



# Family Self-Sufficiency

## From *the* Office

It's hard to believe that fall has already arrived and the holiday season is once again just around the corner. This issue of the FSS newsletter puts the spotlight on recent FSS graduate Kelly Larabee who shares her experiences over the past two years as a FSS program participant. Her story can be seen on page 2.

As a heads up, the FSS program will be offering workshops on resumes and interview skills this spring. For those of you not work-

ing, 2012 is the year to dust off that resume, sharpen up your interview skills and KNOW that you will find employment! Additionally, the FSS program has partnered with Rabobank and will be offering budget and banking workshops. These workshops will be mandatory for all FSS participants not currently employed or enrolled in vocational or higher education programs.

FSS Program participants, as a whole, continued to shine over this past year in your efforts to complete the goals

outlined in your Individual Training and Service Plans. In summary, twenty-two of you are attending college or career technical training programs, twenty-two of you are employed, ten of you found new employment this year and even more impressive, sixteen of you increased your earned income over the past nine months. Way to go!

I wish all of you continued success and hope your holiday season is a happy and safe one for you and your loved ones!

## Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is the ability to deal effectively with other people and their feelings as well as your own. In job hunting, a high EQ can produce a successful interview and ultimately a job offer. Unlike your intelligence quotient (IQ), which is genetically predetermined, you can increase your EQ through awareness. And EQ may be as much a predictor of success

(if not a better one) than your IQ, especially in job hunting, where personal interaction plays an important role.

**Assertiveness:**

Being assertive helps you move the job opportunity forward without offending or frustrating the interviewer. Think of assertiveness as being located halfway between passivity and aggressiveness. For example, suppose you are trying to close

on a job offer, but the interviewer is delaying the final decision.

You can respond in one of three ways:

**Passive:** "Could you give me a call when you've made a decision?" **Assertive:** "Could you give me a specific time and date when you'll make your final decision?" **Aggressive:** "If you don't hire me right now, I'll go work for your competi-

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**Seasonal Employment**

**Major retailers in the Chico area have started hiring for the 2011 holiday season. This is an excellent opportunity to get your foot in the door for potential full-time employment and to add employment history and references to your resume.**

# FSS Graduate-Dreams Do Come True

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Kelly Larabee joined the FSS program in March of 2009. A December 2008 graduate of

Chico State University, she was unemployed and not sure what the future held for her and her four-year old daughter. Kelly told me she was intrigued by the "Free Money" flyer that had been mailed in her Section 8 recertification packet. "Homeownership has always been a dream of mine, so when I saw the flyer, I had to call. After the FSS orientation, I couldn't wait to sign the contract." Kelly credits the FSS program with helping her to focus on

career goals and for referrals to One-Stop and CalJobs that eventually helped her land a job with United Health Care. "Having a five-year career plan in writing with specific goals and completion dates in place really motivated me." Within a matter of months Kelly increased her earned income which triggered the start of an FSS escrow account. Kelly took advantage of the many workshops held by the FSS program and FSS referrals to other service agencies. Kelly stated the budget workshops and the credit review and follow-ups were extremely beneficial and helped her to bring up her credit score. "While I've always wanted to own a home, I never really believed I'd be able to save enough

for a down payment and I always thought my credit score might hold me back. It's hard to believe but in two and-a-half years I raised my credit score and through the FSS program I was able to save up enough money to make a down payment on a home of my own."

Kelly completed all of the terms of her Contract of Participation on September 8, 2011. During her time in the FSS program, Kelly was able to save \$9,925.36 in her escrow account which she used as a down payment for buying a home here in Chico. Kelly expects escrow to close in the very near future and will leave Section 8 to take up residence with her daughter, now age 6, in their first home. A dream she never thought would come true. Congratulations Kelly.

