



NEWSworthy

A newsletter for the members of Minnesota NEW – National Eligibility Workers Association

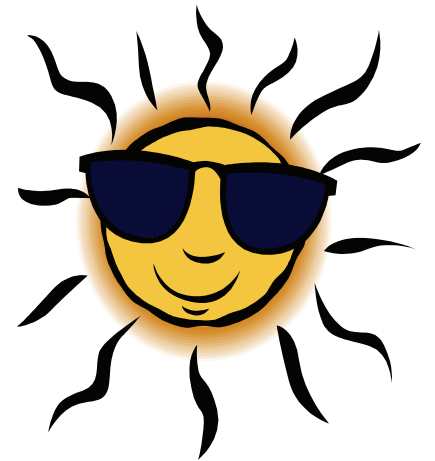
Summer Seminar 2007

The annual “Summer Seminar” sponsored by the Minnesota Chapter of N.E.W. took place on May 22, 2007 in the metro suburb of Maplewood. It was N.E.W.’S largest conference ever, with over 180 eligibility professionals attending. It was a very successful event, as those who were there may attest to, but in case you weren’t able to make it...

The day began with a N.E.W. business meeting, in which the annual “N.E.W. Horizons” award was bestowed upon Kitty Brown of Hennepin County. Kitty served as a dedicated N.E.W. board member for many years and just recently resigned her post due to other commitments. N.E.W. will miss Kitty’s communication and training expertise.

The day’s break-out sessions featured a variety of speakers, including National N.E.W. Paths’ very own Vice-President, Ellen Sevall, who presented “Feathers in the Wind.” Other topical speakers were Ann Dolence, Mary Grandy, Andre Koen, Alejandro Maldonado, and Dr. Richard Sebastian. There was truly something for everyone.

The event concluded with keynote speaker Dakota County Sheriff Don Gudmunson. Throughout his presentation, entitled “Fall in a Mud Puddle, Get Up and Check Your Pockets for Fish,” this public servant captivated his audience with words of wisdom and hilarious storytelling. Sheriff Gudmundson was certainly a crowd favorite, based on the feedback we received.



This year’s success only inspires us to work harder and aim higher for next year, and we continue to be grateful for the opportunity to provide high quality training to our eligibility colleagues throughout the state. The input you gave us on your evaluation forms will be used to make next year’s seminar even better yet. See you there!

Reflections of a past board member

As I step down from active participation on the MN-N.E.W. board, my mind slips into a reverie of random thoughts that I want to share with you.

When I started as a financial worker over 25 years ago, I wanted to make a difference – to help people. Sound familiar? What I found was an environment filled with complicated rules, demanding deadlines, low tolerance for errors and high expectations for excellence in customer service. I wanted to do a good job and soon realized that if I was going to survive in this business I needed something to help me cope and develop myself professionally.....that's when I discovered N.E.W.

I heard about the organization through a co-worker and joined in 1986. The first conference I attended was at my own expense. It was held in New York City and I still remember how impressed I was with all of the presentations. It was invigorating to be around others who understood this work and spoke in the same language of jargon and acronyms! Most importantly, it energized me and I began to feel "empowered" –there were things I could do to make my work easier and help my clients! This enthusiasm was contagious and I came back to Minnesota excited and anxious to share what I learned with others.

After a few years of membership, I was approached by a national board member and encouraged to become a national board member. In 1990 I had the privilege of being elected and the pleasure of serving as a national board member from 1990 – 1996.

Why am I sharing this? Because I was someone who didn't think of myself as a leader, yet I wanted things to change so eligibility work could receive the same "professional" courtesy and respect that social work received. I wanted an opportunity to learn and grow so I could better serve my clients. N.E.W. helped me find ways to start making these things happen.

A major turning point for me was a presentation from a fellow board member on the topic of professionalism. The main point of the workshop was that anyone can be "professional", it all hinges on your attitude – your perspective. This sparked "possibility" within me, kind of like the "little engine that could" – I think I can, I think I can.....

Soon I began to take on increased responsibility and to challenge myself to do things outside of my comfort zone. N.E.W. provided an opportu-

nity to explore and develop untapped skills in a safe and nurturing environment. I learned from other board members who mentored, advised and encouraged me. Through this experience, I was able to do things I never dreamed possible – chairing the Professional Development Committee, becoming national president, establishing a Minnesota Chapter. Most importantly, I personally benefited from the lasting friendships I've made within Minnesota and across the country.

Now it's time to pass the reins to others. The Minnesota Chapter is no longer a fledgling beginner and has taken off on its own I leave with happy memories and a wish for all N.E.W. members that their experience will be as rich and rewarding as mine.



