

Flexible spending and health care reform

As a reminder, as of January 1, 2011, over-the-counter drugs will no longer be covered under your flexible spending plan. Take this into account as you plan out flex expenses between now and June 30.

Contributing to the Annual Fund

This fall, faculty and staff again have the opportunity to participate in a giving drive to benefit Calvin's [annual fund](#), the Calvin Energy Recovery Fund and various other Calvin initiatives.

If interested in making a financial contribution you can either make a gift [online](#) or set up an automatic [payroll deduction](#). Contributions through payroll deduction will be reflected beginning in January.

Questions? Contact the development office at ext. 6-6090.



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From the desk of our director

As the bare branches, colder weather and shorter days remind me, November is here and Thanksgiving is fast approaching. This time last year the human resources office was busy in the midst of the benefits fair and benefits open enrollment. This November, with the movement of our benefit plan year to the fiscal year, our focus has shifted to other things.

We wrapped up two great training opportunities in the last few weeks. Over 50 office assistants participated in two professional development days in the final weeks of October and we've received some great feedback. In these development days, participants heard sessions on Calvin branding, social media and strengths assessment. The fall new staff orientation (NSO) also wrapped up recently. Check out page three to read comments from this session's participants. You can also find out more about new staff orientation in the February 2009 [issue](#) of *The Resource*.

November is National Adoption Month and we chose to recognize this by talking to two different adoptive parents on campus. Check out page two to read about the adoption experiences of Dorothy Britton (human resources) and Chris Ellens (development) as well as find more information about the adoption benefits at Calvin! If you are considering adoption or just want more

information, I welcome you to contact our office.

As the holidays draw near, Calvin students and employees look forward to some time away with family and friends. You can check out the [2010](#) and [2011](#) holiday calendars on the human resources website. Campus will be closed on November 25 and 26 for Thanksgiving and from December 24 to January 2 for Christmas. Since interim starts on the Wednesday we return to campus from the Christmas break, the campus will observe the New Year's Day holiday on Christmas Eve rather than on January 3.

As you may recall, John VanderSloot, Calvin's TIAA-CREF representative, is coming to select buildings on campus once a month to meet with faculty and staff members in those buildings who wish to talk about their retirement accounts. On December 7, John will be in the Science Building. Limited appointments are available on that day; call 800-732-8353 to set up an appointment.

Stay tuned to *The Resource* next month for important end of the year information, both from payroll and our office. I hope that each of you have a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends.

Todd Hubers
director of human resources

It's My Job: A chat with Melisa Hubka

Here in the academic services department in Hiemenga Hall, you can find Melisa Hubka, assistant registrar and data guru.



R: How long have you been at Calvin?

M: About 15 years. Like many people, I came to campus as a student and never left!

R: What do you do?

M: Two big things: I maintain the degree audit and provide demographic data to people or departments that need it. For example, say you want a list of all business majors who listed music as one of their interests on their application—I can get you that list!

R: What do you think makes you successful in your job?

M: I am highly detail-oriented. I understand the vital importance in keeping our data clean; and in this job, it's all about the details. I also really enjoy working with students.

R: What would you like us to know about your office?

M: The academic services department is really here to help. We want students to feel comfortable calling or stopping by.

R: What is one thing we might not know about you?

M: My parents were missionaries and I was born in Nigeria. From there we moved to Mexico...Missouri. It's a real town, [look it up!](#)



When her son Braden left for college, Dorothy Britton (manager of compensation and benefits for human resources) thought her child-raising days were over. But when her son suggested to his parents that they think about getting into foster care or adoption, they couldn't say no.

"With the barest of research, we learned about the great need out there, especially for older sibling groups in the foster care system," said Britton. "So we decided to take action and be a part of the solution, not the problem."

While Britton and her husband were waiting to receive their foster care license, they agreed to provide respite care on the weekends for current foster families. Respite care is short-term, temporary relief for current foster parents. "And that," Britton grins, "is how Amber and Sean came into our life."

Amber (15) and Sean (12), sister and brother, first came to the Britton household as respite kids. After their current foster parents requested to be relieved of duty, Amber and Sean were transferred to the Britton house as full-time foster children on April 1, 2009. Over the course of the next year, Amber and Sean become available for adoption.

