

# STRENGTHENING OKLAHOMA



**GARFIELD COUNTY  
EXTENSION**

## Parents Who Invest in Themselves Reap Dividends

When a couple goes through a divorce, each parent may have feelings of grief, loss, anger or anxiety. To help suppress those feelings, some people try to stay busy but this can add additional stress.

One of the best medicines for parents experiencing divorce is self-care, said Katey Masri, manager of [Oklahoma State University Extension's Co-Parenting for Resilience](#) program.

"While self-care may feel selfish or even impossible, it's one of the best gifts you can give yourself and your children," Masri said. "When a parent invests in themselves, it means they're taking the time to care for themselves. Think of it as depositing money in the bank and earning interest. Each deposit, whether it be for your physical, emotional or mental health, is an investment in yourself."

It's important for parents to balance their health. One way to quickly boost your mood is to exercise. Exercise naturally produces positive hormones that can lower stress and anxiety while boosting physical, emotional and mental health. Getting enough quality sleep and eating a well-balanced diet are two more factors that affect health.

Masri said being there for your children is vital, as is socializing with a group of people with shared common interests.



"Expand your social circle and sign up for a class or workshop to learn something new," she said. "When times are hard, it can be easy to isolate yourself and become overwhelmed by negative feelings. Being around others with similar interests will do wonders for your emotional health."

Research has shown that meditation is another proven technique to lower anxiety, stress and depression. It also improves physical health. There are several ways in which a person can meditate, including smartphone apps, online videos and other free resources.

Masri also noted the importance of focusing on the positive aspects of your life. Find value and appreciation in the things you have instead of focusing on what you don't have or have lost. Practicing gratitude is one of the most powerful, cheapest and easiest ways to increase happiness. Gratitude can be found in the most minute moments, and the more a person looks for it, the easier it becomes to recognize. Challenge yourself to find

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three different things for which to be grateful every day.

Most people don't think twice about being kind and compassionate to others but remember to treat yourself with the same love and kindness shown to others.

"The ability to truly love another person begins with the ability to truly love yourself," she said.

Part of self-care is bringing out your inner child with play. If you watch children play, it's easy to see the joy they're experiencing. Play brings joy and stress relief and builds connections in relationships. Make a list of things that bring you joy and select one when negative feelings challenge your motivation.

"Parenting is hard work and can bring feelings of joy and accomplishment. Being kind and compassionate to yourself will help you become the best parent possible," Masri said.



### Vance Air Force Base-Cookie Welcome OHCE Project

At the recent board meeting a schedule was developed for our new **Welcome to Enid-Vance AFB-Cookies by OHCE**. This project was proposed at our recent Spring meeting. Each month 24-28 Air Force Support Staff arrive in Enid and are welcomed to the city and area. The cookies will be part of their welcome bags and delivered to each one in training.

To make this a workable countywide project, each group will donate a total of 10-12 dozen cookies for their assigned month. The cookies should be delivered to the Extension Office by the second Monday of each month and bagged in groups of 2-3 cookies (depending on size) in small snack size baggies. To make it easier, cookies can be delivered during business hours before the second Monday if that works for your group. They will be frozen until picked up by our liaison-Don Johnson.

The rotation will start **July--Casa La Mia, August—Domes-ti-kates, September—Kremlin, October—Pioneer Wheathearts, November—True Honest Workers, December—Casa La Mia, January 2025—Domes-ti-kates**. We will continue with this rotation schedule and add it to our yearbooks in 2025. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Extension Office at 580-237-1228.

Garfield County  
OSU Extension Office  
will be closed  
July 4 & 5, 2024





# Summer Workshops

## Artisan Bread Baking Class - July 12

The workshop on Artisan Bread baking will be held Friday, July 12, starting at 10 am. The cost is \$20 and includes a light lunch. We will be learning to measure using a scale, how to create a poolish, hydrating your flour and the different types of flour and yeast used in baking. Class is limited to 10 so sign up early.



## Food Preservation Jelly and Jams

The Jelly/Jam Class is scheduled for July 17. Class begins at 12:30 pm. Each participant will have 2-3 jars to take home at the end of class. The cost is \$25 and includes all supplies needed. A complete Food Preservation Manual is included in the cost.

## Food Preservation Pickles



The Pickles and Pickling workshop is scheduled for July 18. Class begins at 12:30 pm. Each participant will have 2-3 jars to take home at the end of class. The cost is \$25 and includes all supplies needed. A complete Food Preservation Manual is included in the cost.

## Novice Sewing Class



A beginning sewing class will be held Monday July 22, starting at 5:30 pm. Leading the class will be Sue Schmidt. The class is designed for the beginning sewer of any age. Adults and children are invited with a limit of 8 sewers. Children under age 13 will need an adult helper. Enroll by July 15 and you will be given a supply list. A limited number of sewing machines are available for use here at the office. There is no cost for this workshop.

## Table Runner Class

A quick and easy Table Runner class will be August 7, 10-2. Kits will be ready for you to sew with cost of \$20 which includes refreshments. Bring your sewing machine and supplies. Register by July 31.



## Barn Quilt Workshop



One last Barn Quilt workshop for the summer will be Friday, August 9, 9-4 pm. Cost is \$40 and includes all supplies, patterns as well as lunch and snacks. Sign up before August 1 to save your spot.

## How to select the Perfect Watermelon

If you're picking a watermelon in the field or from your own garden, its stem may tell you if it's had enough time to ripen:

A stem that's dry and yellow-brown signals it's mature. A green stem may signify the watermelon is not yet ripe and will lack flavor and sweetness.

