March 3, 2005

**CareLearning.com starts today for Skiff Medical Center**

Starting today, Skiff employees may use CareLearning.com, a new online educational program that has replaced Terrific Thursday.

Along with today’s paycheck, every staff member will receive his or her user name and password for the new CareLearning.com education program.

Carelearning is a convenient, cost-effective way to provide required training for Skiff employees. Instead of spending 4-6 hours at Terrific Thursday, employees will individually sit down to a computer screen and log on to a web-based training system at www.CareLearning.com.

The program can be accessed from any Skiff computer equipped with web access, a sound card and speakers or headphones.

Before the end of the year, every staff member will complete the 11-14 different training “modules” that make up the CareLearning.com curriculum. The average employee will need 3-4 hours to complete the training.

There’s an incentive to finish your CareLearning.com training sooner than later: anyone who finishes by June 30, 2005, will receive 30 extra Skiff Scorecard Rewards points! You’ll get 15 points if you complete it by September 30, 2005.

Department managers who have tried CareLearning.com say the program is simple and friendly to use. Many have appreciated that that pre-test allows them to skip a module if they score 100 percent.

You can complete the entire CareLearning.com training in one session, or you can do it in smaller 10- to 15-minute sessions if you prefer.

If you have questions about CareLearning.com, contact Guldberg at ext. 4871.

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**5,000 stuffed animals collected!**

More than 5,000 stuffed animals were collected at Skiff Medical Center and a location in Omaha, as Operation Huggable Friends gathered furry friends for young victims of the tsunami in Southeast Asia. Coordinator Carla Johnson, RN, thanked everyone who contributed to the effort. Helping to organize and count the animals were (from left) Kari Hemann, RN, and her children Sydney, 7, and Collin 4, former Skiff nurse Kathy Wilken and her husband, Doug, and Whit Johnson (Carla’s husband).
Waiting room position filled

Berdena Vos has been hired as a permanent employee in the Surgery Family Waiting Room. Sharron Meyer, formerly of the Business Office, will return to Skiff as a temporary employee to work as needed in the waiting room when Berdena is not available.

Open Forums set for March 10 & 11

All patient care staff are invited to join Steve Wilbur, Vice President of Patient Care Services, for an open forum at one of the following times:

- Thursday, March 10 at 3:30 p.m. or 6 p.m.
- Friday, March 11 at 7:30 a.m. or 2 p.m.

The agenda will include an update from the Skiff Board of Trustees meeting, a Patient Care Services update, and time for questions and answers. The open forums will be held in the former Assisted Living Dining Room on 2nd floor.

Turn in Fitness Frenzy logs by Friday, March 4

The current Fitness Frenzy “Resolution Solution” has drawn to a close. Employees who have completed log sheets for this program must turn them in to Deb Nilles by this Friday, March 4. Logs can be dropped off in the Nutrition Services Department or the Nutrition Services Mailbox. When turning in log sheets, please indicate what incentive you would like and it will be delivered to you:

- 150 points earns you a Digi-Walker pedometer or $15 in cafeteria coupons;
- 125 points earns you a Cookbook or $10 in cafeteria coupons;
- 100 points earns you $7 in cafeteria coupons;
- 75 points earns you $5 in cafeteria coupons.

Congratulations to the employees who have completed this program!

If you have already turned in your log sheet without indicating your incentive - please let Deb know what you would like!

Sponsors sought for Australian swim trip

Dan Guldberg, of Nutrition Services, and son of Lisa Guldberg, RN, has been selected from other Iowa high school swimmers to represent the U.S. as part of a select swimming squad that will travel to Australia in June 2005. He will participate in various international swimming competitions throughout Australia. In an effort to defray the costs associated with the trip, Dan is seeking donations, pop cans, etc. from the community. Anyone interested in helping Dan or wanting more information, is asked to call extension 4871.

Educational Offerings

- ICN Education Program on April 6, 2005 from Noon to 2 p.m. [Newton ICN site to be announced]. Dr. William Wickemeyer will give a presentation titled “Metabolic Syndrome” and Dr. Richard Carano will discuss “New Insights Into Initiating Insulin Therapy”. This is a great opportunity to earn 2 FREE CEU’s. If we have a decent turnout for this program, we will be allowed more CEU programs over the ICN in Newton. Contact Ann Hansen RN, CDE for further information.

