

CONNECTIONS

A NEWSLETTER ABOUT FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS & PERSONAL GROWTH

INSIDE

2 Intercultural Engagement
Questions & Answers

3 Extension Spotlight

4 Personal Development

5 The Culture of Farming

6 Resources for Strengthening
Intercultural Engagement

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

10 Ways to be Culturally Sensitive

1 Avoid stereotypes

Although some cultures may have common characteristics and/or traits, get to know the individual rather than making assumptions based on race, gender, or ethnicity.

2 Ask rather than assume

Sometimes, when we are unfamiliar with a culture different from our own, we make certain assumptions based on what we hear from others. Ask respectful questions from those you want to learn from rather than assume based on hear-say.

3 Recognize cultural strengths

Although a certain culture may be different, all cultures do have inherent strengths. Take time to notice the strengths of a culture.

4 Recognize similarities & differences

Some people want a certain culture to follow the mainstream culture while others try to maintain their uniqueness. All cultures will have similarities and differences. Recognizing similarity creates connection; recognizing difference helps define the strength of uniqueness.

5 Agree to disagree

Although a certain culture may not behave in a manner in which you agree, it is ok to agree to disagree and still remain friendly and respectful.

"Greetings! I am pleased to see that we are different. May we together become greater than the sum of both of us."

*Vulcan Greeting
(Star Trek)*

(Continued on page 7.)



FROM THE DESK OF

Charlotte Shoup Olsen



Intercultural Engagement

Strengthening our skills in intercultural settings is part of professional development for reaching new potential Extension audiences and for creating greater understanding of our world.

Our intercultural concepts and attitudes have been forming since our preschool days, according to researchers who have been looking at racial and cultural identity development. We become aware of skin color

differences and group affiliation at a very early age. Thus, strengthening our skills to work with others different from ourselves is a personal journey that never really ends.

We hope that the information in this month's *Connections* gives you some helpful resources for continuing your journey.

Charlotte Shoup Olsen, Ph.D.
W. Jared DuPree, M.S.

Answers to Questions from Kansas County Extension Agents

For those of you who attended the session titled *The Government's Healthy Marriage Initiative and How It Relates to Extension*, a couple of questions were asked. Here are the answers to those questions:

Question:

Are there other funding opportunities for community coalitions working on marriage education services other than federal grants?

Answer:

The Kansas Health Foundation regularly gives Recognition Grants to communities in the work that they do. It is possible that the marriage education work might be considered. Thanks, Marsha Weaver, for this information. The website for exploring this option is:

<http://www.kansashealth.org/grants/index.jsp>

Question:

Who would be eligible to apply for the federal funds designated for the Community Healthy Marriage Initiative if and when the funds become available?

Answer:

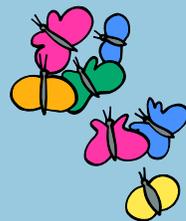
The Family Life and Marriage Specialist, Pamela C. Marr, with the Administration for Children and Families Regional Office in Kansas City, indicated that each funding stream has different eligibility criteria. As each new funding stream is announced this year, the FCS listserv will be sent those requests for proposals in which Extension is eligible. If you would like to see a sample of a Federal Register grant announcement from last year, please let Charlotte know.

Extension Spotlight Donna Martinson

Donna Martinson has been a Kansas county Extension agent for 33 years with her first ten years in Elk County and the remainder in her current position in Geary County. However, she has had multiple job experiences throughout her life such as waitressing, custom sewing, switchboard operator (at the K-State Athletic dorm!), office clerical assistant, and farming. Both of Donna's degrees come from K-State—a B.S. in Home Economics Education and a M.S. in General Home Economics.

Teaching is the most rewarding aspect of Donna's job, whether through her news columns, radio programs, staffing a fair display, or holding a class. She says, "I love it when something the Extension office provides empowers people with knowledge and skills that make a difference in their lives." Because of Ft. Riley, Geary county has two major populations—those who live there for a long time and those who come and go. Serving both of those populations, in addition to all the sub-groups within each population, can only be accomplished by active involvement in lots of coalitions and cooperative programming. Her best success comes from getting Extension materials in the hands of collaboration partners who have direct contact with many families. That collaborative work, though, has been quite an accomplishment with retired military in many community positions who have had to shift from a military model.

Donna always wants to do more, but tries to keep a balance without overextending her physical abilities. Since Geary County has a high birth rate, many of her efforts are geared



"Over time Geary county has adopted a community problem-solving approach. Seldom is any major issue tackled by one entity alone. This community collaboration has allowed us to approach issues from different directions, but all toward the same goal."