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## Emotional Intelligence (*continued from page 1*)

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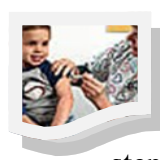
The first response is almost guaranteed to fail, while the third response, even if immediately successful, creates resentment. The second approach sets up specific conditions for the job offer without forcing the pace. **Self-Awareness:** Identify your own feelings, and use them to cope effectively with the job-hunting process. Follow these steps: Identify which emotions you're feeling. Are you angry? Sad? Self-conscious? Confident? Predict how your feelings will affect your performance during the job-hunting process. Compensate for negative emotions that might hinder your effectiveness, and expand positive ones that might help you get the job offer. For example, if you're furious that your first interview was a no-show, take some time to calm down before you go on another interview. **Empathy:** Adapting to the interviewer's moods and emotions is

as important as recognizing your own. Empathy begins with effective listening and observation. But simply knowing what the interviewer might be feeling is not enough to be empathetic. You must actually be able to feel what the interviewer is likely to be feeling. For example, suppose you discover that the interviewer has just received some bad news. You can respond by: Proceeding with the interview as if nothing had changed, demonstrating low EQ. Suggesting another time for the interview, showing more moderate EQ. Taking a moment to imagine the sense of confusion that the interviewer might be feeling and, depending on the situation, decide whether he would prefer to commiserate or, alternatively, be distracted. If you're unsure, ask the interviewer what he would like to do. This reveals high EQ. **Problem-Solving:** To show the interviewer how you will help satisfy his organization's needs, you need to act as a problem

solver. Follow these steps: Discover what these really are. Don't try to present yourself as a solution to a problem you don't fully understand. Help the interviewer visualize how those needs could and should be satisfied. Show how hiring you could move the interviewer's organization closer to the way the interviewer would like them to be. **Happiness:** It's important to maintain a sense of balance when things go awry so you leave your prospective employer with a good impression. Suppose, for instance, an important job interview goes poorly. You might want to beat yourself up and question your worthiness to be hired. Instead, realize that every interview is different, and the next will probably be better. If you can take a bad interview in stride, you will be more likely to feel and communicate enthusiasm and energy during your next interview.

# “Take 3” Actions to Fight the Flu this Year

## **Take time to get a flu vaccine**



CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses.

While there are many different flu viruses, the flu vaccine protects against the three viruses that research suggests will be most common.

The 2011-2012 vaccine will protect against an influenza A H3N2 virus, an influenza B virus and the H1N1 virus that emerged in 2009 to cause a pandemic.

Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine as soon as the 2011-2012 vaccines are available.

Vaccination of high risk persons is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness.

People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older.

Vaccination also is important for health care workers, and other people who live with or care for high risk people to keep from spreading flu to high risk people.

Children younger than 6 months are at high risk of serious flu illness, but are too young to be vaccinated. People who care for them should be vac-

inated instead.

## **Stop the spread of germs**

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.

Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)

While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.

## **Take flu antiviral drugs**

If you get the flu, antiviral drugs can treat your illness.

Antiviral drugs are different from antibiotics. They are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) and are not available over-the-counter.

Antiviral drugs can make illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious flu complications.

It's very important that antiviral



drugs be used early (within the first 2 days of symptoms) to treat people who are very sick (such as those who are hospitalized) or people who are sick with flu symptoms and who are at increased risk of severe flu illness, such as pregnant women, young children, people 65 and older and people with certain chronic health conditions.

Flu-like symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also may have vomiting and diarrhea. People may be infected with the flu, and have respiratory symptoms without a fever.

