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Kansas Currents

K-State Research and Extension News

Knowledge for Life

Central Kansas Extension District

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FEBRUARY 2014

Celebrate the Return of ...



DATES: March 16 – May 10

COST: \$6 per person

1 team check payable to: Central Kansas District
Optional t-shirt available for purchase.

REGISTRATION: Deadline is March 13 at 5 p.m.

Captain's Packet: Now available at Minneapolis and Salina extension offices.

One of Central Kansas Extension District's most loved programs is set to return! Mark your calendar, grab some friends, and break out your running shoes. Walk Kansas begins March 16.

We all know physical activity is good for us. Did you know that exercise is also known as a "wonder drug"? This type of "medication" has been shown to aid in weight management, treat depression, anxiety, and osteoporosis. It also helps prevent and treat diabetes, high blood pressure, plus breast and colon cancers.

If you want to try this "wonder drug" in a fun and unique way, sign up for Walk Kansas! Walk Kansas is a team-based program that will motivate you to be more active with friends and family, make better nutrition choices, and reduce your stress levels. It is an 8-week fitness challenge with teams choosing between three different fitness goals. Organizing a team is simple and easy!



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KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION AND COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

The following is what you need to do:

- First, recruit a team of up to six people motivated to exercise.
- Make sure you have shoes that are good for many miles of walking or exercising.
- Choose a team captain and pick a name for your team.
- Pick up registration materials for your team from the extension office, Salina or Minneapolis.
- Have your team captain turn in registration materials to the extension office by March 13.
- Keep track of the minutes you walk, servings of fruits, and vegetables consumption (optional), and report your weekly total to your team captain. The captain will add up all the members' minutes, fruits and vegetables (optional) for the week and report the team total online.
- Plan to have lots of fun!
- If you can't find six people for a team, that's ok! Teams can be any size as long as there are not more than six people.

Walk Kansas celebrates 13 years of success! This year, teams will again choose between three challenges. Challenge #1 is the traditional Walk Kansas program where participants "walk" the distance across the state, 423 miles for the team, or 150 minutes of physical activity a week per individual. Challenge #2 consists of five hours of activity per week, enough to go across the state and back. For challenge #3, teams will travel 1200 miles, exercising for six hours a week per individual. This is the distance of the perimeter of the state.

You may substitute or combine other forms of exercise with the walking program. Walk Kansas will accept running, cycling, and other fitness activities for the accumulation of miles to "walk" Kansas. There are no limitations on who can participate.

For more information, contact the Salina extension office 785-309-5850 or the Minneapolis office at 785-392-2147.

Strong People is Back!

For those of you eagerly anticipating another session of Strong People, the wait is almost over!

Strong People is for you if:

- you want to take better care of yourself in 2014.
- you want to gain strength, stability, and flexibility.
- you want to meet new people and make new friends!

Date: Tuesday, March 4 – May 15

Time: 9:45-10:30 a.m.

Place: Salina Senior Center

Cost: \$10 per person



Strong People is a fun and enjoyable light weight training class. It is designed to benefit all individuals, from experienced exercisers to beginning novices. Any ability level can benefit from this course. We will perform simple, specially designed moves to improve balance, flexibility, build lean muscle, and burn calories.

Classes will be held at the Salina Senior Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning March 4 through May 15. **Note:** We will exercise at a **NEW** time this year. Class will be held at 9:45-10:30 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Feel free to bring your own ankle and hand weights or use the weights provided by the Senior Center. Be sure to wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

Registration materials can be found at the Central Kansas Extension District Office located in the basement of the City-County Building or at the Salina Senior Center. Cost of the class is \$10 per person. Registration forms and payment are due to the extension office by Friday, February 28. Everyone will need to fill out registration forms, including a health questionnaire and physician's signature page. Contact Leah Robinson at the Minneapolis extension office 785-392-2147 for more information.

Knowledge at Noon

Stepping Stones for Stepfamilies

Date: Friday, February 7

Time: 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Place: Golden Wheel Senior Center
114 S. Concord Street, Minneapolis

Date: Tuesday, February 25

Time: 12:10 – 1 p.m.