- CPR recertification will be offered to staff on these dates:
  - April 25
  - July 25
  - October 24

All sessions will be held from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. This will be a “come and go” renewal, so come to class prepared! The average renewal time has been one hour. Call Lisa Guldberg (4871) with questions.

Skiff birthdays

Rhondi Machin March 3
Deb Drewis March 3
Jeff Lemley March 5
Wayne Mitchell March 6
Carol Hammer March 6
Amber Pelzer March 9
Sue Bartel-Kelso March 10
Mike Oleson March 11
Vivian Huisman March 14
Robin Rockwell-Dennis March 15
John Bartello March 16
Kim Dove March 16
Janet Sloan March 17
Jane Sloan March 18
Robyn Friedman March 18
Amanda Lewis March 18
Vicki Housley March 18
Getting to Know You...

**VICKI WALTER**

Name: Vickie Walter  
Department: Nutrition Services  
Position: Late Office/Late Cafeteria  
How long at Skiff: 2-1/2 years  
Previous jobs: Chiropractic Assistant, Newton Community School  
Hometown: Newton  
Schools you attended: Newton Elementary, Spirit Lake Community, Montezuma, Florida High  
Family: Husband Sonny, 2 daughters Christina (Jason) and Heather (Mike) Grandchildren Haylee and Briana  
Hobbies or outside interests: Anything Lucille Ball, exercise, taking Buddy (my dog) for walks, giraffes  
Ideal vacation: Going on a cruise somewhere warm and sunny with my sister  
If I won the big lottery I would…make sure my kids were set for life. Buy a much bigger house  
What I like best about working here: My daughter and niece both work here and I have a lot of good friends now. We’re all just one big family.  
Interesting tidbit about yourself: Both of my daughters are expecting so I’ll have 2 new grandchildren by the end of the year. That makes a total of 4 (so far).

**HEATHER CUNNINGHAM**

Name: Heather Cunningham  
Department: Nutrition Services  
How long at Skiff: 2 years, 3 months  
Previous Jobs: I was a nanny for 3 years and worked at Kindercare and Park Centre  
Schools you attended: Newton High School  
Family: Husband (Mike), Baby on the way and dog (Joey)  
Hobbies: Bowling, movies and hanging with friends  
Ideal vacation: Bahamas  
Last Book You Read: *What to Expect When You’re Expecting*  
If I won the big lottery I would…buy my parents a new house and then one for my husband and I  
What I like best about working here: Everyone is so nice and friendly. Very pleasant place to work.  
Interesting tidbit about yourself: My husband and I are expecting our first child May 1st.

**DANIELLE CARMICHAEL**

Name: Danielle Carmichael  
Department: Nutrition Services  
Position: Coffee Shop  
How long at Skiff: 2 months, however almost 3 years while in High School  
Previous jobs: Claim Rep at Social Security Administration, Lab Tech at Bowen Science Building (University of Iowa)  
Hometown: Newton  
Schools you attended: NHS and U of I  
Ideal Vacation: I would like to go to Spain  
What I like best about working here: The people  
Interesting tidbit about yourself: I am going back to school for nursing
Here’s a list of “Shining Stars” at Skiff Medical Center!

Here are some “Shining Stars” at Skiff Medical Center! They’re employees from any department who have gone the extra mile for patients, families or co-workers to help us accomplish our mission of providing personalized, compassionate health care.

• To the Med/Surg staff: I would like to express my appreciation to each and every one of you for your excellent patient care, and your kind hearts to assist your fellow workers when the census gets high. Each of you pitch in and truly work as a team, each of you in your jobs shine and are a shining star to me and Skiff. I am proud to know and work with all of you as your supervisor. When you work together, as I see you do, you make up a “Galaxy.” My deepest thanks to all of you for being here at Skiff. Thank you. From Deb Swihart.

• Thanks to Susan Winecoff for staying late and returning to work the same day to help recover multiple call-back cases. From Dennis Harrelson and Genevieve Langmaid.

• Thanks to Johnny Williams of Environmental Services for helping me clean OR rooms after multiple call-back cases so I could go home earlier. From Genevieve Langmaid.

