



MARSHALL STAR

Serving the Marshall Space Flight Center Community

Dec. 7, 2006

An interview with Tereasa Washington, director of the Office of Human Capital

'Building credibility with customers to take human capital support and service to the next level'

How is the Office of Human Capital organized and how does it operate at the Marshall Center?

Managing by objectives and Forecasted Measurable Outcomes are the approaches used in the Office of Human Capital to accomplish its mission and to conduct business with clients and customers. Our scorecard with its objectives and FMOs are agreed to by the center and are linked through the center's mission to the agency's mission and objectives. Adopting this method of performance has allowed us to focus our energy and resources on those things the center wants us to do well.

Interestingly enough, with this understanding has come better integration of OHC products and services as well as more innovation around these focus areas as employees can more easily commit to a well-defined path. Our staff meetings typically begin by placing our scorecard with its objectives and FMOs on the screen in front of us to remind us to stay focused on the right things. This has allowed us to more effectively perform the Human Capital role of Talent Management in partnership with every center organization, and in an integrated fashion within OHC.

Talent Management is not a catch phrase. The center's ability to accomplish its mission is determined by whether it can attract and acquire the right talent in the right numbers at the appropriate proficiency levels. We must then continue to train and develop this talent within an organizational structure and environment that will motivate and enable the highest levels of performance. The Office of Human Capital depicts Talent Management as a circle because, while each segment



Doug Stoffer/MSFC

Washington firmly believes that employees from diverse backgrounds and skill areas, other centers and industry have made the Office of Human Capital stronger.

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NASA gives 'go' for Space Shuttle Discovery launch on Dec. 7

From a NASA Headquarters Release

NASA senior managers have unanimously recommended launching the Space Shuttle Discovery on Dec. 7. Commander Mark Polansky and his six crewmates are scheduled to lift off at 8:35 p.m. CST on the STS-116 mission, one of the most challenging flights, to continue building the International Space Station.

During the 12-day mission, including three spacewalks, the crew will work closely with flight controllers at NASA's Johnson Space Center, Houston, to install a new segment of the station's girder-like truss and activate the station's permanent, complex power and cooling systems.

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Shuttle launch posters presented to Marshall managers



Steve Cash, deputy manager of the Shuttle Propulsion Office, displays a poster prepared for Space Shuttle Discovery's STS-116 mission to the International Space Station. Cash presented a copy of the poster to Marshall Center Director David King on Nov. 30. The poster features a photograph of STS-116 astronauts and Discovery on the launch pad at the Kennedy Space Center, Fla., poised for a launch no earlier than Dec. 7.

David Higginbotham/MSFC

Launch

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The launch date was announced after a traditional meeting, known as the Flight Readiness Review. During the two-day meeting, top NASA managers and engineers assessed risks associated with the mission and determined whether the shuttle's equipment, support systems and procedures are ready for flight.

"What struck me during this meeting was how complex this mission is and how it fits into the next series of assembly missions," said Associate Administrator for Space Operations Bill Gerstenmaier, who chaired the Flight Readiness Review. "

Joining Commander Polansky on board Discovery will be pilot Bill Oefelein and mission specialists Bob Curbeam, Joan Higginbotham, Nicholas Patrick, European Space Agency astronaut Christer Fuglesang and Sunita Williams. Williams will remain on board the station for six months. European Space Agency astronaut Thomas Reiter, who has lived on the station since July, will return to Earth on Discovery.



NASA/KSC

Shuttle Launch Director Mike Leinbach, left, greets STS-116 mission specialists Joan Higginbotham and Robert Curbeam and Commander Mark Polansky after their arrival at Kennedy Space Center, Fla., Sunday, Dec. 3. At press time, Discovery was on the launch pad and ready for launch on Dec. 7 at 8:35 p.m. CST.

For more information about the STS-116 mission, including images and interviews with the crew, visit <http://www.nasa.gov/shuttle>.

