Physical Plant Employees Honored with Staff Merit Award

By Kelsey Tharp

With a combined 45 years of dedicated service, the devotion and drive of two Physical Plant employees has finally been rewarded.

Jennifer L. Krebbs, Area Coordinator for Building Services, and Kevin Ashley, Carpenter for the Glass Shop, were presented IU Bloomington’s Staff Merit Award at a ceremony on December 15th in the IMU’s Frangipani Room. Annually there are six recipients honored out of the 5000+ staff employees on the Bloomington campus. Two are selected from each category: Professional Staff, Support Staff and Service Staff.

The winners were notified of their achievement through a phone call. After learning he had won, Ashley felt pleased people cared enough to nominate him and thought receiving the award felt great. Krebbs described winning the award as overwhelming, saying, “I was pinching myself. The honor was pretty amazing, actually.”

The award winners were treated to a special ceremony before being presented with a Staff Merit plaque by Provost and Executive Vice President Lauren Robel. Krebbs described the ceremony as lavish and explained she left feeling she had truly won something special. Ashley added that the winners’ families and friends were invited to the celebration to share in their honor.

Employees are nominated for the Staff Merit Award based on criteria such as: demonstration of positive attitude, job performance, attendance and their dedication to improving Indiana University for faculty, students and staff. According to their supervisors, Krebbs and Ashley are great examples of these criteria in action every day.

Greg Fichter, Assistant Director writes that Krebbs “has always represented the Building Services Division in a professional and positive manner and just recently all of her efforts paid off.” During her 27 years with the Physical Plant, Krebbs has worked her way up through the ranks. Fichter believes this is due to her desire to improve her own performance.

Jennifer Krebbs and Kevin Ashley embody the spirit and professionalism of a long line of great Physical Plant Staff Merit Award winners. In their every day work, they radiate the positive attitude and teamwork that makes the Physical Plant run effectively. We appreciate their efforts and value their service - Congratulations Jennifer and Kevin!

Out of over 5,000 IU Employees, two Physical Plant Staffers with a combined 45 years of service receive Staff Merit Award
Lock Shop Renovation - Key to Unlocking Space

After almost two years of diligent work, the lock shop’s renovations are finished. The renovations were made to facilitate the Lock Shop’s efficiency and inventory their stock.

The shop’s most notable addition is a new mezzanine level, complete with an overhead door. The mezzanine doubles the space in the shop. It is filled with several rows of long, metal shelves heaving with an assortment of carefully organized lock repair materials.

Danny Martindale, Carpentry Shop Supervisor, says he was very appreciative of the help Mary Robbins and her storeroom crew provided to organizing the shop’s inventory. Now that the stock resides on the shelves, it is easier to know what materials are available for the workers.

The mezzanine has provided valuable storage space and organization for locksmiths Paul Aydt, Allen Hall and Rob Wetzel Jr. These locksmiths have the responsibility of providing a security service for all the members of Indiana University.

The members of the lock shop take pride in their service to the university. These staff members regularly stay late to complete their work, are on-call 24/7, work stand-by for most sporting events and service 10,000+ doors across campus. The immensity of their job requires a large stockpile of parts to be prepared for any sort of lock emergency. Their patrons consistently praise them on their excellent customer service.

The expanded, organized space allows the locksmiths to more easily complete their work and develop professional relationships with other departments and people.

Tuesday Morning Food Huddle

Confused about healthy eating and nutrition? Need some inspiration for creating a delicious meal? Healthy IU is here to help!

Over the course of January, Healthy IU presented the Tuesday Morning Food Huddle program series at the Physical Plant. This series was created to provide staff members with information on making healthier food choices and how to use this knowledge in their everyday lives. Each week, the Huddle attracted 40-50 employees.

One of the program’s subjects was selecting healthier fast food options while on the road. Jackie Braspenninx, Healthy IU Manager, explains that fast food menus have healthier options hiding on them. She suggests picking grilled options over fried and trying a baked potato or side salad in lieu of fries.

Braspenninx states she is very grateful for the Physical Plant’s attendance at the Huddle and is pleased by the staff’s interest in the program. She writes, “This was a pilot program and we hope to expand it and use it in other departments.”

For more nutritional information and guidance, schedule a free advising appointment with Steven Lalevich, Healthy IU’s Nutritionist. He can be reached at askanrd@indiana.edu or by calling 812-855-4948.
Because hearing loss can be gradual, happening over a long period of time, we often don’t recognize it until it is too late. This is why we must make sound decisions when it comes to protecting our hearing by following a hearing conservation plan.

Indiana University’s Hearing Conservation Program was established to prevent occupational noise exposures which could lead to noise-induced hearing loss, and to comply with existing Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations.

Physical Plant includes over 270 employees in IU’s Hearing Conservation Program. Physical Plant’s Safety Programs Coordinator, Ryan Crowe, explains, “Hearing loss is a problem for staff, especially for those who work with heavy equipment. Upon entering a machine room, a person initially notices the immense noise level. As time passes, the person gradually becomes accustomed to the noise and forgets the loudness of the space. This can lead to sound overexposure and hearing loss.”

This risk of overexposure is why the “how loud for how long rule” was created. This rule indicates the safe amount of time someone can spend listening to a certain amount of noise.

IU’s hearing conservation program also includes:

- **Noise Assessments:** Noise assessments are conducted by trained professionals in IU’s Office of Environmental Health & Safety. The noise assessments determine the exposure levels of various work areas and appropriate hearing protection for those areas is then selected. Monitoring takes place periodically, and when a change in equipment or procedures could affect noise levels.

- **Employee Training:** Properly trained employees are critical to a successful hearing conservation program. Employees will be informed on an annual basis how high levels of noise can damage their hearing and how to protect their hearing through the proper selection and use of hearing protection devices.

- **Audiometric Testing:** Audiometric testing measures the sound frequency and intensity that each employee can hear. The hearing tests and evaluations are conducted by IU Speech & Hearing Clinic professionals. Employees enrolled in the hearing conservation program will have their hearing tested once a year. An employee’s initial test, known as a baseline audiogram, will establish a baseline against which future tests are compared.

Hearing loss is preventable. Be sure to take an active role in reducing the harmful effects of noise exposure at work and at home.
Top: The Lock Shop’s Best Key Combinator (left); The new overhead door that exits the mezzanine (middle); Inventory labeled and ready for use (right)

Middle: Locksmiths Allen Hall, Paul Aydt and Rob Wetzel Jr. (left), Locksmith Rob Wetzel Jr. ready for work (right)

Bottom: Some of the keys to service the 10,000+ doors across campus (left)