1. Look for the Field Spot. One of the most important indicators of the quality of a watermelon is the color of its field spot, that large, discolored spot on the surface that tells where the watermelon sat on the ground as it ripened: A creamy yellow or near-orange field spot indicates a melon full of flavor. A white or light-yellow field spot signals a watermelon that lacks flavor, so you may want to choose another one.
2. Look at the Stripes. The coloring of your watermelon helps indicate the ripeness of the fruit. Pick a melon that has a strong, consistent stripe pattern. Its green stripes should be a deep dark green, while pale stripes should be a creamy light yellow.
3. Knock on It. Give your fruit a gentle tap and listen to the sound it makes: If the pitch sounds deep and hollow, the fruit has more water and is likely ripe. If your knock sounds higher-pitched and dense, it may signify the rind is too thick and the fruit has not fully ripened.
4. Check for Spots. Dry weathering spots and vein-like webbing lines are great indicators of an extra-sweet watermelon. These spots show where sugar has been seeping out of the fruit, so inspect all sides of your melon before you commit to one.
5. Choose the Heaviest One for Its Size. A good one feels heavier than it looks because the denser it is, the higher the water content and the sweeter the watermelon.
6. Select the Rounder Shaped One. Look for a watermelon that's rounder and more evenly shaped, as opposed to an oval one. Rounder melons are sweeter, while oval ones tend to be watery and less flavorful. Also, steer clear of watermelons with irregular lumps on their surface.
7. Get the Firmest and Dullest Melon. Regardless of its size, choose a watermelon with a firm exterior. Look over the whole melon and, if you find soft spots, cuts, dents, cracks, or other signs of damage, move on. Additionally, you want to choose a dull-looking watermelon. A shiny rind likely indicates an underripe melon.

### Other Watermelon Questions

#### Do watermelons ripen after picking?

Watermelons do *not* continue to ripen once harvested. The ripening process stops the minute a melon is separated from the vine. This means that, unlike bananas and pears, it won't work to set a watermelon on the kitchen counter and expect it to ripen.

#### How long do watermelons from the store last?

Uncut watermelons can last on your counter at room temperature for 7 to 10 days. Once cut, watermelon is good in the refrigerator for 3 to 4 days.<sup>2</sup> For peak freshness and longevity, the best time to purchase a watermelon is during peak season, May through September.

#### Should watermelon be refrigerated?

Refrigeration depends on whether a watermelon is whole or has been cut. Keep whole watermelons on the counter at room temperature to maintain their sweetness and overall flavor. After cutting a watermelon, store it covered in the refrigerator to keep it from drying out and going bad.

#### Can you freeze watermelon?

Yes, you *can* freeze watermelon provided you adhere to these do's and don'ts:

- *Don't* freeze a watermelon whole.
- *Don't* freeze any melon pieces with rind or seeds.
- *Do* flash-freeze bite-sized pieces first, and then bag those pieces in a freezer-safe container.
- *Do* store watermelon flesh in the freezer for up to 1 year.



Source: National Watermelon Promotion Board

# Education Workshops for July

Check out some of these offerings for OHCE members, guests or anyone interested in a good time with friends and learning a new skill.

## Leader Lessons August and September Meetings

The Leader Lesson for August “Cast Iron Cookery” will be held **Wednesday, July 31, 2 pm** in the Garfield Extension Conference room. **(Note this is a change from your yearbook schedule due to a conflict)** See you then. The lesson for your September meetings will be one of the lessons presented at the State OHCE meeting—Bone Broth: Is it the Newest Elixir? Or Nature and You: How Nature Impacts Your Well-Being. Lessons will be presented on Wednesday, September 25, 2 pm.

## Stay Strong Stay Healthy Exercise Class

The next Stay Strong Stay Healthy exercise class will begin Monday September 16, 12:30 pm and be held each Monday and Wednesday through Wednesday November 6. Call the office at 580-237-1228. Class size is limited.

## Garfield County Fair September 4-8

Details and fair books will be available in late July for the County Fair. Check out the upcoming workshops for fair entry items as well as all your projects since the last fair. The deadline for fair entries will be late August. More details and schedule will be in the July newsletter.

## Board Meeting Monday, August 5, 9:30 am

The next Garfield County OHCE Board meeting will be held Monday August 5, 9:30 am in the Garfield Conference Room. We will complete fair plans at this time as well as other business including the Fall Association meeting scheduled for October 15. Hostesses are Kremlin Home Culture with the meeting to begin at 6:30.

Remember that information about the upcoming County Fair including OHCE Exhibits is included in your yearbook’s pages 26-29. If you have questions, please call the office or your local president. Remember all items for the fair exhibition must be pre-registered by August 30 with the Garfield County Fair.

## Oklahoma State Fair— OKC

If you wish to enter items in the State Fair of Oklahoma, entry deadline is August 15. State Fair dates are September 12 – 22. Each exhibitor is responsible for bringing your items to the fair and for pickup at the completion of the fair.

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**Joy Rhodes**  
Extension Educator, FCS/4-H Youth Dev.

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information or reasonable accommodation need to contact Joy Rhodes, FCS Educator at (580)237-1228 or [joy.rhodes@okstate.edu](mailto:joy.rhodes@okstate.edu) at least two weeks prior to the event.



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## Dates to Remember

- July 7-9—OHCE Annual Meeting
- July 12 — Artisan Bread Class
- July 17 — Jams/Jellies class
- July 18 — Pickles/Pickling class
- July 22 — Novice Sewing Class
- July 31 — Leader Lesson
- August 5 — OHCE Board Meeting
- August 7 — Table Runner class
- August 9 — Barn Quilt Workshop
- Sept. 4-8 — Garfield County Fair
- Sept. 12-22 — Oklahoma State Fair
- Sept. 16 — Stay Strong Stay Healthy



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