

## President's Message



Thanksgiving is behind us and Christmas Break is just ahead. This is the season marked by gatherings of family and friends and celebrations of blessings in our lives. When people gather at our homes, many of us spend countless hours making sure that everything is "just right" - a tidy house, joyous decorations, good food, and good friends.

### Hospitality!

Providing hospitality is one of Opaal's four core values. At Opaal!, when we speak of hospitality, we mean welcoming guests with warmth and kindness. Hospitality comes in various forms:

- A smile for every child that comes through the serving line.
- A kind word for the new student who is afraid.
- The care in which our meals are prepared, presented, and served.
- Special decorations at a catering event.
- Special treats for the teachers and staff.
- Board of Education meals and snacks.

Each of us provides hospitality to our guests – students, parents, staff, administration, and other members of the community – in our own special way.

The difference between "customer service" and "hospitality" is huge! It is all in one's attitude. And fortunately, we each own our attitude.

As New Year's Day approaches, let each of us resolve to re-commit ourselves to the practice of hospitality each and every day. It will bring a smile and good feelings to those we serve... and to each of us. Enjoy reading the articles in this issue focused on hospitality.

Opaal!

Kevin

## Long time Opaa! Employee's Life Celebrated

*By: Jami Stine*

**Louise Renfro** began working in the Nixa kitchens in 1972 and worked for a total of 33 years before retiring in 2005. Her career in the Nixa kitchens covered many different areas, but it was in baking that she found her true passion.

Louise managed the high school cafeteria for awhile, but left the position of manager and began baking at Thomas Elementary, before moving to the junior high as the baker. It was her work at the Junior High School that gave her the most pleasure. Louise was the go-to person for trying out new recipes and she enjoyed taking the recipes home to try them out before fixing the product for the students. She took great pride in her baking, producing wonderful cakes, cookies, hot rolls and her own special favorite cinnamon rolls. Louise had such a big heart she always wanted students to have the very best! She also trained many bakers for the district's cafeterias.



It was Louise's big heart, exemplary work, and her love of students that afforded her the honor of Opaal's Employee of the Year in 2000. Louise's daughter Teresa was trained by her mother, and is the kitchen manager at High Point Elementary today. Many, many students enjoyed the fruits of her labor, and we at Opaal were privileged to have known her and benefited from her talent and gift of hospitality to all her knew her! Louise Renfro passed away on November 9, 2010.

# Who's Ready For a Vacation??

By: Scott Meyer

These five words were splashed on brightly colored posters last year, reminding all of our employees that they could be rewarded with a vacation, if their location worked safely and did not have an accident.

Opaal! introduced the Safety Vacation incentive program for all of its staff last year as a way to increase employee awareness in the area of safety and reward them for safe work habits. Four trips were awarded throughout the 2009-10 school year. One trip was awarded for 1<sup>st</sup> semester, two trips for 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, and a Grand Prize for employees that remained accident free the entire school year.



To qualify, each individual kitchen or location must have been accident free for each time period of the award. A couple of last year's winners have taken their vacation and have commented on how appreciative they are with the awards.

One of the winners from last year, **Linda Alberson**, Director of Nutrition Services at Greenville School District, and her husband Terry chose the vacation to Branson. The vacation included 4 day, 3 night lakeside view accommodations at the Chateau Resort. Known as the "Castle in the Ozarks", this resort is set on a wooded hillside overlooking beautiful Table Rock Lake, and just a short drive away from all of the activities that Branson has to offer. The vacation also included \$600 in spending money to use on the various attractions, dining, or whatever they wish.

When asked about the vacation, Linda commented, "I never dreamed of winning, so anyone can, they just need to be safe at work." Linda constantly reinforces that message to her staff at Greenville. Studies show that 80-90% of all accidents are a result of unsafe acts by employees. Bringing safety awareness into the daily conversation at Greenville is a top priority for Linda.

"We just really had a fantastic time. I am very appreciative that I work for a company that rewards its employees for things like good safety practices!" Judging by that statement from Linda, I know she (and her staff) will do their part to be eligible for another vacation.

Opaal! is continuing the Safety Vacation program again this year. A total of 5 vacations will be awarded throughout the school year. As the overall success of our safety program is improved, more and more incentives could be added. Very exciting!

Remember, work smart, do your part. You never know, it may be you getting that phone call saying "Are you ready to go on a vacation?"

