



The Torch

The official newsletter for Indiana state employees

Big Brothers Big Sisters

One BIG story of companionship and friendship

The state of Indiana was recognized as one of the top Corporate Partners for the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Indiana (BBSCI) due to the number of employee involvement in 2011. Here is just one of those state employee’s personal experience with the organization and his ‘little.’

**Christopher Kraemer,
Department of
Workforce Development**

Chris has always had a bug to volunteer with kids, and has been involved with Special Olympics for the past few years. However, he felt like he wanted a more one-on-one experience with kids to “improve someone else’s life and to steer [him] from right and wrong.” Chris did not grow up with a father but rather met him later on in life.

“I wanted [to guide] someone at a younger age to experience things I felt I missed out on.”

work. Tristan quickly learned that if his grades or daily reports fell, no special activity would take place.

Chris tries to select educational activities, but sporting events are usually the favorite of them both.



Chris and Tristan enjoy an Indiana Ice game.

Since Chris has become apart of the family, Tristan has shown a vast improvement in his grades and attitude at school. Just recently, Tristan was chosen as a “model student” and now has the opportunity to tutor another

struggling student in his class. College is now a goal for Tristan and he has set his sights on even becoming a doctor, lawyer or, of course, a professional athlete.

Chris describes his experience as “very rewarding and so much fun.” He also has instilled a friendship that will, according to him, will last forever. “He can be 30 [have a problem] and will know he can always call me for anything.”

Click [here](#) to read more success stories or to find out how you can get involved with BBSCI.

Tristan is one of three boys being raised by a single mother. He had been on the BBSCI waiting list for a year and half. When Chris met the ten year old, he immediately felt a connection. Tristan’s relationship with his father was non-existent, so he lacked male companionship and guidance. Tristan was a very shy kid who struggled with ADHD, communication and learning skills. After a few outings together, they each opened up and have been building a relationship ever since.

Chris instituted a positive reinforcement plan to encourage studying and dedication to school

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Submit your story ideas in an email to: spdcommunications@spd.in.gov



DNR offers a blue plate special... with a twist

In this green conscious culture, finding easy ways to give back to our environment can be challenging. Fortunately, though there is one option that's as simple as the click of a button but yields huge rewards for the state of Indiana.

The Indiana Heritage Trust (IHT) program was established in 1992 to help preserve Indiana's rich natural heritage. The purpose of the program is to acquire properties that represent outstanding natural resources and habitats, or have historical or archaeological significance. And the primary vehicle for program funding is through the blue "eagle and sun" license plate, emblazoned with the word ENVIRONMENT along the bottom.

The IHT puts the entire \$25 license plate fee directly to work buying land for state parks, forests, historic sites, fish & wildlife areas, and nature preserves. This means more opportunities for fellow Hoosiers to enjoy hunting, camping, hiking, bird watching and other forms of outdoor recreation throughout Indiana.

Nick Heinzelman, Executive Director

of Indiana Heritage Trust notes: "In our 20 years of working with willing



sellers, the IHT has purchased more than 350 properties, in 50 counties, totaling more than 55,000 acres. The IHT was created because Indiana had lost thousands of acres of its original plant and animal habitat and we rely on sales from the Environmental License Plate even moreso today than we did in 1992."

And those facts are true. In 1800, about 87% of our state was covered with hardwood forests. But today, less than 20% of Indiana is forested and over 86% of our original wetlands have been lost. In some regions of the state, more than 90% are gone.

At its inception, the Environmental Plate was the only specialty plate available. Sales peaked in 1996 at about

85,000/year, then declined gradually over the next decade until dropping below 50,000 in 2009 and 2010. With specialty plate options continuing to grow (there are now more than 85), Environmental Plate sales are dropping. Couple a downward trend in plate sales with a growing need for land, and the concern becomes even more apparent.

IHT's success is dependent on the thousands of Hoosiers who buy the Environmental Plate for their car, truck or motorcycle, and sometimes even for more than one vehicle. In fact, both the personal vehicles of Department of Natural Resources director, Robert Carter Jr., have Environmental plates.

