

CONNECTIONS

A NEWSLETTER ABOUT FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS & PERSONAL GROWTH

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PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

21 "Giving" Ideas



1 Adopt a friend/child (do services and activities for/with).



2 Adopt a pet.

3 Prepare holiday boxes for needy children/families.



4 Clean someone's car (inside and out).

5 Clean someone's home.



6 Cook meals for needy/elderly.

7 Do someone's laundry.



8 Donate blood.



9 Donate clothes/toys/household items.

10 Give holiday decorations to needy for their homes.

11 Help out at shelters/hospitals/nursing homes.

12 Assemble hygiene kits (for shelters).



13 Do litter cleanup (roads/parks).

14 Make stuffed toys/dolls for children.

"Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle."

Plato



FROM THE DESK OF

Charlotte Shoup Olsen



Give Yourself a Gift!

During this holiday period, Jared DuPree, the co-editor of this newsletter, shared the following tips on how to prevent burnout that he uses year round.

Tips from Jared Dupree...

On a personal note, this is what I do to prevent burnout:

1. Exercise three times a week with someone else.
2. Set boundaries on my time (no work at home after 5:00; no work at home on weekends) even if I have a lot to do.
3. Read books outside of my field to help me experience other themes of life.

4. Eat a healthy diet. This has been crucial for me. I cut out carbonated beverages, fast food, and caffeinated drinks.
5. Schedule family time and date nights with my wife.
6. Learn to say 'no' to tasks that I really don't have to do and do not want to do in terms of work or other responsibilities.

I hope you take some time this holiday season to give yourself a break and enjoy the art of receiving gifts/help. I believe it is an important half of knowing how to give.

Happy holidays!

Jared DuPree
Charlotte Shoup Olsen



15 Read to elderly.

16 Sing at hospitals/nursing homes.

17 Volunteer for children's story telling at local library.

18 Teach reading to the illiterate.



19 Wash windows.

20 Cleanup yards.



21 Invite a new family in the area for dinner.

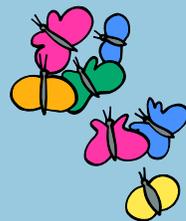
Extension Spotlight

Elaine Johannes

Dr. Elaine Johannes has worked for K-State Research and Extension since 1990 in various jobs relating to family, youth, and community development. Most recently, she accepted a tenure-track position as a Youth Development Specialist in the School of Family Studies and Human Services. Elaine has her PhD in Lifespan Human Development (2003), master's in Adult and Community Counseling with a gerontology minor (1982), and a bachelor's degree in Psychology with a psychology technical specialization (1979). She is purple through and through with all degrees from K-State.

The most rewarding aspect of working in KSRE for Elaine is working with people both locally and across Kansas as "they inspire that extra effort and enrich my life with their insights." But she admits that "just getting organized and getting to meetings on time" is a challenge.

Her current work relates to youth development including their health and well-being (i.e. healthy lifestyles, physical activity, and relationship building). The USDA funded work she has done over the past 15 years has focused on strengthening families in order to support the healthy development of youth. From the early rural mental health and family farm stress to the current teen leadership for physical activity and 'Operation Military Kids' projects, "I've tried to support cutting-edge Extension work, benefiting Kansans."



"The thoughts of 11 year old N Kosi Johnson, African AIDS victim, speak to my future ambitions, "Do all you can with what you have in the time you have in the place you are."

Elaine Johannes

Elaine also teaches and advises students in the Youth Development Masters online program through the Great Plains IDEA initiative. Additionally, she is working on a Hispanic Youth Development pilot proposal to add to her Extension work.

In her personal life, Elaine likes to run, read, and be a sports fan in addition to being a spouse, wage-earner, parent elder caregiver, mother of a teen, and schedule organizer. She has learned over the years that "we all carry multiple roles that extraordinarily enrich our lives. There's not one way or the right way to be a family, and that's what makes life so thrilling...Everyday is a grand learning experience!"

Helping the “Helpers”

Burnout is a common occurrence among helping professionals. There are a number of ways to take time out to help yourself as a helping professional. It is important to learn to receive help as well as give help. Here are some ideas that address burnout:



■ Recognize the symptoms of burnout.