Donna Martinson

to cooperatively working on child nutrition, child care, parenting, financial management, relationships, health and other identified issues.

Donna and her husband, Gail, have two adult children. Gail is a carpenter, but would really love to raise horses, hunt and fish full time. Their daughter, Jill, teaches language arts at Junction City Middle School. Jill and her husband are the *parents* of a very special *granddog*, Faith. Their son, Clint, his wife, and two children live in Dodge City where he works at Excel. In her spare time, Donna likes to sew, read, spoil the grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and the neighbor kids, do yardwork, and be with her husband and family. And for the future—"Someday I'm going to have a studio where I can sew, refinish furniture or old trunks, or fiddle around to my heart's content, then close the door so no one can see my mess—I mean my *creativity in progress!*"



PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

Thinking About Your Own Family

Understanding and exploring your heritage and culture can be a rewarding experience. It can help you develop a stronger sense of identity, unify your family, and establish family legacies.



Family Legacies

Family legacies are traits, characteristics, experiences, and/or traditions that are carried through each generation that offer positive growth and development in the family. A family legacy is more than a tradition of working in the same vocation or always having a certain activity at holidays. A family legacy tends to be a more long-term characteristic (e.g., our family takes time to serve others, our family seeks to work hard, our family is honest, our family uses humor to lift others, etc.).



- ◆ Significant Events (War veteran, special award, special ability / talent)
- ◆ Significant Characteristics (Humorous, intelligent, witty, quiet, etc.)

If you have trouble answering some of the questions, take some time to call relatives who might know more about a particular relative. A cultural genogram can help a child, teenager, or yourself examine your heritage, traditions, and legacies. Many come away from this project with a deeper sense of purpose and understanding of others and themselves.

Family Uniqueness

Each generation may carry on legacies from past generations. In addition, when a couple comes together, both partners bring with them family legacies that will merge with each other. This can be a positive experience. The strengths of two family lines can come together to strengthen a new family. Yet, every person is an unique individual with differences and strengths that no one else will carry. Focusing on the family legacies, strengths, and uniqueness of the new family creates a new sub-culture. It is a part of the larger family line culture that will carry on through time, but it is also the creation of a brand new family with uniqueness and strengths that can face unique challenges.



Cultural Genogram

A cultural genogram is a family tree that identifies cultural traits. This can be a great activity to do as a family in order to examine one's culture. Draw on a large piece of paper your family including parents, kids, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins (three-four generations). Next to the parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, list some of the following characteristics:

- ◆ Ethnicity / Race
- ◆ Heritage (Family-Line's origin—Germany, Norway, Spain, Ghana, Mexico, Japan, etc.)
- ◆ Occupation

The Culture of Farming

Farming is a way of life. It exemplifies work that never seems to end. According to Gulley (1974) and Lewis (1991), the value of work has high ethical significance in farming. Agricultural beliefs and values of today's farmers arose from conditions in both colonial America and Europe stemming from Protestantism. The Protestant work ethic exalted the concept of work to a level of religious, personal, and social significance. Farmers work to have dignity, a value of achievement and the morality of self-reliance.

This work ethic continues to be powerful in American farming, and has a direct influence on all aspects of a farmer's life. Farm work has clear advantages and benefits as a way of life; however, the value and meaning placed on work can have its drawbacks. Long hours of farm work have contributed to injuries, psychological stress, conflicts in relationships, and other health care and safety problems and concerns (Bushy, 1993).

Psychological stress has been linked to how farmers view work (Bushy; 1993; Labao & Meyer, 1991; and Lorenz, Conger, Montague & Wickrama, 1993). The meaning of work held by farmers has generated expectations and standards by farmers for other workers hired to work on farms. When expectations for hard work from others have not been met, stress and frustration have been reported. Additionally, stress can have profound effects on relationships between spouses and their children.

This study interviewed 15 men and women farmers in southeastern Wisconsin in order to understand the culture of farmers. The interviews gathered data in order to understand the strengths and difficulties of the culture itself.

In summary, farm work is viewed as positive, contributing to family cohesion, discipline, and high moral values. Work is associated as a fundamental cultural value in farming (Gulley, 1974). On the other hand, work can be detrimental, costing farmers social relationships, psychological well-being, leisure, and personal health and safety.