## Accident Free Zone

The following districts had no accident claims during the months of August thru November 26th:  
(Includes "For Record Only" claims)

### Dan Wolff Region

Harrisburg  
Spring Bluff  
Winfield

### Janie Duffey Region

Diamond  
El Dorado Springs  
Jasper  
Lamar  
Nevada  
Westview  
Wheaton

### Kay Divelbiss Region

Archie  
Butler  
Holden \*New Acct.  
Johnson County  
Lafayette County  
Oak Grove  
Odessa  
Smithville

### Kathy Diederich Region

Brookfield  
Centralia  
Clark County  
Fayette  
Moberly  
North Calloway  
Palmyra  
Paris

### Karen Wracher Region

Clearwater  
Crawford County  
Gasconade County  
Greenville  
Maries County  
Steelville  
Van Buren  
Winona

### Louis Thorpe Region

Clinton County (Plattsburg)  
East Buchanan  
Excelsior Springs  
Hamilton  
Kearney  
Lawson  
Maysville

### Steve Strup Region

Arcadia Valley  
Caruthersville  
Charleston  
East Carter  
East Prairie  
Hayti  
Kennett  
Pemiscot  
Puxico \*New Acct.  
Scott City  
Woodland

### Rick Turner Region

Aurora  
Marshfield  
Mountain Grove  
Verona  
West Plains



Districts Accident Free (Aug-Nov. 26th): **75%**      Last Year – **74%**  
Opaal! Kitchens Accident Free (Aug-Nov. 26th): **91.5%**      Last Year – **90%**

Work Smart, Do Your Part!

## "We Love the Lunch Bunch!"

By: Pam Rohrer

During National School Lunch Week, the kitchen at Maries Co. R-II School in Belle received several posters and letters from the students in appreciation of what the cooks do for them. Mrs. Hance's Kindergarten class made a poster with all their favorite food on it. The cooks received several letters letting them know how the kids feel about them. The quote, "We love the lunch bunch" said it all.



## Nixa Put's on a Spread

By: Jami Stine

The Thanksgiving Feast Staff Special at Nixa High School was a huge success. Kitchen Manager, **Debbie Stephenson** really "put on a spread". She does an excellent job of making the High School teaching staff feel welcome in the cafeteria. The menu was Turkey, Mashed Potatoes/Gravy, Green Beans, Sweet Potatoes, Stuffing and Hot Rolls. In addition, the salad bar included cranberry sauce and Debbie's own spinach salad. Dessert ranged from Decorated Holiday Sugar cookies to Pumpkin Carrot Cake to Chocolate Pumpkin Cake to Praline Pecan Pumpkin Cake to Bread Pudding in the shape of a turkey.....YUMMY!

The teachers all needed a nap after lunch.

To top it all off, live music was provided by a young man during the entire lunch service time.



## What is Hospitality

"Hospitality is formally defined as a "cordial reception: kindness in welcoming guests or strangers." For Opaal! the dictionary's portrayal of what constitutes hospitality; however, is inadequate! For all of us working daily to provide for students, staff, and communities in which we serve the dictionary definition only begins to touch on the importance of Hospitality in our service. To Opaal!, the term hospitality is about creating a scenario in which customer/guest needs are placed first and, in doing so, it is integral to achieve an atmosphere that will serve to allow guests from a variety of backgrounds to feel equally welcome in our service.

Hospitality cannot be completely achieved unless each employee is committed to the mission, which requires leadership from the top down exhibiting commitment to quality food, friendly, fast, and familiar service. Nothing is more important to our service than the way in which you greet each student or staff member served daily. Your smile and welcome may be the most important part of your "guests" day! Our success in providing for our "Guests" depends on following good rules of Hospitality every day!

## A Tribute to Teachers and Staff

By: Nina Wallace

The cooks at Shelby were busy one day during American Education Week. As a tribute to the teachers and staff at the school district the cooks baked mini loaves of apple bread. Once all of the loaves were baked the cooks packaged up the bread real nice, and presented it to the staff members. The staff loved the bread!

## 2010 Employee Engagement Survey a HUGE Success!

The 2010 Employee Engagement Survey is now complete and participation was outstanding! Over 1,000 Opaal! employees stepped up to the challenge and gave input on this survey. THANK YOU! The honest and confidential feedback from all of you will help shape the future of Opaal! and will be used to make more informed business decisions for the organization.

Dr. Lyonfields is now busy interpreting the survey and our goal is to have the consolidated results available to share in February. In the meantime, please know that your efforts and energy are definitely noticed and this survey is just one of the many things that distinguish our people as true Opaal! champions!