Notes from the President

By Dale Carlson, Dakota County

Thanks to everyone that attended the MN-N.E.W. Summer Seminar. We had a banner year for attendance with over 150 people attending. We really appreciate the feedback received and will make improvements based on your comments.

Having said that, we also received a great response on the training topics and speakers. N.E.W. is about learning and developing skills to help us do our jobs better. We learned more about the AIDS/HIV issue, how to work with diversity and understanding more about Minnesota-Care. We also advanced our professional skills by learning how to work with difficult people, understanding how our words impact others and how powerful a positive attitude can be. It was a great time for people to see and talk to other county workers.

We are starting the planning for the 2008 conference. If you have a topic that you think would be interesting for people or have heard a great speaker, please be sure to let us know. You can send an email to any of the board members (email addresses can be found on our website at

www.mnnew.org).

This coming year, we will be focusing on membership. This is the only *national* organization for eligibility staff. If you have any ideas, be sure to let us know. We want to see our membership grow and be able to expand on the activities we engage in. We are also looking for people interested in being on the Board. Meetings are about once per month. For additional information, please contact dale.carlson@co.dakota.mn.us.

We look forward to hearing from you and we especially look for-

ward to seeing many of you again, at next year's seminar.

Rename the Summer Seminar Contest!

Every year the Minnesota chapter of N.E.W. hosts a "MN-N.E.W. Summer Seminar. The seminar got its name because it was usually held during the month of June (1st month of summer!)

For the past few years, the seminar has taken place in April or May (spring months!) The seminar for 2008 is also tentatively set for late April. For these reasons, "Summer Seminar" doesn't seem to fit this event anymore.

The Minnesota N.E.W. board is seeking ideas for a new name for this annual seminar. Please submit any ideas you have to Donna.Biederman@state.mn.us

The MN N.E.W. board will review all entries and if your idea is chosen, YOU will win a 1 year membership to N.E.W. (\$35 value)!!!

The Minnesota N.E.W. Board Needs You!

We currently have several openings on our board and invite you to consider joining us. As a board member of the Minnesota Chapter of N.E.W., you will have opportunities such as:

- Developing articles for our semi-annual newsletter;
 - Providing ideas for legislative input;
 - Networking with other professionals;
 - Planning the annual Summer Seminar; and
- Enhancing your professional skills and career opportunities.

Please feel free to call one of the board members listed on the back of this newsletter if you want more information.

Take the challenge and become active in **N.E.W.!**



2008 N.E.W. HORIZON NOMINATION FORM

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR TO NOMINATE YOUR FELLOW CO-WORKER FOR THE 2008 N.E.W. HORIZON AWARD. THIS YEAR'S NOMINATION WILL BE BASED ON THE MN-N.E.W. CODE OF ETHICS. (Members of the Board are exempt from nomination)

LISTED BELOW ARE THE NOMINATION CRITERIA:

***SERVES THE PUBLIC INTEREST: TREATS ALL COLLEAGUES, CLIENTS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WITH RESPECT, DIGNITY, AND COURTESY.**

***RESPECTS THE LAW: ADHERES TO ALL DATA PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY LAWS AND POLICIES.**

***DEMONSTRATES PERSONAL INTEGRITY: CARRIES OUT PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES IN A WAY THAT INSPIRES PUBLIC CONFIDENCE, TRUST, AND RESPECT.**

***PROMOTES AND SUPPORTS ETHICAL ORGANIZATIONS: DEMONSTRATES SUPPORT FOR THE MISSION, GOALS, AND POLICIES OF N.E.W.**

***STRIVES FOR PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE: BY ACKNOWLEDGING AND TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ERRORS.**

TO NOMINATE AN INDIVIDUAL SIMPLY WRITE A FEW SHORT SENTENCES AND EMAIL IT TO Donna.Biederman@state.mn.us OR Dale.Carlson@CO.DAKOTA.MN.US

THE DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS IS APRIL 4, 2008

DON'T DELAY----DO IT TODAY

Karen Linda Ovella Erica



Cheryl Dale Donna

MN N.E.W. Board Members

Dale Carlson, President—Dakota County	651-554-5671
Karen O'Keefe, Vice-President—Sterns County	320-656-6119
Erica Buelow, Treasurer—Anoka County	763-323-6031
Donna Biederman, Secretary—DHS	651-431-4097
Ovella Davis, DHS	Resigned 1/08
Cheryl Hanks, Anoka County	763-323-6095
Linda Ledkins, DHS	651-431-4582