

Walk Kansas 2015

February, 2015

The Walk Kansas 2015 season is fast upon us. This 8-week program runs from March 15 – May 9. I invite you to round up five friends to create your team of six and participate in this year's annual walk for wellness program!

Ask the Agent

Q: How can I get signed up for Walk Kansas?

- A: You need to check with your physician to make sure you are in good health for the 8-week program.
- B: Next, you need to form or sign-on with a forming team of six people. The calculations used in the Walk Kansas data base is built around a team of six. If you end up being on a team of 5 or a team of 7, our office will adjust your reported miles to reflect a 6-member team.
- C: Together with your teammates identify a name for your team.
- D: Complete the individual registration form, being sure to include your signature, and return to your team captain. Your registration will not be accepted without your signature and date.
- E: You need to pay your team captain for the \$7 registration fee to participate in the program. Additionally, if you want a Walk Kansas t-shirt or hoodie, you will need to include the cost of your shirt in your registration payment. We will accept a single payment from each team from your team captain.
- F: Finally, set a personal goal and make a plan on how you are going to reach it!

How does Walk Kansas work?

- Co-workers, family members, friends and neighbors form teams of 6 people who will track minutes of physical activity and food choices during the 8-week challenge.
- Each team identifies a goal, or challenge, it wants to reach. Three challenges are offered. **Challenge 1** is the distance across the state, and would require each member to reach the minimum guidelines for physical activity, 150 minutes per week. To achieve **Challenge 2**, the team must go across and back, or 5 hours per week for each participant. **Challenge 3** takes the team 1200 miles around the perimeter of the state, a 6-hour-per-week goal for each person.
- Walking isn't the only activity that counts. When you sign up, you will receive an information sheet "Move More – Feel Better, Physical Activity Guide" to learn about moderate and vigorous activities that count, and strengthening exercises. Just a reminder – any activity you report should be performed for a minimum of 10 consecutive minutes.
- Participants record daily fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Team members report progress to their team captain each week. Team captain reports totals to local program each week.



It's a Win-Win with Walk Kansas!

Regular physical exercise is the first part of the win-win! Your body will respond with more energy, better circulation, and firmer muscle tone. All Walk Kansas participants will receive a weekly newsletter with physical activity and health tips, healthy eating information, and a tasty recipe. Staying motivated is important. Knowing how close you are to your goal can help you with that. On the Walk Kansas website, you can check your team progress compared to others across the state. Friendly competition keeps the program fun and motivates you to reach your goals.

The second part of the win-win comes from the drawings you can be in to receive Walk Kansas incentives! Each week two teams will get a collection of incentives and two individual wild card incentives will also be awarded. The team incentives are awarded to teams meeting that week's criteria. For example, the first week team incentives will go to the first two teams to turn in their reports on time. The wild card incentives come from random drawings of two individuals who have reported progress that week to their captain.

Pick up a registration form from the Geary County Extension office or download the forms at: <http://www.geary.ksu.edu/p.aspx?tabid=96>. There is a \$7 registration fee for each participant. Team captains can choose to pay for their team's registration with a credit or debit card when they turn in the registration packet. A small transaction fee will apply.

Team registrations are due **February 24, 2015 by 5:00 p.m.**



Check out the inside article for ideas on how to increase your physical activity and be better prepared for Walk Kansas 2015!

Writing a Legacy Letter

You may first be asking “What is a Legacy Letter?” Simply stated - it is a written personal history that reflects significant events in your life that helped shape you into the person you are now. It provides your family with a glimpse of your life that they may not otherwise know about.

“Why should I write one?” Writing a Legacy Letter to those you care about can be an amazing gift that can carry on from generation to generation. Unlike a ‘last will and testament’ that focuses on the allocation of money and possessions, the Legacy Letter focuses on the emotional connection you have with those you care most about. It provides richness to the passing of one generation to another.

“How do I get started?” There are a few “tools” you might want to gather before you begin. I suggest you purchase a blank journal or composition notebook. You can compose your thoughts in a document on your computer, but the handwritten journal is more personal. If you have poor handwriting, you might consider the typed alternative to be a better choice. If you have physical limitations that prevent you from writing or typing, try recording your Legacy Letter on tape or digital video.



