

### Upcoming Geary County Extension Programs

\*\*Requires pre-registration. Call 238-4161 to pre-register\*\*

#### January

- 16 — Picky Eaters—for parents w/young children—7:00 PM; JC Head Start
- 18 — Eagle Days—at the Milford Nature Center—9:00 AM - 3:00 PM; free to the public and fun for all ages
- \*\*23 — Let's Live A Little—focuses on health and wellness for those 50+ yrs. old— 6:30 PM; Dorothy Bramlage Library Classroom
- 25 — Country Living Expo—learn about life in the country, from bee-keeping to small acreage animal care — 9:00 AM to Noon; Geary County 4-H Building.
- 29 — Kansas Day—a canning and food preservation in Kansas program for elementary students—8:30 AM; Westwood Elem.

#### February

- 15 — Geary County 4-H Club Day—8:00 AM; JC Presbyterian Church
- \*\*20 — Stepping Stones for Step Families—looking at the challenges and opportunities in step-parenting—6:30 PM; Dorothy Bramlage Library Classroom



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Geary County Office information: <http://www.geary.ksu.edu/>

Greetings! I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the warm welcome I have received as your new Family and Consumer Sciences Agent here in Geary County. Although I have learned much about Geary County and have met many new people in the past 6 months, I look forward to continue learning, meeting new people, and establishing a programming routine for our clients. For those I have yet to meet and work with, I thought I would take a moment to introduce myself.



Although I was born in Rice County, from the age of 2, I lived in Marshall County and graduated from Marysville High School. I have 2 degrees from Kansas State University, both with an emphasis in Family and Consumer Sciences. After graduating with my BS, I worked as a Staff III Packaging Manager at the Frito Lay plant in Topeka, Kansas. From there, I moved into an Extension program assistant position on the KSU campus for a year while I began my MS program. During that time, I became engaged to my husband who I have now been married to for over 22 years. We live on his family farm in Morris County with our 3 young boys— Mark is 10, Joey 8, and Zach 7. I taught high school FCS at Council Grove for 14 years before transitioning to an Instructor position at KSU in the College of Education. After 8 years there, I now enjoy using the culmination of my many experiences and skills to serve the public here as the Geary County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent.

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#### Ask the Agent

I am collecting questions for an Ask the Agent segment to include in each newsletter. Questions can be submitted to me via e-mail or phone call. I will answer your question in a timely fashion and will plan to use these questions to share with those on our mailing list. Questions can cover any range of topics such as family matters and relationships, clothing and home care, foods and nutrition, health and wellness, Medicare and any other questions related to home, health, and family.

# Focus on Families

## Keeping Your Home Safe:

The cold winter months in Kansas seem to keep us indoors more than we may like. Studies show that Americans spend up to 90% of their time indoors, regardless of the season.

Remaining indoors for extended periods of time may have health risks that you can avoid due to the concentration of air pollutants that can exist indoors. Home, school, and the workplace are areas of greatest concern.

It is important to make sure that our living environments are free of air hazards that can cause serious health risks to families and individuals. Learning about these hazards is our first line of defense against the illness they can cause.

Indoor air hazards in your home include:

**Radon Gas**—January is state and national Radon Action month. Purchase a test kit at the Geary County Extension office to check your home for this dangerous gas.

**Carbon Monoxide gas**—Install an alarm in your home, one per floor, if possible. If you already have them in your home, make sure you keep fresh batteries in them. Replace batteries every 6 months to provide the best protection for you and your family.

**Household Products**—VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds) can be found in many household products used for cleaning and home repair. Read the label on all household products and make sure you provide proper ventilation to reduce risk of physical harm.

Research shows that the impact of poverty on health is significant. “People with more income tend to be healthier and live longer” according to the Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP.) Many factors contribute to this outcome including:

- ◆ **Lack of Care**—Of the total non-elderly population in the U.S., 18.5% do not have health insurance. The low-income population is especially vulnerable for being uninsured. Almost 70% of those living in poverty in the United States are uninsured.
- ◆ **Work/Living Conditions**—In addition to poor working and living conditions, the stress and pollution in these environments affect health across the life-cycle, even for the developing embryo during pregnancy. “Brain science and developmental psychology studies suggest that the negative effects of early childhood poverty, from prenatal to age 5, might be especially harmful and long lasting.” - IRP

Other key points:

- ◇ Education, occupation, income, and assets—socioeconomic status or SES—are major determinants of health.
- ◇ Children are especially vulnerable to the negative health effects of poverty.
- ◇ Birth to age 5 is critical for development; just a few years of poverty may negatively affect a child’s life course.

Source: Poverty Fact Sheet “Poor and In Poor Health” - IRP

# Financial Facts

## Healthy Habits

### Make Healthy Snacking a New Year’s Resolution

Consider following these healthy snacking tips to give you a boost:

- ◆ Use snacks to fill the nutritional gaps in your diet.
- ◆ At an office celebration, eat only a small piece of dessert. When it’s your turn to treat the office, bring bagels and fruit as a healthy alternative.
- ◆ Choose a solid snack that satisfies hunger longer than a liquid. Research shows that people eat less food at mealtime if they consume a solid snack than a liquid snack with the same amount of calories.
- ◆ Choose snacks that provide dietary fiber as well as other nutrients, such as fresh fruits, dried fruits, raw vegetables, and whole-grain breads or crackers.
- ◆ Surround yourself with healthy snacks in small portions. Store them in your desk drawer, refrigerator, briefcase, backpack, gym bag, and car—any place that you have a tendency to want to snack.
- ◆ Try new food or different forms of your old stand-byes such as frozen bananas or grapes.
- ◆ If you have a high-fat snack during the day, eat a low-fat dinner to stay on track with you daily limits of calories.
- ◆ Eat sensible portions. Single-serve containers can help you limit your portion sizes. Choose smaller places and bowls to eat from to also help with portion size.

Source: [www.clemson.edu/extension](http://www.clemson.edu/extension)



## Connecting with Kids

Here is an idea you can use on those “can’t go outside” cold days with your kids. Sit down and enjoy this project with your children. You can learn a lot about them when you “play” and it gives you a chance to keep the communication open between parent and child.

### Puffy Snowflakes

You will need:

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Salt                   | Empty dishwashing soap bottle                |
| Self-Rising flour      | Microwave                                    |
| Food Coloring (option) | Colored cardstock paper or brown grocery bag |
| Water                  |  |
| Bowl                   |  |
| Spoon                  |  |

In a bowl, mix equal parts salt and self-rising flour. Add food coloring if you want some color (snowflakes would likely not have color, though.) Add enough water to make the mixture the consistency of pancake batter. Pour the mixture into the soap bottle. Play with your child in making various snowflake designs on the paper. Place your finished artwork in the microwave for 30 second on high (time varies by microwave.) Paint will be dry and puffy when finished.

Variations: Butterflies, Flowers, or other simple drawings.