

## IMPORTANT EMPLOYEE RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

### DSP Microcredential Program Graduates Twenty

Last month, The Arc Lexington in partnership with SUNY -FMCC and NYS OPWDD recognized 20 employees who have completed the DSP Microcredential program and received their national certification. The DSP Microcredential is a program designed to offer ongoing education and training for professionals in the field, helping them enhance their skills and advance their careers at no cost to the employee.

Samantha Welch, Jessica Wilson, Randi Nellis, Diane Bellamy, Lisa Kiszka and Priscilla Loveless.

For more info on the Microcredential program or to register for the fall semester, contact **Courtney Mickels**, [mickelc@thearclexington.org](mailto:mickelc@thearclexington.org) or (518) 775-5439.

Congratulations to the following employees: Jessica Brenan, Jessica Brick, Pamela Chrisman, Ruby Conte, SaMia Eason, Hilary Fitzpatrick, Kristin Ginter, Rebecca Grossman, Ashley Karas, Michael Putman, Shyanne Roberson, Elizabeth Thompson, Nicole Varney, Megan Waldron,



### LEXINGTON EMPLOYEE MILESTONES

*Congratulations and thank you to the following employees celebrating milestones in January and February.*

#### 40 Years

Dan Richardson, Administration, February 12

#### 35 Years

Robert Rhinehart, Residential, February 5

#### 25 Years

Michelle Blakeslee, Medical, February 7  
Brooke Carpenter, Residential, February 7  
Toni Edwards, Family Services, February 7

#### 20 Years

Jennifer Randall, Residential, February 7  
Heidi Van Deusen, Clinical, February 3

#### 15 Years

Tiffany Etherton, Residential, January 4  
Shawna Lamphear, Residential, January 12

#### 10 Years

Daniel Johns, Residential, January 19  
Barbara Pasquarella, Residential, January 5  
Doris Thompson, Residential, January 19

#### 5 Years

Alyssa Achzet, Residential, January 25  
Chinasa Aghadiuno, Residential, January 27  
Valerie Bull, Residential, February 11  
Erial Jones, Residential, January 20  
Debra Sherman, Clinical, January 6  
Helen Thomes, Family Services, January 20  
Kayden Tretola, Residential, January 25  
Shaunique Valace, Residential, February 24

#### 1 Year

Andre Adams, Residential, February 28  
Savannah Anderson, Residential, February 2  
Mackenzie Leigh Bordeau, Medical, February 20  
Kevin DeLaet, Residential, January 22  
Zoey Dutcher, Residential, January 22  
Nicholas Handy, Maintenance, January 3  
Jeremy Posluszny, Residential, January 3  
Dana Rulison, Residential, February 3  
Dominic Tortorello, Flame, January 22  
Devin Tran, Residential, February 20  
Sherry Vogel, Residential, February 5

# SPOTLIGHT ON EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

## Reliance: New Carrier for Voluntary/ Supplemental Benefits

All voluntary/supplemental benefits are now administered by a new carrier, Reliance. Any statutory disability or family leave (DBL/PFL) claims opened in 2024 with Lincoln, will remain with Lincoln.

All plans formerly with Metlife, have also moved to Reliance. If you receive something in the mail from MetLife, it's simply a result of these plans coming to an end. No action is required from you.

Reliance has taken over all new claims as of January 1, 2025. These include:

- Voluntary Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment for the employee, spouse and children.
- Voluntary Short Term Disability
- Voluntary Long Term Disability
- Critical Illness
- Accident Insurance
- Indemnity Insurance

If you have any questions about any of your claims, please reach out to Fran Schneider in Human Resources at [SchneiF@thearclexington.org](mailto:SchneiF@thearclexington.org) or call (518) 775-5475.

## What's New in 2025: Additional Hours For Paid Prenatal Leave

Effective January 1st, New York State requires covered employers to provide **20 hours of paid prenatal leave during a 52-week period.**

Prenatal leave time does not reduce other paid sick leave available under the Paid Sick Leave Legislation (PSLL).

## New! Thirty Minute Mentors On EAP's Website

Leadership guru Adam Mendler goes one on one with America's most accomplished and insightful people. Each episode features a wealth of practical, actionable advice from a leading CEO, founder, athlete, celebrity, influencer or general. Explore over 100 audio-only interviews, each approximately 30 minutes.

Simply click on "Member Login" at [www.theEAP.com](http://www.theEAP.com), sign in, and click on the Comprehensive Training Library in the "Training Center" and enter "Thirty Minute Mentors" in the search bar.

## Use It, Before You Lose It: 2024 Flexible Spending Account Claims

If you enrolled in a flexible spending account in 2024, **the deadline to submit FSA claims for 2024 expenses is March 31.** After that a maximum of \$640 of unused funds will rollover into your 2025 account. Any remaining funds above \$640 will be forfeited if left unused. Claims should be submitted to American Benefits Group (ABG) for dates of service in 2024.

