Stepping into a stepfamily is no easy task

Although the national divorce rate is about 40 percent, nearly three-fourths of those divorced individuals will remarry. Of those remarriages, roughly 65 percent of them involve children from a previous relationship. In fact, according to the U.S. Census Bureau projections, around the year 2010 there will be more stepfamilies than any other family form.

Any marriage is something that takes a tremendous amount of work, but creating a successful stepfamily that will endure the tests of time can be a very difficult task for many families, said Ron Cox, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension family sciences specialist.

“Many people believe that stepfamilies are just like first-marriage families, but that’s just not the case,” Cox said. “The blending together of different personalities, histories, loyalties and habits can be challenging. Couple that with feelings of hurt and loss that many people bring to the new family and there can be numerous obstacles to overcome. But the biggest problem is that they are not the same kind of problems that a traditional family has.”

All stepfamilies have something in common – they have experienced the loss of previous family relationships. This loss could have been caused by death, divorce or some other split-up of a couple in which at least one is a parent. This loss will have to be grieved in some fashion and there are several stages of grief, including denial, guilt, anger, depression, the upward turn, reconstruction and acceptance. A person may experience one, some or all of these emotions while grieving the loss of the previous family unit. However, the grief process is often short circuited when one of the parents enters into a new romantic relationship.

It is the feeling of loss and the expectation of a happy new family that can create a confusing situation for most stepfamilies.

Cox said a marriage is supposed to be a time when a new relationship and family is born and the beginning of “happily ever after.”

“When a stepfamily is formed it’s also a time of sadness, anxiety and grief over what is being left behind. What can make matters worse is that different members experience the grief and the new family differently and they don’t always understand how the other people could be feeling ‘that way,’” he said. “This often creates tension and can result in fights and hurt feelings.”

It is important to keep in mind that the grieving process from divorce tends to follow a cycle of love, anger and sadness that people may experience several times. In the beginning, these feelings may be quite strong and intense, but as time passes, they will typically decrease and become less problematic. Be sure to allow everyone time to work through these feelings before entering into a new relationship.

“It’s extremely important to keep your expectations realistic,” Cox said. “If unrealistic expectations guide how you bring your stepfamily together, you’re setting yourself up for disappointment. Make the commitment to find the right kind of help to ensure your stepfamily will endure the tests of time.”
Do you cook for one or two?
By Katie L. Reim

STILLWATER, Okla. – According to the most recent census the United States has more than 61 million one-and two-person households.

If you are part of this statistic sometimes it may feel like cooking for one or two may not be worth the hassle. However, everyone needs to eat.

Janice Hermann, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension nutrition specialist, said preparing a meal for fewer people can be healthy and taste good.

“When you are planning your meals remember to incorporate a variety of foods,” Hermann said. “Homemade meals usually are more nutritious, better tasting and more economical compared to eating out.”

Hermann said frozen meals require little preparation, but you may need to add fruit, vegetable, bread, salad or milk to make it well-balanced.

Cooking for fewer people usually leaves leftovers. Plan ahead on how the leftovers can be used.

“If you have leftover ham, it can be used in an omelet, sandwich or in scalloped potatoes,” she said. “Leftover baked chicken can be chopped up on a salad or used to make a chicken salad sandwich. Chili leftovers can be used on a baked potato.”

Leftovers can also be frozen in smaller portions for later use.

Hermann said when keeping leftovers it is important to date and store them properly. Leftovers should be refrigerated within two hours. Use food storage containers and use the general rule of refrigerated leftovers can be kept for one to three days and frozen leftovers can be kept for one to three months.

“Most recipes can be cut in half or in thirds,” Hermann said. “Also look for cookbooks that have recipes designed for one or two.”

Hermann suggests using the following chart if you are cutting a recipe in half:
- ¼ cup equals 2 tablespoons
- 1/3 cup equals 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons
- ½ cup equals ¼ cup
- 2/3 cup equals 1/3 cup
- ¾ cup equals 6 tablespoons
- 1 tablespoon equals 1 ½ teaspoon
- 1 teaspoon equals ½ teaspoon
- ½ teaspoon equals ¼ teaspoon
- One large egg equals one small egg or just the egg white

For cutting a recipe in thirds:
- ¼ cup equals 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon
- 1/3 cup equals 1 tablespoon plus 2 1/3 teaspoons
- ½ cup equals 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons

**Wellness tip: Health benefits of strength training**
The health benefits of strength (resistance) training include increased bone mass, increased muscle strength, and improved quality of life. Strength training makes daily tasks such as carrying groceries and lifting children easier. Injury becomes less likely. Incorporating strength training into your life helps reduce the risk of developing obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

**Don’t forget** to send in your newly elected officers and new enrollment forms.

Membership dues need to be paid by each groups treasurer by November 1st.

$12.50 per member.
Celebration of Crafts

The Grady County OHCE Celebration of Crafts Show and Quilt Exhibit is scheduled for November 13th and 14th at the North Building of the Grady County Fairgrounds. The Craft Show and Quilt Exhibit will be open on Friday, November 13th from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. and Saturday, November 14th from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

More than 80 vendor booths are expected at this year’s Craft Show. Most booths will feature handmade items. Local OHCE groups will have booths which will feature homemade goodies just in time for the holidays. A concession stand will be available which will be hosted by Springcreek OHCE.

Vendor applications for the Craft Show and Quilt Exhibit are currently available at the Grady County Extension Office or online at www.oces.okstate.edu/grady. Cost of booths is $35 for one space or $60 for two spaces. If you are interested in a booth, please contact Extension Office at 224-2216.

Quilts have traditionally been heirlooms passed down through the generations. Many of these quilts have a story to tell about past family history. Do you or someone you know have a quilt with a story? Please consider exhibiting the quilt at this year’s OHCE Quilt Exhibit. Applications are now available at the Grady County Extension Office or from Gail Bush (224-2280). Quilts are not judged and there is no fee to enter. Any size or pattern of quilt will be accepted. Quilt applications are due by October 29th.

More than 100 quilts have been exhibited at each of the past exhibits. The age of quilts range from recently completed to 100 years old. This year’s exhibit will feature a special exhibit for Wedding Ring quilts.

The public is encouraged to visit the exhibit and vote for their favorite. The quilt with the most votes will be awarded the “People’s Choice” Award. A special award will be given to the People’s Choice in the Wedding Ring quilt exhibit. There will also be workshops and demonstrations which are scheduled both days of the Exhibit.

DATES TO REMEMBER

| October 1 | OHCE Bi-Annual Leadership Training—County Officers |
| October 8 | Fall Council |
| October 13 | SW Dist. Membership Mtg. County OHCE president and Membership Chair or alternates should plan to attend |
| November 1 | Dues and Membership Forms in county office |

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“Baling Wire and Duct Tape” November Leader Lesson will be handed out at the Fall Council Meeting.
2009 Caddo County Free Fair had a record year—1951 entries in Open Classes. A huge heartfelt “Thank You” to everyone who donated their time and talent to making the fair so successful! OHCE volunteers deserve much credit for a beautifully displayed exhibit hall and delicious foods.