Place: Room 109, City-County Building
300 W. Ash, Salina

Training Opportunities for Child Care Providers

Every Child Counts: Building Community

Jamal seems different from the rest of the children in your group. He usually plays by himself and when he asks to join others in play, they usually say, “No.” This professional development program helps you learn how to bring out nurturing, caring behaviors in children to create a community where children support each other. You’ll learn ways to help Jamal and others like him to rise from being a loner in the group to being a leader. (KDHE Approved-2 hours)

Date: Thursday, February 20

Time: 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Place: Minneapolis Courthouse
(K-State Extension mtg. room in basement)
307 N. Concord, Minneapolis

Registration Fee: \$10



Date: Thursday, April 17

Time: 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Place: Salina Public Library (Prescott meeting room
is located downstairs near Youth Services)
301 W. Elm, Salina

Registration Fee: **FREE for SALINE COUNTY PROVIDERS** (\$10 for providers located outside of Saline County)

I am Moving, I am Learning Module 2

This fun and interactive training is all about MOVEMENT! You will learn about early brain structure, brain functioning, and how movement enhances the brain. You will also discover fun activities you can do with the children in your care that will stimulate the brain and support skill development. You will recognize how moderate to vigorous physical activity supports school readiness skills in children, AND how to facilitate activities with children that will achieve the 60 minutes of structured physical activity needed per day. As we wrap up our day, you will understand how to incorporate movement into a child’s day. You will also learn and facilitate developmentally appropriate, simple activities to use with young children at home. (KDHE Approved – 6 hours)

Date: Saturday, March 1

Time: 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Place: Salina Public Library (Prescott meeting room
is located downstairs near Youth Services)
301 W. Elm, Salina

Registration Fee: **FREE for SALINE COUNTY PROVIDERS** (\$10 for providers located outside of Saline County)

To register, contact Lisa Newman at the Salina extension office.

Did You Know?

- Only 54% of Americans say they have a savings plan with specific goals.
- Only 43% of Americans say they have a spending plan that allows them to save enough money to achieve the goals of their savings plan.
- Only 66% of Americans have sufficient emergency funds for unexpected expenses like car repairs or a doctor’s visit.
- 55% of the retirees who responded to an Employee Benefits Research Institute’s Retirement Confidence Survey reported having less than \$25,000 saved for retirement.

Source: America Saves, EBRI

Low Income Energy Assistance Program

Do you, or someone you know, need help paying your energy bills? The Low Income Energy Assistance Program is a federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per year benefit.

In order to qualify applicants must be living at the address, be personally responsible for the utilities at the residence, demonstrate a recent history of payments, and not exceed 130% of the federal poverty level.

A representative from Westar Energy will be at the Salina Emergency Aid/Food Bank, 225 S. Chicago St., Salina, on February 10 from 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. to help with the application process. Please bring proof of income, and Social Security numbers, for all members of the household, and utility account numbers.

Free Income Tax Assistance

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

VITA, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, program offers free tax help to people who make \$55,000 or less. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing in local communities.

Salina: Volunteer Connection

239 N. Santa Fe

Walk-in, no appointment necessary

January 28 through April 15

Tuesdays: 1 -6 p.m.

Thursdays: 1 – 4 p.m.

Saturday: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Minneapolis: Extension office

307 N. Concord

9 a.m. – 4 p.m., February 7, 12, 28, March 14, April 14

Appointments: Call 785-392-2147

Got Plans for Your Tax Refund?

Use 30-40-30 plan to pay for your
PAST, PRESENT, and FUTURE

PAST: Designate 30% of your refund to paying off debt and catching up on outstanding bills.

PRESENT: Earmark 40% for current use.

FUTURE: Use 30% to jump start an emergency fund or longer term savings

K-STATE Research and Extension

Become a saver today and take advantage of free tools to help you save and manage money!

www.kansassaves.org

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Content provided by Virginia Saves and America Saves
For more information visit <http://www.AmericaSaves.org>



AARP Tax-Aide

This program offers free tax help for all with priority assistance to people who are 60 years of age and older. IRS-certified volunteers provide tax counseling, return preparation and electronic filing, and specialize in questions about pensions and retirement issues unique to seniors.

