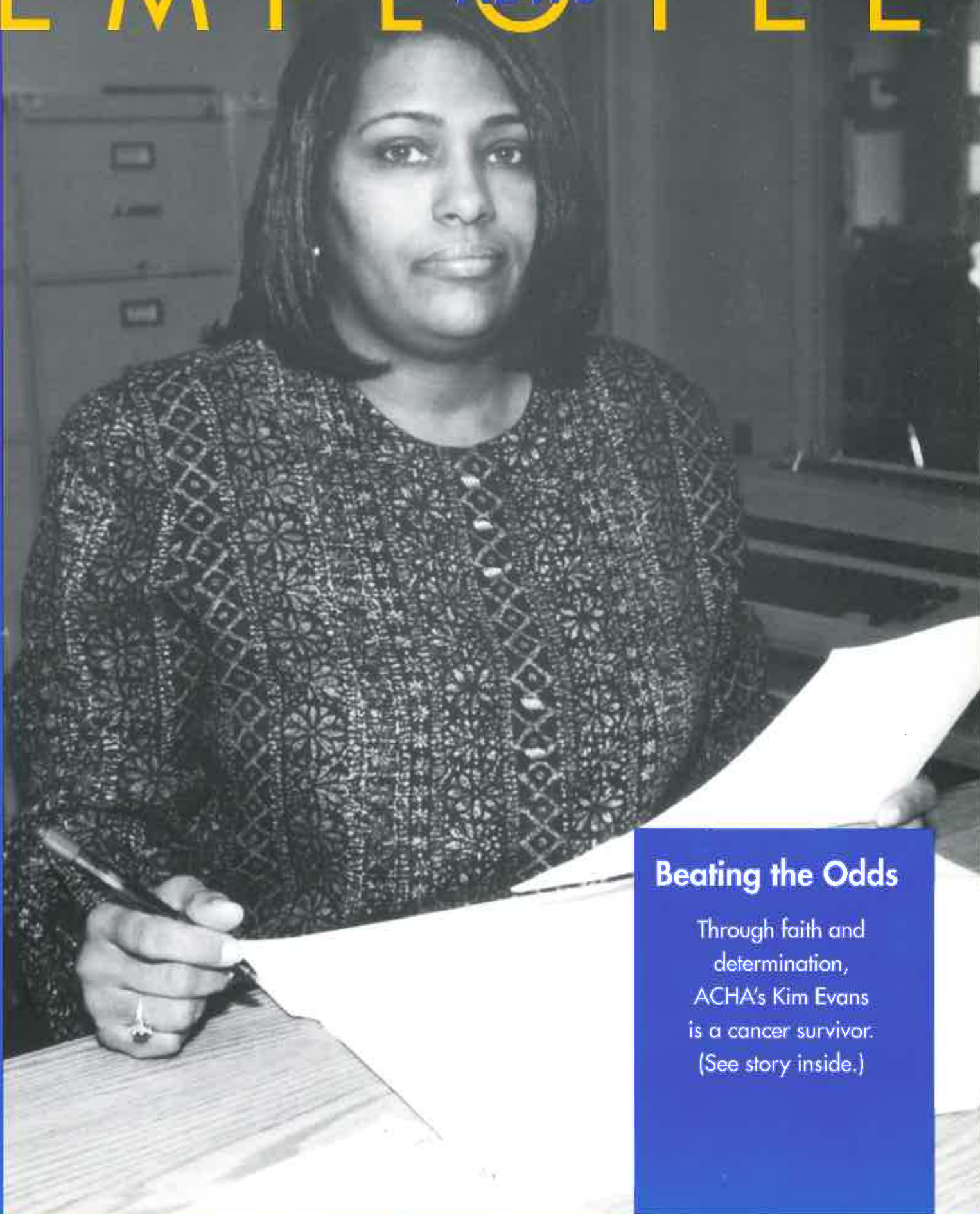


EMPLOYEE NEWS

S P R I N G 2 0 0 2



Beating the Odds

Through faith and determination, ACHA's Kim Evans is a cancer survivor. (See story inside.)

