



# 2013 Staff Reporter

July ★ August ★ September ★ October ★ November ★ December

## CQL Re-Accreditation a Success

The first week of December saw Liberty welcoming a representative from the Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL), an international organization which provides accreditation to human service organizations for outstanding work and excellence in the services they provide and how the support is executed.

Liberty is very honored to have been given the prestigious four-year accreditation for the second time! We are one of slightly more than two hundred organizations in the world with this distinction.

Staff, along with stakeholders from the community, spent the entire week looking at how Liberty is doing with our personal outcome interviews and basic assurances that represent how we function as an organization.

Liberty COO Candy Opalka has this to say:

"We had phenomenal results, thanks to the amazing work you all put into supporting people! Your hard work has resulted in ensuring lives and dreams people value, and the independence that makes such a difference to everyone!

CQL comments included, "Wow! These are some of the best plans and systems we have ever seen!" "People are involved in choosing things that matter to them and their lives are full!"

This could not be possible without each of you and your constant encouragement of people's growth, independence, and new experiences. A special thank you to the teams of people which spent so much time helping us learn what matters! The heart and soul of CQL is Carrie-Ann Schmidt and Andy Stegeland. Without their constant encouragement and organization of this event, we would not have had such a successful accreditation review. Thank you to everyone who helped plan and create the amazing artwork and pictures! Most important are our self advocates who have told their stories, shared their time, and emceed these events.

Thank you for all you do to bring excellence to all we do! ■



## From the Help Desk

### Using the Right Mouse Button

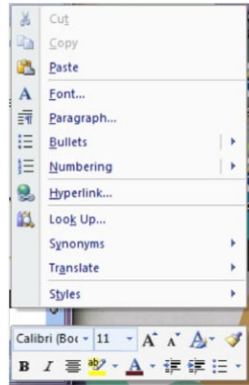
Did you ever wonder what all those buttons are on your mouse? What more could you possibly use but the left button?

The right mouse button provides shortcuts to different functions. It all depends on where your cursor is when you click the button.

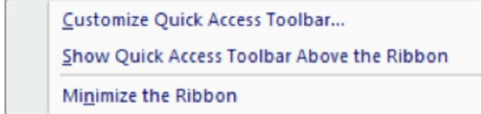
For example, while typing this in Word, I clicked the right mouse button on the text of my document, right next to my cursor. It brought up a menu that looks like the one on the right.

The features listed are common options you may need when typing text in a word document.

When I moved the cursor up to the toolbar on the top of the screen, the second menu popped up.



After the menu pops up, click the left mouse button on the option you would like to perform. Click the left button on any options that appear after that.



If you accidentally click on the right mouse button, move your cursor off the menu and click the left button to close it. ■

## 2013 Manufacturing Recap

Liberty's manufacturing department thanks everyone involved through 2013 who has helped our department successfully ship over 125,000 cases this year. Our products are shipped all over the country with the bulk of the products being used in New York State.

In combination with Manufacturing, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Sub-Assembly, Liberty provided our individuals with paying jobs to accumulate over 73,408 hours worked. Congratulations!

Some of the new relationships we began in 2013 include Breton Industries of Amsterdam, NY, Taylor Made Products in Johnstown, NY, and Richardson's in Canajoharie, NY. In conjunction with the knowledge and assistance from Breton, Liberty began selling Humvee Soft Top Covers to the United States Military around the country. Liberty began punching valves for Taylor Made Fender Buoy's in February of this year. The jobs performed for Richardson's began in July this year and are done onsite in their manufacturing facility.

A few of the new products Liberty started to manufacture this year include Liberty Fireshield, a product developed to gain valuable seconds to escape any burning fire. Two types of Field Marking Paint for all types of athletic fields were filled for the first time to complete orders for the fall semesters. Last, but not least, Liberty added a Floor Sweeper manufactured by Bissell to its product line including over 200 items.

