



EXTENSION

STRENGTHENING OKLAHOMA FAMILIES Family and Consumer Science News

Winter 2026

Small steps can lead to big changes for better health in 2026

New year. New you. At the dawn of a new year, many people plan goals they want to achieve, and living a healthier lifestyle is often part of the plan.

However, these goals don't necessarily mean making drastic changes or starting over. The focus should be on consistency, said Nila Pradhananga, OSU Extension food and nutrition security specialist.

While we're excited for the new year and have high hopes for achieving the big goals we've set for ourselves, sometimes those goals lose their luster after a few weeks," she said. "This is why it's important to focus on staying consistent with achievable goals and outline the steps it takes to get to the finish line."

Pradhananga suggests setting SMART goals – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

- **Specific:** Be specific with the goals – make sure they're clearly defined. Instead of setting a goal to eat healthier, be more specific. For example, set a goal to eat a healthy breakfast five days a week.
- **Measurable:** Goals must be measurable to track progress effectively. Indicate how many days or minutes of exercise are attainable.
- **Achievable:** Goals should be realistic and within reach to support successful outcomes. Consider current schedules and resources to help make goals a reality. Plan to do meal prep on Sunday to ensure healthy meals throughout the week.
- **Relevant:** Make smaller plans that are relevant to what matters most. Each smaller goal should clearly connect to the bigger picture.

For example, if the overall goal is better stress management, setting a goal to take short walking breaks during the day would be relevant.

- **Time-bound:** While long-term goals are great, set a goal for shorter time frames and then reassess. This is a time when changes can be made to make goals more attainable.

"If eating healthy and meal-planning are your goals, but your schedule is hectic, look at resources that can help," Pradhananga said. "For example, for someone, grocery shopping could be time-consuming, so maybe grocery delivery or curb-side pickup would be beneficial. Take advantage of available resources that can help achieve your goals."

Also, identify patterns that hinder goal achievement. Is it a lack of planning, fatigue, lack of direction or some other cause?

"Once you understand the 'why' behind specific behaviors, it makes it easier to set realistic, meaningful goals and plan small, achievable steps toward change," she said.

She also suggests replacing behaviors with healthier alternatives. Consider what can be done differently instead of focusing on what behaviors need to stop. Small substitutions and gradual changes are often more sustainable than drastic overhauls.

"Don't give up if you fall short of your goals. It's a new, clean slate each day," she said. "Taking your plan one day at a time will help ensure a healthy 2026."

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Dewey County OHCE District OHCE Meeting

Mark your calendars for the West District OHCE Meeting (North Region) on Saturday, March 28, 2026, at Seiling High School, 100 N. Elm, Seiling, OK. This year's theme is "Life is a Picnic with OHCE." Ellis, Dewey, and Woodward Counties will serve as hosts.

Morning refreshments and a catered lunch are included in the \$30 registration fee. Late registration is \$35, and lunch cannot be guaranteed for late registrants. Registration is due to the county extension office or county OHCE president, Alayna Huber by February 27, 2026.

The meeting will begin with registration at 8:30 a.m., followed by the business meeting at 9:00 a.m. State officer and committee workshops will be offered, additional sessions will include:

- Cupcake Canvas
- Hats to Di 4 – Design Your Own Concert Hat - \$35 class fee (Payable cash at the workshop door)
- Native American Bead Work
- Plant Propagation
- Echoes of the Past – Holocaust History and Education
- Design to Dine: Planning Your Summer Vegetable Garden
- History and Etiquette of Picnics
- And many more

Dewey County Hostess Opportunities

As announced at the County Awards program, there are several opportunities for Dewey County members to participate in hosting the district meeting.

Before the meeting:

- Hem mini tablecloths, make jelly, bake bread for the 30 thank you baskets that will be given as speaker gifts.
- Visit local businesses or organizations and ask for donations for the swag bags that will be given to each participant.

Friday, March 27th – Meet at the high school cafeteria at 1:00 to help:

- Assemble the 30 thank you baskets
- Fill the swag bags with goodies
- Set up for the meeting – FFA students will be there to assist with heavy lifting
- Set up registration area

Saturday, March 28th – meeting day!! Sign up to help:

- Registration table
- Lunch serving lines
- Serve as a room hostess for an assigned workshop session(s).
- Assist with clean up after the meeting

Contact Alyana Huber, your local club president or the county extension office if you need additional information.

County OHCE T-shirts

County OHCE T-shirts are being ordered for Dewey County members to wear at the district meeting, and future events. T-shirt sizes need to be submitted to the county extension office by January 23rd.

