



December 2022

# THE EXTENSION CONNECTION

Wyandotte County K-State Research and Extension

## Director's Note

**Denise Dias,**

Wyandotte County Director

Can you believe we are counting down to Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukah, and of course New Year's? No matter how or when you celebrate the season we would like to wish you glory, peace, and happiness for the holiday season. Please take time to celebrate all that is good in this world and as the new year unfolds, commit to being more kind and understanding of each other! Happy Holidays!

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# EMBRACE THE HOLIDAYS AND LEARN OTHER CULTURES TRADITIONS

Jessie Carr

4-H Youth Development Agent

With winter comes colder weather, weeklong breaks from school, snowmen, hot cocoa with marshmallows, and opportunities to embrace diversity! The winter months are filled with unique traditions, celebrations, and holidays around the world

Kids all around the world celebrate different winter holidays! Some holidays may be familiar to us while others might be new to us. Taking the time to learn about winter celebrations encourages a sense of inclusion and connection for youth and youth too! Many winter celebrations focus on togetherness, generosity, and connection - how awesome is that?

Learning about holiday traditions around the world can be fun but should also be done with good intention to foster the value of diversity and inclusion. We can teach youth that people can celebrate different holidays based on their culture and own beliefs. We may be unfamiliar with another person's traditions, but that doesn't mean that we can't show respect to one another.

Check out these winter holiday resources:

·[PBS - All About the Holidays](#)

·[National Geographic Kids - Winter Celebrations](#)

·[Michigan State University - Teaching Children About](#)

[Winter Holidays](#)

·[McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership -](#)

[A Look Around the World, Winter Celebrations](#)

# 4-H Youth Development



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# MANAGING HOLIDAY STRESS

Chiquita Miller,  
Family and Consumer Sciences Agent

With the anticipation of the holidays, there can also be that feeling of dread – how are you going to get everything done on an already busy schedule? For many people, the extensive preparations they engage in to pull off those picture-perfect holidays create so much stress, that they cannot even enjoy themselves. The “picture-perfect” part is where much of the stress originates. Many try to pattern our holiday plans with visions of TV specials, Movies, and a host of other commercialized examples in our heads.

## Six Tips to Prevent Holiday Stress and Depression

Acknowledge your feelings. If someone close to you has recently died or you cannot be with loved ones, realize that it is normal to feel sadness and grief and to express your feelings.

Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they do not live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion.

Stick to a budget. Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. Do not try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts. Maybe try alternatives such as donating to a charity in someone’s name, giving homemade gifts or starting a family gift exchange.

Plan ahead. Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities.

Learn to say no. Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed.

Seek professional help if you need it.

While the holidays are a time of joy and sharing, they can also be a source of significant physical and mental stress. Managing holiday stress requires setting priorities as well as avoiding or reducing as many stressors as possible.

<https://extension.illinois.edu/blogs/family-files/2019-11-26-managing-holiday-stress>

# Family and Consumer Sciences



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# EFNEP CLASSES BEGINNING IN JANUARY!

**Stephanie Whatley-Hopkins**  
EFNEP Agent

After over a year and a half without EFNEP classes, we finally have a session of 10 classes on the calendar. K-State Research and Extension Wyandotte County is proud to partner with Keeler Women's Center, who has graciously offered to host classes starting in January of 2023.

The curriculum that we are offering in partnership with Keeler, is called Families Eating Smart and Moving More. Eating Smart and Moving More is a curriculum that offers simple solutions to help participants eat smart and move more while providing the skills to be able to eat more meals at home, eat healthy when eating out, and move more in their everyday routine. Each lesson challenges participants to make positive changes to achieve good nutrition, increase physical activity, practice food resource management skills and practice proper food safety techniques. Together we will explore 10 different topics on food and nutrition, food safety, and more. We will also prepare and taste a healthy EFNEP recipe every week.

Some foods we will taste include: a fruit salad, stir-fry, and mini-meatloaves. Not only will we leave class with new tools to try within our homes, but also a new recipe idea for dinner.

Classes will be hosted at Keeler Women's Center at 759 Vermont Ave, Ste 100-B, Kansas City, KS 66101

Classes will be held Thursdays from 10:00 am - 11:30 am on the following dates:

- January 5, 12, 19 and 26
- February 9, 16, 23
- March 2, 16, and 30

Upon completion of the 10-class session, participants will receive a graduation certificate and a bag including small kitchen items, a step counter, stretch band, and water bottle.

## Nutrition and Food Safety



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# HEART HEALTH EIGHT ESSENTIALS

Lori Wuellner

Food and Nutrition Agent

It's no secret that physical activity and healthy eating are key components to a better "you"! But research has revealed other lifestyle behaviors that impact our health. The American Heart Association (AHA) recently released "Life's Essential 8". This "checklist" incorporates the latest data on how to maintain cardiovascular health and reduce risk for heart disease, stroke and other major health problems.

The eight key factors are:

- 1) Eat better
- 2) Be more active
- 3) Quit tobacco
- 4) Get healthy sleep
- 5) Manage your weight
- 6) Control cholesterol
- 7) Manage blood sugar
- 8) Manage blood pressure

This [link](#) will take you to a one-page fact sheet with a summary of each of the eight essentials... However, if you want to take a closer look at each factor go [to the following](#)...

For example, if sleep is calling your name, then click on the Health Behaviors: Get Healthy Sleep and you'll discover straight-forward information on how sleep affects your health, the benefits of sleep, and tips for success. Each fact sheet is available in both English and Spanish. On this same webpage there is a bonus, Resources, for each of the eight essentials.

