From the Agent’s Desk:

Welcome to the “Winter 2016/2017” edition of the “Living Well in Poinsett County.” Information within the newsletter focuses on the 5 main educational areas within the Family and Consumer Sciences field:

- Family Life
- Foods and Nutrition
- Health and Wellness
- Financial Management
- Leadership and Volunteerism

I hope you find the information helpful to your everyday life. Please don’t hesitate to contact the Poinsett County Extension Office with any questions or requests for additional information. The County Extension Team is here to serve you and our neighbors within Poinsett County.

Have a Merry Christmas! I look forward to working with you in 2017!

Your County Family & Consumer Science/4-H Agent,
Leigh Blythe

The Family Life Corner...

The Poinsett County CES, in coordination with the Cross County and Crittenden County Extension programs will conduct “The Best Care” training for childcare providers on the following dates and locations:

- April 1 – Trumann First Baptist Church from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- April 8 – Wynne Church of Christ from 9 a.m. -2 p.m.

Participants can receive up to 10 hours of certified training (5 hours available each day of training). There is no cost to attend but pre-registration by contacting the Poinsett County Extension Office is highly encouraged. Call 870-578-4490 to register or to receive additional information.
Extension Get Fit Volunteer Leader Training

Interested in being a certified “Extension Get Fit” Group Leader? A training is scheduled for January 17 at the Craighead County Extension Office in Jonesboro.

Participants will receive a training notebook and will be certified to lead a Basic Extension Get Fit Class.

Registration is required.
Register here: http://forms.uaex.edu/GetFit

Cost to attend is $20 and includes lunch, snacks, and training notebook.

Find more information about “Healthy Living in Arkansas” by visiting
http://www.uaex.edu/health_living/health/default

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service is now taking applications for the new Extension Wellness Ambassador Program. The first of its kind offered in the state, this program will teach participants simple strategies to improve their own health and the health of their family, friends, and neighbors. The training is conducted by Cooperative Extension Service professionals, health professionals, and other specialists in their field and includes topics such as:

- Healthy eating and weight management
- Avoiding portion distortion
- Strength training
- Exercise to improve balance and flexibility
- Preventing and managing chronic disease
- Health behavior change strategies that stick
- Understanding personality types
- And other special topics!

Extension Wellness Ambassador trainees will receive 40 hours of training in health and wellness, and in return, they will agree to give back 40 hours of service in support of healthy living programs.

The next Extension Wellness trainings will be on January 10th, 17th, 24th, and 31st at the Craighead County Extension Office in Jonesboro. Space is limited. Pre-registration is required. For more information or to register, contact the Poinsett County Extension Office at 870-578-4490.
Eating healthy doesn’t mean spending more at the store. With a few simple tips, packing your pantry and refrigerator with nutrient dense foods can trim your waist while preserving your wallet. One of the first steps to achieve “grocery store” success is to develop a “Grocery Store Game Plan.”

Before making your shopping list, write down the meals you want to make during the coming week. Buying for the week means fewer shopping trips and buying only the items you need. Here are some basic tips for creating your menu and grocery list:

1. Evaluate your freezer, cabinets and refrigerator to determine what you currently have on hand. Saving money is a snap when you use items you already have.

2. Use a worksheet to plan your meals and determine what items you need to purchase.

3. Create a list of recipes (some family favorites and some new ones to try). Find new ideas for healthy and low-cost meals based on what you have on hand, foods your family enjoys, and foods that are good buys.

4. Think about your schedule. Choose meals you can easily prepare on your busiest days. Save more complicated recipes for your when you have more time to spend in the kitchen.

Adapted from: www.choosemyplate.gov

Cran-Apple Crisp
Ingredients:
- 4 apples (cored and thinly sliced)
- 1 can cranberry sauce (14 ounce, whole)
- 2/3 tablespoon margarine (soft, melted)
- 1 cup oatmeal (uncooked)
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
Wash apples, remove cores and slice thinly, keeping peel on. In a bowl, combine the cranberry sauce and apples. Pour into an 8x8 inch pan. Combine melted margarine with oatmeal, brown sugar, and cinnamon until well blended. Sprinkle over apple/cranberry mixture.

Cover and bake for 15 minutes. Uncover and bake 10 more minutes until the topping is crisp and brown. Serve warm or cold.

Makes 8, ¾ cup servings. 210 calories per serving.

Looking for new recipes to add to your collection? Or maybe new ideas to add some flavor to some old favorites?

Check out “What’s Cooking” at the USDA Mixing Bowl http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/

Preserving the Bounty
Food Preservation Workshop
Tuesday, March 21, 2017 --- 9 am-3:30 pm
Location to be announced

Open to ages 14 and up.
$10 registration fee to cover supplies.

Contact the Poinsett County Extension Service for more information or to register.

Pre-registration is required. Space is limited.
Many consumers aren’t sure where to start when planning for their financial future. Long-term financial goals may vary for consumers based on future hopes and dreams but there are still some basic targets that apply to everyone. Here are 4 financial goals that help consumers build financial stability.

1. **Live within your income.**
Sound simple? In many Arkansas households, consumers spend more than they earn. This usually means there is revolving debt – credit cards.

The problem with carrying credit card debt is that interest continues to build. Here’s an example: A $3,000 balance at 14.4% interest with a $90 minimum payment would take 11 years to pay off and you would pay more than $1,500 just in interest. Another concern with living month-to-month is that there is no safety net or plan for unexpected expenses. Record income and expenses to create a monthly spending plan.

