



NEWsworthy

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

Minnesota NEW Seminar – “What’s In It For You?”

4-22-08

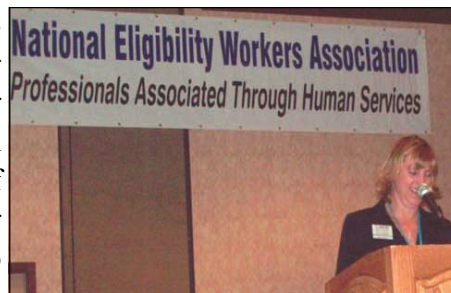
For the Minnesota Chapter of NEW, spring officially began on April 22nd as we gathered in St. Cloud for our annual seminar, this year entitled “What’s In It For You?” And in case you didn’t happen to notice the change on dates, the annual NEW “summer seminar” officially became the “spring seminar,” welcoming a change in weather, attitude, and outlook!

Break-out workshops covered a variety of topics. Two were program-related (MinnesotaCare and Burials, presented by DHS staff). One was community-focused (Post-Traumatic Veteran Stress), another personal (Making Stress Work for You), and one designed to learn about our ever-changing work of technology (Technologic). Seminar attendees had a nice variety to choose from.

To wrap up the day, keynote speaker and perennial crowd favorite, Petra Marquart presented “The Power of Service.” Well, to borrow a quote from her book of the same title, “Dazzling service is something that is magically created in the moment by inspired, empowered, and rewarded people who are committed to doing the right thing.” Petra

challenged us all to provide great service by first asking ourselves: “What would good customer service feel like if I were me on the other side of the desk?” and using our response to guide our actions accordingly. Seminar attendees who have heard Ms. Marquart in the past agreed that hers is a presentation to hear not just once, but periodically to remind us of the purpose of our human service positions.

The 2008 NEW seminar was a well-rounded and well-attended event. Please plan to attend next year’s, scheduled for April 21st at the St. Cloud Holiday Inn.



Top Photo: National NEW President

Bottom Photo: National NEW Board

NEW

National Conference Report

By Erica Buelow & Karen O’Keefe

We consider ourselves fortunate to have had the opportunity to attend the National NEW Conference held August 17 through August 20, 2008 in Anaheim, California. Neither of us had ever gone to a national conference before, and we were unsure what to expect. As it turned out, we were pleasantly surprised and impressed by all aspects of this training event.

Why? Probably because it featured an extremely well-rounded agenda. Session choices included federal policy, state’s best practices, technology updates, and personal growth – you name it, it was there. NEW President Susie Cummins said, “If it is hard for you to choose which workshop to attend because you want to see them all, we have met our goal” in preparing for this year’s conference. NEW should be proud for meeting its goal and then some.

Not only was the conference agenda a hit, the event was well-planned and at the lovely Crowne Plaza. We returned home with gratitude for participating in an informative and fun-filled conference!

Meet Your Board

Its time to meet board member

Cheryl Reijon

1. *What is your current job? How long have you been doing it?*

I have been a Business Analyst at DHS for just over 2 years. I was previously at Hennepin County for 27 years as an eligibility worker.

2. *How did you get started in eligibility work?*

I started in eligibility work when I was quite young (29 years ago). I was offered two jobs at the same time by the county. One position was a medical receptionist, and the other was an eligibility worker. I chose the eligibility worker position because I wanted to help people and make a difference in their lives.

3. *What is your work history in this field or related fields?*

I started in the General Assistance Division, working with single adults, state hospitals, treatment centers, and battered women. I then moved to the Elderly and Disabled area and began working with a very different client set, including the families of people going into long term care facilities. I had both maintenance and intake caseloads at various times.

I have seen eligibility work progress from manual paperwork to ever increasing automation. I was quite resistant to change and was a technophobe until I took some computer classes at a community college. I began to realize the benefit of online and web based applications not only for doing the work, but for communicating information that would help us to do a better job at serving our clients. I helped to bring about automatic monthly issuance and an online user manual at Hennepin County. I eventually went back to school and obtained a degree in Technical Communication from Metropolitan State University.

4. *What keeps you in this kind of work?*

I feel good knowing that others benefit from my work. Right now I am very excited about the new MEC² application, and I am hoping that we can apply the things we learned making the child care system to making a web-based front end to the MAXIS system.

5. *How and when did you become involved in NEW ?*

Kitty Brown, Past Minnesota NEW President, first got me involved with NEW. when she approached me to be a webmaster. The more I saw of the organization, the more impressed I became with the work the board does to provide an annual seminar for eligibility workers as well as information throughout the year.

7. *How has NEW been a positive influence for you personally and professionally?*

NEW has helped me to feel good about the work we do.

8. *What has been most rewarding about participating in NEW?*

Meeting new people.

9. *What do you like best about NEW?*

The help and networking that it offers workers.

10. *What does NEW has to offer potential members?*

A place to belong. A broader perspective.

11. *How is NEW an asset in personal and professional development?*

It looks great on a resume. People take notice when you are a member of a professional organization.

12. *Do you have a vision for the future of NEW in Minnesota?*

I would like to see NEW members become participants with DHS by providing input and sharing ideas for better systems, policies, and service. Eligibility Workers have valuable skills and knowledge that need to be shared not only with the people who develop the systems, policies, and training, but with other eligibility workers.

