Springtime Cheer…

We usually hear about “spreading winter cheer” during the Christmas holiday season, but we feel this expression better suits spring instead. The harsh winter weather that Oklahoma has experienced in the past months has made it unbearable for many. That is why we would like to thank all of you for coming out to our early events, regardless of the uncompromising weather, including January’s Extension Conference and February’s New Extension Educators Orientation. We were lucky both conference dates experienced no major weather problems.

The Staff and Program Development team has had a busy start in 2010, and it is hard to believe that it is March already! We recently caught up with our In-service numbers (see page 6 for our 2009 year In-service totals), a project that we usually expect to finish by the end of January. We are also in the process of getting caught up with other projects, including our annual office spring cleaning.

In this issue of the Extension Exchange, readers will notice a huge emphasis on spring cleaning and organization. Not only is this important to us, but we do practice what we preach. During the year, maintaining files and disposing of any unused items ends up merely being side projects and tend to lack consistency. Therefore, we dedicate the Springtime to rank organization as our top priority. After all, spring is the bridge that connects winter to summer - a significant transition phase.

So if you do decide to tackle it this year, we wish you a Happy Cleaning! And we hope you enjoy this month’s issue of the Extension Exchange.

From Joyce, Krista and Dianne
The Staff and Program Development Team
Spring Cleaning

Why do it?

1. Less clutter often allows us to focus easier
Life sometimes goes by faster than we are able to catch up. Cleaning out all of our unnecessary things can provide a fresh focus on projects that should be started by now or completed. Feeling fresh and refocused may also make you happier and more at ease.

2. We may find lost items that can be useful
How many times have you been cleaning and found a lost earring or a twenty dollar bill? Cleaning out your work space, house and car can lead to finding all sorts of things you thought you had lost forever, and maybe some things you did not even realize were lost.

3. Re-organizing can lead to new ideas
New ideas can come from getting your life back in order. Often, we get too caught up in catching up. Having an organized place to start can allow you to come up with fresh ideas, or start old projects you have forgotten about.

4. Jump starts our passion again
Looking back over old materials might spark an interest in taking an old project down a new road. Using old interests might lead to some pretty interesting findings from a new perspective.

5. Find things that need to be done and have been pushed aside
It is common to accidentally push aside projects that should be completed sooner rather than later. Doing a good spring cleaning will allow you to reconnect with the tasks you have left behind.

To get you started

1. Set a date on the calendar - Stick to the day you scheduled for spring cleaning. If you do not schedule a date on the calendar there will always be something else that will come up to fill your time.

2. Get the entire office staff involved - Let all co-workers know about the spring cleaning date and allow them to share the same enthusiasm. Offer an incentive to yourself and others. Use each other’s enthusiasm to tackle what needs to be done.

3. Plan out your day - Save the best for last. Do the chore you like the least, first. You won’t dread getting to it if you accomplish it right away and once it is done you will be motivated to do some of the easier things on your list.

5. Don’t be afraid to throw away junk - Over-accumulated stuff is called junk. Look to your local donation centers. Extra collection of stuff means extra collection of dust.

6. Stay focused on cleaning only - Forget about all of the other things you have going on in your life, like the stack of monthly reports that need to be completed - just submit those tomorrow.
### How Organized Are You?

In honor of Spring cleaning, it helps to know how much you keep things in order. Let organized-chaos be a thing of the past, by starting out with a comparison between how confident you feel about your organization skills and where you actually fall on the organization scale.

Answer these 10 questions and tally up your points for each answer. At the end, let us know whether you turned out to be Super-Organized, a Messy-Molly or somewhere in between. Enjoy!

