

HOMEMAKER HAPPENINGS

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES

JANUARY - 2025

UK Martin-Gatton
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
University of Kentucky.



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Dear Extension Homemaker Members,

By now, you've probably heard that Donna Curl, our longtime staff assistant, is retiring on January 3. Donna has been a part of the office staff for almost twenty-five years with the last twenty having the primary responsibility of Family and Consumer Sciences of which our Extension Homemaker Association is a part. While all the staff assistants are equal in status, Donna was the one you probably worked with most often. She will take with her the knowledge and routine of the position as well as her customer service experience. She will be missed, but we are also happy for her as she begins a new chapter in her life. We will honor her service with a reception on December 19, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM here at the extension office. Feel free to stop by and wish her well and share in the joy of her new adventure!

So, who is going to take her place? While no one will be like her we are currently in the process of reviewing applications and conducting interviews. Our hope is to have someone in place by mid-January. Be on the lookout for an announcement once the decision is made, and they are working full time in the office!

Wishing you a wonderful Holiday Season filled with joy and good health!

I look forward to seeing you in 2025!

Jennifer Bridge,
Extension Agent for Family
And Consumer Sciences Education





Cranberry Pecan Cheese Ball

16 ounces Cream Cheese (2- 8-oz)
1 ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese
½ cup dried cranberries, chopped
½ cup chopped pecans with an additional ½ cup to coat cheese ball
1 Tablespoon fresh orange zest
1 Tablespoon honey
1 teaspoon cinnamon
Mix all ingredients together (except the reserved pecans for coating).
Form into a ball, wrap in plastic wrap and chill until firm. Remove from plastic wrap and coat in remaining pecans. Serve with crackers or bread of your choice.

Serves 10-12 people

Jennifer Bridge
Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences Education

Slow Cooker Safety

Source: Annhall Norris, extension associate, and the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service

Few things are better than coming home at the end of the day to a freshly prepared meal. Slow cookers can help us achieve that dream.

While slow cookers may be synonymous with winter, you can use them any time of the year to safely prepare foods. In fact, using a slow cooker during the summer will help keep your home a little cooler as it keeps you from using a hot oven to prepare dinner.

A slow cooker cooks food at a low temperature over a longer period of time than other cooking methods. The pot's heat, its lengthy cooking time and steam created by the tightly covered lid destroy harmful bacteria, making it safe for food preparation. As with any appliance or food preparation method, safe handling is extremely important when using a slow cooker. Remember these tips when using your slow cooker.

Always wash your hands before and while preparing foods. Make sure your slow cooker, utensils and work area are clean before using the slow cooker.

Always thaw meat or poultry in the refrigerator before putting it in the slow cooker. Keep perishable foods refrigerated until preparation time.

Put vegetables in the slow cooker before meat or poultry because they take longer to cook.

Only remove the lid to stir your meal or check for doneness.

Cook foods at the proper settings according to the instructions of your recipe. If you are going to be gone all day, it is safe to cook foods on the low setting for the entire time.

Food will remain safe for consumption in the slow cooker as long as it is working. If a power outage occurs and you are not at home, throw the food away, even if it appears done. If you are home and the power goes out, finish cooking the food in the slow cooker by some other method that does not require electricity such as a gas stove or an outdoor grill.

January is Mental Wellness Month

January is Mental Wellness Month, a perfect time to focus on your mental health and well-being. It's like giving your mind a fresh start, just like you might give your home a deep clean after the holidays. You may be wondering, "but what is mental wellness?" Mental wellness is a state of well-being in which individuals are functioning as their best version, they are able to realize their strengths, build on their weaknesses, can cope with stress, and have an overall balance between their emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental selves. There are several activities that individuals can participate in to ensure they are taking care of their mental wellness.

Here are some fun ways to boost your mental wellness:

1. **Try something new:** Pick up a hobby you've always wanted to try or rediscover an old one. Maybe you've always wanted to learn to play an instrument, paint, or write. Or, if you used to love a particular activity, give it another shot. Sometimes, revisiting old hobbies can bring back a sense of joy and fulfillment.
2. **Learn and Grow:** Engage in activities to better yourself such as reading self-help books, seeking therapy services, and engaging with a health and wellness coach.
3. **Find your peace:** Try participating in activities that will calm your mind and enhance your mental health such as meditation or yoga.
4. **Connect with others:** Volunteering or spending time with friends and family are shown to enhance your mental health.

So, this January, let's make it a month of feeling great! By incorporating these activities into your routine, you can improve your mental wellness and overall well-being. Remember, it's important to be patient with yourself and to find what works best for you.