If it's time to renew your license plate, the IHT asks that you "Pledge To The Plate" and help make a difference in Indiana.

The IHT Environmental Plate can be ordered through myBMV.com, at license branches, and other customer service locations. This plate is available for passenger cars, trucks up to 11,000 pounds, motorcycles, and recreational vehicles.



WGU INDIANA

"WGU Indiana's flexibility and affordability make it a great option for DNR employees. Due to the increasing responsibility of Property Managers and Assistant Managers, coupled with the requirements under the Property Manager's Act, it is more important than ever that our team members earn a quality bachelor's or master's degree preparing them with business-related competencies."

— **Dan Bortner, Director of Indiana State Parks and Reservoirs**

Visit indiana.wgu.edu or call (877) 214-7014 for more information about the university as well as the 10% tuition discount available to state of Indiana employees.

Plan your child's summer camp at the State Museum

Crime-solving mysteries, dirty jobs, fossil hunting and artistic works of art can all be in store for your child in a summer camp at the Indiana State Museum! Camps begin June 4 and each week deliver new adventures based on the museum's outstanding exhibits and collections. Campers will be in a safe and educational environment while engaged in topics such as forensic science, paleontology, art, nature, archaeology and history.

Registration for summer camps is underway. Space is limited, so register now between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. by March 31 to reserve a spot for your child. Advance registration is required by the dates below.

A \$5 child discount is available for siblings attending the same camp. First child in a family pays full price. All applications must be mailed together. Call 317.232.1637 to reserve your spot using your credit card.

A registration packet will be mailed to you and the completed registration forms need to be returned to the museum. Each camp will meet from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

A complete listing of available summer camps can be found [here](#). Options for this summer include:

Indiana Artists Camp: June 4 – 8

Ages: 10 – 14; Cost: \$185 member / \$210 non-member.

Let your artistic side shine as you use materials such as clay, paint, and yarn to create individual works of art! From exploring your art making skills to painting outside like many Hoosier artists, you will learn about the unique art that has been created in our state. Become inspired as you stroll through the museum and White River State Park to see if you will be the next great Indiana artist. Register by May 21.

Paleontology Camp II: The Pipe Creek Experience June 11 – 15

Age: 11 – 14; Cost: \$185 member / \$210 non-member. Register by May 29.

Get ready to explore the Indiana of five million years ago during the Pipe Creek Experience. Work with museum paleontologists as you dig in, screen through and encounter the wildlife that called Indiana home before the Ice Age. Campers will get to work with real material from the Pipe Creek Junior site looking for actual remains of rhinos, camels and other strange and unique creatures. Be a paleontologist sweating while you dig, getting wet screening at a water screen and peering through microscopes looking for the smallest bits of life. Uncover your inner paleontologist and unearth the secrets to Indiana's past.

Exploring Nature Camp

June 18 – 22; Ages: 7 – 10; Cost: \$100 member / \$125 non-member.

Get ready to have a close encounter with the wonders of the natural world! Join the State Museum and the Earth Discovery Center at Eagle Creek Park as we discover the fossils, plants and wildlife found in our cities, parks and backyards. Campers will explore Ice Age fossils, native species and learn how to protect their environment and then have the opportunity to put that knowledge into practice at Eagle Creek Park through hiking, exploring pond life and cooling off in a crazy creek stomp! Register by June 4.

History Alive Camp June 25

– 29 Ages: 9 – 13; Cost: \$100 member / \$125 non-member.

Are you ready to build a cabin? Were Hoosiers in the Civil War? Through hands-on activities and demonstrations, campers will experience what life was like for Hoosiers during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Campers will “pack” their own wagon for the journey west to Indiana, interact with historical re-enactors and characters and see first-hand how the State Museum preserves the Indiana story. Register by June 11.

Paleontology Camp: Fossils, Mammoths & More: July 9 – 13

Ages: 9 – 12; Cost: \$100 member / \$125 non-member; Register by June 25.