## Lexington Schools Host Veterans Day Meal



By: Becky Morton

Lexington played host to some very special guests on Veteran's Day. They had 35 Veterans and 10 guests eat lunch with the students. Each of the military personnel was escorted to the com-

mons by the school color guard where their name, branch of service and years of service was announced. There were service members from the Army, Marines, and Navy with service dates ranging from 2 years to 18 years.

## Fancy Nancy Comes to Ellis Elementary

### Elementary

By: Phyllis Schaefer

On November 4th, Ellis Elementary was transformed into Fancy Nancy Night. A new book series has captured the hearts of many little girls. So they came, all dressed up, and brought their families with them. After the reading of their favorite book, they came to the cafeteria known as the Fancy Nancy Parfait Parlor. 260 guests were treated to Ice Cream Parfaits with lots of toppings, especially sprinkles, which is Nancy's favorite!



## Nixa Celebrates School Rivalry

By: Jami Stine



The Nixa Food Service staff got into the spirit of the Nixa/Ozark football game. They made cupcakes and the names on the cupcake tags are the coaches for the football team. There were also cute names for the sandwiches and other food items. The sign on the table says "The Eagles are Hungry" and the sandwiches were Tiger burgers. (Ozark's team are the Tigers). Great job Nixa on helping show school spirit!

## Mountain Grove goes Vegas!

By: Doris Nettleton

On October 8, 2010, Mountain Grove School District held their annual Homecoming Parade. The three kitchen managers, Doris Nettleton, Donna Driskill, and Kelly Marler, put their heads together and came up with an idea for a float to participate.

"We wanted to be more than just lunch ladies. We thought this would make us more personable to the students, staff and community."



The theme this year was Vegas-based. We came up with the idea "Roll the Bears!" since we were playing the Willow Springs Bears. Our float consisted of a "bear", Ashley (Doris' granddaughter), and 17 cooks including our director, Pam Hyde. Shane Nettleton, Doris' son was recruited into pulling the float and helping with the decorations. We made dice out of boxes

and scattered several teddy bears on the float. The highlight was the 600 homemade Opa! hot rolls that were thrown to the parade watchers! Each kitchen made and individually wrapped 200 rolls. The crowd went wild! There was much positive feedback on our participation and a great time was enjoyed by all! Oh, and by the way, the Mtn. Grove Panthers were victorious that night against the Willow Springs Bears with a score of 48-47. We think it was because the lunch ladies helped them "Roll the Bears!"

## Welcome to Opa!

By: Connie Fuwell

Puxico R-VIII School District is one of the newest members to Opa! Puxico is located in Southeast Missouri next to the Mingo National Wildlife Refuge. The school enrollment is around 750 children and the mascot is an Indian. Puxico school employees greeted the Opa! team with the best of the small town hospitality. As a new director to Opa!, I could not have asked for a better team of employees. The second week of Opa!'s service the school hosted Grandparent's day, serving 527 grandparents a turkey dinner.



# 401(k) Open Enrollment is Here!

Are you participating in the Opaal! Food Management, Inc. 401(k) Plan? There are many benefits to being a participant in this plan. The greatest of which is that it is the right step toward a more secure retirement.

This is not a regular savings account. Rather it is a retirement plan sponsored by Opaal! that allows employees to contribute to their own retirement savings through payroll, and the deductions come out of your check on a pre-tax basis. **Plus**, there is **FREE MONEY** involved!! That's right! Not only do you save in taxes with the pre-tax deductions, but Opaal! will match 25% of your first 6% of contributions to your plan. This money goes directly into your account on an annual basis and is subject to the vesting schedule.

## **Best Practices to consider:**

**The impact of an early start.** Your decision to start today could give you quite a bit more at retirement than starting five years from now.



**Contribute as much as you can.** Fidelity considers 10%-15% per paycheck to be a very good start. That amount can take you a long way toward reaching your goals.

**Do what you can afford.** Start at a number that feels comfortable to you. You can start with as little as 1% of your gross pay, and you can always change it later. The important thing is to invest what you can afford and start right away.

**Invest more in your plan and pay less in taxes.** Your pretax contributions come out of your pay before income taxes are taken out. You can actually lower your current taxes by investing in the plan today.

## **How Do I Enroll?**

If you are eligible to participate and you have not done so already, enrolling in the Opaal! Food Management, Inc. 401(k) Plan is the right step toward a more secure retirement. It is easy to join our plan and make that next great investment in yourself.

Just follow these simple steps to enroll:

First, go to Fidelity NetBenefits® at [www.401k.com](http://www.401k.com) or call Fidelity at 1-800-835-5097.