(Source: American Heart Association; and Tufts Healthy & Nutrition Letter, Oct. 22)

For information on food safety, nutrition, and wellness email Lori Wuellner at [lwuellne@ksu.edu](mailto:lwuellne@ksu.edu)

# Nutrition and Food Safety



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# BOOSTING YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

Jan McMahon

Nutrition Program Assistant

As we enter into the winter months, we try to keep ourselves and our families safe from various “bugs” (germs). Our immune system functions throughout our body. It is composed of specialized cells that prevent or limit infection in our bodies. Immune cells recognize substances that enter our bodies and attempt to remove them if the substance appears to be harmful to us. Consuming a healthy diet is one of the best strategies for having a healthy immune system.

Produce is high in vitamins A and C which are antioxidants. [This app/bulletin](#) will help you to know what is in season and most economical.

Protein is an important part of our defense team and strengthens our immune system. Especially, respiratory, gastrointestinal, and urinary tract infections.

Our fourth immune booster is Vitamin E. Sunflower seeds and oil, safflower oil and almonds are good sources of vitamin E

Our fifth team member is vitamin D, the sunshine vitamin. Unfortunately, in northern states, the sun is only strong enough for our bodies to absorb vitamin D from March to October. Foods with Few foods are naturally rich in vitamin D3. The best sources are the flesh of fatty fish and fish liver oils. Vitamin D is in fortified milk.

Next up are our B vitamins, especially B6, folate, and B12 Last but not least are the minerals iron and selenium.

Also, staying hydrated and exercising are very important.

Research has shown some nutrients, including protein, and certain vitamins and minerals, have specific roles in immune health. If we lack any of these nutrients, our ability to fight infection can decrease.

## Nutrition and Food Safety



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# COMMUNITY VITALITY GRANTS

**Denise Dias**  
**Extension Director**

Looking for some funding to support a local project? Here are some opportunities for project funding for your community.

AmeriCorps Kansas has three grant offerings available. The AmeriCorps Kansas Operational Grant is for organizations interested in operating an AmeriCorps program in the state. Matching funds are required. The due date is December 5, 2022:

The AmeriCorps Kansas Planning Grant is for organizations interested in a 12-month planning period to develop an AmeriCorps program in the state. The due date is January 31, 2023, and this offering also requires matching funds:

The AmeriCorps Public Health Grant is for organizations interested in operating a public health AmeriCorps program in Kansas. It does not require matching funds and the deadline is December 5, 2022:

The Sunderland Foundation has grants in the funding areas of higher education, human services, arts and culture, and healthcare and hospitals. You can view the application with a link to funding areas at the top of the page where you can view previously awarded projects to get an idea of what types of efforts they fund:

## Show Pride for Your Community!

The Kansas PRIDE Program is a partnership of K-State Research and Extension, the Kansas Department of Commerce, Kansas Masons, and Kansas PRIDE, Inc.

Kansas PRIDE is dedicated to serving neighborhoods and communities across the state to encourage and assist local government and volunteers in making their communities a better place to live and work.

Local groups identify what they would like to preserve, create, or improve for their future. Then, working with the resources of K-State Research & Extension and the Kansas Department of Commerce, community volunteers pull together to create their ideal community future. Need help getting started? Just ask!

# Community Development



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# POINSETTIA, A WINTER DELIGHT

Lynn Loughary  
Horticulture Agent

Nothing signals the holiday season like Poinsettias. Poinsettias are the most popular Christmas plant and the best selling potted plant in the United States. Seventy-four percent of Americans still prefer red poinsettias, followed by white and then pink. The new fad is painted poinsettias that come in any color and are available through most florists.

The showy colored parts of poinsettias that most people think are the flowers are actually colored bracts (modified leaves). The flowers of the poinsettia are in the center of the colorful bracts. When selecting a poinsettia, a fresh poinsettia is one on which little or no yellow pollen is showing on the flower clusters in the center of the bracts.

Modern poinsettia varieties stay attractive for a long time if given proper care. Place your poinsettia in a sunny window or the brightest area of the room, but don't let it touch cold windowpanes. The day temperature should be 65 to 75 degrees F. with 60 to 65 degrees at night. Temperatures above 75 degrees will shorten bloom life, and below 60 degrees may cause root rot. Move plants away from windows at night or draw drapes between them to avoid damage from the cold.

Poinsettias are somewhat finicky in regard to soil moisture. Avoid over watering because poinsettias do not like "wet feet." On the other hand, if the plant is allowed to wilt, it will drop some leaves. So how do you maintain proper moisture? Examine the potting soil daily by sticking your finger about one inch deep into the soil. If it is dry to this depth, the plant needs water. When it becomes dry to the touch, water the plant with lukewarm water until some water runs out of the drainage hole, then discard the excess water. Be sure to punch holes in the foil covering the pot so the water can drain into a saucer.

It seems that every year about this time the rumor is resurrected that poinsettias are poisonous. This is NOT true. Though there may be an allergic reaction to the milky sap, there has never been a recorded case of poisoning.

## Horticulture



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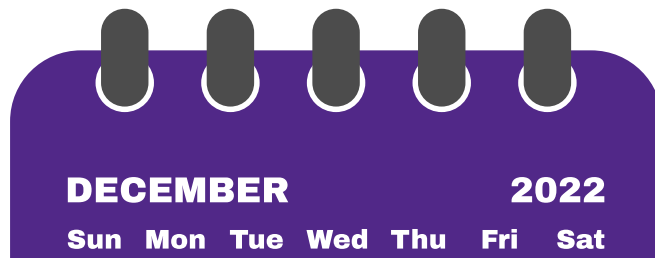
# Upcoming Events



## December:

**December 1 - Designing and Installing Paths and Raised Beds in the Home Garden**

**December 13- Healthy Brain, Healthy Body**



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

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