1. **How long does it take you to find a document or piece of information?**
   - [ ] Five minutes or less—I know exactly where I left it! (1 point)
   - [ ] About fifteen minutes—it’s either here or there. (2 points)
   - [ ] A day or more—I can’t even remember the last time I saw it! (3 points)

2. **How often do you discover that you’ve double-booked your daily schedule?**
   - [ ] Frequently—but my coworkers are used to it! (3 points)
   - [ ] Occasionally—I feel terrible, but sometimes, it just happens. (2 points)
   - [ ] Never—all my appointments are carefully recorded. (1 point)

3. **How often are you late for meetings and appointments?**
   - [ ] Frequently—I’m the queen/king of tardy! (3 points)
   - [ ] Sometimes. Breakfast, misplaced keys, picking an outfit—these are things that slow me down. (2 points)
   - [ ] Never—I respect people’s time and I expect the same from other people in return. (1 point)

4. **How much of your desk is covered with paper?**
   - [ ] 10% or less—a couple of neatly stacked piles and most of them are filed. (1 point)
   - [ ] 50% - I have a lot of stuff, but I swear I know where everything is! (2 points)
   - [ ] Where is the desk? (3 points)

5. **Which statement accurately describes your perception of hosting meetings?**
   - [ ] I love to host meetings! (1 point)
   - [ ] I don’t mind hosting meetings—it’s a lot of work, but it’s worth it. (2 points)
   - [ ] I’m not fond of hosting—I find it stressful and doesn’t allow me to spend time on other work. (3 points)

6. **When do you do your office cleaning?**
   - [ ] At the same day every week. (1 point)
   - [ ] Every week, when I find time. (2 points)
   - [ ] When I run out of desk place. (3 points)

7. **How many day-planners and/or calendars do you write appointments in?**
   - [ ] It’s all there, in one source. (1 point)
   - [ ] I have 2-3 places to store scheduling info, and I consolidate whenever I can. (2 points)
   - [ ] I have notes, books, and reminders in all kinds of places! (3 points)

8. **When do you complete monthly reports and other requested reports?**
   - [ ] As soon as they arrive, of course! (1 point)
   - [ ] Most often, before the deadline. (2 points)
   - [ ] When I find them, I will let you know! (3 points)

Source: Chatelaine Magazine
9. How frequently do you return to the house to retrieve forgotten items?

_____ I always have what I need for the day. (1 point)
_____ On occasion, I have to run back to grab something. (2 points)
_____ It seems like I always leave something behind! But it’s only a real problem if it’s my keys. (3 points)

10. How often do you clear out your e-mail and/or computer files?

_____ Once a week or more. (2 points)
_____ Every six months, or more. (1 point)
_____ Clear out….email? (3 points)

Results

10 to 15 Points— You are Super Organized
Congratulations! Your life is definitely in order. You have a system and you stick to it. Sometimes, you cannot understand why others cannot be more like you. But the question is not so much how you organize, but really more about what you want to accomplish when organizing. This is an area where people’s point of views vary. Some believe that organizing consists of long hours of filing - tasks that actually take longer than deciding to just dump everything in one place.

Here’s a tip: Watch how people around you utilize things. If they need help organizing, help them realize how much it will save time, without a grueling lecture. For instance, if a colleague has a tendency of stacking file folders on the floor when he or she is not using them, place a basket there.

16 to 25 Points— Mid-Range Messy
Like most of us, you are always on-the-go. Yet, you understand that an organized life saves time for other things. Occasionally, you ask for help when you cannot handle chores on your own, and you do not always maintain perfect order. Many people are like this because they are the type of people who hold onto things, and find that the random items that are useless now, can be useful in the future. The problem with this mentality is that it often leads to clutter, and eventually forgetting why they kept these things in the first place.

Consider the value in the items you decide to keep. Ask yourself why keeping them would benefit you in the future, and whether the storage time will be short-term or long-term. Place items somewhere they can easily be found, and label containers so you know what is inside.

Above 26 Points — Messy Molly!
You may think of yourself as a laid back, go-with-the-flow and low-maintenance employee, but in the workplace, mid-level to high maintenance is important if you are constantly having to meet deadlines or scheduling events. Missed meetings, appointments or deadlines can place you at a disadvantage, not only with the progress of your job goals, but also productivity.