Marshall's Center Management Council holds first official meeting

The Marshall Center Management Council held its first official meeting Nov. 8. This initial council meeting represents an important milestone in strengthening the way the Marshall Center does business and aligning Marshall to NASA's governance structure.

"The Center Management Council officially replaces the Program Management Council as the forum in which the center's technical performance is reviewed," said Dr. Elizabeth Newton, manager of the Planning and Integration Office in the Office of Strategic Analysis & Communications. Her office supports management and evolution of Marshall's governance process for the Office of the Director.

Last year, NASA Administrator Michael Griffin instituted a new governance structure within NASA that separates the authority over programmatic decisions from the authority over institutional decisions. In this "two chains of command" model, the center director provides technical and institutional resources to satisfy program requirements, while reviewing and reporting regularly on program and project performance with input provided to NASA's governing Program Management Council.

The mechanism for Marshall's review of program and project performance is the Center Management Council, which in many ways is an expansion of Marshall's long-standing Program Management Council. Under the chairmanship of the center director, the Center Management Council evaluates the status of center-managed programs and projects.

"The materials prepared to support the meeting ensure that multiple perspectives on performance are presented so that open discussion and debate are fostered during the meetings," said Newton. "The airing of different opinions and the real-time integration of different needs during the meetings are critical to the center making good decisions about optimizing for overall mission success."

The council also ensures that project and technical issues presented by project managers, the Safety & Mission Assurance Directorate and the Engineering Directorate are understood

and resolved in a way that preserves the independence of technical authority from programmatic authority.

Also, the new Engineering Management Council, chaired by the director of the Engineering Directorate, Michael Rudolphi, underpins the Center Management Council as a committee, articulating an official engineering position on issues. Plans are in the works for a Safety & Mission Assurance Review Board to function as a Center Management Council committee as well. Issues that cannot be resolved at the council can be elevated by the center director to NASA Headquarters.

The Center Management Council is one of Marshall's three governing councils — each one focusing on a different dimension of the center's performance. The others are the Strategic Planning Council, which focuses on stakeholder commitment, customer satisfaction and attaining center strategic goals; and the Integrated Management Systems Board, which focuses on institutional performance such as efficiency, effectiveness, safety and productivity.

Integration among the councils is achieved by the overlapping membership of each body, as well as the staffing of all councils by the Office of Strategic Analysis & Communications. The office performs the secretariat function for all three Marshall governing councils, setting agendas, recording minutes and tracking actions. Rich Gladwin with the Planning and Integration Office serves as the Center Management Council's executive secretary. The Office of Strategic Analysis & Communications also provides the analysis necessary to foster informed debate and discussions during council meetings.

Abbreviated minutes of the Center Management Council are available on Inside Marshall at <http://inside.msfc.nasa.gov/cscmn.html> to help Marshall employees stay informed of the center's progress and critical issues.

"With the Internet, it's easy to stay current with what's going on at the center and at the agency," said Newton. "As an employee of NASA and a contributor in the mission process, it is important to seek out information about the activities that affect the agency's Vision for Space Exploration."

For more information about the agency's governance, employees can read NASA's Strategic Management and Governance Handbook (NPD 1000.0), available in the Marshall Integrated Document Library at <http://midl.msfc.nasa.gov/>. Also available in the document library are the governing council charters. Marshall's Implementation Plan for Technical Excellence is available at <http://ed.msfc.nasa.gov/edinside/edweekly.html>.

Rita Roberts, an ASRI employee who supports the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications, contributed to this article.

Volunteers needed for 14th annual Great Moonbuggy Race on April 13-14

Volunteers for the 14th annual Great Moonbuggy Race are needed for Friday, April 13, and Saturday, April 14, 2007. The race will be at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville.

Positions for the race include obstacle judging, score keeping, reporting, pre-race qualifying and start/finish line activities. A T-shirt and lunch will be provided for each volunteer.