• A very brightly Shining Star to the clinical staff in all areas of Skiff, for the exceptional job they have done in the last couple of weeks when census has been high and there have been a lot of staff illness. Everyone has worked extremely hard and it is greatly appreciated. From Steve Wilbur.

• Thanks to Tammy Ward for covering for me so I could go to a funeral. From Karla Mackerman.

• I would like to thank Shelby Wolf for her willingness to trade days with me, so I can make the most of my new almost grandma time. From June Trease.

• To Dan Boelman, for staying after the unit meeting to help on Med-Surg. To Michelle Hayes for working extra on February 18th. To Jessie Loveland for working a double shift to help with staffing. To Steph Williams for doing a great job as supervisor on a very busy day. To the Med-Surg staff for their hard work during a very busy time. From Kris Hoyt.

• We would like to thank the staff in the Respiratory Therapy Department for working with us on scheduling PFT’s at the last minute. We appreciate you working with us to provide good service to our customers. From the Occupational Health Services staff.

• Thank you to Brenda Young for helping me out when I was caring for a challenging patient on Monarch wing. Glad you were there! From Priscilla Stonehoecker.

To name a colleague a “Shining Star,” just drop a note to Steve Wilbur or John Easley.

Trisha Boyer.
• To June Trease, Justina Meredith, Rachel Wood and Jessie Loveland for working extra for us. To Melissa Main for orienting an agency staff when the assigned nurse called in ill. To Carol Hopkey for arranging orientation when she would be gone. From Kris Hoyt.

• To Lisa Guldberg for helping with orientation of new staff.

• To Carla Johnson, Kari Hemann and Nancy Van Zee for working as a team on the workplace survey action plan and goals for the OB department for the Skiff rewards. To Amber Pelzer for giving up office time to help out in OB. To Vicki Gunsaulus for staying late to help out in OB. From Brenda Smith, RN.

• B-I-G thank you to Linda Foster and Laura Dawson for all of their hard work on our collection efforts over the past two months. Their dedication and hard work is reaping results. From Karri Woody.

• Jennifer Lehrman deserves “kudos” for being a great team player. Her willingness to help in Materials Management while they are short staffed is greatly appreciated. From Karri Woody.

• To Shelly Beeler, Vicki Schut and others in OB for taking the time and effort to create some of the best baby photos on any hospital web site! From John Easley.

• Thanks to Linda Foster for all of her continued help. She has been great. From Cindy Abel.

• To Melody Wright for doing an outstanding job taking on the entire PACS responsibility and doing very well at it. From Jane Maury.

• To Sam Hendrix-Kennedy, Beth Fredrickson, Robin Rockwell-Dennis and Bonnye Varland – Thanks for being willing to pull to OB and work extra hours when we need you. From Vicki Schut and the rest of OB staff.

• To Jessica Loveland – Thanks for staying over and working a double shift twice recently to help cover for illnesses. From Jen Adams.

• To Janet Sloan – Thanks for helping me with an admission on a busy night recently and for helping me take care of a very sick patient during the admission. From Jen Adams.

• To Kim Dove – Thanks for working a night shift after your regular shift to cover in OB when we really needed you! Your hard work was noticed and appreciated!

• To Suzanne O’Roake – Thanks for your hard work during a very busy night recently. You helped me and my patients a lot! From Jen Adams.

• To Sue Wolters – Thanks for picking up an extra supervisor night shift to help cover for an illness last week! From Steve Wilbur.

• To Shelby Healey, Merle Smith, Karen Kriz, Lora Mattson – Thanks for doing your jobs so well and competitively. What a huge role each of you play here for patients and staff! You are appreciated!

• Thanks from Nursing Services to the following people for being willing to pick up extra hours in the last couple of weeks to help cover for open shifts, staff illness and patient census needs. Stephanie Williams, Michelle Hayes, Jessica Loveland, Mary Madsen, Kim Molloy, Robin Rockwell-Dennis, Jane Stevenson, Lori Grimes, Angie Barnes, Melissa Pearson, Lisa Hopkins, Tammy Wilson, Sarah Coy, Amber Pelzer.