Discover what it is like to be a paleontologist looking for fossils in Indiana. Uncover the reality of Indiana's missing dinosaur record. Then explore Indiana's ancient past when mammoths, saber tooth cats and even rhinoceros roamed the land. Investigate sea creatures that once called Indiana home millions of years ago, and delve into a mock cave excavation just like museum staff. If you love fossils and are curious about paleontology this is the camp for you!

Crime Scene Indiana State Museum: July 16 – 20

Ages: 9 – 12; Cost: \$100 member / \$125 non-member.

Pieces of valuable art are missing from the museum! Think you have the skills to find the crooks? Then use your powers of deduction to become a super sleuth as you solve this and other mysteries. As the lead investigator, you will examine evidence, lift fingerprints and analyze mock crime scenes. Investigators will see how bugs can be used at a crime scene, meet real forensic experts and see the science behind the investigative techniques. Register by July 2.

Archaeology Camp: The Adventure Beneath Your Feet

July 23 – 27 Ages: 9 – 12; Cost: \$100 member / \$125 non-member.

Have you ever wondered how archaeologists explore ancient civilizations? Now you can find out! Discover first-hand how archaeologists use artifacts from 12,000 years ago through today to understand how people in the past lived. Test your skills with prehistoric tools using pump drills and throwing spears with an atlatl. See if you have what it takes to become an archaeologist and uncover the secrets of the buried past! Register by July 9.

High school graduation rate improves

Indiana's graduation rate has improved to 85.7 percent in the 2010-2011 school year. It increased 1.6 percent over last year and 4.3 percent over the 2009 rate. This is the highest graduation rate

Hoosier students have achieved since the state began measuring the four-year cohort graduation rate in 2005. A record-high 171 public schools reached 90 percent or more of their students graduating in four

years—a primary goal Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Tony Bennett set for all Indiana students in 2009.

“I commend Indiana’s educators, students, parents and community members for their efforts to increase graduation rates,” Bennett said. “In today’s world, graduating from high school with a meaningful diploma is critical to achieving any measure of success in life. To see so many more high school students reach this essential milestone is inspiring, and I am thankful for the hard-working teachers and leaders in our schools who helped them get there.”

Approximately 45 percent of public high schools met or exceeded the 90-percent graduation mark, and 83 percent of public high schools graduated 80 percent or more of their seniors. In addition, 55 percent of schools improved their graduation rates over last school year, with 25 percent of schools improving their rate by five or more percentage points.

“I am incredibly proud and encouraged by the gains being made in schools across the state,” Bennett said. “Our teachers and principals continue to push for excellence, and our students are benefiting.”

In 2011, 80 percent of graduates received a Core40 or Honors diploma which is the most in Indiana’s history. More than 200 schools (58 percent) increased the number of students



receiving an Honors diploma over last year. Non-waiver graduation rates also improved statewide, increasing

from 78.1 percent in 2010 to 78.9 percent in 2011.

Of the 14.3 percent of students who did not earn diplomas, 6.1 percent were reported as high school dropouts/undetermined—0.3 percent fewer dropouts than were reported in the 2010 school year. The breakdown is listed below:

2011 Student Graduation Breakdown

- 85.7 % : graduated within four years
- 6.1 % : reported dropouts or undetermined, which means they either moved out of state, dropped out or left school without formally withdrawing
- 6.3% : are still in school
- 0.4 % : earned a General Education Development (GED) diploma
- 1.2 % : earned a Special Education Certificate
- 0.2 % : earned a non-diploma Course Completion Certificate

2011 Public High School Graduation Rate Breakdown

- 90-100 % – 171 schools
- 80-89.9 % – 142 schools
- 70-79.9 % – 39 schools
- 60-69.9 % – 11 schools
- Less than 60 % – 14 schools



It’s that time again..

It’s time again to spring forward and lose an extra hour of sleep.

Daylight Saving Time is currently practiced in 76 countries and directly affects more than 1.6 billion people worldwide.

