



January 2026

THE EXTENSION CONNECTION

Wyandotte County K-State Extension



Director's Note

Denise Dias

Wyandotte County Director

Happy New Year! Here's to a year filled with good health, joy, and plenty of opportunities to grow, learn, and thrive (with a little help from Extension along the way!).

Happy
New Year!

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4-H Youth Development

NEED A FAMILY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION? TRY 4-H!

Looking for a meaningful way to start the year? 4-H offers countless opportunities to make friends, develop new skills, and shine in educational competitions.

By joining the 4-H program, your family will gain access to:

- Monthly Club Meetings – The heart of 4-H. Connect with other families and members, take part in youth-led business meetings, and engage in hands-on educational and community service activities.
- Projects – Kansas 4-H offers more than 40 project areas to explore. Each project provides valuable learning experiences and opportunities to compete throughout the year.
- County & State Fairs – Showcase what you've accomplished during the 4-H year! Members present their projects at county fairs, earn ribbons for their efforts, and top achievers advance to the Kansas State Fair.

If you are a parent interested in enrolling your child in 4-H, we'd love to hear from you! Reach out today by email or phone to get started.



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Family and Consumer Sciences

**HELP THE MOST VALUABLE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE RING IN 2026
BY SHARING, HAPPY NEW YEAR WISHES, HOPES AND DREAMS WITH THEM.**

There's no better time to start new beginnings than the first day of the New Year. As we welcome January and a new year, it's a perfect time for exploration and setting positive intentions for the months ahead. This month let's try to focus on opportunities for families and tips to start off the year with purpose and positivity.

Embracing Fresh Starts

The start of a new year is an opportunity for families to set goals, reflect on achievements, and make plans for growth. Here are some ideas to help your family embrace this season of promise:

- **Create Family Goals:** Sit down together and discuss what you hope to achieve as a family this year. Whether it's improving communication, trying new activities, or focusing on health and wellness, setting goals can foster teamwork and motivation.
- **Celebrate Small Victories:** Acknowledge and celebrate accomplishments from the past year, no matter how small. Recognizing progress can build confidence and inspire everyone.
- **Vision Board:** Get creative by making a vision board that represents your family's hopes for the year. Use magazines, drawings, or digital tools to visualize your goals together.

Winter Wellness

- With winter in full swing, it's important to prioritize health and well-being. Here are some strategies to keep your family healthy and happy:
- **Active Indoors:** Engage in fun indoor activities to keep everyone moving, such as dance parties, obstacle courses, or yoga sessions. Physical activity is essential for maintaining energy levels during the winter months.
- **Focus on Nutrition:** Start the year with healthy eating habits. Involve your children in meal planning and cooking to teach them about nutrition and foster healthy choices.
- **Engage in Outdoor Play:** When weather permits, bundle up and enjoy outdoor activities like sledding or building snowmen. Fresh air and physical activity can boost mood and energy.

Wishing you a wonderful and fulfilling January!



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Nutrition and Food Safety

HAPPY HEALTHY NEW YEAR!

H - ealth

Make health a priority this year. Health should be more than the absence of disease — read on for ideas.

A - ttitude

A positive attitude may not cure a disease. However, thinking positively can help you deal with misfortune, make the most of your situation, and enjoy life more.

P - hysical activity

Physical activity helps improve health and fitness, maintain a healthy body weight, and reduce the risk for several chronic diseases and conditions. Check these recommendations for different ages,

<https://odphp.health.gov/moveyourway>

P - eople

Numerous studies indicate that social networks, whether formal (such as a church or social club) or informal (such as meeting with friends), make people less vulnerable to ill health and premature death. Be wary, however, of social support that drains you through people being too demanding or encouraging you to engage in harmful behaviors.

Y - our body

Schedule regular physical check-ups as needed, including eye exams, dental exams, mammograms, colonoscopies, and general physicals.

N - O!

Rather than a "to-do" list, consider a "don't do" list. You may discover that doing LESS can bring MORE enjoyment to your life.

E - at healthy

According to MyPlate (<https://www.myplate.gov/>), a healthy eating routine is essential at every stage of life and can have positive effects that accumulate over time. Consume a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein-rich foods, and dairy and fortified soy alternatives each day. When deciding what to eat or drink, opt for options that are rich in nutrients. Make every bite count.

W - isdom

Take time to listen to your own body. Rather than set your goals based on how fast other people walk, how little sleep others can get by on, or how much someone else eats, concentrate on what makes YOU healthy.

Y - our hands

"Keeping hands clean is one of the most important ways to prevent the spread of infection and illness." (Source: CDC). For helpful tips on properly washing your hands, go to <https://www.cdc.gov/clean-hands/about/>

E - nough sleep

Many adults don't get the recommended amount of sleep, which is linked to chronic diseases and conditions—such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and depression. For tips to improve your sleep, check out the following: <https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about/index.html>

A - void portion distortion

Rather than worry so much about "what" you eat, consider "how much" you eat. Serve food on smaller plates. Eat from plates and bowls rather than packages and bags, so you see how much you're eating.