• Shining Stars to Veronica Chance, Kristi Miller, Jo Breckenridge, Justina Meredith, Misty Smith, Michelle Beeler, Joyce Slycord, Kathleen Jackson, Edie Hoover, Katy Stonehoecker for demonstrating such great teamwork and cooperation for their willing.

(Please turn to page 5)
“Shining Stars” at Skiff Medical Center (continued from page 4)

ness to pull to hospice, home care and OB to help out when needed. It is appreciated! From Steve Wilbur.
- To Jesse Watters – A Shining Star for arriving to work on time. From Steve Wilbur.
- To Vicki Gunsaulus – Thanks for staying over on Monday to help out in OB. From Steve Wilbur.
- To Nancy Van Zee – Thanks for taking OB call [and coming in to work] on Monday night to help cover for an illness! From Steve Wilbur.
- Thanks to Melissa Engle for stepping in to cover for 2 co-workers who were ill this week. From Deb Nilles.
- Brenda and I would like to give Jen Lehrman a big shining star for all the help she has been giving us over the past month. She has been a great help and much appreciated. Brenda and I would like to send her a big THANKS. From Jim Maher and Brenda Allspach.
- A special shining star to Traci Korte for juggling two schedules at once. You rock!! From the PM&R staff.
- To Bonnie Pittman & Suzanne VonSeggern for going the extra mile on a hectic weekend. They made sure our patients were well cared for and comfortable. From Colleen Jacobsen.
- Shining Stars: A big thank you to all who took on extra shifts to assist in covering the Monarch Wing the past couple weeks—we have been full and overflowing to med-surg. I will attempt to name those involved and hope I haven’t left anyone out. Sarah Coy, Trisha Boyer, Brenda Malott, Becca Nunn-Ryan, Kathleen Jackson, Edie Hoover, Justina Meredith, Suzanne O’Roake, Plus a work-out for those who worked their regular hours and had very busy shifts. From Carolyn Sullivan.
- A thanks also to Jane and Natalie and Linda C. for handling all the admissions and deaths that have happened over the past two weeks. I work with special people. From Carolyn Sullivan.
- To Jane Johnson of Human Resources, for her extra work and dedication in completing payroll while Donna Baker is gone this week. From Gena Garber.
- To Nancy Van Zee and Kim Molloy for picking up extra hours. From Brenda Smith.
- To Susan Murphy for taking the time to be a great preceptor for a nursing student, even during this time of high census. Thanks so much! From Kris Hoyt.
- Shining Stars from Home Care Director Diane Larson:
  - To Kelsey Roush for her creativity in planning the ‘stress relief’ basket exchange. Staff enjoyed sharing what others had received and relaxed for a few minutes!
  - To Kelly Maher, Bobbi Patton, and Sandi Dean for arriving to work early to help out with clerical needs.
  - To Steve Wilbur for arranging for relief assistance in Home Care. Staff appreciated the effort and help!
  - To Connie Loehr, Sarah Ayers, Peg Morton, and Donna Russell for all the extra Home Care Aide hours they have worked. Our clients are so thankful for your care!
  - To Rhonda McCray for volunteering her assistance for the on-call nurses on weekends. You help to lessen the workload and allow more timely care for our clients.
- Shining Stars from ER/SCU Director Susan Carzoli:
  - To Merle Smith for coming in on your day off to be with a family.
  - To Marsha Koughn for her un-ending determination and care of multiple patients in the SCU. She never complained and was a real trooper for the day!
  - To Sandy Van Zee for offering to help with telemetry monitoring & documentation for the day when the SCU was swamped with patients.
  - To Mary Madsen for staying over an extra 4 hours when we had several staff call-ins.
  - To Sam Kennedy for assisting a staff person and myself with a procedure. Even though you were busy and had 6 patients, you took the time to help answer questions as well as walk us through the procedure.
  - To Karri Woody for coming in extra over the weekend to open the Business Office when the ED was busy with patients coming from every direction.

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**New Materials Management Director joins Skiff staff**

Welcome to Kerry Soule, Skiff’s new Director of Materials Management.