For more information on volunteering,

contact Kristy Hill at kristy.hill@nasa.gov. For more information on the Great Moonbuggy Race, including the rules, the course and photos from previous competitions, visit <http://moonbuggy.msfc.nasa.gov>.

Goal for construction is minimal traffic impact

New bridge replacing Patton-Martin overpass

By Dan O'Boyle

For the Redstone Rocket

Known as "Bridge 4" to the U.S. Army Garrison's Directorate for Public Works, the Patton Road overpass construction project on Redstone Arsenal is progressing toward its May completion.

"Because of the catastrophic damage to the overpass in the June 7 incident, we in the Directorate for Public Works decided to go ahead and bring the bridge up to modern design standards," said Tom Richardson, a civil engineer in the directorate. "Upon project completion, the bridge will have a clearance height of 16 feet, as well as being 40 feet wide and with 6-foot safety shoulders."

The new bridge will feature 120-foot-long, 54-inch-high pre-stressed concrete girders.

In line with the construction progress, arsenal motorists using

Martin Road, both eastbound and westbound, can expect short-term, intermittent traffic stops while the existing span's demolition — both north and south ends — is completed.

"There will be no traffic stops during peak traffic commute times," said Keith Cook, also with the public works unit. "Our goal is to have a minimal impact on traffic. In fact, we are taking advantage of weekends, non-peak hours and holidays to get a lot of work done when the traffic load is light."

Motorists can expect a Martin Road detour around the overpass Saturday, Dec. 9, as well as one-lane closures on Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 11-12, for utility and abutment excavation work on the road's shoulders. On Wednesday, Dec. 13, all four Martin Road lanes will be open, with permanent traffic control — signs and barricades — in place.

Classified Ads

To submit a classified ad to the Marshall Star, go to Inside Marshall, to "Employee Resources," and click on "Employee Ads — Submit Ad." Ads are limited to 15 words, including contact numbers. No sales pitches. Deadline for the next issue is 4:30 p.m. Thursday.

Miscellaneous

China cabinet, \$275; long sofa, \$195; large copper collection, \$395; men's leather coat, \$30. 852-6952

New 7.5' artificial Christmas tree, dark green, \$50. 881-7000

2002 Snapper hydro zero turn commercial lawnmower, 18HP, complete w/sulky. 326-0918

Two side-by-side eye level crypts, masonic bldg., Valhalla Memory Gardens, all fees included, \$5,200. 860-558-3063

Gate-leg table, seats 8 or more, Mahogany, \$350. 828-4251

Go kart, 5HP, single seater, \$250. 656-4211

Four-wheeler tires, new ITP Mud Lites, wheels, lug nuts, center pieces, fits Honda 450/up, price negotiable. 256-259-1523

Tenth anniversary Tickle Me Elmo, new in container, not opened, \$120. 464-9055

Kenmore refrigerator, 22 cu. ft., side-by-side, almond, ice-maker/water in door, \$100. 652-0227

Sony PS2 with many games and accessories; Gameboy Advance, \$220. 864-2629

Cherryhill by Broyhill entertainment center; armoire for 36" TV plus 2 side units, \$1,200. 256-318-5372

2001 Salem travel trailer, 24', \$9,200. 256-851-0938

Santa Fe peg perego train and track, \$80; lots of kids toys. 682-6325

Fisher Price cradle swing, \$50; Take-Along swing, \$35; bouncer, \$25; Eddie Bauer bassinet, \$80. 256-337-1471
1998 Mustang GT, 16x7 rims, 5-4.5" lug pattern, all four \$50. 655-9464

Jim Beam Collector's Decanter Figural bottles, miscellaneous decanters, empty, 1960/1970s. 655-1944

Aquarium, 45 gallon, furnished w/stand; iron weights, bars, bench, 80 lb. bag; \$150 each. 652-5177

Kenmore heavy-duty super capacity washer and dryer, \$250. 881-5088

Air hockey table, 4'x7', w/four pucks, \$150. 603-3414

Hitachi HDTV, 51", new-in-box, Model 51F59A, built-in HDTV tuner, \$899. 655-1986