We would not have this success if it wasn't for great customers around the state. Some of our newest customers for 2013 who began purchasing products from Liberty include the New York State Fair Grounds and New Hyde Park School District. For more information on any of our products, please contact the sales and marketing office at extension 3256 or 3270 or visit our website at [libertycleanproducts.com](http://libertycleanproducts.com) ■

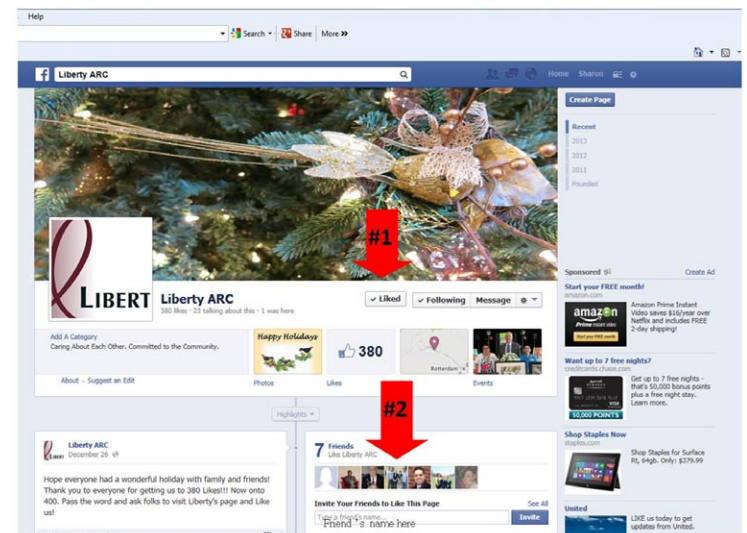
## "Like" Vs!

At Liberty we are on a social media mission to reach a milestone of 400 "Likes" on our Facebook page. We need your help to meet (and better yet, exceed) our goal! First, a HUGE thank you to all of you who have already "Liked" our page and visit us on a regular basis. Now we need you to spread the word.

Liberty's page is aimed at informing the public about the wonderful activities the individuals we support are involved in and the great things Liberty is doing in the community.

You can either ask someone you know to go to Liberty Arc's Facebook page and click the "Like" button (#1 arrow on the graphic) or you can invite your Facebook friends (#2 arrow on the graphic) to go to the page and click the "Like" button. Make sure they are choosing the button just below the cover photo (the large rectangular photo at the top of the page) and not a comment below in the posting section.

Thank you so much for your support! Let's get the word out about Liberty! ■



## Benefits Corner

### \*Just a reminder...

- The agency's insurance plan year now runs July through June. The next open enrollment period when you can make plan changes, additions, enroll in vision, or enroll in a Flexible Spending Plan will not be until May, 2014, with a July 1, 2014, effective date.
- Effective January 1, 2014, Liberty will be switching our Life Insurance carrier for employees from Standard Insurance to Hartford Life Insurance Company. Hartford is currently the agency's carrier for Long Term Disability coverage. You will not be required to complete a new beneficiary form as Hartford has agreed to accept any enrollment forms we currently have on file if a claim is ever made. Supplemental coverage rates will remain as they currently are. For those of you already enrolled, this will be a seamless transition.
- Here is the link again for the Employee Self Service website, where staff will now go to view their paystubs as well as accrued time off. There is also a link to it on the top of the Liberty Intranet home page next to all the other programs / departments called "Employee Self Service."

<https://selfservice.libertyarc.org/selfservice/>

If you encounter any problems logging into your account, contact Diana Mack at extension 3288.

# Personnel Personals

## ■ Births



- **Trisha Krajewski** (Residential) and her husband Jay, welcomed their TRIPLETS, yes, triplets, on August 21. Welcome Aaron (4 lbs. 13 oz.), Bailey (4 lbs. 7oz.) and Caleb (5 lbs. 4oz.). Three bundles of boy joy...congrats!
- **Tina Morey**, who works in our HR Department, is the proud grandma of Harley Rose who was born on October 31 at 5 lbs. 12 ozs. Enjoy your time with your new granddaughter!
- **Leo** (Day program) and Julie Rouse welcomed their daughter Knylah Kayvonne Rouse on November 5, weighing 4 lbs. 8 oz. 17.5 inches. Sounds like you had a lot to celebrate this holiday season!
- **Linda Emden** (Residential) also welcomed a grandchild, Rita Alice Williams. Rita was born on November 17 and weighed in at 6 lbs. 11ozs. Congratulations!

## ■ Wedding

- **Adam Fetterly** (Operations) had a wonderful Fall! He and wife Kelly were married on November 2. Warm wishes for many happy years!



## ■ Milepost Birthday

- **Sue McCarthy** (Assistant Manager at our Guy Park Residence) turned the big 50 on December 27! Happy Birthday, Sue, and many more! ■

# Feather Your Nest Raffle



MaryAnn Metz  
and Tracy Mead

Liberty Foundation's Annual "Feather Your Nest" Raffle was a great success this year, not only for the programs the Foundation supports, but for Liberty staff as well!