A Burlington native, Soule received his B.A. in Economics from the University of Iowa. He began his career as a senior merchandising analyst for Target Corporation in Minneapolis. He moved to Newton in 1992, when he began a 10-year stint at Younkers as a buyer in housewares, crystal and silver, and footwear. Most recently, Soule worked at the Newton Group, where he served as General Manager.

Kerry is married to Darcy Soule, a first grade teacher at Thomas Jefferson school in Newton. They have three daughters: Taylor, 12, Tara, 10, and Jordyn, 6.
A clarification on Skiff’s health insurance coverage

If you are covered under Skiff’s employee health insurance plan, you should know that the “Tier 1” 90%-10% coverage is only available when care is provided at a Skiff (or a Skiff-owned clinic) and by Skiff-affiliated physicians and providers.

Services provided at the Skiff Specialty Clinic are covered at the 90% rate; so are services provided at Skiff’s satellite clinics in Monroe, Colfax and Baxter.

Care provided by non-Skiff providers is covered at either the “in network” rate of 80%-20% or the “out of network” rate of 50%-50%, depending if the provider is a member of the Skiff network or not.

“We’ve had a few cases where an employee thought they would get 90% coverage from an out-of-town physician because they had a referral from a Newton physician,” said Jane Johnson of Human Resources. “But to get the 90% coverage, it has to be from a Skiff-based provider.”

If you have questions, please contact Johnson at ext. 4351.

March is Nutrition Month – Get a Taste of Nutrition!

In honor of National Nutrition Month, the Skiff dietitians will be promoting nutrition in a variety of ways.

- Stop by the information table in the radiology hall to pick up information on a variety of nutrition-related topics. Watch for new information each week.
- Test your nutrition knowledge by taking the National Nutrition Month 2005 Quiz on the table in the Radiology hall. Drop the completed quiz in the box by the information table. Prizes will be provided to five individuals who turn in completed quizzes.
- “Eat 5-9 A Day,” a fruit and vegetable competition starting March 6. Pick up a log to track your intake from any of the Skiff dietitians OR on the information table in the radiology hallway. Logs will be provided each week with information regarding serving sizes. Drop the completed logs in the box by the information table. Prizes will be offered to the top 5 fruit and vegetable consumers.
- Read the informative table tents in the cafeteria to increase your nutrition knowledge.

Prizes include Avon Calorie Manager Bracelets, fruit and veggie baskets, and exercise kits. Please contact Jenny Thompson at ext 4303 with any questions.

New Skiff employees

Amy Summy
CNA Float Pool

Christine Hinshaw
Occupational Health

Angie Thongvanh
Good-To-Go Coffee Shop

Kerry Soule
Director of Materials Management

Donna Fuller
Unit Secretary

Angela Sevde,
CNA
**Birthdays ending in ‘O’**

Jen Lehrman and Diane Versendaal each celebrated a significant birthday on Wednesday (we won’t mention the number). Co-workers in the Business Office commemorated the event with dead roses, prunes, black and purple decorations, and photos from the past.

**Bowl for Kids’ Sake**

Bowl for Kids’ Sake is an annual fundraising event for Big Brothers Big Sisters where you can be a bowler, a team captain, a sponsor, or all three! When you bowl in this event, you’ll enjoy a fun outing with friends, family, colleagues, your civic or faith group, and make a positive difference in the lives of children.

Here’s how it works: Bowl for Kids’ Sake is a bowling fundraiser to support mentoring for children in need of positive role models. Teams of 4-5 bowlers sign up by completing a team registration form (available by calling 792-4077) Each participant must raise $50 in order to be eligible to participate. If you don’t have a team but want to bowl individually, please call and Big Brothers/Big Sisters will find a spot for you.

The event is scheduled for Sunday, April 3 from 12:30-2:30 p.m. at Cardinal Lanes in Newton. Bowlers can collect sponsors the traditional way, using pledge sponsor sheets, or by soliciting friends and family by e-mail.