BEATING THE ODDS

Through faith and determination, ACHA's Kim Evans is a cancer survivor

By her very nature, Kim Evans was used to keeping things under control.

As an employee with the Allegheny County Housing Authority in Braddock, Evans served as an inventory control clerk before moving up to become an administrative assistant in the warehouse department.

As a divorced single mother, Evans successfully maintained order in the midst of the usual hectic pace that comes with raising five children.

So it is not hard to imagine the shock she experienced on August 13, 1999, when doctors diagnosed her with cancer, leaving her helpless and fearful of what the future would bring.

Clearly, Evans was no longer in control.

"After I was first told I had the disease, I told the hospital staff 'You're in the wrong room,'" said Evans, who was tested and diagnosed at UPMC Shadyside after she was found by two of her children earlier that morning, passed out on the floor of the family's Stowe Township home. "I simply could not believe this was happening to me since I considered myself to be a healthy person."

Evans had gone to work the day before, with no inkling of her illness. But her fainting spell (she was not even aware she had passed out when she was found on the floor) would be followed by two more episodes, which prompted her to be taken to the hospital by paramedics to find an answer to what could possibly be wrong.

The diagnosis was devastating: Stage 4 (out of 5) Acute Myelogenous Leukemia, a cancer of the blood-forming cells which, by definition, results in an abnormal increase in the production of leukocytes - small, colorless cells in the blood, lymph and tissues - which are important in the body's defense against infection but in large numbers can be fatal.



Acute Leukemia is a rapidly progressing disease that, principally, affects cells that are unformed. Because of this, these immature cells cannot carry out their normal functions.

Evans was admitted immediately and stayed in the hospital for three months. Doctors arranged for a bone marrow transplant and began their search for a donor. Unfortunately, none of her siblings were a match and no donor could be located. Eventually, she went home for one week before returning for aggressive chemotherapy treatments.

The effects of the procedures took their toll. Evans lost both her hair and appetite. She dropped 92 pounds. She was so fatigued she could not work and had to relocate to a second-floor apartment with less stairs under the supervision of her oldest daughter, Edina Peterson. Edina, who is 23, took a third-floor unit in the same building to help with her younger sister, Kiah Evans and brother, Eddie Peterson, who resided with her mother. Evans' other children are grown and living on their own.

For Evans, leaving her home was painful, as she was on the verge of mortgage closure. Living in her home, though, was physically too taxing.

But while her health was frail, her faith and resolve remained strong with the help of her physician, Dr. David Mayernik, an oncologist at UPMC Shadyside. "He told me, 'You have to give me a year of your life and I'm going to try to give you the rest of your life,'" said Evans. "I had to trust in his God-given skills."

While she laid in bed battling her illness, Evans often worried about her family's welfare in the event something would happen to her. She utilized her time by writing her own obituary and made sure

her insurance policies were in place, as she did not want to be a financial burden to her family.

Evans was particularly concerned about the effects of her illness on her two youngest children: Kiah, 9, and Eddie, 15. However, Kiah and Eddie maintained their grades to earn a place on their school's respective honor rolls.

Eddie, now 18, has gone on to Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where he is on full scholarship with the basketball team, while Kiah, 12, is in the sixth grade and doing well, playing basketball for her elementary school as well as for her AAU team, the Pennsylvania Hoop Stars.

Her other adult children, Martina Peterson and Michael Evans also adjusted and are doing well.

Today, after extensive chemotherapy and alternative bone marrow treatments which included the use of frozen stem cells, Evans' cancer has been in remission for 18 months.

Clearly, life has a way of turning negatives to positives.

"In the beginning, the natural question was 'Why me?' But everything happens for a reason," said Evans. "You cannot question God."

