

The Extension Cord



Health and Human Sciences

To start 2022...

Hello,

Returning to work after the holiday season is always difficult and this year was no exception! After time at home with family, good food, and a cozy atmosphere it's hard to roll out of bed and out into the cold every day. I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and are experiencing great things at the start of this new year!

Included in this newsletter is a summary of happiness principles that I hope continue to bring a positive start to the new year. Smoothie ideas, a few recipes, and upcoming programming are also included.

HHS programming is heavily focused on school aged students right now. I will be delivering Captain Cash, a money smart program developed for third graders, in Rochester schools beginning this month. We will also be working with fourth grade students at Caston, Akron, and Rochester to build circuit boards. As always, I'll be visiting the Youth Outlet Center a couple times each month to prepare and cook meals or snacks with middle school students. I very much enjoy these programs and look forward to interacting with these varied age groups.

Personally...

2022 marks an exciting time for my family as we anticipate the arrival of our second son in February. I will be out of the office for a while but if any Health and Human Sciences questions come up, please continue to call the office. We will connect you to HHS educators in surrounding counties to make sure questions and concerns are taken care of during my absence.

-Jessica Riffle

Upcoming Public HHS Programming

Date	When	Where	What
Jan. 17		Riddle Elementary School	Captain Cash starts!
Jan. 19	11:00 am	Kewanna Public Library	Using Different Types of Ovens
Jan. 25		Caston Elementary School	Circuit Board Building begins!
Feb. 3		Akron Elementary School	Circuit Board Building begins!
Feb. 8	11:30 am	Fulton County Public Library	Using an Air Fryer 101
Feb. 16	11:00 am	Kewanna Public Library	Tentative (content TBD)

Happiness Principles

The University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Research & Extension have organized a list of principles as a blueprint for happiness. At the start of a new year, these principles can help us build a more happy and positive year.

Happiness Principle #1: Notice and Appreciate the Good in Each Day. The first foundational way to be happy is to look for the good in every single day. People who look for the good in their daily lives are happier and accomplish more.

Many people believe that their circumstances determine how they feel. If the events of the day are frustrating, disappointing or stressful, they assume it is inevitable to experience negative emotions—to not feel happy with life. But research has shown that the happiest people aren't happier because they have better life circumstances than others; they are happier because they have learned to look for and appreciate what is good about each day.

Happiness Principle #2: Focus on the Positives in Your Past. Everyone chooses memories to construct a unique life story. This story can be happy or sad depending on how they choose to think about these memories. Positive memories are those that make you the happiest and can have long-lasting effects in shaping your identity. Close your eyes and relive some of the memories you have identified as your best. Notice that when you relive positive memories, positive emotions naturally fill your mind.

Happiness Principle #3: Look Forward to Tomorrow. Many people invest a great deal of time and energy worrying about things that are unlikely to happen or are beyond their control. When you begin worrying about something that might happen in the future, ask yourself: "What is the chance that this will actually happen? Is this something I can do anything about?" Depending upon your answers to those questions, choose from these options- have courage to face challenges, accept what you cannot change, manage what is in your control, and/or manage your way of thinking.

Happiness Principle #4: Know and Use Your Strengths. Each of us has personal strengths—positive characteristics that come naturally to us. Research has shown we will be more likely to thrive in life if we identify our unique strengths and design our lives to use them. We will feel encouraged and energized.

Happiness Principle #5: Choose to Serve. Some people choose to serve by participating in community or religious organizations. But service doesn't have to be limited to formal roles in organizations. Service can also be offered informally as we reach out to neighbors, people in the community, or family members. It might involve a service project, but it could also take the form of a personal visit, a written note, or a phone call.



Fruit & Veggie Smoothies

Smoothies can be made many different ways and can use lots of different ingredients to get essential nutrients, vitamins and minerals needed for healthy living. Smoothies can be low in fat, sodium, and cholesterol; while being a good source of vitamins, potassium, calcium, and fiber. ChooseMyPlate.gov encourages Americans to vary our vegetables, as well as focus on fruits. The current recommendations are; half our plate should be fruits and vegetables, include protein into our diet, and to eat or drink calcium-rich foods. Each of these can be targeted when making a smoothie!