Winners of the \$6,000 Grand Prize were 10 staff members from Liberty's Business Office: Donna Mochrie, Bill Pulver, Deb Barker, MaryAnn Metz, Jaclyn Hernigle, Janet Zilka, Tracy Mead, Nanette Conyne, Christine Tessiero, and Lisa Zanella.

Other staff winners included Shirley Pettengill, a \$1,000 winner, and \$500 winners Anne Ricci and Wendy Moore and her husband Jeffery (the Moores were grand prize winners last year!).

Thank you to everyone who supported the Liberty Foundation. Don't forget to purchase your ticket next year...who knows, you may be the next \$6,000 winner! ■

# Holiday Basket Giveaway



Overnight getaway winner Jennifer Ferluge is congratulated by Human Resources Director Judie Stoebe who donated both overnight packages.

The Human Resources Department, along with Staff Training and Corporate Compliance, sponsored a Holiday Basket Giveaway! The baskets and goodies were purchased with the commission checks from this year's employee book fairs.

Margarita Basket .....	Karen Blake	Chick Flick Night.....	Michele Eplite
Baking Bowl Basket .....	Carman Irizarry	Chocolate Basket .....	Trisha Smith
Afternoon Break Basket .....	JoAnn Piurek	Soup Basket .....	Samantha Rodriguez
Double Wine Basket .....	Chris Lail	Italian Pasta Basket .....	Danielle Swedatschenko
Popcorn Basket .....	Deb Wallin	Spa Basket .....	Cathy Ann Walbourn
Dunkin Coffee/Carafe Basket .....	Roxanne Vecchio	Cookie Baking Basket .....	Stacy Stafford
Ready To Cook Basket .....	Denise Slawienski	Candle Basket .....	Chuck Hanson
Car Wash Kit.....	Dane Peck	Chairs/Dart Board .....	Deb Oliver
Wine and Glasses .....	Paula Shirvanion	Snowman Basket .....	Val Goodemote

## —Two Grand Prizes—

Overnight Stay and Breakfast at Lake Placid Marriott:

Jovan Valentin • Jennifer Ferluge

Congratulations to all!

# Book Fair

The semi-annual "Books Are Fun"

Book Fair was held in late November for holiday shopping. Staff bought and browsed throughout the day for books, electronic gadgets, and holiday décor; this fair had it all! ■



## DSP Week

In early September Liberty celebrated National Direct Support Professional week in a variety of ways:

- Three banners brought attention to the celebration of this week; they were placed at: Grieme St. bridge over Rte. 30, LE Building; and Mohawk Day Hab Building.
- Editorial in Amsterdam Recorder from COO Candy Opalka describing the role DSPs play and how vital they are.
- Over 200 yellow and orange flags were erected around Liberty's campus honoring DSP with personal messages and names of staff members.
- Throughout the week several breakfasts were held for DSPs.
- DSPs also received gifts of T-shirts, baskets of goodies, and gift cards.
- Directors and Assistant Directors visited DSP on various shifts (even overnights!) at residences and day programs.
- Social Media was also used this year. Throughout the entire week, Thank You messages were posted on Liberty's Facebook page celebrating our DSPs. Messages from fellow staff, individuals DSPs support, board members, and family and friends could be read on a daily basis.

It was a comprehensive effort by many to ensure Liberty's hard working DSPs are recognized and know they are appreciated for all they do. *Thank you!* ■



## Employee Recognition Picnic: "Time to Clown Around"

Also in September, Liberty hosted its first Employee Picnic for all employees. Throughout the day, staff got to sit back and relax while enjoying food, music, and conversation. The theme was "The Carnival" and staff was able to win prizes at various midway-style games, as well as team events. The main highlight of the day was the dunking booth, where agency leaders took to the plank to raise money for charity. Employees had the opportunity to take a chance at dunking their favorite leader. This event raised \$1800 for those charities.

The high-earning employee was the Business Office's Chris Lail (for his organization, the Starlight Foundation).

The intent of the relaxed and enjoyable event is to provide an opportunity to express Liberty's gratitude to our dedicated employees. The "dunkees" (in 60-degree water!) included Mike Decker, CEO (raising funds for Liberty Foundation); Candy Opalka, COO (raising funds for the National Breast Cancer Association); Wendi Kirk, Manager (raising funds for Canajoharie Youth Center); Travis Bethel, Regional Director (raising funds for Amsterdam Homeless Shelter) and Renee Sapia, Manager (raising funds for the Alzheimer's Foundation).