■ Learn to ask for help.



■ Be aware of the limitations of your family, your job, and yourself.



■ Maintain discipline in daily responsibilities and duties.

■ Take “time out” during the day.

■ Diversify responsibilities to put more variety in both your job and your home life.

■ Take short vacations at least twice a year.



■ Try to change little things that gnaw at you and accommodate to those you cannot change.

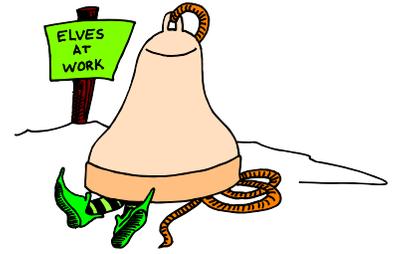


■ Organize your time so you can concentrate on vital tasks.

■ Admit burnout is a real problem for you; don’t try to cover it up.



■ Distinguish between stressful aspects of your job or home life that you can change, and those you cannot change.



■ If too much time is being taken away from the satisfying aspects of your life by unimportant, trivial duties, establish a set of priorities for yourself. Discuss your priorities with your boss and your family members.



■ Make a list of the things you hate most on the job or at home. Dispense with or delegate all you can.

■ Alternate major tasks in which results will not be seen for awhile with

those that will have immediate productive and gratifying results.



■ Reach an awareness of your motivation in dealing with your family or in entering your specific career field.



Source: <http://www.coping.org/growth/burnout.htm#tips>

Volunteering

by John Wilson

In the research, volunteering is considered a part of a number of activities. Rather than spontaneous help that is reactive to a problem, volunteering is proactive and entails some commitment and time. In other words, volunteering typically is planned with the sole purpose of helping someone else usually in a public, formal environment (i.e. Salvation Army, local hospital). Volunteering is also considered different than being part of a voluntary organization. Wilson states, "There is something to be said for separating these roles. The first consumes the collective goods the organization provides, while the second helps produce those goods." In addition to this definition, the article also stated the following patterns and trends associated with volunteering:

- 56% of the United States has volunteered in the past year (1998 survey).
- Married people are more likely to volunteer.
- Parents with older children are more likely to volunteer.
- As one ages, the likelihood of volunteering goes up.
- In North America, females are slightly more likely to volunteer than males.
- Volunteers tend to be more politically active.

In addition, a number of benefits have been found related to volunteering:

- Volunteering among the youth lowers antisocial behaviors.
- Volunteering has been correlated with better physical health in old age.
- Volunteering decreases mortality rates.
- Volunteering increases self-esteem, self-confidence, and life satisfaction.

The research suggests that a large part of the US is taking part in volunteering. During a season of giving, volunteering is often one of the best gifts one can offer. In the end, many report receiving more intrinsically than those they are serving. As helping professionals, one can motivate families to volunteer, not only to help those that might be in need, but to strengthen one's own family.



Resources

Resources for the Holidays

News Release Websites

From the University of Kentucky Extension...

- Holiday Gift Certificate
<http://www.ca.uky.edu/fcs/holiday2003/holidaygiftcertificate.pdf>
- Universe of Possibilities - Skills for Creating Happiness and Blessing Others
<http://www.ca.uky.edu/fcs/possibilities/index.htm>

From Kansas Research & Extension News...

- Choose Life Balance: Controlling Stress During Holidays—Or Any Time
http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/news/sty/2002/controlling_stress103102.htm
- 'Get in Shape' Emotionally Before Holiday Stress Hits
http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/news/sty/2002/holiday_stress112002.htm
- Tradition Can Endure Even After Kids Know 'Santa Secret'
http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/news/sty/2002/santa_tradition121002.htm

Past KSRE News Releases

Other K-State Research and Extension News Releases that may be in your files:

- Tis the Season to Trim Stress
Released: November 15, 2004
- Tame Holiday Cash Crunch
Released: December 6, 2004
- Life Changes Prompt Holiday Adjustments
Released: November 13, 2003
- Family Gatherings Can Be Beneficial
Released: November 21, 2003
- Games Good For Children, Families
Released: November 25, 2003
- Edible Gifts: Mail Early, But Wisely
Released: November 7, 2003