Salina Senior Center

Wednesdays and Thursdays, February 5 – April 10

By appointment only: Call 785-827-9818

Federal Student Aid

The federal government offers more than \$150 billion in grants, loans, and work-study funds to students each year. To see if you qualify for aid, you must complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, commonly called the FAFSA. Completing and submitting the FAFSA is free and quick, and it gives you access to the largest source of financial aid to pay for college or career school.

In addition, many states and colleges use your FAFSA data to determine your eligibility for state and school aid, and some private financial aid providers may use your FAFSA information to determine whether you qualify for their aid. Find out more information and apply at <http://studentaid.ed.gov/>.

Dangers of Homemade Infant Formula

Parents want to feed children the safest food possible. But some have taken the risk of feeding homemade infant formula which can be dangerous.

Advocates of this practice claim that homemade infant formula avoids using ingredients produced with biotechnology among other claims. This is dangerous because some recipes tend to include raw milk which is a food safety risk. They also have poor nutritional content and can lead to poor growth and development.

The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly discourages parents from using homemade infant formula. When mothers cannot breast feed, commercial infant formula is the “only safe source of food for non-breastfed infants through their first year.” Commercial formula is thoroughly tested for safety and nutritional quality. All formulas must comply with the Infant Formula Act to safeguard all babies when consuming the formula.

Winter Weather Tips for Pets

It has been extremely cold recently. Our animals, especially indoor/outdoor pets, probably do not have an adequate winter coat for protection in these very low temperatures. Hypothermia and dehydration are the two most probable life-threatening conditions for animals in cold weather. Wet conditions and wind-chill add greatly to the cold-stress for animals.

During cold weather, smaller pets should be brought indoors if possible. If you are unable to keep your dog or cat inside during cold weather, provide it with a warm, solid shelter against wind. The floor of the shelter should be off of the ground (to minimize heat loss into the ground) and the bedding should be thick, dry, and changed regularly to provide a warm, dry environment. The door to the shelter should be positioned away from prevailing winds. Avoid space heaters and heat lamps because of the risk of burns or fire. Heated pet mats should also be used with caution because they are capable of causing burns if not set up properly.

Keep an eye on your pet's water. Sometimes owners don't realize that a water bowl has frozen and their pet can't get anything to drink. Animals that don't have access to clean, unfrozen water are more likely to drink out of puddles or gutters, which can be polluted with oil, antifreeze, household cleaners, and other chemicals.

Beware of cats under the car hood. Cats will curl up against almost anything to stay warm — including car engines. Cats caught in moving engine parts can be seriously hurt or killed. Before you turn your engine on, check beneath the car or make a lot of noise by honking the horn or rapping on the hood.



Qualities That Keep Families Strong

The Search Institute has identified five key qualities that help all kinds of families be strong: Nurturing Relationships, Establishing Routines, Maintaining Expectations, Adapting to Challenges, and Connecting to Community.

The *Establishing Routines* quality identifies several things you can do to strengthen the family bond.

- **Family meals** – Busy schedules of parents and children make it more challenging, but research suggests that having dinner together at least four times a week has positive effects on child development. Family mealtime has been linked to a lower risk of obesity, substance abuse, eating disorders, and an increased chance of graduating from high school.
- **Shared activities** – Eating meals together, talking about the events of the day, sharing joys and defeats, doing household chores together and spending some evenings popping corn and watching movies are examples of shared activities. The more time you spend together, the better chance you have of sharing quality experiences.
- **Meaningful traditions** - Holidays, rituals, and celebrations are part of family life. Traditions give us a feeling of security – an important thing for adults and children. Traditions can also help during transitions in family life – a job change, a move, an illness, or divorce. Traditions provide a feeling that even though some things have changed, there are still things we can count on.

Shared routines, traditions – both new and old, and activities give a dependable rhythm to family life.

