to ORS's external customers, she is always ready to lend a helping hand to those internally."

Congratulations to Charles Leik, our 2008 Innovator Excellence Award winner.

"Charles has demonstrated innovation and leadership in building a database for the Accounts Receivable project ... His efforts saved the organization hundreds of manual hours ... He refined the database to auto-feed account receivable data into our collection letters to balance accuracy with efficiency."



Congratulations to Kris Morris, our 2008 Living the Values Excellence Award winner.

"Kris demonstrates the DMB Values daily...She developed and piloted a student co-op program ... She works closely with other process on changes that impact them, maintains confidentiality, is respectful of others...and encourages and supports learning opportunity for staff."



Congratulations to Lois Musbach, our 2008 Every Day Hero Excellence Award winner.

"Lois is dependable, she takes initiative, is diligent and above all she is a team player... She is always willing to go above and beyond what is expected of her... She continues to earn the respect of not only her staff but from her peers as well ... If there is ever a crisis, Lois will be there to not only find the best way, but the right way to manage it."



Congratulations to Angela Schrauben, our 2008 Leadership Excellence Award winner.

"Angela has demonstrated the values of teamwork and integrity ... She is an integral part of the test team, providing both support and direction ... Her leadership in this resulted in an accuracy rate of 85 percent for both software releases."



Vision ORS update

Laurie Mitchell proudly announced, "Vision ORS is done!" With the blending of Forms, Letters and Barcodes into Clarety and the launching of miAccount, the Vision ORS project gets wrapped up. This final phase promotes consistency for our customers while generating partnerships with other DMB agencies.

Looking to the future

Anthony Estell updated staff on steps needed to be ready for MIP Plus, the new benefit structure for public school employees hired July 1 or later. Our readiness efforts include program changes by June 27, testing from May 15 to June 20, and training for changes in Clarety.

Renovation update

Wing B will soon undergo renovation, including the air system, electrical system, and

	Information Meeting (public school employees)
PRO	Preretirement Orientation (state employees)
PS	Process Support
SME	Subject Matter Expert
STG	Systems Technology Group (Web self-service contract vendor)
T&T	Tools and Technology
UAT	User Acceptance Testing

the conference rooms. **Pam Ward** explained what to expect during the month of May. Staff affected by the move will take everything with them, including phones and computers. This move is a great opportunity for the annual ORS spring cleaning day.

Objectives in Action!

John Donovan and **Brian McLane** shared strategic planning progress. Objectives for the goal *Innovate and Improve Customer Service* are on business plans, and already we are seeing outcomes. For example, Clarety now has demographic information on Defined Contribution members - related to the objective *Ensure staff is confident and capable to respond to Defined Contribution questions*. **Mike Goodman** and **Joe Osentoski** gave us a funny enactment of a customer call both before and after the enhancement.

Question & Answer Session

A question and answer session rounded out the meeting. [View the questions submitted before the meeting and their answers](#). Questions submitted the day of the all staff meeting will be available in the next edition of the *LookOut*.

Winners of the ORS purpose quiz

Congratulations to **Angie DeRose**, **Deb MacGregor**, and **Maudena Orsborn**, winners of \$10 gas cards donated by EMPAC. The winners were selected randomly from the many staff members who correctly identified our ORS purpose: *We are an innovative retirement organization driven to empower our customers for a successful today and a secure tomorrow*.

Thanks to planners

The objectives and agenda for every ORS all-staff meeting are decided by a team of people who represent each process, so that the meetings cover what staff need and want to know. Congratulations to the spring all-staff planning team for a great meeting: **Fred Doll**, **Chantele Geisenhaver**, **Rebecca Hoisington**, **June Holbrook**, **Andy Kolp**, **Mary Picken**, and **Tim Simpson**.

Post-meeting Survey Results

[The survey results are available, view them now.](#)



That's a wrap

The ORS staff who participated directly in the development of miAccount and our business partners gathered on May 1 to celebrate the accomplishments that made delivering miAccount to retiree and active members possible in less than one year. **Laurie Mitchell**, **Laurie Hill** and **Sriram Rao** (STG Project Manager) recognized the efforts made by staff and our AST, STG, and DIT partners. **Anup Popat**, STG CEO, expressed appreciation for the new partnership. **Doug Couto**, DIT Information Officer, recognized the achievement of AST staff.

