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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION

University of Arkansas System



United States Department of Agriculture, University of Arkansas, and County Governments Cooperating

May is AEHC Month in Arkansas

Extension Homemakers in **Cleveland County** will celebrate the contributions of their organization to the community during May as **Extension Homemakers Month in Arkansas**. As a part of the observance, **Judge Gary Spears** has officially proclaimed May as Extension Homemakers Month in **Cleveland County**. **The proclamation was signed by Judge Spears on May 5, 2020. The theme for this year's promotion is "Enriching Home and Community."**

The Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council is an organization associated with the Cooperative Extension Service, part of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. **Cleveland County's** EH clubs are among the 321 clubs throughout the state, with more than 3,700 members. Their mission is to empower individuals and families to improve their lives through continuing education, leadership development, and community service.

Arkansas Extension Homemakers began in 1912 as Home Demonstration Clubs. The clubs, organized by the Cooperative Extension Service, were essential for disseminating critical information for managing family resources and food safety at a time when many rural households were isolated by distance, and without modern tools such as electricity, phone service or access to libraries or other sources of life-saving knowledge.

During the 1918 flu epidemic, EH clubs ran soup kitchens in their communities. They canned vegetables and donated surplus to families during the Great Depression and planted victory gardens to increase food supply during World War II. Before the federal school lunch program began, EH clubs provided lunches for children in their rural communities.

"The clubs have a very long history of service," AEHC president Karen Bell-Fox. "Times have changed, but EHC is still focused on providing education, leadership development, and service to Arkansas communities. We know we have tremendous impact in our communities, in Arkansas, and in our world, and that work will continue."

In recent weeks, EH clubs across the state have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by sewing and donating more than 30,000 masks to medical facilities, nursing homes, first-responders and other groups needing masks in their respective communities. **Cleveland County Extension Homemakers have made and distributed more than 1500 face masks.** EH Clubs also collectively adopted food insecurity as their statewide service project and have started an online campaign to raise enough money to provide one million meals to food-insecure Arkansas families. (see *Million Meals, page 4*)

Handwashing Important to Avoid COVID-19 Virus -But Don't Forget That Smartphone

Research has shown that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, transfers from infected people onto surfaces by touching, coughing or sneezing, said Kristen Gibson, associate professor of food safety and microbiology for the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, the research arm of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

From those surfaces, the virus can transfer to any human hands that touch them. Cell phones have surfaces, Gibson said, and she's especially mindful of **touchscreen smartphones**.

"Touchscreens are high-touch surfaces, just like doorknobs and elevator buttons," she said.

The greatest risk, Gibson said, is touchscreens that are tapped and prodded by multiple users, like self-checkout screens at many stores, or the ones you sign with your fingertip after swiping a credit card at the coffee shop drive-thru.

But **the phone in your pocket is also at risk** of exposure, Gibson said. A person's hands touch those public surfaces, then transfer whatever they pick up to their phone.

Gibson **recommends not using a cell phone while out running errands** — especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Leave it in a pocket or purse until returning home and washing hands. But if that's not possible, she advises cleaning the phone as soon as you return home.

Research conducted by a University of Arkansas undergraduate honors student under Gibson's advisement in Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences showed that a screen cleaning wipe with isopropyl alcohol and a dry microfiber cloth were equally effective at removing bacteria from smartphone surfaces.



Concerning those multiuser touchscreens, Gibson said she uses her **knuckles instead of her fingertips to tap** those. She said **stylus pens** that have rubber tips for use on smartphones and tablets may also be a good idea to avoid touching fingers to public screens.

Gibson said alcohol-based hand sanitizers are a good intermediary step to clean hands while out and about. But she said **wash your hands when you return home**.

World Health Organization research has shown that sanitizer formulations vary among products. "Tests show they all have some ability to inactivate viruses," Gibson said, "but some are more effective than others. And things like how long we rub our hands make a difference."

"There's a lot of variability in the products, in terms of alcohol content and use of other ingredients," Gibson said. "We can't be certain they remove every trace of virus particles." **"Washing your hands vigorously with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the only completely reliable method to be sure your hands are sanitized,"** she said. Gibson said much research remains to be done to measure the effectiveness of various cleaning products and methods.