Remember to advance your clocks when the time arrives. Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, March 11, at 2:00 a.m.

It is also a good time change batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.



Original artwork by Jerry Williams

Alleviate tax return stress with INfreefile

Have you thought about doing your taxes yet? If you haven't, it's time to gather up all your paperwork – your 1099s, your W-2s, your bank



statements and all the rest, so you can get started.

Not many people enjoy doing their taxes, so why bother having to pay for it too? You can file

your taxes quickly, easily and, most importantly, for FREE with the Department of Revenue's new tax filing program INfreefile.

By now, 50,000 Hoosiers have taken advantage of this new program which provides free state and federal tax filing services from some of the biggest names in the business – 1040Now, H&R Block, OLT, Tax Hawk, Tax Slayer and TurboTax.

E-filing your taxes with INfreefile means a more accurate filing processed up to 10 times faster than a standard paper filing. If you are expecting to get a tax return this year, that also means having your return in as little as seven to ten days instead of waiting up to 12 weeks!

Finish off those taxes for another year by going to www.freefile.dor.in.gov today and selecting the program for which you

qualify. It's fast, it's easy and it's free!



Decoding FML: The Third Installment

According to Indiana State Department of Health's Division of Chronic Disease Prevention and Control, the majority of Indiana citizens are affected by one or more chronic diseases. Sometimes these conditions can be managed without impacting your work hours; however, there are other situations where chronic disease management can require a considerable amount of time and attention, involving visits to health care providers and time away from work for incapacity caused by flare-ups or episodes

related to the condition. To assist in the balance between life and work, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides leave from work to care for your own, or a qualifying family member's, chronic serious health condition.

Under FMLA, a condition is considered chronic when it (a) requires at least two visits annually for treatment by a health care provider, or by a nurse or physician's assistant under direct supervision of a health care provider; (b) continues over an extended period of time (including recurring episodes of a single underlying condition); and (c) may cause episodic rather than a continuing period of incapacity. Asthma, diabetes, and epilepsy are just a few examples of chronic conditions.

Family Medical Leave (FML) allows eligible employees with a chronic serious health condition, or who are providing care to a qualifying family member with such a condition, time away from work when episodes or flare-ups of the condition cause

incapacity. Agency call-in procedures must be followed for absences due to unforeseen episodes of incapacity.

Other absences, such as attending treatments, appointments, and/or providing assistance with medications, are foreseeable and must be scheduled outside work hours whenever possible.



Those that cannot be scheduled outside work hours require you to provide notice 30 days in advance or a schedule of the planned treatments.

Prior to FML being designated for a specific absence, an employee must first have submitted a request and supporting documentation and received notice that FML has been approved for that condition. For additional information, including eligibility requirements, forms to be submitted, policies, and FAQs, please visit the SPD Family & Medical Leave [website](#).

If you have additional questions, please call the FML helpline at 317-234-7955, or toll free at State Personnel's Call Center: 1-855-SPD-INHR (1-855-773-4647) and choose the FML option.

Be sure and look for upcoming articles in this publication addressing other aspects of FML, and check out previous 2012 editions of *The Torch* for articles you may have missed.

Clean out your medicine cabinet properly with help from Marsh

Hoosiers will have a safe place to take outdated and unwanted medicines they clean from medicine cabinets this spring. Marsh Pharmacy and MainStreet Market Pharmacy's Spring 2012 "Clean Out Your Medicine Cabinet" event will take place:

- Fri. March 16, 9 a.m. – 7 p.m.
- Sat. March 17, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- Sun. March 18, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- Mon. March 19, 9 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Additional sponsors include the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), the Indiana Poison Center, IU Health, cls/inmar, Statewide Medical/MEDdispose, Inc., Rexam and Indiana Association for Home & Hospice Care, Inc.

To be accepted, all items must be fully identifiable and in their original containers. The name of the medication must be visible on the label; a black, permanent marker should be used to block out personal information, including name, address and account number; sharps should be sealed in a non-returnable, puncture-resistant rigid container (such as a laundry detergent bottle).

