Helping MSU Synergize Work-Life Needs

By Lori Strom

The WorkLife Office helps the university community be productive on campus while managing the inevitable demands of personal life. An example of a service provided through the office is Care.com. This is a resource for the MSU community that can help you find childcare, housekeepers, pet care, senior/elder care support, even house sitters. Work-life issues are complex and diverse. Care.com is a tool that enables MSU staff, faculty and students to be high performing while solving the work-life puzzle of needs throughout the lifecycle, from childcare to elder care.

Childcare is the number one family issue for faculty, staff and students. Yet, in spite of the excellent care options on campus, the scope and variety of demands make it difficult to accommodate everyone’s needs. But we can give MSU affiliates the tools they need to hire someone to come to their home.

Care.com is the largest web based service in the world for finding high-quality care providers, making it easy for families and individuals to locate caregivers close to home—or anywhere in the world. For example, if you are at MSU but your elderly mom needs help in Chicago, you can use Care.com to find caregivers that live near her. Or if you are a professor with a conference in Atlanta, and you have a nursing infant, you can find someone to watch your baby in the hotel while you give your presentation. The Care.com website allows you to view detailed profiles of care providers and you can search according to your requirements: ZIP code, experience, hourly rate, availability and more.

Care.com gives individuals 24/7 access to qualified care providers for every day, occasional or back-up care. Users can either search for providers or post a job to have candidates apply directly.

Security
Care.com is concerned about security and therefore includes safeguards. They conduct criminal background checks, and provide reviewed profiles and recorded references, which adds confidence when you make decisions regarding personal family care needs.

Measures of success
The MSU community has embraced Care.com. In a recent survey, 87% of respondents who tried to hire help through Care.com succeeded, and 95% of MSU respondents said they would recommend Care.com to a friend or colleague at the University.

How do you access the service?
Enter the MSU portal so you will not be charged for the service www.care.com/MSU. Log in with your MSU NET ID, to be identified as an MSU affiliate.

The search service is free, wages for care providers are negotiated between the provider and the user.
Karen Crosby is the Chief Financial Officer in the College of Human Medicine Dean’s Office. In this capacity, she supervises nine employees. The nomination packet was filled with positive sentiments about the work environment Ms. Crosby has created for her department. One letter of support stated, “Karen has fostered a culture of support and respect.” Others referenced Ms. Crosby’s willingness to accommodate for life difficulties and to offer flexible work arrangements. The nomination packet included statements such as, “This flexibility permits me to remain professionally engaged and continue to contribute to the college and university.” Congratulations, Karen Crosby!

Amy Driver is the Data Entry Supervisor/Office Supervisor II in the Department of Enterprise Information Stewardship. In this capacity, she supervises 20 employees. According to the testimonies expressed in the nomination packet, Ms. Driver is an advocate for her employees and creates a unique and productive work environment. Nominators for Ms. Driver’s award highlighted her ability to meet the needs of the team that she supervises with respect and integrity. One letter of support stated, “She approaches each day with a positive attitude that is infectious in our work space.” This positivity also empowers employees toward high performance. Another nominator wrote, “She values our opinions and voices, challenges us to come up with new ideas, and allows each person to shine in their own unique capacity.” Congratulations, Amy Driver!

Sherman Garnett is the Dean of James Madison College. In this capacity, he supervises approximately 50 employees. “Dean Garnett has created a productive and engaging environment, where faculty and staff know that they are respected, listened to, and cared for,” wrote a nominator. By providing a work environment that honors flexibility and tending to personal life needs, “He supports independent thinking and trusts his staff to do their job and do it well,” stated a letter of support for his nomination. As the dean of a college, his supervisory role has successfully blended the needs of both faculty and staff. One letter of support said, “Dean Garnett understands that everyone on the team is valuable, and that we have to be there for each other.” Congratulations, Dean Sherman Garnett!
Jessica Nakfour is the Management Analyst in the MSU Extension Director’s Office. In this capacity, she supervises nine employees. According to the nomination packet, “Her patient, caring and enthusiastic demeanor allows for a great work environment.” Additional letters of support for Ms. Nakfour highlighted her dedication to the staff, providing flexible work arrangements, and fairness for all employees. One letter of support stated, “Jessica consistently demonstrates fair management, consistent leadership and a commitment to supporting and treating her employees with dignity and respect.” As a supervisor, she has also demonstrated a commitment to the success of her team, both as individuals and as a unit. Congratulations, Jessica Nakfour!