Next. Set up your personal identification number (PIN). If you are already a Fidelity customer, you can use your existing PIN.

If you enroll online, you will be prompted to enter your email address.

Finally click on the link to enroll (for online enrollments)

If you enroll over the phone, a Fidelity Representative will talk you through what you need to do to complete your enrollment.

If you have questions or need help before getting started, please visit [www.401k.com](http://www.401k.com) or call Fidelity at 1-800-835-5097.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Our plan has an automatic enrollment feature.** If you are newly eligible and you do not take action, you will be automatically enrolled at a 3% contribution rate. You will receive a separate notification about the automatic enrollment from Fidelity.

Our 401(k) plan is an excellent tool to save for your retirement and help you "Make the Most of Your Future"!

## Richmond Serves up Thanksgiving Feast

*By: Angela Hambrick*



Richmond Sunrise Elementary School grades 2-5 with enrollment of 500 students, participated in a Thanksgiving Feast. Sunrise is the highest free and reduced building in our district. But this year was a little different for Sunrise....Justin Mefferd, school principal offered 2 free meals to each student in the building, so each student could bring 2 guests to eat with them. Mr. Mefferd had completed a fundraiser, and wanted to give back to his building and the district. Yes! He chose food service of his way of giving back! Talk about Hospitality! Talk about Thanksgiving! Talk about "our" motto, "Make Their Day!" Wow !! Richmond kitchen staff prepared a meal of turkey or chicken patty, mashed potatoes, green beans or corn, home-made stuffing, sweet potatoes, Opaal!'s famous hot roll and pumpkin dessert. What a meal!! The kitchen staff received so many thanks and smiles throughout their busy day from students, guests and staff! Dr. Kizzire, Superintendent, was wiping down tables, while Mr. Mefferd and other Sunrise staff were helping with silverware and condiments for the students and their guests. It was a wonderful TEAM effort! I am so proud of our Opaal! employees and the Richmond School District for all they do! This wonderful day resulted in serving 1,227 individuals. What more can I say! There is nothing any better then working as a team and seeing all the smiles on faces as a result!

# Cowgirl Round-up Cookies

## **Ingredients:**

3 cups all purpose flour  
½ teaspoon baking soda  
½ teaspoon baking powder  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 ½ cups butter, softened  
½ cup shortening  
1 ½ cups brown sugar  
1 ½ cups granulated sugar  
3 eggs  
1 ½ teaspoons vanilla  
3 cups oats  
1 ½ cups walnuts  
1 cup dried cherries  
1 (12 ounce) bag white chocolate chips  
1 cup shredded coconut

## **Directions:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.  
Mix flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.  
Combine butter, shortening, and sugars; mix until blended. Add eggs and vanilla, stir until just mixed in. Add flour mixture and mix until blended. Add oats and continue mixing. Add the nuts, cherries, white chocolate chips, and coconut, one ingredient at a time, mixing lightly after each addition.  
Drop dough by the spoonful onto lightly greased cookie sheets. Bake cookies for 11 minutes or until lightly brown on top.



## What you eat Effects how you Sleep



If you could pick the best foods possible, wouldn't you? And if you knew which foods would hinder your restful sleep, wouldn't you avoid them? Here's your chance to learn which foods to eat for a clear, good night's sleep.

**Reach for Tryptophan-Rich Foods**—Dairy foods contain tryptophan, which is a sleep-inducing substance. Also try poultry (turkey), bananas, oats and honey.

**Indulge your cravings for Carbs**—they complement dairy foods by increasing the level of sleep-inducing tryptophan in the blood. Try these late night snacks such as a bowl of cereal and milk, crackers and yogurt, or bread and cheese.

**Have a Snack before Bedtime**—if you struggle with insomnia, a little food in your stomach may help you to sleep. Don't use this as an excuse to pig out. Keep the snack small, too much food will activate your digestive system and keep you awake.

**Put Down the Burger and Fries!**—Research shows that people who often eat high-fat foods not only gain weight; they also experience a disruption of their sleep cycles.

**Beware of Hidden Caffeine**—it is no surprise that the evening coffee may disrupt your sleep. Don't forget less obvious choices like chocolate, cola, tea and decaffeinated coffee. Cut all caffeine from your diet after noon each day.

**Keep Protein at a minimum at Bedtime**—Protein rich foods are harder to digest. They are not sleep friendly.

**Cut the fluids by 8 PM**—Staying hydrated throughout the day is great, but curtail your fluid intake before bed. You will have interrupted sleep if you are constantly getting up to go to the bathroom.