The specific types of pharmaceuticals that will be accepted include:

- Prescription medications
- Over-the-counter medications
- Vitamins and nutritional supplements
- Veterinary medications
- Sharps or needles in resealable hard, plastic containers.

The following items will **not** be accepted:

- Controlled substances
- Hazardous, poisonous or toxic substances
- Flammable liquids containing alcohol
- Mixed medications or medications in alternate containers
- Medical or household chemicals
- Inhalers
- Business waste

The special collection is held to help prevent the contamination of streams and lake water. "Wastewater facilities are not designed to remove pharmaceutical products if they are poured down a drain," said IDEM Commissioner Thomas Easterly.

"The chemicals will be discharged, untreated, into lakes or streams. This special collection opportunity gives Hoosiers the opportunity to properly dispose of expired or unwanted over-the-counter and prescription medications."

Throwing pharmaceuticals in the garbage also poses a hazard because pets and children can be poisoned as a result of accidental ingestion. In addition, patient information displayed on discarded containers increases the risk for identity theft.

Marsh Pharmacies has held unwanted medicine collections since 2008, providing Hoosiers a safe place to take unwanted medications and disposing of more than 100,000 prescription bottles in an environmentally-friendly manner. Click [here](#) to locate a Marsh or MainStreet Market Pharmacy.

Additional information about pharmaceutical and household hazardous waste disposal can be found on IDEM's Recycling Web site at www.recycle.IN.gov.



February 4 - Gov. Daniels honored Super Bowl 2012 Host Committee members: CEO Allison Melangton and Chairman Mark Miles each with a Sagamore of the Wabash, the highest distinction the Governor can bestow, for their superb leadership in transforming Indianapolis into the best run Super Bowl city in NFL history. Their efforts produced significant economic opportunities and will leave a lasting legacy that will benefit Indiana for years to come.



Having a bad reaction?

Allergy signs and treatments

Watery eyes, itchiness, runny nose. Sound familiar? If it does, you might have allergies.

An allergic reaction is when your immune system has a bad response to something. It normally protects your body from getting sick because of things like bacteria and viruses. It also helps protect you against allergens, the things that set off an allergic reaction.^{1,2} When it doesn't do that job, it's like having a really sensitive alarm system – it alerts your body to things that really shouldn't cause a reaction.

What causes allergies?

A lot of people have allergies. Your genes and the environment can play a role in that. If both of your parents have allergies, you'll probably have allergies. But, you may not be allergic to the same things or have the same reactions.¹

Common allergy triggers are:^{1,2}

- Pollen
- Mold
- Pet dander
- Dust
- Food
- Medicines
- Insect bites
- Jewelry
- Makeup
- Spices

Signs

Allergy symptoms can be different from one person to the next. But here are some common signs:^{1,2}

- Breathing problems
- Burning, tearing, itchy, red or swollen eyes
- Coughing
- Diarrhea
- Headache
- Hives
- Itchy nose, mouth, throat, skin or other part of the body
- Runny nose
- Skin rash
- Stomach cramps
- Throwing up
- Wheezing

What can you do?

If you think you have an allergy, tell your doctor. There are different ways to test if you have an allergy, such as:^{1,2}

- Skin test
- Blood test or complete blood count
- Use or elimination tests: avoiding certain things to see if you get better or using certain things to see if you get worse

The best way to reduce your symptoms is to try to avoid the things that cause your allergies.^{1,2} Sometimes, that's not so easy to do. It might be easy to stay away from certain foods or medicines. But if your allergy trigger comes from the air around you, it can be hard to avoid.