Jeremy Wilson is the Director of the Center for Anti-Counterfeiting & Product Protection and a Professor in the School of Criminal Justice. In this capacity, he supervises six employees. The nomination packet for Dr. Wilson included statements such as, “He exemplifies integrity and civility and leads by example,” “This flexibility...motivated me to work efficiently and take ownership in my work in the office,” and that he shows “ardent support of the personal and professional growth of his staff.” Other letters of support identified Dr. Wilson’s commitment to his staff and his ability to create a supportive team environment in the department as qualities that make him a great supervisor. Congratulations, Jeremy Wilson!

**Inspirational Woman of the Year Award**

**2017 CALL FOR NOMINATIONS**

The Center for Gender in Global Context at Michigan State University is seeking nominations for the *Inspirational Woman of the Year Award*. If you know an inspirational woman you believe should be recognized for her commitment to Michigan State University and the global community, you are encouraged to nominate her for this prestigious award.

**The Award:**

The *Inspirational Woman of the Year Award* recognizes the achievements of women staff and faculty affiliated with Michigan State University (including main campus and all off-site and satellite campuses). The award highlights woman-identified individuals who demonstrate integrity, leadership, quality performance, integrative and inclusive action, and influence on campus and in the global community. The goal is to elevate and advance MSU’s culture of appreciation for the courageous and empowering work of the women change agents at MSU. Three individuals will be honored—one in each nomination category: Professional Achievement, Culture of Empowerment, and Community Engagement. Recipients of the *Inspirational Woman of the Year Award* will be recognized in spring 2017.

**Deadline for nominations: Tuesday, November 15, 2016**

For more information, visit [http://gencen.isp.msu.edu](http://gencen.isp.msu.edu).
8 Efficient Ways to Spend Your Lunch Break

By Lydia Weiss

How many times have you skipped lunch because you felt “too busy”? Often our go-go-go culture makes us feel like taking lunch is an unnecessary luxury. Or, if you are anything like me, you accidentally eat at your desk and catch yourself being tempted by the ding of a new email. “Well, I will just check that now so I don’t have to deal with it when I get back from my break,” I think to myself. Trying to be “productive” through our lunch break might actually be having the opposite effect than the one we desire.

By skipping lunch, or eating while running to our next meeting, we can actually be doing our work less productive. According to an article in the Washington Post, “Fewer than 20 percent of American workers regularly step away from their desks for a midday meal, and 39 percent usually eat at their desks…” The same article explains that eating a midday meal has benefits because it literally fuels your brain and that stepping away from your desk helps reduce stress, which increases creativity and productivity.

Whether you have a full hour, or can only spare 15 minutes, here are 8 tips for how to spend your lunch break in order to increase your work efficiency and productivity:

1. **Phone a friend.** Setting up a “lunch date” with a friend or colleague you haven’t seen in a while can help you both be accountable to your lunch hour. Meeting in-person or over the phone will also help you feel connected to your community.

2. **Get some fresh air.** Michigan State’s campus is gorgeous – miraculously even on rainy days. Breathe in the fresh air, soak up some vitamin D, and experience campus with a fresh mind. Head over to Beaumont Tower in the center of campus and enjoy the carillon performance every day at Noon.

3. **Eat brain-beneficial foods.** What you eat can impact your productivity. If you often feel groggy after eating lunch, take an inventory of the types of foods you’re consuming. Consider adding some “brainpower foods” to help you stay alert after the midday slump.

4. **Meditate.** Developing a mindfulness practice can leave you feeling relaxed, more able to focus, decrease anxiety and stress, and increase creativity, compassion and memory, according to a blog post on Buffer. Courses on mindfulness are also available through MSU’s Health4U program.

5. **Attend a Health4U lunchtime program.** *Relaxing Under the Stars and Rest with Music* are two programs offered over the lunch hour that are focused on helping you relax and move away from the stress or overwhelm you might experience in your workplace. Relaxation will help you return to your work environment recharged.

6. **Power nap.** Especially on days when you can feel yourself dragging, taking a quick snooze can increase your productivity. After a 20 minute nap (max) “you’ll have more room in your working memory for new information,” according to an article on fastcompany.com.

7. **Exercise.** Get that blood flowing! Have you heard of the *Scientific 7-Minute Workout?* It can help get your blood and oxygen moving to your brain and add some productivity perks to your afternoon. If these exercises are not your style, some simple stretching can also help get your brain back online.

8. **Run errands.** The benefits of this one might be up for debate, but I find that completing little tasks that stress me out after work can help me focus when I am in the office. Instead of having my mind wander to all of the things I have to accomplish after work, I have more mental space for being creative. A word of warning though – don’t try to squeeze too much into your lunch hour. You still need to make time to relax and eat.

These are just a few suggestions to increase your productivity over your lunch break. What are some of your tactics? Email worklife@msu.edu and we will post your suggestions to Twitter (@MSUWLO).

UPCOMING EVENTS & SOCIAL MEDIA

For a complete listing of upcoming WorkLife events, visit our website: https://worklife.msu.edu.