Peters-Revington oak coffee table, oval shape, approx. 45"x27", \$60. 895-9589

Table w/six chairs, \$150; AB roller Plus, \$25; Little Tykes basketball goal, \$30. 682-7165

Oak dresser w/mirror and chest of drawers, \$450. 461-7786

Sleeper sofa, \$35; large dresser/mirror, \$60; leaf mulcher, \$20; man's golf clubs, \$25. 230-8269

Baldwin Acrosonic piano, \$500; 12-volume hardback classical music, \$200. 256-417-2654

Paint, Sherwin-Williams Classic 99 Satin, indoor, color latte, 3 gallons, \$75. 882-3983

Tony Little Gazelle Edge, \$50; Ab Rock-It, \$15; both for \$60. 256-738-3418

Oak computer desk, \$100. 508-6840

Samsung 47" HD-Ready rear-projection TV w/remote, \$600. 714-2265

2003 Epiphone Casino guitar with case, sunburst finish, \$500 firm. 684-0910

Solid oak entertainment center with glass cabinets, \$250. 684-6271

Air Hockey table, 4'x6', \$60. 722-9274

Australian Shepherd puppies, purebred, wormed, 1st shots, vet checked, seven weeks old, \$100 each. 256-561-2287

Vehicles

1995 4Runner, black, leather, sunroof, 4WD, purchased

new by owner, \$4,000. 256-506-2334/Billy

1995 Cadillac Seville SLS, Northstar, leather, heated seats, new tires, \$5,500. 468-3803

2001 Lexus LS430, 78K miles, \$27,500. 348-1809

Triumph Spitfire, Red, 67.2K miles, overdrive, luggage rack, wire wheels, new brakes, tires, \$2,700. 256-881-4748

Ford F150 Super-Crew XLT, 4.8L, 4 door, charcoal gray, PW/PL, PSR, bedliner, \$15,990. 882-0431

2001 Honda Odyssey EX, quad seating, power doors, \$9,950. 256-830-0851

2004 Honda Civic EX, 4 door. 233-6197

Suzuki Eiger, LT-A400/F ATV w/trailer, \$3,500. 882-0271

Yamaha XT225, \$1,500; Yamaha PW80, \$450. 233-5620

Go-Cart, Carter Brothers, 2 seater, new big tires, roll cage, lights, 6HP, \$800. 256-353-6635

1999 Lexus RX300, 88K miles, AWD, towing, premium package, \$11,320. 714-4651

1997 Infiniti QX4, 123K miles, loaded, \$6,400. 479-4288/Pat

1995 Honda Odyssey EX, 5-door/7 passenger, towing, rear a/c, 177K miles, \$4,900. 256-337-0484

Wanted

Weight set w/bench. 658-8645

Horse Hay, need 3 Large, 6' Rolls preferred, will pay top dollar, can pickup. 777-6316

Free

Puppies, mixed breed, cute and playful, medium sized. 508-7527

Found

Women's gold watch, Bldg. 4600 east parking lot, on or about Nov. 24. Call 544-4963 to identify/claim

Manual found for the person who bought Beseler 23CII enlarger from Michael Hall. Call 714-7045

Lost

RAZR cell phone, \$100 reward if returned "working/intact," no questions asked. 544-7219

Washington

Continued from page 1

is performed simultaneously, it is also continual — beginning, ending and beginning again with Planning and Positioning for Future Success. The other sections of the circle are acquiring talent; developing talent; achieving high performance; and talent retention. For each section, there is usually a predominant office, though every OHC office has some role in each area.