2. **Build an emergency fund.**
An emergency fund is your safety net for times of crisis or unexpected expenses. Life happens – cars break down, kids get sick, people lose jobs. An emergency fund helps to keep you financially stable during times of crisis. If you’re just starting to build your emergency fund, set your goal at $500-$1,000. Eventually, you should aim for a fund large enough to cover two to six months of expenses.

3. **Keep adequate insurance.**
Maintain adequate amounts of auto, home, and health insurance. Without adequate insurance, a crisis could leave you thousands of dollars in debt and possibly lead to bankruptcy. Become familiar with terms used in insurance policies so you’ll know what to look for in benefits. Comparison shop for the best rates on a policy that has all of the features and benefits you need.

4. **Increase your credit score.**
Consumers with the best scores receive the lowest interest rates on car and home loans. This can save thousands of dollars over the life of a loan. For example: Financing a $150,000 home with a 30 year fixed rate mortgage at an interest rate of 4.5% would result in $123,610 in interest over the life of the loan. With a 3.5% interest rate, you would pay $92,484 in interest. You would save a total of more than $30,000.

Navigating the Financial Journey is a financial education program that teaches Budget Development, Money Management, Wise Use of Credit, and Consumer Protection. The class, conducted by the Cooperative Extension Service, is approved by the United States Bankruptcy Trustee as an approved financial education program. A Certificate of Debtor Education can be received by bankruptcy filers who complete the class. However, anyone interested in developing a road map to personal financial success is invited to participate in the program. For more information on upcoming financial programs, contact the Poinsett County Cooperative Extension Office at 870-578-4490 or email lhelms@uaex.edu.
Since 1912, members of the Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council (AEHC), have made it their mission to empower individuals and families to improve their lives through continuing education, leadership development, and community service.

The organization is one of the largest nonprofit volunteer groups in the state with a membership of 4,400 and over 350 clubs. Extension Homemakers, the Cooperative Extension Service, University of Arkansas, and the United States Department of Agriculture are partners in providing education to families throughout Arkansas.

Currently, there are two Extension Homemakers Clubs located in Poinsett County, with room for expansion with additional clubs. Clubs typically meet once per month to attend to club’s usual business with additional meetings scheduled to complete group service projects or to conduct county-wide EHC planning and projects.

If you would like to join a current Extension Homemakers Club or learn more about establishing a club within your community, contact the Poinsett County Extension Office at 870-578-4490 or email lhelms@uaex.edu.

“Put a Wrap on Cancer”
Winter 2016 EHC Community Service Project

The Poinsett County Winter EHC Service Project is “Put a Wrap on Cancer” with cancer turbans and pillows for the NEA Circle of Hope and the Flo and Phil Jones Hospice House in Jonesboro. Each club is requested to make at least 50 cancer turbans and/or pillows to donate.

Project Leader for this quarter’s project is: Needs to be filled.

Please contact the County EH Council President, Marge Odom (578-9562) or the County Extension Office at 578-4490 for more information. Deadline for items to count towards this quarter’s project is March 1, 2017.

Poinsett County EHC Provide Christmas Stockings for Local Residents

Over 95 stockings were sewn by Poinsett County Extension Homemakers Club members and donated to the Poinsett County Department of Human Services for distribution to families in need throughout the community.

Looking to join an Extension Homemaker Club? Check out the following clubs or contact the Extension Office to form one in your community!

Whitehall EHC
Meets the 3rd Monday of each month at 6:30 pm.

Lucky 13 EHC Club
Meets the 3rd Monday of each month at 3:30 p.m.
Conflict is a universal human problem. Dealing with conflict effectively requires more than just gaining new knowledge or learning new skills. It requires us to get our hearts right as well.

Every story has conflict at its core. Can you think of any story where conflict is not at the core? Cain and Abel, Moses and Pharaoh, Hatfield’s and McCoy’s, and continuing feuds in almost every family.

What do we do about conflict? There are two tools that we typically try to provide to people.

The first tool is knowledge. We try to arm people with knowledge in order to prevent or solve problems. We read books. We talk to experts. We take classes. We get advice. We believe that ignorance creates many problems and can be remedied with knowledge.

The second tool we try to arm people with are skills. For example, the teaching of communication skills such as the “speaker-listener technique” is very popular. The only problem - research shows that communication skills disappear in the face of conflict.

In relationships: “If all we do is stress communication skills to people without softening their hearts, we will simply make people more clever fighters.” – Doug Brinley

What we need are not just knowledge and skills, but the motivation and willingness to use the knowledge and skills we have appropriately (and in the best interest of others/the relationship). We need to be able to see past only our point of view.

So, getting our hearts right really is the key to success in our relationships.

**Key 1:** Humility opens our hearts:
- Consider your biases
- Consider the weakness in your position

**Key 2:** Compassion connects our hearts.
The meaning of compassion: feeling what someone else is feeling—and wanting to help – being sensitive to the struggles and suffering of others

**Key 3:** Positivity inspires our hearts. It’s the practice of seeing the good in people.

We can learn to be more open to other people (humble), more sensitive to their concerns (compassionate), and more appreciative of their efforts (positive). Rome wasn’t built in a day – It required conscious effort and enduring commitment.

For more information on “Getting Your Hearts Right”, contact the county Extension Office at 870-578-4490 or email lhelms@uaex.edu.