Troubleshooting Yeast

Making homemade bread is challenging and satisfying. Yeast is a critical ingredient to yeast bread success or failure. Here are some tips.

- **Expiration date**- Yeast is a single-celled microorganism that is alive. Over time it can die. Always use it before the expiration date. It should smell earthy or “yeasty.”
- **Liquid temperature**- The optimum temperature range is between 70-138°F. Below 70°F is too cold to activate yeast. Above 138°F will kill yeast. Optimum temperature depends on type of yeast.
- **Salt**- While important to regulate dough proofing, adding salt before yeast activates and multiplies can restrict moisture to yeast and starve it to death.
- **Not punching down dough**- During proofing, the dough creates alcohol. Without punching down, too much trapped alcohol will poison the yeast.



Family Game Time
the second Friday of
every month
4-5:30 p.m.
Youth Services
Salina Public Library

Children must bring their grown ups. Spend a fun and relaxed evening playing and connecting with each other and with other families in the community.



Have Health Insurance?

Although December 23 was the deadline to enroll in a health plan to have coverage effective January 1, consumers still have until March 31 to enroll and pay their first premium to obtain coverage for 2014. If you can afford health insurance but choose not to purchase by this date, you must pay a fee known as the individual responsibility payment when you file taxes next year. The fee in 2014 is 1% of your yearly income or \$95 per person for the year, whichever is higher. The fee increases every year. In 2016 it's 2.5% of income or \$695 per person, whichever is higher.

Depending on your household size and income, you may be eligible for tax credits to help pay the premiums (100-400% of the federal poverty level, FPL), and also cost sharing reductions (under 250% of the FPL). The tax credit may be taken in advance and applied directly to the premium payment, or taken as a refund next year when you file your tax return. The cost sharing reductions help to lower deductibles and co-pays when care is received.

Individuals and families must enroll through the Health Insurance Marketplace at www.healthcare.gov to obtain the premium tax credits and cost sharing reductions. Help is available here in the community for those who would like assistance with this process.

Christina Bachman is a certified Navigator. Her office is in the Salina Family Healthcare Center, 651 E Prescott. Appointments can be made by calling 785-825-7251, extension 316. Christina will be in Minneapolis in connection with VITA tax preparation on February 12 and March 14. She can also help those who qualify for an exemption to obtain the waiver needed to file with their 2014 tax return in spring 2015. Her assistance is free of charge, and you do not need to be a patient of the Healthcare Center.

As a reminder, Medicare beneficiaries with Part A have health coverage that meets the requirement and do not need to do anything.

Poverty Simulation

What would it be like to live in poverty for one month? Register or volunteer during this upcoming simulation to experience the struggles many low-income families face. The poverty simulation helps groups of up to 80 people understand the everyday realities faced by people whose incomes fall below the poverty line during an eye-opening, three hour experience.

Participants assume the roles of members of low-income families, from single parents trying to care for their children to senior citizens trying to maintain their independence on Social Security. Each family member must seek assistance from a variety of human service agencies and other organizations to provide for their family's basic needs during a course of four 15-minute "weeks." The intended result is an increased understanding of the struggles faced everyday by people struggling to get by.

Two simulations will be offered. Hopefully one fits your schedule.

Date: Friday, February 28 from 1-5 p.m.

Date: Saturday, March 1, from 1-5 p.m.

Place: Trinity United Methodist Church
901 E. Neal, Salina

Cost is \$15 per person or \$30 if CEUs issued
For more information, contact Lisa Newman at the Salina extension office.



CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

- 7 Knowledge at Noon, Golden Wheel Senior Center, Minneapolis, 10:30-11:30 a.m.
- 14 Bonding Thru Board Games, Salina Public Library, 4-5:30 p.m.
- 20 Every Child Counts, Minneapolis courthouse, 6:30-8:30 p.m., *Registration required
- 25 Knowledge at Noon, City-Co. bldg., Rm 109, Salina, 12:10-1 p.m.



Central Kansas Extension District
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The enclosed material is for your information.
If we can be of further assistance, feel free to
call or drop by the Extension Office.

Sincerely,



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