For example, the Workforce Strategy and Planning Office is very prominent in planning and positioning for future success. Competency management and workforce planning, among other things, are both the responsibility of this office. These are accomplished through very close cooperation with the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, along with all other center organizations. Other human capital strategies, if they are to be meaningful and effective, must begin with this office. For example, recruitment, for which both Employee Services and Academic Affairs have responsibility, is a primary means of acquiring talent. The strategies around the numbers of persons we recruit; the skills and competencies, including those of the Cooperative Education Program; and the schools with which we partner to recruit and to develop curricula must begin with gap analyses and continue with retirement profiles and projections. A clear understanding of our current and future gaps based on center strategies also help us focus our education programs, which are aimed at building a future workforce of engineers, scientists and business professionals to successfully accomplish current and future missions.

Developing talent begins with a new employee's orientation

to NASA — provided by the Training & Incentives Office — and continues until the employee retires or leaves. Appropriate development of the center's talent pool requires a working partnership with the center to strategically plan and use training and development resources. To ensure that employees are receiving the appropriate training to perform the mission, this office works with center experts to, among other things, research and implement special request training design, and deliver learning products and services, including curriculum development.

Appropriately developing the center's talent through training provides the foundation for achieving high performance. Most of the functions of the Organization & Leadership Development Office fall within this area. One of the ways the center receives a high return on our efforts to achieve high performance from individuals and organizations is through the development of strong leaders. This derives from the "multiplier effect" achieved from the many employees whose attitudes and performance leaders influence. We partner with leaders at all levels of the center to optimize individual, team and organizational performance with a strong emphasis on leadership development. OHC has several initiatives underway to enhance the effectiveness of leaders. One is the Leadership Development Series, a "Leadership 101" course whose purpose is to build a foundation for a culture of trust, learning, empowerment and continual improvement.

Retaining talent is heavily influenced by how well we do all of the other things I've mentioned. First of all, retaining talent is closely connected to acquiring talent, because the moment we bring an employee into the workplace, the retention process

begins. The first day's experience in an organization is crucial. Beyond this, Employee Services supports supervisors to accomplish effective performance management so the employee will be challenged, equitably recognized for his or her accomplishments, and supervised by leaders who appropriately and promptly deal with performance issues that can cause morale to take a nose dive. Employees tell us the things that attract them to the center in the first place also inspire them to stay. For example, the expectation for challenging work, leadership with integrity, competent and committed coworkers, an environment of equity, and continual learning that encourages innovation.



Doug Stoffer/MSFC

Washington believes she is accountable to create a vision that will inspire and motivate her employees, and to enable an environment where they can achieve.

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A critical part of managing the talent at the center is bringing people on board, getting them in the right jobs, supporting them and getting them properly trained. With all that we do, a significant portion of that is the 10,000-12,000 actions that take place through the Employee Services Operations Office. Another 12,000-14,000 actions take place in training. Some of them are very simple. Some require lots of discussion in working with managers and employees.

What role does the Office of Human Capital have in supporting the Vision for Space Exploration?

We had a very tangible role in achieving the Vision for Space Exploration as soon as Marshall Center Director David King announced a major organizational realignment in 2005. We were already involved in a critical partnership with senior leaders to establish an office which would be the focal point for incoming Constellation Program work. Prior to official implementation of the full center realignment, the Exploration Launch Projects Office was informally and expeditiously established by OHC to accommodate new work. During the realignment, Human Capital facilitated the deployment within the center of employees with critical skills and competencies needed for Constellation by using both the federal and NASA Flexibility Acts. Effectively using these flexibilities also allowed us to recruit and retain employees with unique skills and experience to fill key positions quickly and close competency gaps.

From a broader and more long-term perspective, OHC recognizes that NASA will achieve the Vision for Space Exploration only if we have highly skilled and dedicated people. We are proud to say that at Marshall, this defines the vast majority of our workforce. So, our role is to maintain and implement a framework of human capital strategies, policies and practices for the entire center that will help managers, supervisors and employees continue to increase their effectiveness so that we can achieve the Vision. This includes development of effective leaders across the center and promotion of a diverse workforce.