What better way for Liberty's top leaders to say Thank You to employees than by being dunked numerous times in 60 degree water! It was simply a great day of fun for all. ■



## 300 Attend Staff Holiday Party

Liberty's Annual Staff Holiday party was held this year at Perthshire Restaurant and Banquet House. Approximately 300 staff attended the festive get together. They were treated to a delicious meal, music, and a photo booth. The Human Resources Department and Staff Training organized the event.

Thank you to all who helped with and attended this year's party we hope you had a wonderful time! ■



# Liberty Employees Honored

More than 80 Liberty employees and guests attended the annual recognition dinner, on November 7 at the Raindancer Restaurant, Amsterdam, honoring 10-, 15-, 20-, 25-, 30-, and 35-year tenured employees.

**35 years** The first recognition of the evening was for 35-year employee **Barbara Wool, Liberty's Director of PR and Development**. In her years at Liberty, Wool has fulfilled a few different roles and has served 19 years in her current capacity. She has successfully led an informative and positive public relations operation and guided Liberty Foundation in raising millions of dollars for programs that benefit individuals at Liberty.

Other acknowledgements of the evening:

**30 years** Thirty-year recognition of **Deborah Baker, Accounting Clerk in Liberty's Business Office**.

**25 years** Twenty-five year recognition for **Nanette Conyne, Payroll Supervisor; Raymond Dumar, Driver/Material Handler Supervisor; Vivian Fitz-James, Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant; Donna Hall, Assistant Manager; Shari Lynn Herting, Assistant Manager; Donna Mochrie, Accounting Clerk; Karen Pasquarelli, Direct Support Professional; Sandra Perry, Direct Support Professional; Robert Reese, Direct Support Professional; Janis Rorick, Chemical Supervisor/Lab Tech; Donna Sanders, Direct Support Professional; Roxanne Vecchio, Assistant Manager; Faye VanSchaick, Direct Support Professional, and Tina Yerdon, Direct Support Professional**.

**20 years** Twenty year recognition of **Linda Damphier, Direct Support Professional; Jennifer Ferluge, Speech Language Pathologist; Tyler Kanches, Direct Support Professional; Sharon Oleksak, Assistant Manager; Suzanne Schulz, Assistant Manager; Dixie Suits, Assistant Manager, and Lisa Zanella, Senior Staff Accountant**.

**15 years** Fifteen year recognition for **Charlotte Baird, Assistant Manager; Sandra Bell, Lead Skilled Machine Operator; Karen Bielawa, Assistant Manager; Charlene DiCaprio, Dental Assistant; John Glode, Regional Director; Sabrina Gordon, Direct Support Professional; Nancy Guyette, Residential Manager; Bonnie King, Direct Support Professional; Lisa Kinowski, Supervising RN; Sandra Mallett, Assistant Habilitation Specialist II; Pauline Kretser, PC Technician; Mary Beth Papa, Direct Support Professional; Amy Squillace, Direct Support Professional, and Christine Ward, Director of Health Center Operations**.

**10 years** Recognition for ten years of service went to **Kathleen Broderick, Residential RN; Karen Blake, Assistant Director MSC; Donna Doran, Assistant Manager; Jessica Hazzard, Assistant Habilitation Specialist I; Ryann Jump, Assistant Manager; Mary Moltrup, Direct Support Professional; Robert Scofield, Assistant Manager; Gary Stanton, Direct Support Professional; Tina Strum, Assistant Habilitation Specialist II; Christine Swart, Senior Habilitation Coordinator; Eileen Valenti, Direct Support Professional and Carrie Winney, Direct Support Professional**. ■



## Check out Liberty's new website design!

Visit us at [libertyarc.org](http://libertyarc.org) and see the great new look and layout. Brighter colors, large graphics and a more "user friendly" site are available right at your fingertips! ■

## Dining to Donate

**Y**ummy food and great prizes were on the menu at the Foundation's "Dining to Donate" event at Recovery Sports Grill in September. Thank you to all staff who participated in this event. We had a good turnout of friends, family, and staff, which helped raise over \$800 for the individuals and families the Foundation supports.

Our deep appreciation to BBL, Dave Lepine, General Manager at the Recovery Room, and his terrific staff, including Kaitlyn Baker, Assistant General Manager, for giving us this opportunity and for being so helpful and friendly throughout the process.

There were two raffles for attendees to try their luck and two Liberty staff members were winners!