Evans' illness has also proven to be a stimulus which has brought her closer to her family while helping her to be "more appreciative of the small things in life."

"Don't give up, no matter how bad circumstances look. Pull all your strength from inside," said Evans. "Trust and believe in God and you can do it."

Evans returned to work with ACHA in May 2001, working in the Development Department as a secretary. She also volunteers at the Leukemia Society, sharing her story whenever she can while also working on a devotional book to encourage people who are going through the same struggles with cancer.

Her journey is not over - remission must never be taken for granted - but each morning she gets up, Evans is thankful to be here another day. So, too, are her family, friends and co-workers at ACHA, who are happy to see her back in control.

Housing Choice Department Word Search

Words can be found horizontally, vertically, diagonally and backwards.

O R E N T D E X T T R C S M H
 G W R J U S C V K E H O E L O
 W H N D A U S O Y O V F L G U
 A M R E H B U U I D F B F M S
 C S L N H S R C T J A R S A I
 L P S T M I E H V O M G U E N
 A K A I E A S E T W I H F Y G
 N R U X S H P R B N L Q F T T
 D B Y S O T H S A E R A I V N
 L N P I U R A Z I R K L C E E
 O S C F N B H N G S M E I O H
 R E A L T N S H C C V D E M C
 D T R L A N G I G E W L N A U
 S E I L I M A F D J E N C N O
 M T T P F C H R X Y P H Y T V

Hidden Words:

Vouchers	Self Sufficiency	Subsidy
Housing	Choice	Owners
PHA	TTP	Landlords
Families	Assistance	Lease
Rent		



January & February Birthdays

Thompson, Evelyn	February 3
Martineau, Susan M.	February 4
Dickerson, Janeen	February 4
Evans, Kim	February 7
Druga, Susan	February 11
Polk, Robert D.	February 13
Douglass, Thomas	February 15
Leta, Frank R.	February 16
Nau, Mary	February 17
McCall, Phillip A.	February 17
Lieberth, Kristine L.	February 17
Harding, Norman T.	February 17
McNeil, Kim	February 18
Greer, Carol L.	February 18
Malinic, Thomas M.	February 20
Butler, Chauncy	February 22
Simmons, Uloma	February 23
McPayle, Thomas J.	February 24
Marino, Robert A.	January 5
Solanina, John M.	January 7
Sanchez, Louis A.	January 7
Wykiewicz, Bridget L.	January 8
Ruffing, Dennis J.	January 9
Lewis, Lamont A.	January 9
Passante, Regis L.	January 10
Therisad, Ernest	January 12
Rush, Richard	January 12
Hill, Jerome K.	January 14
Hairston, Roderick	January 14
Luckey, Gregory W.	January 18
Mameyer, Dwight V.	January 19
Hinkofer, Terri	January 19
Proctor, Hattie B.	January 22
Liddell Daylynn J.	January 22
Morton, Robert C.	January 24
Battista, Kevin	January 24
Ketter, David W.	January 25
James, John H.	January 26
Phillips, Guy E.	January 27
Valenson, Robert A.	January 29
Smith, Thomas A.	January 30

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



Dennis Ruffing, pictured with Frank Aggazio, receives Employee of the Month Award for January 2002



Monte Williams, pictured with Frank Aggazio, receives Employee of the Month Award for February 2002.

Employee of the Month Selection Process

An employee is nominated by the director or supervisor for service beyond the call of duty. If more than one person is nominated, a committee selects one of the nominees to receive the award. The Employee of the Month receives a plaque, a \$100 check, and board meeting recognition.

Do you have a story you want to share?

