



# **STRENGTHENING OKLAHOMA FAMILIES** *-Major and Blaine Counties-*

## **Taking Small Steps for Health and Wealth in 2022**



The beginning of a new year can sometimes have people thinking about goals or resolutions. Seventy-five percent of Americans make resolutions; about 46% of those concern health and 34% concern money. And yet, 80% of those resolutions are abandoned by the end of January.

The mistakes some people make concerning resolutions is trying to achieve too big a goal, the goal may not be specific enough, it is unrealistic or it involves trying to break a habit 'cold turkey' instead of in smaller stages. One key to goal success is to make small steps toward the ultimate goal and increase efforts as time/money/and success allow.

Thinking about where you are now and what your goals for the future might be. Putting a specific number to a goal can make the goal seem impossible to achieve. For example, instead of setting a goal to lose 50 pounds this year, instead set a goal of walking one mile a day. When that becomes habit, increase the distance. Don't get discouraged if you miss a day – just continue on the next day.

The same idea applies to savings goals. Instead of setting a goal of saving \$1,000 this year, which is just \$83.33 per month, challenge yourself to find \$85 in savings out of your usual expenditures. That's \$21.25 per week. Give up the daily trip to the coffee shop, pack your lunch two or three days per week. Those costs add up quickly. The more ways you think of to save, the quicker you'll meet your goal.

Many goals having to do with health and wealth are interconnected. Some habits that make a person unhealthy cost money, such as smoking, drinking or eating out. Cutting back on these expenditures will make you healthier and wealthier.

It's important not to bite off more than you can chew. We all like quick gratification and if it seems you're not reaching your goals quickly, it's easy to lose interest. Using a tool called the step-down principle helps people be more successful and feel less deprived if their spending or calorie consumption is reduced in gradual stages as opposed to eliminating an item completely.

To visualize the step-down principle,

imagine a staircase with four or five steps. On the top is the most expensive or highest calorie option and the bottom step is the least expensive or healthiest option.

The step-down principle is simply a way of getting what you want but not using the most expensive option. For example, you want to treat your family to a night at the movies. There are options to cut the expense. The nighttime movie, plus snacks is the top step. The next step is going to the matinee, which offers discounted tickets and often has snack specials. Another option is going to a theater that features older movies where ticket prices are lower. Better yet, watch the movie on a streaming service you already pay for or borrow a DVD from a friend or the library, and prepare your own snacks at home.

The step-down principal applies to eating out, as well as other discretionary expenses such as clothing or vehicles. Shop resale stores for clothing. Buy a pre-owned vehicle. Eat out four times per month instead of eight. Restaurants often have larger portions, so share an entrée and skip the appetizer and dessert. You're still enjoying the activity, but it's costing you much less than before.

Interested in cutting calories? Apply the step-down principal in the kitchen, too. Reduce oil and sugar in baked goods by up to one-third for the same results. Substitute lower fat dairy products for those higher in fat. Try using fruit puree or applesauce in place of the fat in quick-bread and cookie recipes.

These same principles apply to exercise. The top step may be no exercise. The next step down is walking for 15 minutes three times per week. Next try walking for 30 minutes and do 10 minutes of weightlifting four times per week.

The small steps you take with both health and wealth can add up to big changes over time and is so much easier to achieve than trying to stick to a huge goal that seems unrealistic and unattainable. Using the step-down principle may also help you develop some better habits that will carry over year after year.

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Major County OSU Extension

### **Blaine County OSU Extension Center**

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## Extend the Life of a Christmas Tree after the Holidays

Families looking for a fun activity after the holidays should look no further than the fresh-cut Christmas tree in their living room. The tree came into the home from nature and now, after the sound of jingle bells fade away, it can be returned to nature.

Once the ornaments and lights have been removed, consider using the fresh-cut tree to help the wildlife in your landscape – particularly our feathered friends. You'll not only be providing food and habitat for the bird population but also providing hours of fun for your family. Place the tree outdoors in the tree stand, a bucket of dirt or even tied to a fence post, and decorate it with tasty treats for the birds to provide them with nourishment needed in the cold, winter months. The tree will also add visual interest to what can sometimes be a bleak winter landscape. Natural wreaths and garland can also be used.

Help attract birds by creating some ornaments that can be hung on the branches. Use cotton or another natural fiber to hang the natural ornaments because the birds can use this material later for nesting. Some easy ideas include: Strings of cranberries, popcorn or cereal; slices of fresh apples or oranges; pinecones smeared with peanut butter and rolled in a bird seed mix or black oil seeds; garlands of red or green grapes; small mesh bags filled with chopped fruit.