Resources:

<https://www.voasw.org/blog/what-is-mental-wellness-how-to-improve-it/>

<https://www.nih.gov/health-information/emotional-wellness-toolkit>

<https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/what-is-wellness/mental-wellness/>

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/caring-for-your-mental-health>

Source: Dr. Natese Dockery, Clinical Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist for Mental Health and Well-Being



Dear Homemakers,

First, I know this is a little late, but I would like to thank all of those who helped make the Holiday Bazaar an immense success. Every vendor I spoke to during and at the end of the day was pleased with their sales and commented they planned to be back next year. They also stated everyone was so pleasant and helpful to them in getting registered, set up, and during the day checking to see that all their needs were seen to. It says a lot for our group of extension homemakers. Again, it always amazes me even with other craft and bazaars going on the same day we always have a great crowd of shoppers. Thanks again to Shirley Beavin for chairing this committee and to Kelly Walz for co-chairing. Kelly has so graciously volunteered to chair the holiday bazaar next year. I know we will all give our support to her wherever it may be needed. Thanks to Margaret McCoy and Joe Burns for volunteering as Santa and Mrs. Claus. We truly do appreciate them both. Thanks to Teresa Wethington and her husband for overseeing the kitchen area. Thanks to those who put up signs and flyers, worked the sales table, acted as hosts at the Farm Bureau and Home and Garden building, worked in the kitchen, and helped with setup and take down. Thanks to the help of the Meade County High School wrestling team the take down was done efficiently and quickly. We certainly appreciate their support. It always takes the effort of many of us working together to have a successful outcome for a large event like the holiday bazaar and I say you accomplished that with flying colors.

On Tuesday, December 3, a Christmas lunch and bunco was held at the Meade County Extension Office. Approximately 45 extension homemakers attended. From the comments and expressions of those in attendance a fun time was had by all. Thanks to those in attendance for bringing donations for the Springhaven Domestic Abuse Shelter.

Just as a thought, in the cold, dreary months of January and February consider writing a short story, a poem, or a memoir to enter the KEHA State Cultural Arts and Heritage Creative Writing Contest. Entries are due to the KEHA State Cultural Arts Educational Chairman by March 1. It is also not too early to be thinking about attending this year's KEHA State Annual Meeting which will be held at the Hyatt Regency Lexington, 401 West High Street, Lexington, Kentucky, on May 6-8, 2024. If you make your reservations by April 7, 2025, you will secure the conference rate of \$149.00 per night + tax (1-4 people per room). The Northeast Area will be serving as the host area this upcoming year.

It is hard to believe that another year has almost gone. My how the time flies when we are having so much fun. I would like to take this opportunity to wish each of you and your families a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year. Please keep those who are ill, those recuperating from surgery or illness, and those who have lost loved ones this past year in your thoughts and prayers.

Respectfully,

Janet Hobbs
MCEH President

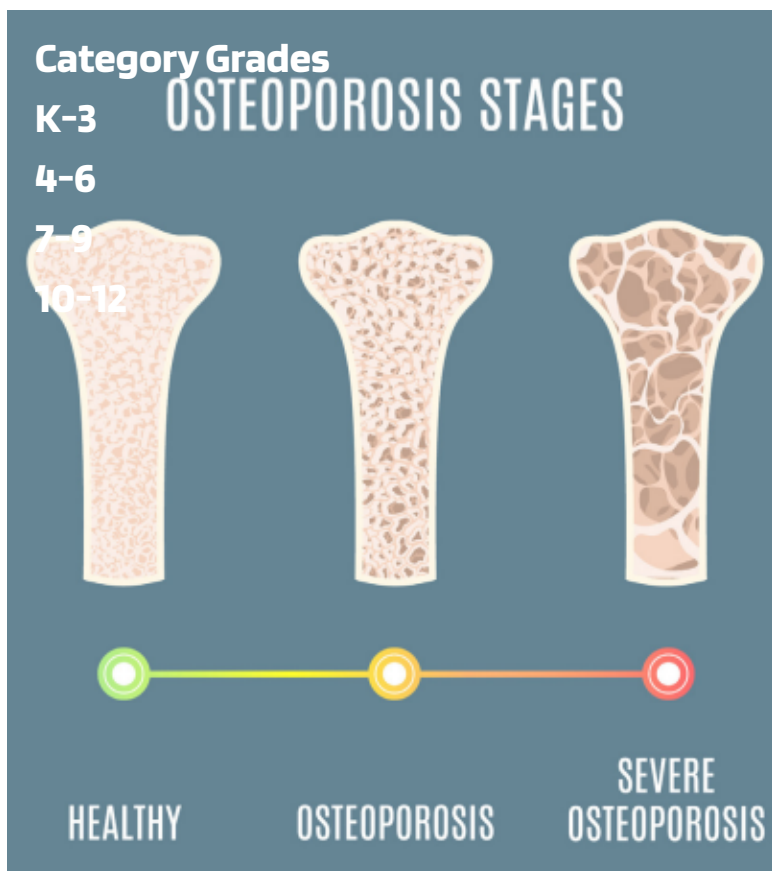


Strong Bones for Life: Prevent Osteoporosis

The lesson for January is a mailout The topic is Osteoporosis. Look for the publication **Strong Bones for Life: Prevent Osteoporosis** coming in your mail.

This publication is very informative. It discusses what Osteoporosis is, who gets it, risk factors and causes, how it is diagnosed and how to treat it.

It explains the importance of physical activity, getting enough nutrition and calcium in your diet and much more.



2025 PIGGY BANK DESIGN CONTEST



**Contest begins on December 2,
2024 and ends on January 10, 2025**

Category Grades

K-3

4-6

7-9

10-12

- Entries are due to the Extension Office no later than January 10, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.
- Submit:
 - *Piggy Bank and Entry Form
- \$100 goes to each category winner
- Additional \$100 to Overall Winner

Must be a Meade County resident

Contest sponsored by:



MEADE COUNTY BANK

Meade County
1041 Old Ekron Road
Brandenburg KY 40108-1719

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**The Extension Office will be closed for the upcoming holiday
December 25 through January 1**

**HAPPY
NEW YEAR**