“What should be included in a Legacy Letter?” A Legacy Letter shares those things that you want to tell your loved ones and survivors. This isn’t a list of what you want your executor to do or say. It is a way to speak directly to your loved ones and share with them everything you want them to know about yourself and about your connection with them. Here are some ideas to help you get started:

- What was your favorite game to play as a child?
- How did you meet your spouse?
- What house did you live in that you liked the most in your life?
- What is your favorite childhood memory?
- What was the toughest challenge in your life and what did you learn from it?
- Who made the greatest impact on your life and why?
- What do you remember about being a new parent?
- When did you get your first car/truck? What was it like?

It might seem like this is a “end of life” task, but it shouldn’t be. It should be a “living my life” task that begins today. Making it a “living and breathing” narrative of who you are is the whole point of the Legacy Letter. You can share it whenever you like. It is a gift that those who care about you will cherish.

One of the many resources we all have to manage is our time. It is a limited resource, but we tend to think we can stretch it beyond that limit by overbooking our calendar, saying “yes” to one more commitment or by cutting the amount of sleep we get to get one more thing done. When we do this, who really suffers? Our family!

How can we be better managers of our time, reducing the stress we place on ourselves and our family? We need to take care of the “big stuff” first then add the smaller tasks in as time permits. First determine what your top priorities are. This is the “big stuff” I mentioned earlier

Leo Babauta, a contributing writer to Success Magazine, identified three mistakes people commonly make when setting their priorities.
Source: <http://www.success.com/article/setting-priorities>



They don’t think about it. People bumble through their daily living letting life just happen to them rather than guiding their time and efforts in a prioritized direction. Their priorities are not consciously set. When this happens they end up doing tasks or committing to responsibilities that they really don’t want to do.

They make it too complicated. Sometimes folks who indeed set priorities get caught up in the management of those priorities with complicated systems and overwhelming detail. If you identify the really important “big stuff” first, you shouldn’t need a complicated system to guide you. When

you are focused on these priorities and you “own them”, your choices will gravitate in the right direction.

They don’t live their priorities. Just like making “New Year’s Resolutions”, setting priorities can be an easy task. The hard part comes in when you have to commit to them! Babauta states it this way: “What you actually do, how you live your life, reveals your actual priorities. Your priorities are what you live, not what you put on paper.”

Dodging these priority pitfalls is an intentional and mindful act. Here are 3 steps for success in this area:

Consciously set priorities. What do you want your priorities to be? What do you want your life – both personal and work - to really represent? Who and what are most important in your life?

Keep priorities simple and focused. Choose to focus on only 2-3 priorities and do them well, rather than scatter your time beyond what is humanly possible. If you have other “small priorities”, put them on a “someday” list.

Live your priorities. You can do this best when you put the first two steps into action. Keeping things simple and focused is the best formula for time management.

For a great visual of how this works, check out this short video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmV0gXpXwDU>

Healthy Habits

Be An Active Adult



Being physically active is important for your health. Adults who are physically active are less likely to develop some chronic diseases than adults who are not active. Here are 10 tips to help you get started:

- Start activities slowly and build up over time. If you are just starting physical activity, build up slowly. This will prevent injury. After a few weeks, increase how often and how long you are active.
- Get your heart pumping. For health benefits, do at least 2.5 hours each week of physical activity that requires moderate effort. A few examples include brisk walking, biking, swimming, and skating. Spread activities over the week, but do them at least 10 minutes at a time.
- Strength-train for healthy muscles and bones. Do strengthening activities twice a week. Activities that build strength include lifting weights, doing push-ups and sit-ups, working with resistance bands, or heavy gardening.
- Make active choices throughout the day. Every little bit of activity can add up and doing something is better than nothing. Take the stairs instead of the elevator, go for a 10 minute walk on your break, or park further from work and walk.
- Be active your way. Mix it up – there are endless ways to be active. They include walking, baking, dancing, martial arts, gardening, and playing ball. Try out different activities to see what you like best and to add variety.
- Use the buddy system. Activities with friends or family are more enjoyable than doing them alone. Join a walking group (or a Walk Kansas team!), attend fitness classes at a gym, or play with the kids outside. Build a support network – your buddies will encourage you to keep being active.
- Set goals and track your progress. This fits perfectly into the Walk Kansas program where you keep a record of the time you are active each day (10 minute minimum) and the fruits and vegetables you eat. Planning your physical activity ahead of time and keeping records will help you meet your goal.
- Add on to your active time. Once you get used to regular physical activity, try to increase your weekly active time. The more time you spend being physically active, the more health benefits you will receive.
- Increase your effort. Add more intense activities once you have been moderately active for a while. You can do this by turning a brisk walk into a jog, swimming or biking faster, playing soccer, and participating in aerobic dance.
- Have fun! Physical activity shouldn't be a chore. It can help you feel better about yourself and the way you live your life. Choose activities that you enjoy and that fits your lifestyle.