Employer webinars successful

In April, CE concluded a series of fifteen webinar sessions describing the retirement law changes that resulted from Public Acts 110 and 111 of 2007. A total of 224 public school employers participated in the webinars, hosted by **Pam Garver**.

ING buys CitiStreet

On May 2nd ING announced its intentions to acquire CitiStreet by the end of the third quarter in 2008. A [mass email to all state employees](#) will be going out in the near future advising them that this does not



affect the 401(k) or 457 plans, member accounts, or investments. More information will be forthcoming.

May 2008 Retirement Times Delivered

The most recent issue of the school employer newsletter, *Retirement Times*, is now available online at www.michigan.gov/psru. *Retirement Times* is issued quarterly and provides news, tips, and updates to school payroll, benefit, and human resource staff.



Tuesday, May 13

Next Tuesday the CSC staff in Wing A will be moving to make room for some staff who will be displaced by the Wing B renovations. There will be some construction of new cubicles and adjustments to others. Along with the moves CSC computers will have Windows XP installed on their computers (M1 Migration).

Wednesday, May 14

CSC phones will be turned off with a message giving an emergency number that will be manned by CSC staff who are not moving. CSC staff will spend the first part of the day spring cleaning their offices and getting reacquainted with their computers. Assuming the migration to Windows XP is successful, the phones are scheduled to be turned back on at 1:00 p.m.

Defined Contribution now in Clarity

As part of the strategic plan initiative for the Innovate and Improve Customer Service goal, we are one step closer to ensuring staff are confident and able to respond to Defined Contribution (DC) questions. As of April 29, when a DC member calls we can immediately identify that the member is part of the Defined Contribution plan because shell accounts have been added to Clarity and Seibel. We no longer need to add a new person's record into Clarity, nor is there that long, awkward silence when the member's record cannot be immediately found.

The accounts include all demographic information, including name, member ID, social security number, account status, SERS DC classified benefit structure, date of birth, and address.

Although the shell records do not show history under the details or transaction tabs, specific account information will be added as a next step. For now, our ability to serve our DC customers has taken a step forward.



Sounding Out is a way for ORS staff to share ideas, viewpoints, gripes, praises, and concerns. Email your opinion (300 words or less, if possible!) to ORS-LookOut@michigan.gov.

Here **Jimmy Isaac**, DIT contract employee, shares his thoughts and experiences on becoming a United States of America citizen.

My journey begins in the early 1950s, when my father migrated from the southern tip of India to its capital in the north, New Delhi.

Though a distance of barely 1,300 miles, New Delhi has a completely different language, dress, and culture. I carried on in the same spirit when my family moved to Kuwait in 1992 after its liberation, and subsequently to the USA in 1998 when I was assigned to a Y2K project. I see my move to the U.S. as a much smoother transition compared to my father's, thanks to the explosive increase in information flow and access in the past couple of decades.



Jimmy Isaac

Staying in Lansing for the past 10 years has given my family a sense of stability and time to find our bearings within the community. The kids have taken to the American way of life, but with a positive appreciation of their roots. Our two daughters are not averse to calling us "Amma" and "Appa" (the Indian equivalent of Mom and Dad) in their friends' presence, though our son keeps silent! The children each have their own personality. While the eldest tries her best to speak our native language, Malayalam, with relatives back in India, the middle one manages a few monosyllables, and the third refuses outright to speak in the language. At school, the kids have flourished with the respect and opportunities given to them. For my wife and me, it has taken more time to adapt, and in some cases, old habits are hard to change.

Reflecting back on the past 10 years, changing my citizenship status to a United States citizen on April 16, 2008, seemed almost a non-event, thanks in large part to the privileges afforded all people in the country, regardless of their citizenship status. When I ask myself what I like most about the USA, it would be the freedom and values that the country is founded on. The basic respect for each other and sense of fair play is evident, for the most part. At our first school open house for our eldest daughter, the courtesy and respect shown by the teacher to our 6-year-old, treating her like an adult, was an eye-opener.