Monthly Lessons

January's lesson, Brain Blitz – Keeping your wits has been delivered to lesson leaders.

February's lesson, Garden Planning – companion planting will be presented at the Seiling Senior Center at 10:00 on Friday, January 30th and then at the local club meetings in February.

March's lesson, Cooking for one or two on a budget will be presented at the Seiling Senior Center at 10:00 on Friday, February 20th and at the local club meetings in March.

One Dough Three Ways Workshop on February 24th ~ 1:00-5:00 ~ Fairgrounds in Taloga

Learn to mix up a quick batch of basic yeast dough. The recipe can be made into bread, dinner rolls and/or cinnamon rolls. Registration fee \$15.00 covers all supplies and equipment. Each participant will take home a loaf of bread, an 8" X 8" pan of dinner rolls, and an 8" X 8" pan of cinnamon rolls. To register contact extension office by February 20th.

Scams ARE on the rise: what you need to know

We're seeing a rise in impersonation scams where individuals pose as high-profile members of our organization and government entities, such as executives, department heads or senior leadership. These messages often appear urgent and convincing, using names and titles you recognize.

In addition, scammers frequently request gift cards as a form of payment. Gift cards are never a legitimate payment method for business transactions, government fees or organizational expenses. No executive, government official or reputable business will ever ask you to purchase gift cards for payment or favors.

Red Flags to Watch For:

- Messages claiming to be from a VP, director or senior leader using a personal or unfamiliar number.
- Requests that bypass normal procedures or ask for secrecy.
- Unusual urgency or pressure to act quickly.
- Instructions to buy gift cards and share codes or photos.
- Spoofed phone numbers: Scammers can make it appear as if the message is coming from a legitimate number, even one you recognize. Do not rely solely on caller ID or the displayed number.

What You Should Do:

- Do not respond or act on suspicious requests.
- Never purchase gift cards or send codes based on unsolicited messages.
- Block the number if you believe it is not legitimate.
- Verify the sender through official channels (company directory, internal email) before proceeding with any communication.



2026 West District Meeting North Region

Saturday, March 28, 2026

Seiling High School, 100 N. Elm, Seiling, OK

Registration: \$30

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"Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communications, program information or reasonable accommodations, need to contact Susan Routh, Family & Consumer Sciences DPS at 580.233.5295 or susan.routh@okstate.edu at least two weeks prior to the event."

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy



Strength Training Program for Older Adults

Strength training is no longer just for bodybuilders. Stay Strong, Stay Healthy is an eight-week, evidence-based strength training program designed for older adults who want to improve their quality of life and stay active. Classes are held in familiar settings such as senior centers and church halls, not the gym. The exercises are easy to learn, safe and effective. No need to wear special clothes—just comfortable, loose-fitting pants and shirt, along with sturdy, closed-toe walking shoes.

What are the benefits?

Strength training:

- Increases muscle strength
- Improves balance
- Enhances flexibility
- Strengthens bones
- Relieves arthritis
- Helps control weight
- Lifts depression
- Reduces stress
- Reduces risks for heart disease

Here's what we do

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy classes include:

- Warm-up exercises
- Eight strengthening exercises, with or without hand and ankle weights
- Cool-down stretches

Over the course of the program, you will increase your strength and improve your balance. After the eight weeks are over, you can continue the strength training program in the comfort of your home or with a group. Weights will be available on-site, and a trained instructor will help you learn and do these exercises safely.



Classes will be held at 9:00 a.m. at
Seiling Senior Citizen's Center

January 16

January 27

February 6

February 27

March 10

January 20

January 30

February 13

March 3

March 13

March 20

January 23

February 3

February 20

March 6

March 17

Help your child learn to love reading

Reading brings everyone, young and old, the opportunity for amazing world experiences, a peek into someone else's life, a chance to seek out a new adventure, all from the comfort of your home. March is National Reading Month, a wonderful time to remind ourselves of the amazing opportunities afforded by literacy and to celebrate reading with a special young person in our lives.

Experts recommend children engage in 30 minutes of literacy activities every day. Many schools require students to turn in reading logs or charts. It is important to keep this literacy time fun and engaging for children. Reading shouldn't be a chore, or a dreaded homework task. [Michigan State University Extension](#) offers the following five tips to help keep reading fun.