Connecting with Kids

Last month I shared some actions you can take to build a stronger relationship with your children. The home and family environment are ideal for helping children feel secure in building long-lasting relationships now and into their adulthood.

Accept your child's temperament. I have three boys and they each have their own unique temperament. A child's temperament is developed at an early age and becomes fairly galvanized at a young age, as well. Kids tend to be classified into one of four categories: a) easy-going; b) challenging; c) slow-to-warm-up; or d) mixed temperament. As a parent or guardian, you also have your own temperament. When your temperament is different from your child, it can lead to conflict. However, accepting each of your children for who they are will help them feel secure and comfortable with their personality and identity.

Invest time with your children. Making time with your children a priority is critical. This doesn't mean that you "entertain" them every chance you get. Rather, you simply need to be present with them (in both mind and body.) Spending "ordinary" time with them is as important as the "memory making" moments you create. Quality moments require many hours of little moments – talking about your children's day, having conversation, reading and telling stories.

Deliberately touch your kids every day. This may seem like common sense, but we can't take touch for granted with our

kids. We can give them high-fives, fist-bumps, head scratches, hugs, or goodnight kisses – all of which help us connect on a different level. Those with babies need to hold their children gently and lovingly, not just when they are caring for their physical needs (such as feeding or burping.) Those warm and safe embraces set the stage for your children to learn that relationships are nurturing and secure.



Teach your children important values and life lessons. You are the first and most important teacher your child will ever have. Teaching them how to handle both the positive and negative feelings they have is important to their emotional well-being. Remember that children learn just as much from what they see YOU doing as they do hearing what you tell them. Parents need to show and handle their positive and negative emotions in a healthy way, too.

Demonstrate tenacity to your children – the "stick-to-it-ness" needed when we are up against a challenge. Tenacity helps create a resilient family structure, one that generates warmth with clear limits and realistic and constructive boundaries.

Childhood is the "practice ground" for your child to become a healthy and secure adult. Your positive efforts to give them the foundation they need to transition to adulthood is critical.

Source: 10 Tips to Connect with Your Child: This Emotional Life: www.pbs.org; Janie Lacy

Upcoming Geary County Extension Programs

****Requires pre-registration. Call 238-4161 to pre-register unless otherwise noted****

February

- 16— President's Day—Geary County K-State Research and Extension Office is closed.
- 24— Walk Kansas Team Registrations Due in the Geary County K-State Research and Extension office by 5:00 p.m. One payment per team, please. We now accept credit card and debit card payments in our office for a nominal transaction fee.

March

- 3— MPI Parenting Class**—Devin Educational Resource Center, 123 Eisenhower is 6-session class open to any parents with children ages toddler to teens to help support and equip parents with the challenging task of raising children. Please call the Geary County Extension office to register for the program. The class consists of 6 consecutive sessions held from 6-8 p.m. held Tuesday nights. A \$10/session registration fee is required before the class begins. The total cost for the class is \$60.00 per individual or \$90.00 for the parent and a support person. The class continues through April 14.
- 3— Eat Smart, Move More**—12th Street Community Center Nutrition and Wellness program is free and open to the general public. Please call the 12th Street Community Center (238-1678) to reserve your seat.
- 12— Knowledge at Noon**—”Sharing Your Legacy”, Valley View Estates, 1440 Pearl Drive, Junction City, KS. Program is free to the public. Please call the Extension Office by March 11 to reserve your seat.
- 15— Walk Kansas begins**—Incentives will be awarded two the first two teams to turn in their report for week 1!
- 17-19— Quilts of Valor 4-H** work sessions hosted at Quilter's Yard, Junction City, KS 1—4 pm daily.
- 23— Walk Kansas Week 1 reports due by noon.



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