

Healthy Living,

Happy Homes

in Lonoke County

Spring 2013

University of Arkansas
Research and Extension

Lonoke County
Cooperative Extension
Service

P.O. Box 357
Lonoke, AR 72086

E: dbowen@uaex.edu
Phone: 501-676-3124
Fax: 501-676-7847



Dianna Bowen
County Extension Agent:
Family & Consumer
Sciences

Facebook: UAEX-Lonoke
County FCS
Twitter: Dianna
Bowen@UAEXlonoke

www.uaex.edu

Marriage, Parenting, &
Family Life
Food & Nutrition
Financial Management
Health & Aging



Mark Your Calendars

Food Preservation Workshops – good for beginners and experienced food preservers. The fee for each workshop will be \$10.00 to cover the cost of supplies. Class will meet at the Extension Office and size is limited so call the office, 501-676-3124, to register.

- Freezing – April 23, 1:00-3:00 pm
- Water-bath canning – May 2, 1:00-4:00 pm
- Pressure canning – May 14, 1:00-4:00 pm

Note: We will also be testing pressure canners and gauges on April 17 & 19. Call the office to set up a time to bring yours in to be tested for accuracy.

Summer Day Camps for Kids – each camp will be 2 days from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm and there will be a \$20.00 registration fee for each camp to cover supplies. More information will come out in late March – early April, watch for fliers and registration information.

- Beginning sewing – June 25-26
- Advanced sewing – June 27-28
- In the Kitchen – July 10-11

Mailing List Update

As required by postal regulations, the Lonoke County Extension Service must regularly update its mailing list each year in order to send informative newsletters and other pertinent material. We have enclosed a “request to be on mailing list” card which contains numerous subject matter areas as well as civil rights information. Persons wanting to receive periodic mailings should check all appropriate subject matter areas; complete sex and gender sections; provide correct name and address; affix postage and mail the card or visit the Lonoke County Extension Office on Hwy 70E, 501-676-3124 to provide us with their information. You may also get this newsletter electronically by emailing me your request at dbowen@uaex.edu

FINANCIAL

TAX PREPARATION – MORE MONEY IN YOUR POCKET

Tax time is here. Consumers are faced with many choices for tax preparation. You can keep more money in your pocket if you make careful decisions about tax preparation. Here are some tips to help you make wise, money-saving choices. “Carefully consider your tax preparation options,” said Laura Connerly, assistant professor for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, “Spending less on tax preparation means you keep more of your refund.”

Compare rates and fees. Different tax preparation services charge different amounts. Check around several places before you make a selection. You can also save money by avoiding additional fees such as the refund anticipation loan. It’s tempting to have the money in hand as soon as possible, but the fees charged for refund-anticipation loans often range from 50 to 500 percent of the amount of your loan. Sometimes there are additional application fees. Avoid using a refund-anticipation loan if possible. If you decide you must have the loan, shop around to find the lowest fees.

File electronically. You can have your tax refund in as little as 10 days. Some tax preparers charge fees to submit your tax forms electronically but it’s usually much less than the fees for a refund-anticipation loan. Be sure to ask your tax preparer about the cost.

File electronically for free at www.irs.gov. You can complete your own tax forms and send them electronically to IRS. This will save you the cost of the preparation fee too. Fillable forms are available online

Use Free File. Free File supports preparation of Federal tax returns and no-cost electronic filing. You can use Free File if your adjusted gross income is \$57,000 or less in 2013. The software

has simple questions and automatically puts your answers on the right forms. Tax filers can select from a list of tax preparation software companies. Find more information and links to the software on the IRS website.

Use a free tax preparation service. You may qualify for one of the following free programs:

- VITA - Many people qualify for free tax preparation. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) offers free tax preparation. VITA is available for people who make around \$51,000 or below. Electronic filing is usually available. Locate VITA sites near you by calling 1-800-906-9887 or look on www.irs.gov.
- TCE and AARP – People age 60 and older can find free tax assistance through Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE). Trained volunteers provide tax counseling and basic tax preparation. AARP also offers a free TAX-Aide program. Call 888-227-7669.
- AFTC – The Armed Forces Tax Council (AFTC) oversees free tax assistance programs for the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Military members and their families can receive free tax preparation assistance. Tax preparation sites are usually set up within military installations. Electronic filing is usually available.

For more information, contact Lonoke County Extension Office at 501-676-3124 or dbowen@uaex.edu. Visit www.uaex.edu for more information on personal financial management.

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its program to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, Action gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative /Equal Opportunity Employer.

Home, Health & Family

Play Is Children's Work

Fred Rogers of Mr. Roger's Neighborhood says, "Play is often talked about as if it were a break from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood." Often we think of play as an indulgence for children. But, play really is serious learning for children. Play helps children learn about themselves and others, their environment, and the world around them. It helps them to develop small and large motor skills, language skills, problem solving skills, leadership skills, and social-emotional skills. Play is serious business for healthy child development.

You can support your children's play by providing appropriate toys and by taking an interest in their play. Help your children use toys creatively. Pose age-appropriate problems or challenges and encourage your children to come up with solutions, but don't insist that they solve the problem if they lose interest. Follow your children's lead and honor their preferences. As you join in their play, your children learn valuable skills and you forge strong bonds with them.

To find out more about parenting, check out *The Parenting Journey* or *See the World Through My Eyes* programs at arfamilies.org, follow us at [facebook.com/navigatinglife](https://www.facebook.com/navigatinglife) or contact your local county Extension agent. You might also enjoy reading *The Secure Child* by Stanley Greenspan.



If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, send me an email at dbowen@uaex.edu. If you know someone who is not getting this newsletter and would like to receive it please have them contact my office.



Spring 2013

Starts

March 11!

Did you know that walking is one of the LEAST EXPENSIVE and EASIEST ways to get fit and reduce your risk for cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke? All it takes is a decent pair of walking shoes and 150 minutes of your time every week for 8 weeks. If you walk or exercise for 30 minutes a day, 5 times a week, for 8 weeks, you'll feel better, lower your stress level and enjoy all of the amazing health benefits of regular physical activity.

Walk Across Arkansas is a FREE, 8 week program that starts in March and is designed to help Arkansans establish the habit of regular physical activity. It is a fun and flexible way to exercise. Just get together with several other people and start walking. You can walk together or individually. All you need is a team captain and 2 to 10 team members.

Here's how it works: Team captains log on to the Walk Across Arkansas Website to register your team. Team members and captains keep track of your daily minutes of exercise and log them online for 8 weeks. If you do not have access to the internet, contact the office for paper forms. By the end of WAA you can have a healthy habit that will last a lifetime! Most of our participants choose to walk during WAA, but other activities count such as jumping rope, swimming, exercise DVDs, etc. as long as you exercise with intention for at least 10 minute increments and it raises your heart rate or makes you sweat. Awards will be given the team that logs the most minutes, the overall adult and overall youth! Get your team together now! I look forward to walking with you all this Spring!

http://www.arfamilies.org/health_nutrition/walkacrossar/default.htm.

**Registration opens February 18
Organize your teams NOW!**