## **24-Hour Hotlines**

**Domestic violence**  
895-8476 or  
1-800-895-8476

**Youth mental health/  
suicide/crisis**  
1-800-371-4373

**Child abuse**  
1-800-400-0902

**Adult mental health/suicide/  
crisis**  
1-800-334-6622

**Elder abuse**  
1-800-664-9774

**Poison control**  
1-800-876-4766

**Rape crisis**  
342-7273

**Public Health**  
879-3665

## Saving at the Supermarket

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Between free shipping for online orders, an ever-expanding catalog of mobile apps and deals, and a slew of other incentives

offered by grocery stores, the era of coupon clipping just doesn't cut it anymore. ShopSmart suggests trying out these money-saving techniques:

### **Coupon Sites and Apps:**

The biggest selection of coupon is still found online. Sites such as Coupons.com and SmartSource.com usually have up to 100 deals at any time, compared with no more than 30 coupons in newspaper circulars. Additionally, CouponMom.com and SmartSource.com have new mobile versions that let you scroll through offers and pick the coupons you want from your phone without downloading special software or apps.

But don't stop there: More stores and manufacturers are loading their web-

sites and smart phone apps with great deals. For instance, Grocery Smarts Lite, a new app for Android smart phones, tracks items and prices from the latest store circulars from CVS, Rite Aid, Target, Walgreens, and Walmart, then cross-references all possible manufacturers' coupons with the circulars and show you the bottom line for each item.

**Social Network Offers:** More grocers are using Facebook, Foursquare, and Twitter to lure customers with deals. You can use Foursquare on your phone to get deal alerts when you're driving near a store. Walmart uses Facebook to post coupons as well as specials at the store closest to your ZIP code. Whole Foods offers one-day sales, recipes, and more through Facebook and Twitter. Though a deal might not put dinner on the table, it could get you a break on a bag of chips or deli potato salad if you buy a pack of ribs.

**Store Sites:** With dozens of sites and apps for finding and managing coupons,

even veteran coupon clippers can feel overwhelmed. The solution? At the very least, focus in on the store or two at which you do your weekly shopping and check its websites and circulars for list builders and downloadable apps to organize your trip. Also, make sure to ask the store whether it accepts other stores' coupons.

### **If You Do Nothing Else...**

Ok, you have a life, but you still want to save. We're with you on that. If you do nothing more than these basics, you'll still score plenty of deals.

**Start clipping:** Get multiple copies of the local paper for extra coupon savings. Also, check in-store dispensers, receipts, and products themselves for coupons.

**Sign up:** Registering for websites such as CoolSavings, Coupons.com, and GrocerySmarts.com is free and gives you access to tons of downloadable coupons.

**Watch the register:** Make sure sale prices are rung up when you check-out.

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## Enjoy the Holiday Season

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Preparing and getting through the holidays can be a job in itself. Between the baking, gift-wrapping, holiday get-togethers, visiting

with friends and family, and possibly some travel, it can be overwhelming and often tiresome. The holidays are a time for enjoying one another and celebrating the season. No one has time to be stressed out! Here are 5 ways to simplify the holiday season to help get you through the next three months:

**Gift bags** – With so many great gift bag selections these days you are sure to find the perfect bag for your gift. A present in gift-wrap is a beautiful sight, but if you are crunched for time you can still have

a beautiful gift in a lot less time.

**Potlucks** – Getting everyone together for the holidays is a tradition for many. Rather than take on all the cooking and baking yourself, ask your guests to bring their favorite holiday dish with them. You get to try new things, and most likely will not spend the whole day in the kitchen.

**Bake in advance** – Do you bake during the holidays? Bake in advance and freeze-sugar cookies are an excellent candidate for freezing. You can bake them now, freeze them and then pull them out when you need to ice them. Biting off a little bit of the baking at a time will help you get it all done.

**Make a list** – And check it twice. Lists can be a lifesaver. Make a list

for the gifts you want to give, and keep track of what have already purchased and stashed away. Also, make a list of the gifts you receive. This will make it much easier when you write thank you notes.

**Shop in advance** – Stick to your list and keep track of where you stash the gifts away. Getting your shopping done in advance will give you more time to enjoy the holidays as they quickly approach.

The holidays are a time for rejoicing and giving. Keep it simple and enjoy the holiday season.

If you are in need of resources specifically related to the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays - food or gifts - please check out Help Central.org or contact the FSS office at 895-4474, extension 231.

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