All claims must be submitted online or postmarked (if being mailed to ABG for manual processing) by **no later than March 31.**

### Lexington's Mission

*We empower people with autism and developmental disabilities to live their best lives, every day, by partnering with their families, our employees and our community.*

# Blood Pressure: Know Your Numbers and Risk



## February is American Heart Month

High blood pressure, or hypertension, is known as the “silent killer” because often there are no symptoms. It’s essential that you know your blood pressure numbers, and if you’re at risk for cardiovascular disease.

Blood pressure is the pressure of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries. It is measured using two numbers. The first, systolic blood pressure, measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats. The second, diastolic blood pressure, measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart rests between beats. If your measurement is 120 systolic and 80 diastolic, you would say “120 over 80” or write “120/80.”

Some people may be at risk for hypertension. Risk factors include obesity, diabetes, an unhealthy diet, lack of physical activity, alcohol and tobacco use, family history, and more.

The older you are, the greater your likelihood of developing it. High blood pressure increases your risk for serious health problems such as heart disease, heart attack, and stroke.

### Below are the blood pressure ranges.

#### Where do you fall?

- **Normal:** Less than 120 / Less than 80
- **Elevated:** 120-129/ Less than 80
- **High (Hypertension Stage 1):** 130-139 / 80-89
- **High (Hypertension Stage 2):** 140 or higher / 90 or higher
- **Hypertensive crisis:** 180 or higher / 120 or higher

If you’re unaware of your blood pressure numbers, discuss it with your provider on your next visit and determine if you need to take action.

For more information on managing blood pressure, cholesterol, and overall heart health, check out this [interactive learning module](#) on the CDPHP website.

## February is Cancer Prevention Month

The New York State Department of Health recognizes February as National Cancer Prevention Month and encourages New Yorkers to take steps to reduce their risk of cancer. New York State continues to offer preventative health care, research and community programs. Cancer is one of the most chronic diseases in New York State and is second only to heart disease as the leading cause of death. Each year, about 115,000 New Yorkers are diagnosed with cancer.

Almost 19,000 individuals die from a tobacco-related cancer each year, accounting for 56 percent of all cancer deaths in New York State, according to a recent report. Cancer prevention month serves as a reminder for every New Yorker to take steps to reduce the risk of cancer. Research shows more than one third of cancers are

preventable if the right measures are taken including:

- Knowing one’s genetics and family history.
- Getting help to quit smoking.
- Limiting alcohol consumption.
- Making healthy eating choices
- Maintaining a healthy weight and being physically active.
- Limiting sun exposure.
- Testing home for radon.
- Getting vaccinated for HPV and hepatitis B.
- Getting screened for cancer and hepatitis C.
- Talking to a health care provider about the risks for cancer.

To find a nearby screening location, visit [New York’s Cancer Services Program Community Programs List](#).

For assistance with any Human Resources related matter or information, contact a member of the Human Resources team at:

<https://bit.ly/humanresourcescontacts>

. This newsletter will be archived at the following link: <https://thearclexington.org/hr-updates>

## It Pays to Refer New Staff



**Sue Rickard**, pictured here with Renee Mackey, earned \$150 for an employee referral.



**Elizabeth Cionek**, pictured here with Dale Schermerhorn, took home a \$150 referral bonus.



**Paul Wagner** earned an employee referral bonus for hiring Ben Wells as a CDL driver!

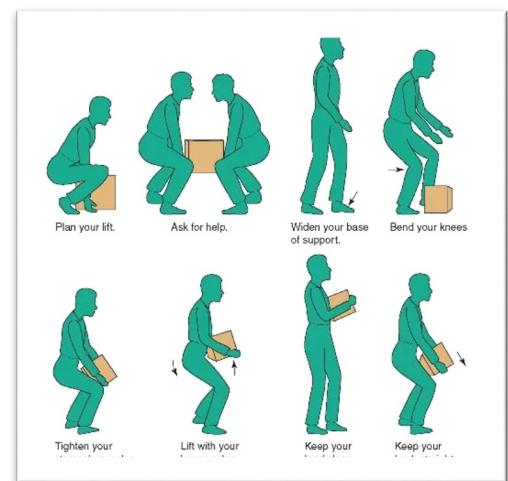
## Safety News

### Safety Ambassador, Safe Environment and Wellness Meeting Schedule Announced

The Safety Ambassador and Safe Environment and Wellness meetings have been scheduled for 2025. The meetings will take place from 10AM-12PM as follows:

- **Thursday, February 20**, at 121 Opportunity Drive, Schoharie, event space
- **Friday, February 28**, at 465 N. Perry St, Johnstown, classroom C
- **Thursday, August 21**, at 121 Opportunity Drive, Schoharie, event space
- **Wednesday, August 27**, 465 N. Perry St, Johnstown, classroom C
- **Thursday, October 23**, 121 Opportunity Drive, Schoharie, event space
- **Thursday, October 30**, 465 N. Perry St, Johnstown, classroom C

During these meetings we share information related to wellness topics, safety best practices, and with your help we discuss areas where we can improve our safety program followed by safety recognitions.



**Heavy lifting tips:** Practice safe body mechanics at all times.

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*Managers, please post and distribute to all employees.*