Happy New Year!

2017 has begun and that means lots of educational activities are being scheduled. In the next few weeks, you will receive a letter asking if you would still like to receive information from the Howard County Extension Service. We are required each year to update our information. Please complete the form and return to our office. If we do not receive your form, your name and address will be dropped from our mailing list. If you prefer to receive information via e-mail, let us know. We are “experimenting” with the 4-H Newsletter to see if this is a viable option.

A wonderful time was enjoyed by all at the Christmas Council Meeting in December. The food was delicious; the NHS Jazz Band played festive songs and did a great job; and we had a lot of fun with the ugly sweater contest. Check out the photos below!

There are lots of things happening in the next few weeks. Be sure to check out all the possibilities and register for any upcoming classes you might be interested in! The best way to register is to call our office at 870-845-7517.

Birding Basics

Do you find yourself looking out the window and watching nature - nature in the form of birds? Do you ever wish you knew what the names of the birds were? Do you want to learn how to attract songbirds to your yard? If so, this month’s leader training lesson, “Birding Basics” will teach you everything you need to know.

The training is scheduled for Tuesday, January 24 at 10:00 a.m. at the Howard County Educational Center in Nashville. We are working on having a guest speaker for this program. Participants will receive a basic bird book on Arkansas birds.

All EHC members are encouraged to attend. Anyone is welcome to attend.
America Saves

Are you planning a vacation this year? Would you like to “pad” your retirement account? Do you plan to make a significant purchase in 2017? If so, Extension can help you save the money you need through the program, “America Saves”.

America Saves is a campaign designed to encourage people to save, reduce debt and build financial stability. This year, Howard County Extension Service is promoting the program and hoping to register as many people as possible for the event. The America Saves Campaign begins in January and runs through America Saves Week, February 27-March 4, 2017.

By joining the America Saves Campaign, you will receive e-mail messages, videos, text messages, all designed to help you save money. Anyone with a Smart Phone or Internet connection is welcome to participate.

I will be sharing this information at club meetings in January and registering interested participants. If you are interested in registering for the campaign, you can register online at www.uaex.edu/money to learn more about saving strategies and to take the 2017 America Saves pledge.

Research shows that people who make a written commitment of a goal are more likely to keep that goal. Why not join the campaign today? It costs nothing to join and it may help you save for financial goals in 2017!

4-H Book Sale

Now is the time to clean out your bookshelves and get rid of any books you no longer need or want and replace them with “new reads”. The Howard County 4-H STEM/Robotics Club is sponsoring a book sale to help them raise funds to participate in state and national activities and competitions.

The sale will be held January 20 and 21, 2017 at the EH Center in Nashville. Sales will be by donation and all proceeds will benefit the 4-H STEM/Robotic Club.

The club will accept donations of “old” or no longer wanted books on Tuesday through Thursday. They will take any genre including popular novels, history, children’s books, mysteries, romance novels, etc. They are also working with the Howard County Library to collect books. Donated books may be dropped off at the library or Extension office.

Nothing is better than curling up on a cold day with a hot cup of tea or coffee, a warm blanket and a good book! Please donate your old books and plan on stopping by and supporting the book sale.

Uncommon Threads Donate to UAMS

Uncommon Threads EHC answered the call before the holidays when the state office sent out a request for lap throws/blankets for UAMS patients. The goal was to donate a minimum of 300 blankets. Howard County EHC, with the help of Uncommon Threads, donated a dozen blankets. Across the state, enough blankets and then some more, were presented to UAMS the week before Christmas!
January EHC Board Meeting

The Howard County EHC monthly board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 24 at 1:00 p.m. at the EH Center. Several items of interest are on the agenda. They include:
- Follow up to December fund-raising events
- Spring AEHC meeting
- State EHC meeting
- 4-H Competitive Activities
- Plus much more!

All executive board members, educational chairmen, and club presidents are encouraged to attend. Any member may attend, but only voting members will be allowed to vote. If you can’t attend the meeting, please make sure you have a representative present in your place.

Mark your calendar and plan to attend and take part in conducting the business of your organization.

Extension Get Fit Through Tai Chi for Arthritis

Back by popular demand, Howard County Extension will be offering Tai Chi for Arthritis program on Monday and Wednesday mornings starting January 23. The class will be held at the Howard County Extension Homemaker Educational Center at 10:00 a.m. each day and will last for 12 weeks. A registration fee of $12 will be charged to cover program supplies.

Tai Chi for Arthritis Program is a fun exercise program designed to help people of all ages and a wide range of physical abilities with “joint friendly” exercise alternatives. Participants will learn the 12 basic movements of Tai Chi, plus warm-up, cool-down and breathing exercises. Tai Chi is for everyone and requires no special equipment. All you need is comfortable clothes and a good pair of lace-up shoes. Walking shoes or tennis shoes are perfect!

Tai Chi is easy to do. There is no strain on the body and we will not be doing any “weird” exercises. It is a slow paced exercise that helps reduce stress, improve joint flexibility, balance, coordination, breathing, concentration and memory.

Each class will last about 45 to 60 minutes. The exercises you will learn can be done every day, unlike strength training exercises which should be done only one to two days a week. This is actually an exercise you will enjoy doing because relaxation is a key component! Anyone can participate.

If you are interested in this class, please register by January 17 by calling the office at 870-845-7517. I know several people are taking exercise classes offered through other organizations and this time may not work for them. If you are interested, but have a conflict with the time schedule, let me know. I will schedule for later in the day to reach as many people as possible.

Call the office to register or if you have any questions about Tai Chi.

AEHC Annual Meeting

Plans are well underway for the Annual AEHC State Conference June 6-8, 2017 at the Hot Springs Convention Center. Mark your calendars now with this date! Around mid-March, information about this year’s State Meeting will be shared. Deadline for registering for State Meeting will be May 1. If you are interested in going, please call the office now for hotel reservations.
4-H BBQ Bowl Rib Sale

The annual 4-H BBQ Bowl Rib Sale will be held on Saturday, February 4! Plans are being made to have both Cornish hens and slabs of ribs for sale once again. This is a major fund raiser for Howard County 4-H and all proceeds will be used to help youth attend summer educational programs at the local, district, state and national levels.

If you are interested in ordering ribs or Cornish hens, please call the office and let us know. They will take pre-orders through Wednesday, February 1. A limited number of ribs will be available the day of the sale. The sale will start at 10:30 a.m. on February 4 and go until 2:00 p.m. It will take place on the lot beside the radio station in Nashville. Call the office at 870-845-7517 for more information or to place your order!

If you are interested in ordering an EHC nametag and/or shirt, the order is due by January 27. Nametags are $5.75 and t-shirts are $8.00 and up, depending upon the type of shirt you order.

Jean A. Ince
County Extension Agent - Staff Chair