Allergies can't be cured, but there are ways to treat and relieve your symptoms. Treatment will depend on the kind of allergy you have and how bad it is. Medicines or allergy shots may help. But you may need to get shots for years before they work. And they don't always work for everyone.¹

Severe allergic reactions, called anaphylaxis, need to be treated with a medicine called epinephrine. It can save a person's life, if it's taken immediately after a severe allergic reaction.^{1,2}

Allergies in kids

Some research has shown that breastfeeding babies until they're at least 4 months old may help prevent a certain allergy to cow's milk.¹

Changes in the mother's diet while she's pregnant or breastfeeding don't seem to make a difference in preventing allergies in kids. But, the timing of when your kids start eating solid foods and when they first try certain foods can help prevent some allergies.¹

Some kids may outgrow allergies when they get older, especially food allergies.¹

Visit anthem.com for more ways to get healthy – and stay healthy.



Tips to allergy-proof your environment:^{3,4,5}

- **Windows:** Keep them closed and use air conditioning if you're allergic to pollen.
- **Temperature:** Dust mites and mold love hot, humid houses. So, keep the temperature in your home at 70°. And keep the humidity under 50% to prevent mold from growing.
- **Bed and bedding:** Wash your sheets, pillowcases and blankets at least once a week in hot water. Use covers for pillows, mattresses and box springs to help against dust mites.
- **Floors:** If you can, get hardwood or linoleum floors instead of carpet. Make sure any rugs are washable to help control dust and mold. Vacuum at least once a week.
- **Smoking:** Don't let anyone smoke in your home. Avoid cigarette smoke when you go out.
- **Cleaning:** Wear a painter's mask when you vacuum or clean, work in the garden or mow the lawn.
- **Food:** Always check the labels of what you're eating or drinking to make sure they don't include something you're allergic to.
- **Medicines:** If you have a drug allergy, you need to avoid taking it. You may need to avoid other drugs like it, too. Think about wearing a medical alert bracelet, in case you have an emergency.

Resources

Check out the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology website at aaaai.org for more information about allergies. You can take the Skin Allergy Quiz to help you find out about any skin allergy trigger you may have. And The Virtual Allergist™ can help you figure out if you have an allergy by checking signs you have. You can also search for a doctor who treats allergies. The WebMD® Allergies Health Center at webmd.com/allergies also has an allergy quiz, as well as slideshows about allergy triggers, treatments and more.

Certain factual or statistical information was derived from the following sources:

- 1 PubMed Health. *Allergies*. (Accessed November 17, 2011): ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001815/
- 2 Mayo Clinic. *Allergies*. (Accessed November 17, 2011): mayoclinic.com
- 3 Mayo Clinic. *Allergy-proof your house*. (Accessed November 17, 2011): mayoclinic.com
- 4 Mayo Clinic. *Food allergies*. (Accessed November 17, 2011): mayoclinic.com
- 5 Mayo Clinic. *Drug Allergy*. (Accessed November 17, 2011): mayoclinic.com

NEW! Mobile Dentist Search

To accommodate our increasingly mobile customers, Delta Dental has developed a quick, easy way to search for participating Delta Dental providers while on the go.

With the new Mobile Dentist Search you can access Delta Dental's online Dentist Search using your mobile devices. Once you are at the site, enter your location and select your dental plan, and a list of nearby in-network dentists is generated. The ability to find a nearby in-network dentist could be especially important in the event of a dental emergency.



38% of Americans now own a smartphone¹, and by 2015 more people will connect to the Internet via mobile devices than desktop PCs.²

To use the Mobile Dentist Search, go to www.DeltaDentalIN.com on any mobile device and use our dentist search feature, or scan the QR code (right) using your smartphone.



*Your smartphone may require a specific application for scanning QR Codes. Go to your mobile device's Application Store to download.

¹ "In US, Smartphones Now Majority of New Cellphone Purchases." NielsenWire. 30 June 2011. http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/online_mobile/in-us-smartphones-now-majority-of-new-cellphone-purchases/ (accessed August 2011).

² Ingram, Mathew. "Mary Meeker: Mobile Internet Will Soon Overtake Fixed Internet." 12 April 2010. <http://gigaom.com/2010/04/12/mary-meecker-mobile-internet-will-soon-overtake-fixed-internet/> (accessed August 2011).