"At that point we had a decision to make," said Britton. "The State of Michigan was legally obligated to place these kids in adoptive homes within the next year. We had to decide if we wanted to keep them as foster kids, and then have to ultimately give them up, or if we wanted to adopt them."

Sensing strongly that it was something God called them to, Britton and her husband decided to adopt. The adoption was finalized on August 10, 2010. "Our [biological] kids really encouraged us," said Britton, "Amber and Sean had become part of our family. What people don't always realize is that these [foster] kids are often victims. They didn't choose that life. The best part of bringing Amber and Sean into our family is seeing them thrive in a healthy environment. They really are completely different kids now."



Not long after Chris Ellens (manager of phonathon and analytics specialist for development) and his wife had their daughter Mayah, they started thinking about how to expand their family.

"We knew God was calling us to grown our family," said Ellens. "At the same time we felt God was prompting us to really seek out what his plans for our family might be."

Ellens and his wife turned to the Bible for guidance. "We kept running into this idea of God

It's all in the family— adoption at Calvin

November is national adoption month and we're celebrating by highlighting two extraordinary Calvin adoptive families! Read on to hear their stories.

welcoming the downtrodden, the widowed, the orphaned into the fold," said Ellens. "I think it's very significant that God chose to use this type of language to tell the salvation story. After some time of prayer and soul-searching, we knew that God was calling us to adoption. I think that sometimes people view adoption as a second choice, but it wasn't for us. It was God's choice."

The Ellens family adopted a little girl from Ethiopia and named her Hanna. Less than two years later, they welcomed Amira, also from Ethiopia, into their home.

"We chose international adoption because we found it striking how limited the prospects are for kids in overseas orphanages," said Ellens. "When we visited the orphanage in Ethiopia to pick up Hanna, we felt such a strong obligation to help those children."

People often tell Ellens how lucky Hanna and Amira are to have his family, but he sees it in another way.

"We are humbled by the scope of what God can do," he mused. "Our lives are so joy-filled because of our girls, both biological and adopted. The best part of this process has been seeing Hanna and Amira flourish and grow."

The college provides eligible employees partial reimbursement for adoption costs. Contact [our office](#) for more information.



Another semester, another NSO

On Friday, November 5, human resources wrapped up our fall New Staff Orientation (NSO). Nine new staff members graduated from this training and celebrated with a luncheon at Prince Conference Center (pictured above).

Naturally, our office is always collecting feedback from participants of our various trainings. Here are a few of the responses garnered when we asked grads “what was your favorite part of NSO?”

Nicole Brower, leasing agent for Glen Oaks East: “The NSO with Calvin grants employees a glimpse of the complete picture that is Calvin. Excellence abounds, but what I was impressed with was the sense

of genuine care from all of the [divisional] vice presidents.”

Nicole Parker, program coordinator for multicultural student development: “In general, I loved every part of NSO. It gave me a chance to meet and interact with people from different departments that I do not see or work with on a regular basis.”

Andrea Hensen, project neighborhood mentor: “I most enjoyed Ken Heffner’s session about Calvin engagement and discernment of music, movie and pop culture. Our conversation...encouraged me to be a more faithful discerner of this calling on my life.”

Kenneth Pohler, campus safety officer: “My two favorite

sessions were the history of Calvin and the presentation by Provost Claudia Beversluis. I think it is important to know how and why the college began and [the Provost] was so down to earth and excited about her work.”

Jay Lindeman, property manager for Glen Oaks East: “My favorite part was the willingness of the president, vice presidents and other staff members to take time and meet us new hires to share with us how they contribute to the mission of the college.”

For a more in-depth look at NSO, check out the February 2009 [issue](#) of *The Resource*. Another session of NSO will be offered in the spring.

Getting to know NEW STAFF

We want to take this opportunity to welcome the staff members (new or transitioned) who have started at Calvin this month. Be sure to make them feel welcome!