Effective leaders will inspire and motivate employees to excel and to seek to partner with other organizations in ways that will help them to excel as well. Human Capital must provide the opportunities to recognize these potential leaders and to provide the tools, information, concepts and skills to support them in reaching their full potential. Additionally, the complexity of the Vision's challenges requires more than ever the diverse experiences, perspectives, talent and ideas that will promote innovative thinking and approaches. So, the active appreciation and respect for the diverseness of our workforce — experience, professions, ethnicity, race, gender and age — will allow us to more effectively harness the energy and commitment of every person occupying a center slot. Not only do merit principles require this in our selections, promotions and awards, but it seems to me that since we don't expect the agency to grow, there's no real choice here.

What is the greatest strength of the Office of Human Capital and how do the offices complement one another in delivering services?

The strength we bring to the center is that we always remember the "H" in human capital and encourage others to do the same. I believe this is enabled and enhanced because our office has the broad diversity that I spoke of earlier — ethnicity, gender, race, professions and experience.

Human Capital is a highly regulated area. We have human resource professionals with broad, deep training and experience who can navigate and interpret the regulations and who understand how we can appropriately innovate. We also have relatively new professionals as well as engineers, scientists and persons with many other professional backgrounds performing human capital functions. These individuals tend to provide both a language bridge to our customers and increased credibility that has contributed significantly to our ability to engage and partner effectively with them.

I firmly believe that employees from diverse backgrounds and skill areas, other centers and industry have made us stronger. They provide perspectives that make us think a bit more about how what we do and say impacts people. They question us hard and they challenge our thinking and approaches to help us find better solutions. We, therefore, complement each other as individuals and as offices within OHC.

The Office of Human Capital's vision states: "We are the benchmark in delivering innovative human capital solutions to support the objectives of our clients and partners." Can you share some of the organization's innovations?

The Integrated Product Teams, Space Launch and Transportation Systems course, Integrated Stakeholder Coalition for Workforce Development, and the Marshall Staffing Plan Management System are just a few of our organization's innovations.

One of OHC's most important innovations is the Integrated Product Team approach to delivering our products and services. The concept continues to evolve, but, basically, the IPTs are multi-functional teams responding to the business needs of their customers. Knowing the customers and understanding their needs is the first and foremost objective for each IPT. The key to the IPTs is to work with their customers and provide consistent customer focus around a comprehensive suite of products and services.

The IPTs are divided into three groups: the Engineering organizations, program and projects, and institutional organizations. The groups come together on a weekly basis for a Client Integration Meeting to exchange ideas, share best practices, recognize patterns and trends, address systemic issues and problems and formulate cross-cutting solutions.

A Team Integration Meeting is held monthly for all designated

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IPT members and is also open to all OHC employees. Each of these monthly sessions includes a client learning topic whereby center clients come in and spend time discussing with the group their priorities and how they view OHC's role in accomplishing those priorities. These face-to-face interactions with clients help to instill a sense of connection with organizations, particularly the technical organizations. There is also an OHC learning topic to aid the IPT's understanding of OHC. Implementation of the IPT approach represents transition from a functional stovepipe focus to a customer products and services focus.

The Space Launch and Transportation Systems course, or SLaTS, was developed and taught by three OHC contractor engineers who are former NASA managers. Just bringing them into OHC several years ago was an innovation. They provide critical learning and perspective for us. The course is 40 hours and provides an integrated view of space launch and transportation system design and operations. The topics include customer needs, objectives and requirements; launch and transportation system design, development, test and manufacturing; and creating operations concepts and infrastructure capabilities. NASA Administrator Michael Griffin read the technical publication that is the basis for SLaTS and stated in an e-mail to Constellation managers, "there is some really good stuff in this. I would enjoy being in a class on this topic — whether I took it or taught, it would make no difference, I'd still learn a lot!"