Smartphone Cleaning Tips

- Use damp screen-cleaning cloth or dry microfiber cloth
- Don't forget back and sides of phone
- If phone is in a case, remove it and clean the case with warm soapy water or a disinfecting wipe
- Spray disinfectants should only be used if they are recommended for electronic devices
- Wash hands after you clean the phone

May EHC Lesson: “Simplifying”

What is “simplifying”? It is eliminating stuff you don't use. Learn what to keep (those items that bring you joy and value) and what to do with stuff you get rid of. **Remember that organizing isn't simplifying. Organized clutter is still clutter.**

Why would anyone want to simplify? Simplifying your life by reducing clutter may reduce stress, increase happiness, and save money. Research indicates that home environment influences psychological processes, mental health, stress, and behavior. We might say that simplifying or decluttering can make you happier, healthier, and smarter. For older adults who may be planning to move to a smaller home, simplifying is a great way to prepare for downsizing.

FlyLady's 11 Commandments (Marla Cilley is the FlyLady. FLY=Finally Loving Yourself)

1. Keep your sink clean and shiny.
2. Get dressed every morning, even if you don't feel like it. Don't forget your lace-up shoes.
3. Do your morning and before-bedtime routine everyday.
4. Don't allow yourself to be sidetracked by the computer.
5. Pick up after yourself. If you get it out, put it away.
6. Don't try to do two projects at once. ONE JOB AT A TIME.
7. Don't pull out more than you can put back in one hour.
8. Do something for yourself everyday, maybe every morning and night.
9. Work as fast as you can to get the job done. This will give you more time to play later.
10. Smile even when you don't feel like it. It is contagious. Make your mind up to be happy, and you will be.
11. Don't forget to laugh everyday. Pamper yourself; you deserve it!

Website: <http://www.flylady.net/>

Marie Kondo -Choose Joy

Marie Kondo is a popular media personality known for her expertise in tidying or organizing. She labeled her method for decluttering the **KonMari Method**. The KonMari Method™ encourages tidying by category – not by location – beginning with clothes, then moving on to books, papers, miscellaneous items (she calls these komono), and, finally, sentimental items. **Keep only those things that speak to the heart, and discard items that no longer spark joy.** Marie recommends thanking items for their service before letting them go. There's an opportunity to learn from all the things in your life, including the ones that you discard. If you let go of a belonging you never used, it taught that you have no purpose for something like this in your life. Thinking deeply about each item you discard will affect how you live and acquire new things moving forward.

Rule 1. Commit yourself to tidying up.

Rule 2. Imagine your ideal lifestyle.

Rule 3. Finish discarding first.

Rule 4. Tidy by category, not by location.

Rule 5. Follow the right order.

Rule 6. Ask yourself if it sparks joy.

Website: <https://konmari.com/>

For more information on “Simplifying” you can contact the Extension office at 325-6321

EHC Reminders



- **The Million Meals Donation Drive** remains a major goal for 2021. Your donation will go to the food bank of your choice. To make a donation, go to:
https://uaex.co1.qualtrics.com/ife/form/SV_exkDy8TcRRq8Lbv
- The AEHC State Conference scheduled for June 2-4 is being rescheduled for a later date.
- All Extension meetings and programs through June are cancelled until further notice.



County EHC Members Have Produced over 1500 Face Masks



As supplies of commercially produced medical face masks run low, many essential workers need cloth face masks. EHC members across the state have sewn and donated more than 30,000 face masks for local healthcare and other essential workers. **Cleveland County EHC members have made and distributed more than 1500 face masks to date.**

For face mask patterns and recommendations from the Arkansas Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control, go to the AEHC web page:

<https://www.uaex.edu/life-skills-wellness/extension-homemakers/default.aspx>

The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. These help to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Face masks keep you from touching your nose and mouth and getting infected from germs on your hands (don't touch your eyes either), protect your nose and mouth from large respiratory droplets from other people's coughs or sneezes, and keep you from coughing or sneezing droplets onto your hands and surfaces if you are sick.