The fun thing about making smoothies is that you can mix and match different ingredients for your needs and likings. Smoothies can use fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables. Often you can make up your own smoothie recipe from fruits and vegetables you already have on hand! They can be a great way to use up ripe fruit or vegetables, instead of throwing them away. Think about those bananas that are beginning to turn too brown and soft on your counter. Peel them, place them in a sealed bag or container, and freeze. They will now be ready for your next smoothie combination. This same idea can be applied to many fruits and vegetables. In general, to freeze your own fruit, wash the fruit thoroughly under running water, pat dry with clean towels and freeze in a single layer on a rimmed cookie sheet. Individual pieces can then be transferred to a freezer bag or container after freezing.

As mentioned, fresh or frozen fruit can be used. If you like thickness and undiluted flavor be sure your fruit is frozen before blending. While almost any fruit can be used, popular choices are: bananas, strawberries, pineapple, peaches, blueberries, melon, mangos, pears, oranges, raspberries, kiwi, grapes, blackberries, and pomegranates. Adding greens into your smoothie is a great way to incorporate these foods into your diet, especially if you're not a fan of their flavor. Any green leafy vegetable such as romaine lettuce, chard, spinach, arugula, kale or spring mix, carrots, beets, broccoli, and celery can all be blended into a smoothie.

Don't forget to add liquid! Add at least 1 cup of liquid to the mix to improve the texture and make the smoothie drinkable. Your liquid can be milk, juice, water, yogurt, or crushed ice. Water will alter your flavor the least but if you plan to add juice look for 100% juice. Incorporating milk or yogurt will also increase the protein in your smoothie. Nuts, seeds, soy, nut butters, alternative milks, flax and chia seeds are other food sources that provide protein and can be blended into your mix.

Cutting and Removing Seeds from Pomegranates

Pomegranates have a very powerful flavor and vibrant color that will stain wooden cutting boards. Find a surface that won't stain and place the pomegranate crown up.

Cut an 'x' into the fruit about halfway down from the top. Place a medium bowl in the sink. Turning the pomegranate upside down in your hand so that the crown is facing down into the bowl, break the fruit into quarters. Squeeze and bend each quarter over the bowl so that seeds and juice are released. Continue until most of the juice and seeds have been released from each quarter.

Pick out any white membrane from the bowl so that all that's left is juice and seeds. They are now ready to eat or incorporate into a recipe!



Winter Favorites

Roasted Root Vegetables

Ingredients:

1 large sweet potato, peeled and cubed
½ lb. red potatoes, washed and cubed
½ lb. beets, washed and cubed
2 parsnips, peeled and halved lengthwise
½ red onion, peeled and sliced lengthwise
2 tsp. minced garlic
¼ cup olive oil, divided
2 tsp. dried thyme
3 tsp. dried rosemary
1 tsp. ground cumin
1 tsp. salt (more to taste)
½ tsp. black pepper (more to taste)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400°F. Place cut vegetables in a large mixing bowl (the more similar the size of vegetable pieces, the more evenly they will roast). Add 3 Tbsp. olive oil, thyme, rosemary, cumin, salt, and pepper and stir until vegetables are evenly coated with oil and spices. Brush remaining olive oil on rimmed baking sheet. Spread vegetables out evenly on baking sheet and roast for 15 minutes. Remove from oven, stir vegetables so that they remain evenly spaced on the sheet. Return to oven and continue roasting for another 15-25 minutes or until largest pieces are tender and edges are beginning to brown.



Citrus Marinade

Ingredients:

½ cup avocado or olive oil
¼ cup lemon and lime juice mixed
2 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. onion powder
½ tsp. black pepper
Optional: 1 Tbsp. dried cilantro

Directions:

Mix all ingredients together and pour into a plastic zip lock bag. Place chicken or pork into mixture and let marinate for up to four hours. Marinade could also be poured over fish prior to baking for added flavor. **Note:** Do not use remaining marinade that touched the raw meat on the cooked meat. This is a food safety risk. Make enough marinade to set some aside and serve with finished meal.

Winter Citrus Salad

Ingredients:

3 navel oranges
1 pink grapefruit
6 kiwi
1 pomegranate

Directions:

Remove peels, white pith, and centers from oranges and grapefruit. Separate the segments and cut into bite size chunks. Try to save as much juice as possible as you cut chunks and move all into a large bowl. Peel and cut kiwi. Add to orange and grapefruit mixture and mix evenly. Remove seeds from pomegranate and sprinkle over top of fruit mixture. Serve in bowls so the juice can be enjoyed too.