**Robin Moller** won 20 \$5 NYS Lottery scratch-off tickets and **Vivian Fitz-James** won \$130 from the 50/50 raffle. Congratulation Robin and Vivian and thank you to everyone, especially the Business Office who came together and enjoyed the evening out! ■



*Vivian  
Fitz-James*



*Robin  
Moller*

## It's a New Year...

### ...a new...You?

**I**t's that time of year, New Year's resolutions abound! At Liberty we make it easier for you to keep them throughout the year.



Here are a couple of ways:

■ Since the fall, approximately 10-12 people have been "shaking it" in Zumba®, a Latin-based exercise program that incorporates toning and cardio. Zumba® is available to all, every Wednesday from 4-5 in the Day Supports café. Just bring \$5, sneakers, and expect to have fun!

■ Starting the second week of January, a group of Liberty employees will be participating in a

weight challenge through the Fulton County YMCA. We wish them all the best of luck and hope they are all "The Biggest Losers"!

■ If you want to keep track of all the healthy things you're doing AND earn credit, then log onto your CDPHP account and log "Lifepoints." It's as simple as clicking on the "Lifepoints" area on your main CDPHP login page. You can get a potential of \$365 in rewards by submitting your activities throughout the year. Activities such as; gym membership, flu shot, annual physical, dental/eye exams, and much more! At the end of the year you can redeem your points for gift cards from hundreds of different vendors.

Start today and reap the healthy rewards tomorrow! Good luck, and may 2014 be a wonderful year for you and your family! ■

## Medical and Clinical Corner

*Employee Flu Shot Clinics, free for Liberty employees, were offered this fall by our Clinical and Medical Department. (L to R) Liberty staff member Ryan Biggie receives his preventative shot from Liberty nurse Tammy Lorensen.*



### Fight the Flu

**T**he flu season usually runs from late fall until March. The flu is a serious illness with symptoms starting with fever, sore throat, cough, tiredness, and body aches. In some people the flu can lead to potentially life-threatening complications.

Even without being vaccinated there are steps you can take to reduce transmission of the flu:

#### To help boost your immune system:

- get plenty of rest
- exercise
- eat properly.
- Stay home from work if you experience flu symptoms.
  - Taking it easy could help you feel better sooner
  - Will slow the spread of disease to others.
  - To reduce the spread of germs, cover your nose and mouth, preferable with a disposable tissue, when coughing or sneezing.

#### HANDWASHING!

Clean your hands with soap and warm water.

Carry a waterless hand gel and wash your hands frequently:

- After using the bathroom
- Before eating
- Before and after preparing food.
- CLEAN SURFACES you touch frequently, such as door knobs, water faucets, refrigerator handles, tables, telephones.

*Let's all work together to stay healthy this winter!*

—From Robin Moller, Director of Medical and Clinical

## Thanksgiving Feast



*Doug Blanc receives his Thanksgiving sauce from Bill Sikora. Also serving are: (R to L) Connie Dulysz, Bernie Masterpolo, Chad Hartwig, Barb Renda, and Gary Greco.*

**I**t was a Thanksgiving meal with all the trimmings—turkey, stuffing, potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce and (who can resist?) pumpkin pie with whipped cream! Staff was treated to the authentic feast served by folks from our Sales/Marketing and Business Offices. Thank you very much for your willingness to make the Holiday season one full of caring and joy. ■

## rUNDEAD / Color Me RAD 5K

Staff from Liberty's Day Supports program has been busy having a LOT of fun and staying healthy! Over the past few months they've been blasted with color and had to run away from Zombies. Oh, my!

The group participated in the All-You-Can-Eat 5K and the non-competitive race. Zombies did get most of them, but a few people did have a flag left at the end. Team members who survived with a flag at the end turned it in for a raffle ticket to be entered in a drawing. Glad everyone made it back in one piece!

Patty Reksc and staff from the speech and hearing program also participated in the very fun and colorful Color Me RAD 5K. Participants in this walk/run event are blasted with cannon of cornstarch that fires off a blaze of color bombs of blue, green, pink, purple and yellow. When they finish, each person is a walking rainbow! Looks like fun!

Participation in both events raised funds to benefit the Special Olympics. ■



The team made up of Toby VanNostrand, Kyra Pinn, Cesar Ortiz, Megan Martino, Tina Morey, Andy Stegeland, Jeff Collins, Meagan Riccardi, Courtney Downing, Emily Stegeland, Patty Reksc, and Sam Morey were brave when they entered the rUNDEAD 5K in Saratoga.