Interested in receiving weekly e-mails about upcoming programs and events? To join the WorkLife Listserv, send an e-mail with the subject line “WorkLife Listserv” to: worklife@msu.edu. Be sure to indicate your name and e-mail address.

Join us on Facebook: [MSU WorkLife Office](https://www.facebook.com/MSUWLO)

Follow us on Twitter: [MSU WorkLife Office](https://twitter.com/MSUWLO)

NOVEMBER 2016
How about saving enough money each year to buy yourself another very nice bike? Avoiding the costs associated with simply parking your car on campus gives you another $500 in your pocket, not to mention all the other harder-to-see costs of commuting by motor vehicle, especially a single-occupancy-vehicle (SOV). In fact, once you factor in all those other costs, the average sedan driver is paying out a whopping $8,558 in 2016, which is reportedly down this year compared to prior years and good news according to the AAA!

Did you know that no matter how cold it gets you can still enjoy riding?

As a year-round cycling MSU professor of packaging (hat tip Diana Twede) likes to say, "It’s just a matter of the correct packaging!" In fact, contrary to what you might think, that “packaging" doesn’t have to be special (read “expensive”) bike clothing either; wearing other clothing that you likely already have in your closet is fine, just layer it up and be ready to start taking layers off as you warm up while biking.

Some people who haven’t tried it mistakenly assume that bike commuting is colder than walking or taking the bus. Actually your body generates lots of heat while riding and you’re moving faster to your destination—spending less time in the cold, nasty weather that we sometimes get around here. Walking or waiting for a bus generates very little, if any, body heat, so you end up colder than riding a bike. MSU staff also keep the roads and bike paths very clear throughout the winter for everyone’s safety. However, getting to campus is sometimes a little more challenging when snow and ice haven’t been cleared from the roads!

Want to learn more about the benefits of bike commuting, especially in the colder months? Do you want to get started right away? Come to one of three free classes coming up in collaboration between MSU Bikes with Tim Potter and the MSU WorkLife Office. Details and RSVP here.

In closing, if you’re already enjoying these benefits of bike commuting but are newer to campus, check out all the resources and services that MSU provides to encourage and support you here.

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**Calendar of Events @ a Glance**

For a full listing of events and details, visit [https://worklife.msu.edu](https://worklife.msu.edu).

- **November 1, 2016**: Academic Women’s Forum: Fishbowl Discussion with Dr. Janet Lillie (3:30PM-5:00PM); Budgeting for the Holidays (6:00PM-7:00PM).
- **November 2, 2016**: Know the 10 Signs: Early Detection Matters—Alzheimer’s (12:00PM-1:00PM).
- **November 8, 2016**: Winter Bicycling Workshop Series (5:30PM-6:30PM).
- **November 9, 2016**: Women’s Networking Association: Night on the Town (5:30PM-9:00PM).
- **November 14, 2016**: Winter Bicycling Workshop Series (5:30PM-6:30PM).
- **November 15, 2016**: Academic Women’s Forum: The Daring Way (3:30PM-5:00PM); Long-Term Care Planning (6:00PM-7:00PM).
- **November 16, 2016**: Women’s Networking Association: Self-Branding through Personal Reflections (8:30AM-10:00AM).
- **November 17, 2016**: Reflect & Connect: Getting Steady. Reaching Out (11:30AM-1:00PM); Buying a Home from A-Z (6:00PM-7:00PM).
- **November 22, 2016**: Winter Bicycling Workshop (5:30PM-6:30PM).
- **November 29, 2016**: Academic Women’s Forum: Fishbowl Discussion with Dr. Naoko Wake (3:30PM-5:00PM).
The Reflect & Connect series provides an opportunity for MSU faculty and staff to come together to examine the personal and professional impacts of contemporary national and global events/tragedies and provides a space to explore best self-care/work-effectiveness strategies.

**Getting Steady, Reaching Out**

**Thursday, November 17, 2016**

11:30AM-1:00PM, Chittenden Hall, Room 110

We all have multiple roles that require us to be in service to other people. In difficult times, it is important to help yourself get steady before trying to help others. This is a space to gain intentional practices to help ground ourselves in order to be in service to others in our roles as employees, coworkers, parents, partners, and community members.

**Responding with Civility & Courage**

**Monday, November 28, 2016**

11:30AM-1:00PM, Olin Health Center, Classroom (247)

Gain skills and explore strategies for responding to observations and experiences of antagonism. Learn how to be an effective bystander and when and how to report/ask for help. Develop effective responses at work and in the community.

RSVP requested (but not required) to the MSU WorkLife Office at worklife@msu.edu or (517) 353-1635.

**Co-sponsored by MSU Office of the University Physician-Employee Assistance Program, Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives, and WorkLife Office.**