Sometimes young children may be sad when it's time to take down the tree and other decorations, but turning it into a bird feeder can extend the joy of the holiday a little longer. It's a great outdoors activity for your kids to burn off some energy from those sugary treats they may have eaten during the holidays.

Caution should be used when using peanut butter as part of bird food treats when temperatures are warmer than normal. When it's warm outside, the oil can separate and get on the birds' feathers, which makes them unable to regulate their temperatures. One way to combat that issue is to mix the peanut butter with cornmeal. The cornmeal will help absorb the oil, but the peanut butter will still be sticky enough for the bird seed to stick to it.

This can also be a fun educational opportunity for families. Learning doesn't have to stop during the Christmas holiday simply because school is out. Turn this time into an ongoing science project. Together with your children, learn about wildlife that's right in your own backyard. For the best results, don't place the tree right next to your home. Move it toward the back part of your yard so you won't scare the birds when you're trying to observe them. Maybe a variation on bird hunting: Check out a library book about Oklahoma birds and keep track of how many can be found feasting on the treats that have been hung on the tree. To learn even more about what types of birds or other wildlife that visit the tree when you aren't watching, attach a trail camera to the tree to get an up-close view of the new backyard friends.

Even though the holidays can go by quickly, turning your fresh-cut tree into a bird feeder is one way to extend that feeling of joy.

OSU Extension offers additional information regarding landscaping and gardening to attract birds. Contact the county office for details.



## Food Handlers: Food Safety Training

**Choose from one of these 2022 dates:**

**-January 18, April 19, July 19, October 18**

**(other dates can be scheduled as requested)**

**-3:00 P.M.**

**-Online Format Only- Zoom- (participants will need internet access)**



Everyone is welcome to participate in any of these **free online** Food Handlers Food Safety classes presented by Major and Blaine Counties OSU Extension. This is a basic food safety class that will last approximately 1 & 1/2 hours. Anyone currently working in any capacity with food service and/or regularly cooking for large groups is encouraged to attend. All participants passing the final exam will receive a certificate.

Please register at least one week prior to the class you plan to participate in. We will need your name, phone number and email address.

Contact/Presenter is: Dana Baldwin, Extension Educator– FCS/4-H & Major County Extension Director  
dana.baldwin@okstate.edu (e-mail)

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Blaine County OSU Extension  
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# Blaine County OHCE News and Notes



## Thank You!

Thank you to everyone that helped to make the Holiday Bazaar & Santa's Village a success once again. Vendors and participants were all pleased with the day!

## Lesson Leader Trainings

The Lesson Leader Training in January (for February meetings) is Thursday, January 27 at 10 a.m. at Watonga Library. The lesson is "10 Tips to Improve Mental Health". Please plan to attend.

The Lesson Leader Training in February (for March meetings) is Thursday, February 24 at 10 a.m. at the Watonga Library. The lesson is "On No, I Think I've Just Been Scammed". Please plan to attend.

## Hostess & Leader Sheets

Please turn in your groups 2022 Hostess & Leader Sheet to the OSU Extension Center by January 21. These were emailed out to group Presidents in December.

## State Officer/Committee Nominations

Nominations are due February 1 for district rep, state officers, committee chairs and committee members. Those interested should contact Dana by January 21 so forms can be completed. Yes, you can do this!

## Check us out on Facebook!

For updates and announcements, check out and "Like" our page on Facebook: **Blaine County OSU Extension**

## We're on the web, too!

In addition to Facebook, check out and bookmark our website for information: <https://extension.okstate.edu/county/blaine/index.html>

## Awards and More

**Local and County Award Book Reports** (each county and each local group may enter one report book in each category: Cultural Enrichment, Family Issues, Healthy Living, Leadership Development, Membership, and Resource Management).

**Life Story Essays** (entries must be written by an OHCE members).

Instructions for these items are available, as well as assistance in completing them, from Dana at the OSU Extension Center. All items are due no later than Friday, January 21 so they can be submitted together by the state deadline. Let's get some recognition for all of your hard work!

## County Officers Meeting

County OHCE officers will be meeting quarterly in 2022 to discuss and help make plans for upcoming events. The first meeting of the year will be on Monday, January 24 at 12:00 noon at the Watonga Library. See you there!

## Fair Superintendents Meeting

Blaine County Fair superintendents will meet to discuss any needed changes to fair classes on Tuesday, January 25 at 4:00 p.m. at the Watonga Library. If you are not a fair superintendent but have some suggestions for changes, please let one of them know or call the OSU Extension Center prior to January 25.

## Spring Association Meeting

The 2022 Spring Association Meeting will be held on Thursday, March 10 beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the Noble House. More details will be available after the January 24 county OHCE officers meeting.