**State swim meet qualifiers**

Hannah Scotton, daughter of Sandy and Matt Scotton, Carly Colville, daughter of Bill and Ginny Colville, RN, and Austin Bunker, son of Dr. Orville and Kim Bunker qualified for the State YMCA Swim Meet at the Sectional Meet held February 13. Hanna will swim in two relays and two individual events; Carly will swim in three individual and two relay events; and Austin will swim in one individual event at the State Meet. The State Swim Meet will be held at Marshalltown on March 5 and 6.
A note from a grateful Skiff patient

Dear Skiff Medical Center:

My name is David Harwood, and I serve as the Director of Chaplaincy Services at Midland Memorial Hospital in Midland, Texas. I am writing to express my gratitude to you and the Emergency Room staff at Skiff Medical Center for the excellent care that was provided when I was a patient there recently.

Recently my wife and I were traveling through Newton on Interstate 80 when I suddenly became very ill from what I now understand was caused by a virus of some kind. My wife was able to drive to a convenience store, and an ambulance was called to respond to the situation.

Needless to say, this was a very traumatic experience, especially for my wife. Your ER staff is to be commended for their quality service which was professional, kind, and considerate. I am deeply grateful to everyone who assisted my wife and me during this ordeal, and I would ask that you please communicate my thanks to the Emergency Room staff for their service and devotion.

My wife Becky and I extend our heartfelt appreciation to you and your staff at Skiff Medical Center, and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can assist you in some way.

Sincerely,
Reverend David W. Harwood
Director of Chaplaincy Services

Comments from satisfied Skiff E.R. patients

(These comments were received on Skiff Emergency Department patient satisfaction surveys in recent weeks.)

- Best and shortest visit ever!!!
- Very friendly.
- I was very impressed with Sandy Beals. Her care and concern was very comforting and I appreciated it. She also made sure I had additional information on my condition.
- The doctor was very personable, knowledgeable, and thorough. Also very patient and kind.
- The Radiology technician was very kind and personable.
- Nurses were all very good. Dr was very good and acted interested, everyone was very good to my husband and I while we were there.
- The doctor was very nice. I have seen him before for my migraine, which is good because he knows me and knows I am not lying about my migraines.
- The nurses were very polite and concerned about my health.
- I was impressed with the doctor; he called 3 times to check on my daughter after her transfer to Mercy ER.
- Staff was very helpful and explained every detail.
- We were directed to an exam room and immediately seen by a nurse.
- Nurses were very friendly.
- Your hospital has great nurses!
- I was made comfortable right away and checked on often; the nurses were very helpful and nice
- Nurses and doctor were very good.
- I had no problem with any one at the emergency room they were all concerned and very nice.
- We did not have to wait at all. We got right in.
- The doctor explained everything to me so I could understand it.
- Nurse helped me to remain calm to help ease the pain and the doctor was quick and to the point to take care of my issue.
- I was met at the door by the Chaplain, who got me into a wheel chair, then the nurse took me right back. Thank you!

Money Talks: A Financial Guide for Women

What do you want from your money... a house, financial security in later life, college for your children, or another financial goal? Plan today to participate in the Money Talks: Financial Guide for Women series designed for Skiff Medical Center employees beginning March 29.

The sessions are as follows:
- March 29 - Financial Basics: setting financial goals and planning spending
- April 5 - Banking Basics: accounts, credit, mortgages
- April 12 - Insurance Basics: health, auto, home, disability, life, umbrella
- April 19 - Financial Security in Later Life
- April 26 - Investing for the Future: mutual funds, stocks, and bonds
- May 3 - When Life Changes: wills, estates, divorce

The first five sessions will be taught by Ruth Freeman, Iowa State University Extension Family Resource Management Field Specialist. An attorney will present the final session.

The sessions run from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. in the Skiff Inservice Room. To enroll contact Gena Garber in Human Resources.
March is National Athletic Training Month

March is National Athletic Training Month, honoring certified athletic trainers from across the United States. The month focuses on generating awareness of the important role that certified athletic trainers (ATCs) play on the field and in the health care environment.

Athletic trainers are unique healthcare providers who specialize in the prevention, evaluation and rehabilitation of injuries to athletes and those engaged in physical activities. ATCs are a vital member of the medical team, often serving as a liaison relaying information to and from physicians, coaches, and parents to coordinate and provide appropriate health care services. Certified Athletic Trainers are found in several sports settings including the professional, semi-professional, and collegiate and high school arenas as well as other areas of employment including physical therapy clinics and hospitals.

