Tackle the piles of paper in your home

It’s the beginning of a brand-new year. When things are new and fresh, it’s easy to get motivated and make some New Year’s resolutions. What’s on your list? Losing weight? Exercising more? Clearing out the clutter? Getting in better financial shape?

According to the website tripsavvy.com, four of the top 10 New Year’s resolutions involve something to do with health, clutter and financial fitness, said Cindy Clampet, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension family resource management assistant specialist. “The holiday season can bring a lot of extras – extra food, extra company and even extra mail. You may have spent more money to prepare holiday meals and extra treats. Leftovers may have accumulated in your refrigerator,” Clampet said. “With all the hustle and bustle of various celebrations, that pile of mail can easily stack up and get overlooked. Dealing with your mail in a timely manner is important because an unpaid bill in the stack can quickly become a late bill.”

It can be easy to let the clutter in your refrigerator and on your counter or desk impact your finances. These are just a couple of reasons why getting physically and financially healthy, as well as getting a handle on the stacks of paper are so important.

Clampet said one reason so many resolutions that are related to health, finances and organization fail is because people try to bite off more than they can chew. “The trick to success in these areas is to start slowly and do just a little bit each day. In exercise or dieting to losing weight, saving money or getting out of debt, or organizing and clearing out your clutter, no step is too small to get started and it is never too late,” she said.

To get started, sort just one of your piles of paper. Sit down with that pile and go through each piece. You might put a small waste basket nearby, so you can throw away any junk mail. Immediately file anything that needs to be kept. If you come across a bill, pay it right then, either online or write the check. Get the stamps out and put those ready-to-mail bills in your purse or bag for mailing tomorrow!

“To help keep your enthusiasm from waning, tackle another paper pile every couple of days,” Clampet said. “If you try to do it all at once, you’ll get overwhelmed and quit. Take baby steps and you’ll eventually reach your goal.”

The beginning of a new year is a great time to start budgeting your money. With fun budgeting apps on your smartphone, it can be easier than ever to track your spending and saving. Clampet suggests trying an app called Every Dollar or another one called Mint. Both are free and fun to use. “Don’t worry if you don’t have a smart phone or aren’t technologically inclined. Good old paper and pencil will work just fine,” she said. “The important thing is to start a budget because it will show where your money is going.” Start by listing and adding up all your income. Next, list your expenses. Be sure to include everything such as house payment, utilities, student loans, retirement savings contributions and emergency savings. Don’t forget about payments that may not be monthly, such as quarterly tax payments, car insurance and even things such as back-to-school expenses. Add up your expenses and subtract them from your income. Hopefully there is money left over. If not, your choices are to either increase your income or trim expenses.

“Putting a budget down on paper really gives you a visual of how your money is being spent and will help keep you from overspending in any one category,” she said. “Making big changes is hard. Making a small change is easier and becomes a habit more easily. Then those good small habits can more easily become good bigger habits.”
Looking Ahead...

Our 2018 OHCE yearbook will be available in the Extension office by January 31, 2018! We’re looking forward to receiving the reports, secretaries books and Achievement points in January.

Woods County OHCE Achievement Night
February 26th

Perfect attendance awards, achievement awards, secretary’s books, scrapbook, OHCE Member, Young OHCE Member, Rookie OHCE Member of the Year and Heart of OHCE Award winners will be named at the OHCE Achievement Night on Monday, February 23rd in the Women’s Building at the fairgrounds.

All nominees from local groups for Rookie Member, Young Member, OHCE Member of the Year and Heart of HCE Member will be recognized!

Come early to enjoy the refreshments and feel proud of the work your group has done during the past year. The OHCE hostess groups are:

Grow & Share & Patchwork Friends

Reminders

- Mark March 16, 2018 as the date for the NW District Meeting in Langston, OK. Details will be provided at our OHCE Achievement Night.
- Each group is asked to provide one (1) dozen cookies for OHCE Achievement Night, February 26th at 6:30 p.m.
- OHCE Member Awards due to Extension Office by January 8th.
- Reports & Secretary books due to Extension Office by January 19th.

February Leader’s Training
January 25–1:30 p.m.
“Salad Essentials”
Woods Co. Courthouse
2018 OHCE Leader Lessons

Please note that the time for our Woods County OHCE Leader Lessons has changed! All Leader Lessons will be held at 1:30 pm in the Woods County Courthouse beginning in January.

The OHCE Executive Committee met and approved this change in December to help streamline the times for the educators who will be teaching the lessons.

If you have questions, please contact Susan Holliday at 580.327.2786 or email at susan.holliday@okstate.edu.

Thank you!

Northwest District OHCE Meeting

March 16, 2018

Langston University is the site of the 2018 NW District OHCE Meeting on Friday, March 16th. Located in Logan County just east of Guthrie, Langston University was established as part of the Land Grant College program in 1897.

Lunch will be served. Host counties are Kay, Noble and Logan. More details to come closer to the event!

TUSCAN STYLE CHICKEN SOUP

Tuscan Style Chicken Soup - a hearty soup with veggies and beans to warm up your belly!

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, peeled and chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme (or ½ tsp dried thyme)
- 1 stick of celery, sliced
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 litre (4 cups plus 3 tbsp) good-quality chicken stock (ideally homemade, but water with stock cubes will work too. Use water plus bouillon for gluten free)
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 1—(14oz) tin of cooked cannellini beans, washed and drained
- 2 skinless cooked chicken breasts, shredded
- 2 cups packed chopped kale
- Small bunch fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 tbsp finely grated parmesan

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Add the onion and cook for 10 minutes on a low-medium heat, stirring occasionally until softened.
2. Add the garlic and thyme and cook for a further 2 minutes. Add the celery, carrots and potatoes, stir, then add in the chicken stock, salt and pepper. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 20 minutes.
3. Add in the drained cannellini beans and cook for another 5 minutes
4. Add the shredded chicken and heat through for 2-3 minutes, then add the kale. Stir and simmer for 1-2 minutes until the kale has wilted. Test and season with more salt and pepper if needed.
**50-60-70-Year Members and Groups**

To obtain the 50-, 60-, or 70-year OHCE member certificate, a member must contact the Extension Office with their name, address, and year joined by March 1. To be eligible for this certificate, a person must be a current OHCE member in state, county, and local group, and have been a member in good standing for a total of 50, 60, or 70 years. Members will be recognized at the State OHCE Meeting with a certificate and a corsage.

Also, groups that have been in existence for 50 years (in 2016) will be also recognized at the state OHCE meeting.

**“Oklahoma Parks & Staycations”**

March OHCE Leader’s Lesson

Thursday, February 23rd

1:30 p.m.

Plan to have your group represented at 1:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Woods County Courthouse.

Barn Quilt Workshop

January 19, 2018

Alfalfa County Extension Office

602 W. Fifth St, Cherokee, OK

10am-3pm

$30 per person— Lunch provided

We will be making a 2x2 foot barn quilt on pre-painted plywood boards

Paints, brushes and boards will be provided