## 2022 Class Sessions

**February 28, March 7, 14, and 21 or April 4, 11, 18 and 25**

February/March session will meet from 3-5:00 p.m. at the Blaine County Fairgrounds in Watonga

April session will meet from 6-8:00 p.m. at the Major County Fairgrounds in Fairview

For parents and other caregivers where the following topics will be addressed:

- Being an Active Parent      -Building Courage & Self Esteem      -Cooperation & Communication
- Understanding & Redirecting Misbehavior      -Responsibility & Discipline      -Active Parenting for School Success

**Fee for the class is \$20.00 per participant per entire session.**

Please pre-register no later than one week prior to the first class date of the session you plan to attend.  
(at least 3 people must be pre-registered for the class to be held)

**If interested, contact either the Major or Blaine County OSU Cooperative Extension Center.**

580.227.3786 (Major County) 580-623-5195 (Blaine County)

# 2022 CREATIVE COOKING WORKSHOPS



*-brought to you by the OSU Extension Centers in Alfalfa, Blaine, Major and Woods Counties-*

**-Thursday, February 3** at the Woods County Fairgrounds in Alva-  
*Scone Making 101 and Creative Charcuterie*

**-Thursday, May 5** at the Blaine County Fairgrounds in Watonga-  
*Breakfast/Brunch Ideas and The Great Crepe Escape*

**-Thursday, August 4** at the Major County Fairgrounds in Fairview-  
*Tailgating Foods and Best-Ever Bar Cookies*

**Workshop times: 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. each day**

**Fee: \$10/per person each day**

**Please RSVP and pay the fee no later than one week prior to the workshop you plan to attend.**

**Contact your OSU Extension Center:**

Alfalfa County-580.596.3131

Blaine County-580.623.5195

Major County-580.227.3786

Woods County-580.327.2786

## JELLY ROLL LAP QUILT WORKSHOPS

Friday, March 11- Major County Fairgrounds, Fairview

*or*

Friday, April 8- Blaine County Fairgrounds in Watonga

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown

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Participants will complete a lap quilt made with jelly roll fabric strips.  
(Fabric will be a variety of prints and colors.)

Participant fee is \$60 and includes snacks, drinks, and lunch.

Participants will need to bring their own sewing machine, extension cord,  
fabric scissors, straight pins, measuring tape, iron & ironing board.

**Please RSVP and pay the fee no later than one week prior to the date you plan to attend.**

**Contact the Major County OSU Extension Center at 580-227-3786 or the**

**Blaine County OSU Extension Center at 580-623-5195 with questions.**

**Email: [dana.baldwin@okstate.edu](mailto:dana.baldwin@okstate.edu)**



2022

# Lunchtime Learning Sessions

-Major and Blaine Counties-

*Featuring Seasonal Make-and-Take Activities  
and a brief "Journey Through Health" Educational Program*

One hour sessions from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.

Major County: County Fairgrounds in Fairview/Blaine County: Watonga Public Library

**-Snowman Board & Journey Through Health "Eyes"-**

Wednesday, January 19 in Major County

Tuesday, January 25 in Blaine County

**-Spring Carrot Door Hanger & Journey Through Health "Mouth, Teeth & Gums"-**

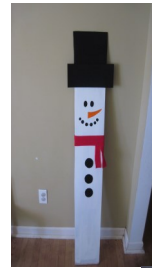
Wednesday, February 16 in Major County

Tuesday, February 22 in Blaine County

**-Mason Jar Easter Centerpiece & Journey Through Health "Stomach"-**

Wednesday, March 16 in Major County

Tuesday, March 22 in Blaine County



**Bring your own lunch and come take part in these programs.  
\$10.00 fee per person per session to cover the cost of supplies.**

**Register by calling either the Major County or the Blaine County OSU Extension Center.  
(Major County- 580-227-3786/Blaine County- 580-623-5195)**

**RSVP and pay \$10.00 fee at least one week prior to the session you plan to attend.**



**Dana Baldwin**

*Major & Blaine Counties Extension Educator  
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and Major County Extension Director*

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# EXTENSION



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**OKLAHOMA COOPERATIVE  
 EXTENSION SERVICE**

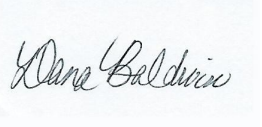
*Oklahoma Home & Community Education, Inc. (OHCE) is a local and state wide partner with Cooperative Extension which brings the best knowledge from OSU to its members. Join a local OHCE group and enjoy programs that help make Oklahomans be their best.*

[www.OHCE.okstate.edu](http://www.OHCE.okstate.edu)



*Family & Consumer Sciences assists communities, families, youth and individuals address issues of health, wealth and well-being through research-based Extension education and programs that are proven to work.*

Newsletter Editor:



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