ATCs hold at least a bachelor’s degree with many, including each of Skiff Medical Center’s athletic trainers, possessing a master degree. Additionally, ATCs must pass an extensive three-part test with a pass rate of only about 35% becoming certified on the first attempt. ATCs who work in the clinical setting have the same background and education as those who work for professional organizations and the high-profile athlete.

Once the credential is earned, it must be maintained through yearly continuing education requirements. The State of Iowa also requires each ATC to be licensed. It is incorrect to refer to them as “trainers” as doing so does not distinguish between certified athletic trainers and a number of other professionals that include the word “trainer,” such as a personal trainer.

Currently, Skiff Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation has three Certified Athletic Trainers on staff, with over 34 years of combined experience. Brett Altman, PT, OCS, SCS, LAT, ATC, CSCS and Laura Williamson, LAT, ATC, PTA provide athletic training services to Newton Senior High School and Matt Scotton, PT, LAT, ATC, CSCS to Colfax-Mingo High School. They provide approximately 1,000 hours of this specialized service annually to these schools’ athletic programs, including varsity event coverage and weekly injury clinics throughout the school year.

Sports covered include football, volleyball, and cross country in the fall; wrestling and basketball in the winter; and track and soccer in the summer. Skiff Medical Center’s ATCs are also available to all other sports such as swimming, tennis, baseball, softball, and cheerleading. Many sports include boys’ and girls’ teams and multiple categories of games are played at each scheduled event (freshman, sophomore, junior varsity, and varsity contests).

“When the week we provide injury evaluation and free tips and advice,” Scotton said. “If the injury requires medical attention, we make the appropriate referral to physicians, physical therapy or sports medicine services.”

“There is always going to be risk of injury in sports, but the equipment and rules are making it safer all the time,” said Williamson.

Skiff began offering sports medicine services through the rehabilitation department in 1994 and will soon begin their twelfth year of service. Altman said, “Yes, we put in a lot of time including many weekends and evenings, but we are told all the time by the kids, coaches, and the parents how much we’re appreciated which makes the role very enjoyable.” When questioned about what they like best about being an ATC, the three agreed that building relationships with coaches, parents, physicians, and, most importantly, the student athletes is the highlight.
Can you think of even one occupation where you never have to lift? Lifting is very much a part of our everyday lives and jobs. And, because of this, we tend to do it without thinking, or at least we do until our backs start to hurt.

Lifting incorrectly can result in a variety of injuries. Back strain is a very common one and it results from over-stretching certain muscles. But it can be avoided by practicing safe lifting techniques.

A hernia is another injury associated with lifting. It does not generally result from a single lifting effort but usually the result of continued extreme exertion, especially done contrary to the structure of the body.

Don’t underestimate the importance of being in good physical condition. Years of poor posture, overeating, lack of exercise, stress, and improper lifting can catch up with you. Learn how your back works and what you can do to keep it strong. Ask your physician for some recommended stretching, warm-up, and reconditioning exercises, and then practice them regularly.

Safe lifting plays an important role in keeping your back healthy. Although there doesn’t seem to be just one correct way to lift an object, there are lifting techniques that take strain off the low back area. They include:

1. Look over the load. Decide if you can handle it alone or if you need help. When in doubt, ask for help. Moving an object that is too heavy is not worth strained and sore back muscles.

2. Clear away any potential obstacles before beginning to carry the object.

3. Support and propel the object while it is attached to you, your grip should be firm. Carrying objects will change your balance. To keep this change of balance to a minimum, keep the load close to your body and to your normal center of gravity between the legs and shoulders.

4. Use good foot position. It allows you to keep your balance and brings into play the full power of your leg muscles. Leg muscles are more powerful and more durable than back muscles, so let your legs do the work.

5. Use your feet to change direction. Don’t twist your body. It compounds the stress of the lift and affects your balance.

When someone is helping you lift, teamwork becomes important. If you’re going to be carrying the load to another point, both of you should decide in advance how it is to be handled. Check the route and clearance. One person should be the leader and be in a position to observe and direct the other. Lifting and lowering should be done in unison. Don’t let the load drop suddenly without warning your partner.

Everyone has a way of lifting that seems most natural. Examine yours to see if you are using the lifting techniques just discussed and reducing strain on your lower back.