Several years ago, the Office of Human Capital recognized that our ability to meet our workforce needs is impacted by community decisions and the community environment. From this, we initiated the Integrated Stakeholders Coalition for Workforce Development. The coalition is made up of representatives from six stakeholder groups — industry, education, government, community organizations, media, and health and social services. The coalition is focused on the skills and capabilities that will be needed by a next generation workforce. A systems map was generated to align resources to achieve the most effective results. This broad-based coalition has become the foundation for the community effort to integrate and strategically address the Base Realignment and Closure Commission challenges along with general workforce issues. We recently transitioned leadership from Marshall to the Huntsville Chamber of Commerce because the model is being implemented in the Huntsville area and shared throughout the state of Alabama through the Alabama Mathematics, Science and Technology Education Coalition, and nationwide through benchmarking and through NASA's field centers.

You manage a large organization that touches the entire Marshall workforce. Can you explain your philosophy and leadership style and how this helps your organization be effective and successful?

I believe that the vast majority of people come to work every day

with the desire to be their best and to do their best. I also believe that I cannot, as a leader, empower them to do so. I am accountable, however, to create a vision that will inspire and motivate them, and then to lead by example in a way that will enable an environment where they can achieve. They will then empower themselves to do excellent work, to take risks, to innovate. They will do this if they believe that I am doing what I can to treat each of them fairly as an individual and equitably as it relates to other employees.

I want people to innovate and learn. I try to create an environment where employees will come up with their own ideas and will also be open to trying someone else's ideas. In my opinion, this requires me as a leader to think carefully about and communicate in words and actions my approach to failure as well as to success, because if your employees are truly innovating, there will be opportunities for a lot of failures. I don't want people to fail, and, as a leader and supervisor, it is my responsibility to support them in ways that will enable their success. Nonetheless, humans will make mistakes, and at some point we all fail.

I adopted a philosophy closely connected to the medical field, which is to forgive and remember. I believe that I have to forgive so that people are willing to talk about and admit mistakes. And, I have to remember so that the same mistakes don't keep occurring. Remembering also helps me to see when the same employees are making the same mistakes again and again, which is a sign that they may need more training, development and mentoring. Or they might be dealing with other issues unrelated to work, or are better suited to a different job. I see it as my responsibility to notice and address these situations. However, if I remember with ridicule, I create a climate of fear where employees will never work to fix problems or help others learn from their experiences. Forgiving and remembering promotes learning and innovation and, therefore, allows us to serve our customers successfully. At the end of the day, that's what it's all about.

We are a service organization. I want my people to understand that we have customers. We must partner with our customers to derive better solutions. But in our business, I want my employees to understand that we exist because we have customers. To keep very satisfied customers, you must relate to them, and they must relate to you. Therefore, it is imperative that we know our customers' business. If we don't know our customers' business, we can't talk to them intelligently, making us unable to craft workable solutions. If we know and understand their business needs, we can always find a right answer. This means talking with them, finding out what's important to them and then meeting their needs as they define them extremely well. This is the way we begin to earn enough credibility with the customer to do the things that will allow us to take their human capital support and service to the next level.

Jessica Wallace, an ASRI employee and Marshall Star editor in the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications, contributed to this article.

Marshall Center celebrates the spirit of giving



Doug Stoffer/MSFC

Brittany Metcalfe, left, a management support assistant in Marshall's Business Planning & Integration Office, and Chrishana Hunt-Granger, the community outreach assistant in the External Relations Office, display the generous contributions of canned and non-perishable food items donated by Marshall employees during the Holiday Reception Nov. 30. The reception, in the Marshall Activities Building 4316, featured music, food and a visit from Santa Claus. Food items collected at the event were donated to the North Alabama Food Bank in Huntsville.



David Higginbotham/MSFC

Steve Cook, manager of the Exploration Launch Projects Office at the Marshall Center, wished employees and their families a happy and safe holiday season as he officially lit the Marshall Center holiday tree at Building 4200 Nov. 30. The tree-lighting ceremony has been a Marshall tradition for more than 45 years.

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