Crystal Gabrielse, accounts receivable coordinator for financial services

Judi Jongekrijg, administrative assistant for chemistry

Michael Mandeville, Help Desk analyst for CIT

Matthew Sink, director of financial aid

Calvin Perks DID YOU KNOW

DID YOU KNOW about the [childcare resources](#) available at Calvin? The college has set aside two rooms on campus for child care. First, childcare rooms are available for children of faculty, staff and students of the college. The parent must provide a caregiver (over the age of 14) to accompany his or her child(ren). Room reservations can be made by printing off the [Calvin childcare room use form](#) and sending it to the human resources office.

Second, Calvin provides a private room for nursing mothers. This room contains a lockable cabinet and refrigerator. Keys for the cabinet can be obtained by contacting human resources at 526-6495.

All three rooms are located in the Chapel Undercroft and are available weekdays from 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Holiday schedules for 2010 and 2011

As Todd mentioned in his letter from the director, the human resources office has posted all holiday information for 2010 and 2011 on our website.



Check out the holiday schedules for [2010](#) and [2011](#) as well as 2011 attendance calendars and tracking documents used by office assistants to record vacation time.

Please make a note that Christmas Eve will be a holiday this year in place of the New Years Day holiday! Work hours will resume on Monday, January 3 and interim classes will begin on Wednesday, January 5.

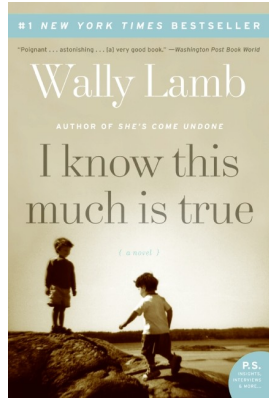
What are you reading?

We at Calvin are a culture of education and self-improvement. What better way to encourage our colleagues in their lifelong learning than to ask that revealing question—"what are you reading?"

Want to submit a book review?
Email humanresources@calvin.edu

This month we are happy to feature a book review from another HR bookie, **Jessica Folkema**. So Jessica, what are you reading?

For I Know This Much is True
Wally Lamb



It was the first line of this novel that hooked me: "On the afternoon of October 12, 1990, my twin brother Thomas entered the Three Rivers Community Public Library, retreated to one of the rear study carrels, and prayed to God that the sacrifice he was about to commit would be deemed acceptable." From that point on, it's

difficult to stop reading.

The size of this book (over 900 pages) and the "Oprah's Book Club" sticker may be valid deterrents for some, but I would like to recommend that you look past those things and pick up this fascinating book. Wally Lamb is a

compelling storyteller. While meandering and overly written at times, the prevailing themes of loss, love and redemption weave the pieces of his lengthy novel together.

After that gripping first sentence and ensuing events, we are introduced to the narrator, Dominick Birdsey, a 40-year-old housepainter and the twin brother of a paranoid schizophrenic. Dominick has spent much of his life angry and afraid, fiercely protective but subconsciously resentful of his troubled brother. The book takes the reader on a painful journey of self-discovery as Dominick grapples with his personal demons as well as a myriad of dark secrets and disasters that have plagued the Birdsey tribe for generations. The story is told through present day occurrences, childhood flashbacks and the pages of Dominick's bombastic Sicilian grandfather's self-penned life story.

Where a lesser author would have created a hopeless mess, Lamb manages to string all of the tangents and tribulations into a powerful voyage through divorce, death, childhood abuse, mental instability, the relationship between twins and some of life's most difficult questions.

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Upcoming Events

Holiday schedule

Calvin will be closed for the holidays on the following days:

Thanksgiving	Thursday, November 25 Friday, November 26
Christmas	Friday, December 24 Monday, December 27 Tuesday, December 28 Wednesday, December 29 Thursday, December 30 Friday, December 31
New Years	*moved to December 24

EAP session: "Ways to enjoy the holidays"

Pine Rest, the facilitator of Calvin's employee assistance program, will be offering a training session this December. Stay tuned to Calvin News for more in-depth information. The session will take place on December 14 in the Commons Annex alumni board room from 11:45-1:15.

Sexual harassment awareness and prevention training

If you have received an email from the human resources office stating that you are required to participate in sexual harassment training, the final available session is Thursday, November 18

*Visit our [website](#) to find out time, location and to register



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