## Holiday Door Decorating Contest



3rd place



2nd place



1st place

In December, the HR Department conducted a Holiday Door Decorating contest. Many people got into the festive mood!

Results:

- 1st place Winner—Lunch courtesy of HR:  
**Renee Martin and her management team**
- 2nd place Winner—Lunch courtesy of HR:  
**Speech department**
- 3rd place Winner—Movie passes:  
**Area 7 staff**

"It was truly a fun event for all. Thank you for the wonderful participation," said Doug Blanc. "It was very exciting to see all the votes and pictures come in." ■

## Volunteer DelSanto Honored

Mike DelSanto, with Liberty's Lifeskills program, is celebrating a volunteering milestone. Mike (center in photo) has put in over 20 years as the person who runs the clock for the Amsterdam Rams boy's basketball games. That's a lot of times-outs, buzzer beaters, and ref calls! Mike was even honored with this photo in the Amsterdam Recorder. Congratulations, Mike, and keep up the great work. ■



Dave Wojeski/For the Recorder

### RUNNING THE SHOW

Shown from left are Mike Bielecki, Mike Del Santo and Bob Malicki — the longtime crew of men who run the scorer's table at games for the Amsterdam Running Rams basketball team. Bielecki serves as the Rams' official scorer, Del Santo runs the clock and Malicki is the public address announcer. The three were honored in a pre-game ceremony before the Rams' game Tuesday against Bishop Maginn for their many years of service for the boys basketball program.

## Chili Cook-off



Michelle Rogers, Vivian Fitz-James, and Pam Wadsworth sample some of the chili contest entries.



(L to R) Judges Traves Bethel, Vanessa Rulison, and (far right) John Glode present the Chili Cook-Off trophy to Curteis Hillbourn. Congrats!

The winner of Liberty's first Chili Cook-off was **Mary (Carol) Hillbourn** (with the help of her son Curteis). The judges—Vanessa Rulison, Traves Bethel, and John Glode—said Carol's chili had a robust flavor and a pleasing presentation. Carol walked away with a beautiful trophy, \$40, and most importantly, bragging rights!

**Vivian Fitz-James** won Most Creative; her entry had good texture and a tasty, smoked bacon flavor.

Honorable Mention went to **Bob Reese** for his zesty ginger-flavored chili creation.

A BIG thank you to all cooks who competed. Ultimately, \$355 was raised for the Snack Bags for Kids Program, helping us support a healthy lifestyle for children in our community.

The judges had a lot of fun tasting 20 different chilies made by Liberty individuals and staff.

Special thanks to Shauna Hernigle and the staff and individuals from 7 Main Street for the concept and organizing the event. It was a lot of fun and we are all looking forward to next year! ■

## Safety Corner



Heather Vecchio  
Safety Manager

### "Safety Culture"

By Heather Vecchio

It's hard to believe another year has passed, as we look forward to beginning 2014 and wonder, "Where did 2013 go?"

It certainly was a year chock full of new experiences, policy and procedure changes, new people, and, of course, new rules and regulations from all over! At Liberty, the New Year promises to bring everyone more opportunities to adapt to change.

Regardless of your job title at Liberty, each person here plays a critical role in the development of what we call the "culture" of the agency. Safety professionals often refer to a "safety culture" at companies in which employees are engaged and motivated to participate and mentor safe behaviors, leading to fewer accidents and injuries.

*The definition of the word "culture" includes a group having shared values, practices, beliefs, and attitudes. It's making sure everyone is working towards the same goal.*

Our agency Skill Based Training (SBT) program was developed specifically to ensure that skills taught in the training classroom were observed and supported by veteran staff, who become mentors for new hires. The "One Team, One Goal" slogan certainly applies to safety and safety training. Many people will have opportunities to mentor new staff, as well as to help each other in daily activities. Whether we are reviewing an agency vehicle inspection record, completing an SBT, or reviewing a fire evacuation plan, each person has opportunities to shape our agency safety culture by providing assistance and guidance to someone else.

**Be the change you want to see** means that we need to exemplify the good we want to see in others. Take time to show someone how, discuss why, and communicate questions and concerns openly and honestly. As a leader, follow up on questions and listen. If you don't have an answer, be honest and try to get one. Provide the "why."

With these changes, we can be a little closer to developing that "safety culture" in 2014!

**Best wishes for a safe and happy New Year. ■**