Following are some random reflections based on experiences in this country.

The dignity accorded to every type of work is commendable. To see a janitor painstakingly going about her work, day in and day out, is excellence personified. Speaking of work, when my wife told her friend that she liked dentistry as a profession, her friend replied that she didn't find the idea of looking down a person's mouth all day very appealing. My daughter quipped, "She is no better; her husband looks down the other end. He is a gynecologist."

Culture greatly affects our perceptions on dress, but sometimes the limits of decency are crossed. My wife's instinctive response on seeing a scantily clad woman at the Academy Awards presentation on television was to ask, "Why does she even take the trouble to wear anything?" One day after school, my eldest daughter had gone to the store with my wife in her school uniform of plaid skirt and polo top. An elderly person came up to her and appreciated that in this day and age it was nice to see a high school kid dressed modestly. But I fully realize that we try and understand opposing viewpoints, and where they come from. Case in point, my wife occasionally dresses up in an Indian sari on special occasions. By its very nature, the sari exposes some midriff. An American friend approached and asked me rather diffidently whether the display of bare skin was an accident or intentional.

Americans are very blessed from a material perspective, but many take it for granted. Diametrically opposed to that is the spirit of generosity and volunteerism that is instilled in children at an early age. In one instance, at my son's school, they

decided to have just a small bowl of rice for lunch - supposedly, all that some children in Asia get to eat in a day - and donate the proceeds to charity. I really appreciated that gesture, because it taught the virtue of giving, empathy for the less fortunate, and understanding what it means to be hungry, all at once.

Despite all the ups and downs of life, the one common thread for my wife and me has been our faith. It has both been a source of strength and a moral compass for living life that we have tried to give first priority, even though I have often failed to live up to it. Our main hope for the children is that they keep the faith and values that we cherish once they are on their own.

I would like to end with a few words about work. Even though I initially worked at ORS as a contractor I always felt more at home at ORS than my parent organization. Starting with the SRVS project, right up to the member self-service project, I have always received encouragement in all my tasks. I value most the trust, freedom, and space given to me at all times to do my work.

Comings & Goings

CSC welcomed **Charlene Heath** on May 5. Charlene is a Lansing resident who grew up in Holt and recently returned to the area after spending the last 18 years in Grand Rapids. She enjoys spending time with her three children, making jewelry, and getting outdoors for golf and fishing.



Charlene Heath

Kristen Kinney returned to work in CSC on May 5. Welcome back, Kristen!

Lynn Barnes' last day was Friday April 25. Also, **Shaun Baker's** last day was May 2. Both were CSC temporary employees.

Robert Noble and **Michael Kanuszewski**, both Cooley Law School students, finished their externships in BPD. Robert's last day was April 11 and Michael's was April 17.

Staff on the move

Elaine Scott is serving as the interim supervisor for the contact center in CSC.

Peggy Shinn accepted an administrative hearings coordinator position in BPD in late March. She will continue to serve as the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) coordinator and help out with strategic planning.

Lisa Barrone accepted an analyst position in ER effective April 6, 2008.

Green Team Recycling Message

Here, the Green Team shares real life examples from your coworkers to show how easy it is to reduce, reuse, and recycle—with little effort and big results!

Steve Crippen: "I use the Leslie 24/7 drop site. Our family of four only generates about one 30 gallon bag of trash every two to three weeks. We also have a burn barrel to dispose of paper products only."

Green Team response: Excellent work, Steve! One of our single, lives-alone members also only puts out just one 30-gallon bag approximately every 6 weeks.



Taylor Stiles: "We collect newspaper for the local county animal



shelter. Usually your local county dog pound doesn't have much funding or support, so we enjoy giving our newspaper to them to reuse."

We also use a big duffel bag, the kind you take on a weekend trip, for our grocery bags. Duffel bags have plenty of room and since I usually go to the grocery store by myself, I can make one trip into the house, rather than having everyone come out and help. Since it just slings over my shoulder, the weight is distributed so it is not that heavy."

Green Team response: Thank you, Taylor! She's already taken up the "just say no to bags" challenge!! We'd like to extend your challenge to ORS staff to "recycle for two weeks just to see how shocked they'd be to see a bunch of recyclables in one place."