Research applications for Extension agents may include the following:

- ◆ Recognize the strengths and values that come with the culture of farmers (e.g., hard work, strong sense of identity, strong moral values, family cohesion).
- ◆ Encourage a balanced life between family, work, and self.
- ◆ Offer ideas to maintain and strengthen the family relationships, manage stress, and seek support and resources for physical health and financial well-being.

This information is based on the article: Lueders-Bolwerk, C. A. (2002, Winter). **The culture of farm work and its implications on health, social relationships and leisure in farm women and men in the United States.** *Journal of Cultural Diversity* retrieved from theweb on February 13, 2005, at http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0MJU/is_4_9/ai_98135734/pg_3.

Other references cited from this article are:

Bushy, A., (1993). Rural women: Lifestyle and health status: Nursing clinics of North America, 28, 1, 187-197.

(Continued on page 7.)



Resources

Resources for Strengthening Intercultural Engagement

Websites

www.ediversitycenter.net

National Extension Diversity Center—Network with Extension professionals about diversity issues.

<http://extensionenespanol.net/>

Extension En Espanol—A national clearinghouse for Spanish language educational resources operated by and for Extension professionals.

www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/espanol/index_eng.html

En Espanol Extension Resources—University of Illinois Extension

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/latino/>

Resources for Working with Latino Clientele—University of Wisconsin Extension-UWEX

www.aces.edu/urban/spanishindex.html

A comprehensive Spanish language resource web site—Alabama Cooperative Extension Service

www.ces.purdue.edu/iec/

International Extension Curriculum—*Strengthening Extension's Capacity for International Engagement*

www.splcenter.org

Southern Poverty Law Center—This center is known for its 'teaching tolerance' resources that can be used in many settings.

Thank you to Carol Young and Dr. Zelia Wiley Holloway for their help in compiling this list.

Conference

13th Annual Multicultural Conference

April 7 & 8, 2005

Garden City Community College

Garden City, Kansas

Co-sponsored with K-State Research & Extension

This year's conference will feature:

- ◆ Faces of America (one-person play)
 - ◆ Old Colony Mennonite panel discussion
 - ◆ African-American (contrasting cultural differences among African Americans)
 - ◆ Character portrayal, A Black Woman of the West
 - ◆ Inter-racial relationships discussion
 - ◆ Addressing stereotypes about people with disabilities
 - ◆ Latino vs. Hispano-Cultural Controversy
 - ◆ Asian experiences
 - ◆ Home on the Range: Kansas Folklore
- To register, contact: Anna Worden
(anna.worden@gcccks.edu or call 620-276-9652)

Books

Developing Cross-Cultural Competence (2nd Ed.), A Guide for Working with Children and Their Families, edited by Lynch, Eleanor W. and Marci J. Hanson; Paul H Brookes Publishing Co., 1998.

This is a user friendly book, written for social services, but relates well to Extension education. □

Ethnic Families in America, Patterns and Variations (4th Ed.), edited by Charles H. Mindel, Robert W. Habenstein, & Roosevelt Wright, Jr.; Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1998.

This is a recognized diversity field reference.



continued from page 1

10 Ways to be Culturally Sensitive

6 Seek to understand more than being understood

We often assume we know how others feel. Taking time to understand someone can open doors of friendship and mutual respect.

7 Engage in culturally diverse activities

Inviting others from different cultures to participate in activities or attending diversified activities helps us become more familiar with each other and creates understanding.

8 Avoid using disrespectful terms or jokes

Some people will criticize, use disrespectful language, and/or make fun of others of a different culture when they feel uncomfortable. This only creates distance and misunderstanding. Treating others with respect works well with all cultures.

9 Learn more about a culture

Going to a festival, reading a book, and/or watching a good movie about a different culture are great ways to become more familiar with a different culture from your own. Familiarity and understanding can help us know how to be sensitive with others.

10 Pro-active kindness

Taking the initiative to say “hi”, ask questions, help a family, and/or invite a family over is important. Making the first step invites others to be more open and kind to you. You never know; you may gain a friend for life in the process.

continued from page 5

The Culture of Farming

Gulley, J., (1974). Beliefs and Values in American Farming. United States Department of Agriculture: Economic Research Service.

Lewis, A.G. (1991). When is women’s work done. Minnesota Science and Agriculture Experimental Station 46 (3), 1.

Labao, L.M and Meyer, K (1991). Consumption patterns, hardships and stress among farm household. Research Rural Social Development (5) 191-209.

Lorenz, F.O., Conger, R.D., Montague, R.B and Wickrama, K.A.S., (1993). Economic conditions, spouse support, and psychological distress of rural husbands and wives. Rural Sociology 58(2) 247-268.