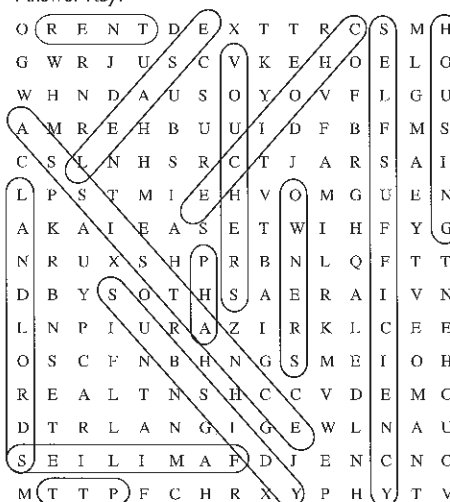
If so, contact Lynn Greer, Director of Human Resources, at 412-355-2152. Your story could be selected for publication in an upcoming issue.

Frank Aggazio Welcomes New ACHA Employees



Seated (Left to Right): Ernie Therisod (Housing Inspector), Frank Aggazio (Executive Director), Tiffany Gibson (Property Manager). Standing (Left to Right): Lamont Lewis (Special Activities Youth Coordinator), Nanette Livadas (Program Manager), Mabel Johnson (Confidential Secretary), Norma Robinson (Division Aide), and Marlon McWilson (Housing Counselor).

Word Search
Answer Key:



YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

IF YOU or any member of your immediate family is experiencing a personal problem, there is confidential help available to you at no cost through your Employee Assistance Program. The **EAP** is provided as a benefit to employees.

SOME OF THE PROBLEM AREAS in which help is available include:

- Marital Problems
- Family Issues
- Emotional Difficulties
- Work and Career
- Child Behavior
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- Legal Difficulties
- Co-Dependency
- Grief
- Eldercare
- Depression
- Financial Concerns
- Stress Management
- Eating Disorders

THE EAP IS STAFFED WITH PROFESSIONALS trained to help you and your family.

This benefit entitles you to: 1. A personal problem assessment interview, 2. Brief counseling, 3. A referral service to the most appropriate helping professional, and 4. Follow-up services to ensure that your needs are met.

USING THE EAP IS SIMPLE AND CONFIDENTIAL. Just call and identify yourself as an employee or a family member. An appointment will be made immediately. The **EAP** may be reached 24 hours per day, 7 days a week.

TO CONTACT EAP: In Allegheny County, call 412-622-7110.
Out of Allegheny County, call 1-800-375-3554.

What should I do if I find a letter or package to be suspicious?

According to the United States Mail Service, if you receive a package or a piece of mail of which you're suspicious, the first thing to do is stay calm. Do not handle, shake, bump, or sniff the suspicious item.

The next thing to do is notify your local law enforcement authorities right away. Isolate the mail piece and keep others away from the area. If possible, put the mail piece in a zip-locked plastic bag and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.

The simple act of paying attention to your incoming mail is the best way to keep the mail safe. Use common sense. Only you know your circle of friends, family and business contacts who normally send you mail. If you receive an item without a return address, or if you receive an item from a business you are not familiar with, better to play it safe and notify authorities.

For updated information on the safety and security of the mail, the USPS offers suggestions at www.usps.com.

Send in your baby photo!

...and we will include it in the next issue of this newsletter. Send photo along with your name and department to Lynn Greer, Human Resources.

Attention ACHA Employees!

A new chapter is being written for the Employee Newsletter—your newsletter—and we need your help! Suggestions are now being considered to rename the newsletter, and the ACHA is holding a contest to determine the winner. So, are you creative? Do you have what it takes to come up with a catchy new name? Are you interested in the chance at winning? If so, please e-mail in your ideas to Lynn Greer at clgreer@achsng.com.

The winning entry will be determined by selection committee. Deadline for entries is May 20, 2002.

Winner can select one (1) of the following prizes:

- Set of four (4) tickets to an upcoming Pirates game
- A weekend family pass to Kennywood
- \$100 gift certificate to Best Buy
- \$100 in free gas via a Sunoco gas card
- Free gift booklet for any Carmike Theatres (approximate value: \$50)

QUOTE OF THE MONTH...

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."
—Aristotle