- **Follow their lead:** Does your child love fairies? Dinosaurs? Big trucks? Help them choose books that match their interests. Take a trip to the public library and leave with a stack of books on the topics that they love most. Get to know your children's librarian, they can recommend books for your child's interests. Many websites offer excellent book lists as well. Try <http://www.readingrockets.org> for a great selection of book lists by theme.
- **Take reading on the road:** Keep a special chapter book for the car. Utilize time spent driving for events, waiting at restaurants, waiting for the bus, etc. Need to keep your eyes on the road? Books on CD can be a fun alternative. Many libraries offer free downloadable audio books. Check out your local libraries' selection by visiting their website.
- **Read aloud:** Kids are never too old to enjoy a good family chapter book. Older readers can alternate chapters, or paragraphs, younger kids can enjoy the story and time spent together. It's fun to change your voice for different characters, or when action changes, but you don't have to be a great actor for your children to enjoy sharing a book together. [Read Aloud America](#) keeps an annual list, separated by ages, of excellent books to read aloud.
- **Create a reading nook:** Provide kids access to a comfortable, well-lit spot, to curl up with their favorite book. Even the smallest homes can offer a little nook, a corner with a bookshelf and a bean bag or a window seat with a basket of books. This designated reading spot helps show the importance of reading in your home and can help make reading time more fun.
- **Ask for feedback:** Keep your child engaged by asking questions about the book as you read together. What does he think about the main characters? What does she think is going to happen? Does he like the book? If you find an author you enjoy, seek out more titles. On the other hand, if no one is enjoying the book, it's okay to not finish it and choose a new title instead.

This article was published by [Michigan State University Extension](#).

GARDEN TIPS FOR JANUARY!

- ❖ If precipitation has been deficient (1" of snow = ~ 1/10" of water), water lawns, trees, and shrubs, especially broadleaf and narrowleaf evergreens. Double check moisture in protected or raised planters.
- ❖ Check on supplies of pesticides. Secure a copy of current recommendations and post them in a convenient place. Dilution and quantity tables are also useful.
- ❖ Check that gardening tools and equipment are in good repair—sharpen, paint, and repair mowers, edgers, sprayers, and dusters.
- ❖ Inspect your irrigation system and replace worn or broken parts. (HLA-6615)
- ❖ Control overwintering insects on deciduous trees or shrubs with dormant oil sprays applied when the temperature is above 40° F in late fall and winter. Do not use "dormant" oils on evergreens. (EPP-7306)
- ❖ A product containing glyphosate plus a post emergent broadleaf herbicide can be used on dormant bermudagrass in January or February when temperatures are above 50° F for winter weed control. (HLA-6421)

Don't Forget to Water this Winter

David Hillock, Senior Extension Specialist

Lack of adequate soil moisture is often a major cause of winter damage. Dry soil coupled with strong winter winds can cause havoc on a plant. All plants, but especially narrowleaf and broadleaf evergreens, use water during winter. When little or no soil moisture is present, plants can become desiccated, and it is more likely root damage will also occur.

When dry cold fronts are predicted, water the landscape at least 24 hours in advance of the front. Apply about ½ inch of water at the time of watering. A sunny day on moist soil helps warm the soil and root area thus reducing the amount of time the roots will be exposed to cold temperatures.

Moisture must be available below the frost line or frozen soil. When the soil freezes, if moisture is not present in soil pore spaces, moisture is pulled from plant roots to form the ice crystals resulting in desiccated roots, thus what some would refer to as "winter kill."

Of course, some common sense needs to be practiced at this time of year; do not allow the sprinklers to come on during a hard freeze. Ice forming on some plants could result in some serious damage and you could create a hazardous situation for you, pedestrians, or even passing vehicles.

Too much water can also result in problems during the winter. Cold wet soil can lead to rotting roots. Soils with more than ample moisture may also encourage winter weeds to germinate and flourish. Water only every three to four weeks and apply only enough water to moisten the top 6 or so inches of soil.

Do not forget plants growing in aboveground planters protected from rain. They need watering even in a wet season. Also, remember to water plants that are located under the eaves of a building or home since they often receive little natural precipitation.

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EXTENSION

Oklahoma Home & Community Education, Inc. 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.



Family & Consumer Sciences helps 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.

Dewey County OHCE CALENDAR --

<u>January</u>	<u>Lesson: Brain Blitz-Keeping Your Wits</u>
Jan. 8	Camargo OHCE meeting
Jan. 13	SCH meeting
<u>February</u>	<u>Lesson: Garden Planning – Companion Planting</u>
Feb. 10	SCH meeting
Feb. 12	Camargo OHCE meeting
<u>March</u>	<u>Lesson: Cooking for 1 or 2 on a budget</u>
March 10	SCH meeting
March 12	Camargo OHCE
March 28	meeting District OHCE meeting

Fun Times OHCE meets each Tue. & Fri. mornings at 9:00 at the Seiling Senior Center

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