Evaluate your system of organization (or lack of one). Plan ahead whenever you can. Take a few moments and create lists for the tasks at hand. Always store your lists and schedule notes in one place.

By creating a routine, your life will run more smoothly.
For eight new Extension educators, 374 Ag Hall was their “home away from home” from February 16–18. It was here, at the New Extension Educator Orientation, that they had the opportunity to become part of the Extension family. They were able to mingle with their new colleagues and state specialists in a variety of ways. Special training sessions were given by county educators, area specialists and other campus faculty and staff. The orientation is designed to bring new educators up to date on OCES policy, give them tools they need to succeed and welcome them into the family.

A special thanks to those who presented at the orientation, as well as those specialists who attended the meet-and-greet session. The educators were showered in give-aways that were donated by local patrons. To all those who donated, we appreciate your support.
CPR / First Aid Class

How prepared are you for a medical emergency? Would you know what to do if emergency medical personnel were not available?

Training sessions on Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid will be offered to all Extension personnel on April 1 and April 22. Two sessions will be offered on both days. The morning session is from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. and the afternoon session is from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. There is no charge for the class and we will pay for the cost of the cards. The session on April 1st will be held in Ag Hall 139 and the session on April 22 will be held in Ag Hall 374. Please select the date and time that best suits your schedule. To enroll, go to the 2010 in-service training site http://dasnr10.dasnr.okstate.edu:9090/Inservice/inservice/list.action.

After taking the class, participants will be certified by the American Red Cross for one year in CPR and for three years in First Aid.

2009 In-service Totals

We’ve tallied up the numbers for all of last year’s In-services. As you can see, folks were very busy with training sessions. If you think of a good topic for an In-service, send your ideas to joyce.martin@okstate.edu

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<th>Total # In-services</th>
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</table>
How Many Mistakes Did You Find?

In last month’s issue of the Extension Exchange, we challenged readers to count how many mistakes they could find in the following paragraph.

Answers to the business writing quiz:

Nothing is more embarrassing than making a writing mistake. Of course, we all think it’s funny when we spot a misspelled word in magazine ads or on billboards. If one of your employees is making these mistakes, it can be disastrous. And if you have a typo in a memo to the boss, how do you think they will view your professionalism? These kinds of mistakes can be prevented, regardless of the person’s job title. The people who make the mistakes can seriously affect how others view your company. That can cost any organization money and hurt its profits.

= 16 Mistakes Total

Be honest. Did you find ALL 16? If you did not, that’s OK. Most people found fewer than 16.

Your Exchanges

Congratulations to our winner, Shelli Gray, for correctly identifying all 16 errors.

Thank you for your tremendous response.

Below are those who responded to us...

Ruthana Landwehr      Debbie Richardson      Danette Russell
Ilda Hershey          Sheila Kautz           Michael Smolen
Suzanne McNatt        Jessica Nickels        
Mickey Simpson        Denise Menke           
Patricia Debow         Jessica Riggin        

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St. Patrick's Day is an enchanted time - a day to begin transforming winter's dreams into summer's magic.

~Adrienne Cook

Wise Owl
Words of Wisdom

Toon of the Moment

Source: http://comics.com

Reminder!

♦ The 2010 Career Ladder Guidelines have been posted on the Staff Development Intranet site at http://intranet.okstate.edu/staffdevelopment. If you would also like a copy, contact Joyce Martin for a PDF version via email.

♦ Career Ladder Portfolios are due by 5 p.m. on Monday April 19, to 255 Ag Hall.

♦ The 2010 Secretary Directory has been posted to the Staff Development Site at http://intranet.okstate.edu/staff_development2010SecretaryBok.pdf

Send us Your Exchanges!

We'd love to hear from you! Please contact us with any feedback. All efforts will be made to include your ideas in The Extension Exchange.

Email: joyce.martin@okstate.edu

Phone: (405) 744-7969

Until our next exchange!