



Staff Appreciation Day

Otherwise known as Mother's Day

By Kelli Wheeler

Staff Appreciation Day is this month. Already had plenty of committee meetings for it, too. Unfortunately, that was for my children's *school* staff appreciation celebration. I haven't gotten the memo yet on the *home* staff appreciation day. I have not seen any signs of my husband and kids holding any sort of meeting or organizing any plans. They had

better get on it: There are a lot of people who need appreciating here.

There's the chef. Three meals a day, all prepared to satisfy the differentiating tastes: The Usual for the son who doesn't like change, The Fruit and Veggie for my naturally healthy daughter, and The No-Leftovers for the husband who should be grateful it's not Breakfast for Dinner more often.

We also have an in-house cleaning lady. The Financial Department has vetoed outsourcing this job so we have one person (the help is very unreliable) in charge of keeping the house straight—similar to trying to build a sand castle with the tide lapping at your ankles. I am always impressed when she can get the floors swept and mopped, carpets vacuumed, furniture dusted, kitchen and bathrooms cleaned just in time for someone to let the dog in with muddy paws, spill Chex Mix on the rug, wipe their filthy hands on the towels after pretending to wash them and leave something they were just wearing in every room. The timing is amazing.

The laundry lady is not very quick, but she is reliable. There will be clean socks and underwear back in the drawers, but not until everyone's down to their last pair. She tends to have the Production Department purchase two weeks' worth of the basics to buy more time between loads. If you can't find what you're looking for, she may tell you to "check the dresser" if you haven't helped put away the clean and folded clothes in the laundry baskets.

We also have a great event planner here. She is awesome at making

sure every family (and extended-family) birthday is celebrated and/or acknowledged, holidays made special, thank-you cards sent, vacations planned and taken and special events attended. There was the one time she forgot to wake the Tooth Fairy, but disaster was averted with the ol' "Did you check inside your pillowcase?" backup.

Which leads us to the Production Department. There should be a lot of thanks going out for all the behind-the-scenes work to make sure everything at home runs smoothly. Groceries that get bought for the chef, cleaning supplies for the cleaning lady, gas and tune-ups for the chauffeur, medical supplies for the physician's assistant, decorations and gifts for the event planner—it's never-ending.

And of course we also have the Child Care Center and its tireless operator. (OK, maybe a lot tired.) Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 364 days a year, it's a wonderful program where lessons are taught, values instilled, manners learned and love, guidance, nurturing and support offered. There's also an enriching environment with playtime, value of work time, field trips, recreation and fun. The kids love it here.

Finally, where would we be without the secretary? Everyone knows it's the secretary who really keeps the place from falling apart. Bills are paid, schedules organized and maintained, calls fielded and returned, events and activities logged and jobs coordinated. She's the first person everyone comes running to when they have a problem

and look to when they need a solution. And somehow she delivers every time.

There are many more jobs staffed here at home, many times thankless and unrecognized (poor mediator and Lost and Found), with new positions being staffed as the wants and needs of the family evolve. Which reminds me, I'm looking to sub out for baseball snack shack volunteer . . .

You know, now that I look a little closer at the calendar, I was mistaken. It's not actually Staff Appreciation Day that was highlighted: It's Mother's Day! I don't know how I could have gotten those confused. And wait, here's a memo:

The Financial Department and groundskeeper would like to be recognized for his contributions as well.

Let me check with the secretary. Oh yes, he's going to have to wait until June.

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