13. *Personal Information—*

Family: Husband and two dogs (Bichons)

Interests: Figuring out how things can work better.

Hobbies: Reading science fiction and fantasy.

14. *How would coworkers describe you?*

Laid-back, quiet, and a quick study.

15. *Tell me something about 3 important moments in your life.*

A. The moment I decided to leave an abusive marriage. My favorite aunt had died and I felt like the best way I could honor her was to have a good life.

B. Looking out over the waiting room and knowing it was only by a quirk of circumstances that I was on the worker side of the counter.

C. Graduating from college at age 50.

16. *What advice would you give to new eligibility workers just starting out today?*

Take pride in your work and be prepared for constant change.



Notes from the "Past" President

By Dale Carlson, Dakota County

Dear Minnesota NEW Members:

Summer has already come and gone and what that means is your Minnesota NEW Board is back at work planning for next year's Seminar! Wow, where did the time go? We are always looking for NEW ideas for speakers and training topics. If you have any requests, please be sure to send us an email.

Most of us continue to be

very busy managing caseloads and meeting the needs of our clients. Our professionalism is to serve our clients as best we can and somehow, we manage to do it. Part of the reason for the busy workloads is new legislative rules. Minnesota NEW is an agency member of MSSA and I am a member of the Legislative Committee representing Minnesota NEW members. We have the opportunity to put forward legislative ideas or suggestions for MSSA to consider for their annual policy agenda. If you have any thoughts or ideas for legislation that pertains to our profession, please send me an email with a description. I can propose it to MSSA for a vote.

As you have noticed, your newsletter was delivered to you via email instead of paper. This was done to save the cost of printing and mailing as well as to be a little more "green." Please be sure to forward this newsletter on to others.

Check These Web Sites!

www.nationalnew.org

National NEW web site

Check out the "TANF Best Practices Handbook"

Written by National NEW. This handbook includes best practices from members across the US.

www.tanfbestpractices.org

www.mn-new.org

Minnesota Chapter of
NEW web site

Recycle--Recycle-- Recycle!

Pass this newsletter on to a
co-worker!

We also continue to have openings on the Minnesota NEW Board. If you are interested, please contact any of the Board members. We look forward to hearing from you.

Dale Carlson

Past NEW President

Mark Your Calendars!

Minnesota N.E.W. Seminar

Tuesday, April 21, 2009

St Cloud, Holiday Inn

34th Annual National

N.E.W. Conference

August 16-19, 2009

New Orleans, LA

(more information at
www.nationalnew.org)

A Message from the 2008 NEW Horizon Award Winner

—Tammy Johnson, Marshall County

I would like to start by thanking my co-workers for nominating me for the 2007 NEW Horizons Award and the NEW Board for selecting me as the recipient. As I attended the Minnesota NEW Seminar in St Cloud at the Holiday Inn in April of this year, I was quite relaxed and prepared for a fun and educational work day out of the office. When President Dale Carlson started the award presentation by describing the award recipient I looked over at my co-worker attending with the seminar with me, who was smiling sheepishly. Wow! Not what I had expected from my day, recipient of the 2007 New Horizons Award.

My name is Tammy Johnson and I have worked fulltime at Marshall County Social Services in Warren, MN for 18 years as a financial worker. I have been the financial assistance specialist for the past 4 years with a truly generic caseload, including long term care. Financial work has allowed me to do some of my favorite things; learn, teach, and work with people. The never ending changes and complex policy for our programs requires constant learning that keeps me motivated. It's a great day when we have learned something new. Training new workers and reviewing policy and MAXIS changes with co-workers permits my love of teaching, and the contact with the people we help fulfills the giving to others at work.

The NEW Seminar was a great day. Good food, friends, workshops and a wonderful speaker, Petra Marquart, who spoke on the Power of Service. Her message about service is really what our work is all about. How we are treated personally and professionally has a huge impact on how we feel about our day, and should also be a lesson on how effective our service is to others. I would encourage anyone who has not attended a NEW Seminar to do so. It's a very worthy, one day event.

Thank you again to my co-workers for taking the time to recommend me for this award. I am humbled, as seldom are we recognized for the work we do and very honored to work with such caring friends. I would like to end with one of my favorite quotes, "Think deeply, speak gently, love much, laugh a lot, work hard, give freely, and be kind."

To nominate an individual for the 2009 Award, simply write a few short sentences about how this person follows the Minnesota NEW code of ethics (found at www.mn-new.org). Email the nomination to Donna.Biederman@state.mn.us or Dale.Carlson@co.dakota.mn.us.

Deadline is April 13, 2009.

The Minnesota NEW 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 NEW, 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 Seminar; and
- Enhancing your professional skills and career opportunities.

Please feel free to call one of the board members if you want more information.

Take the challenge and become active in **NEW!**

MN NEW Board Members

Karen O'Keefe, President	320-656-6119
Sterns County	
Vice-President	VACANT
Erica Buelow, Treasurer	763-323-6031
Anoka County	
Cheryl Reijon, Secretary	651-431-3499
DHS	
Donna Biederman, DHS	651-431-4097
Laura Koll, Anoka County	763-422-6945
Dale Carlson, Dakota County	651-554-5671