Fred Doll: "My recycling is straightforward. Keep it in boxes until I'm passing by the recycle area, use refillable bottles, donate some items to school for art, reuse plastic containers to store leftovers, compost etc. I reuse tin cans to measure the bird feed and use a plastic milk carton to mix and carry the feed to the feeders. Just ordinary stuff I learned as a kid. Of course, as a kid, it was considered good use of resources vs. recycling."



Green Team response: Ordinary? We think not. We want everyone to make the effort. Until then Fred, you are extraordinary!

Pam Garver: "I recently learned about 'precycling' where you decide if the product you are buying has packaging that can be recycled or not and to not buy things over packaged or in nonrecyclable packaging. I'm trying to incorporate this into my shopping habits."



Green Team response: Excellent idea, Pam! Let's send a message to companies that don't use recyclable packaging that they need to mend their ways.



According to recent survey comments, 73 percent of you would like to see more Green Team challenges - the Green Team will be sure to send out the next challenge very soon!

Check out the next issue of the *LookOut* for more tips from your coworkers!

Reserve the date for a day on the links!

The 18th Annual ORS Golf Outing will be held at the Grand Ledge Country Club on Thursday, August 28th. This event is open to everyone at ORS, our business partners, and our family and friends.

The outing is a four person scramble and costs \$156 per foursome. This includes 18 holes of golf with a cart, lunch, and dinner. In addition, a



variety of prizes will be awarded.

You must make your own four-person team and elect a team captain. The organizers do not make any team assignments, so if you are looking for team or have a team in need of a player, check the document in the folder on the shared drive at: <F:\ORS\ORS Staff\!ORS Golf Outing 2008\2008 Players looking for teams & vice-versa.doc>.

Your team captain should send an email to [Fred Covert](#) by August 1. Include the following:

- Teammate names
- Team name
- Workplace of your teammates

Finally, the organizers are always looking for help planning, preparing, and prize gathering! If you or someone you know would like to help with the outing or donate door prizes, please contact [Fred Covert](#) or [Bill Motz](#).

Mother's Day

Mother's Day is celebrated in most countries on the second Sunday of May to honor all mothers and express gratitude for the hardships they bear in bringing up a child.

Celebrating motherhood is a historical tradition dating back to ancient times. A number of ancient cultures paid tribute to mothers as goddesses, including the Greeks and Romans. The Celtic Pagans marked the coming of spring with a fertility celebration linking their goddess Brigid with the first milk of the ewes.

During the seventeenth century, the British Isles introduced a religious celebration of motherhood, called Mothering Sunday, for working class families who had to send their young children off to be employed as house servants. On Mothering Sunday, the child servants were allowed to return home for the day. The holiday's popularity faded in the nineteenth century, only to be reincarnated during World War II when U.S. servicemen reintroduced the American sentimental aspects of the celebration.

Perhaps America's greatest proponent of motherhood, Anna Jarvis, ironically never had children of her own. Anna swore on her mother's gravesite she would realize her mother's lifelong dream of creating a national day to honor mothers. In 1908, her mother's church acquiesced to Anna's request to hold a special Sunday service in honor of mothers - a tradition that spread the very next year to churches in all 46 states. In 1909, Anna left her job and dedicated herself to a full-time letter writing campaign, imploring politicians, clergymen, and civic leaders to institute a national day for mothers. The resolution for a dedicated Mother's Day was signed by President Woodrow Wilson on May 8, 1914.

More about Mothers...

- There are 84 million mom's in the U.S.
- The youngest mother on record was Lina Medina, who delivered a 6½-pound boy by cesarean section in Lima, Peru, in 1939, at the age of 5 years and 7 months.
- There are more phone calls made on Mother's Day than on any other day of the year.
- Mother's Day is the third largest card-sending holiday.
- Mother's Day is the busiest day of the year for restaurants.

Resources: www.holidays.net/mother/story.htm, www.mothersdaycelebration.com, and www.wilstar.com/holidays/mothers.htm.

DMB Mission:
Partners in achieving
excellence

ORS Purpose:
We are an innovative
retirement
organization driven to
empower our
customers for a
successful today and
a secure tomorrow.

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