R - eading materials

Consider the source before starting a new drastic diet or exercise plan. Beware of plans that:

- Promise quick, dramatic results
- Charge large fees for consultations, equipment, supplements, etc.
- Rely solely on testimonials and statements from "professionals" with unusual-sounding degrees.

Here's to a healthier version of yourself in 2026!

(Source: University of Nebraska Lincoln, UNL Food)

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JUMPING INTO JANUARY

With the cold here to stay for the season and the outdoor projects tucked in for a winter's nap, let's shift gears and discuss some of the care and needs of our indoor foliage friends. I am of course talking about houseplants! While many are well adapted to the indoor conditions of the midwest there are some things you can do to ensure they thrive through the colder months.

Pests:

Common pests of indoor plants include spider mites, thrips, aphids and fungus gnats. The damage these insects cause varies in severity but, keeping your plants healthy, watered adequately, and free of debris will significantly reduce the risk of an infestation. For instance, while fungus gnats do not cause damage to the foliage of your plants, their presence can be a signal that the planting media is being overwatered and staying too wet for too long.

Light/Temperature:

With days getting shorter some plants with tropical origins may not do as well on that window sill as it was during the spring, summer, and fall. Plants like croton, amaryllis, ficus, aloes, and cacti can benefit from supplemental light and increased temperature. Moving plants to a western or southwestern facing window, or utilize artificial LED lighting if available.

Water & Fertilization:

As mentioned previously, the days get shorter and light intensity decreases. Less light means less photosynthetic activity thus decreasing the plant's water and nutrient needs. Fertilizing during the winter months is generally not recommended and adversely affect root systems by building up and burning the root systems during a time of decreased activity. The same principle goes for water, less moisture is being uptaken in the root system. Too much moisture can linger in the soil and thus the plant's root system can suffer from lack of oxygen, and wet soil can lead to different disease issues such as fungal pathogens, and certain insect species. Instead of sticking to a regimented watering schedule, check the plant's soil to see if the top 1-2 inches have dried out before irrigating. Some indoor plants like cacti and succulents will need only enough water to sustain them, as wet roots can be high detrimental.



A CLEANER NEIGHBORHOOD = A BETTER WORLD CUP EXPERIENCE

When neighbors work together to tidy up, it creates a welcoming atmosphere that enhances everyone's enjoyment of the event. When everyone pitches in — even for just a few minutes — neighbors can feel proud and connected, creating a welcoming atmosphere for the World Cup.

1. Take a quick walk with a small bag and one glove to pick up litter, which can give neighbors a sense of achievement and help everyone feel involved in the neighborhood's festive spirit.
2. Sweep Your Front Step for a Game-Day Welcome - A simple 2 – 3-minute sweep of your porch or sidewalk creates a fresh, friendly look — especially when people decorate their homes with flags, banners, or team colors. A clean entrance makes World Cup decorations really stand out.
3. Pull Five Weeds Near Viewing Spots - If your neighborhood has a communal viewing area — a shared courtyard, a park corner, or a favorite yard — pull five weeds around the perimeter. It's a fast way to tidy up spaces where people will gather to cheer.
4. Pick Up Ten Pieces of Trash on Fan Routes - Expecting foot traffic as neighbors walk to a local bar, café, or community match screening? Pick up ten pieces of litter on typical paths. It keeps the neighborhood festive instead of chaotic as excitement builds.
5. Straighten Up the Park for Match-Day Picnics - Parks often host tailgates, picnics, or informal gatherings during World Cup matches. Straighten benches, remove fallen branches, or adjust a tipped trash can so the space feels game-day ready.
6. Tidy a Bus Stop Welcoming Fans - If visitors or friends rely on public transit during the tournament, a clean bus stop sets the tone before they even arrive. Ten minutes is enough to remove wrappers, wipe off dust, and make waiting areas more inviting.
7. Clear Old Flyers to Make Room for World Cup Posters - Remove outdated signs and tape from poles or community boards. This opens clean space for neighbors to post match schedules, team flags, or viewing-party announcements—and gives the whole area a refreshed look.
8. Shake Out Shared Mats Before Guests Arrive - If your building or block hosts gatherings during the World Cup, a clean entry mat helps keep shared hallways looking neat despite the extra traffic from excited fans coming and going.
9. Reposition Trash and Recycling Bins After Big Games - After late-night matches or celebrations, bins often get bumped out of place. Taking a moment to straighten them helps keep sidewalks clear and prevents wind-blown litter the next morning.
10. Remove One Major “Eyesore” for a Better Fan Atmosphere - Take care of one noticeable item — a stray cardboard box, a sagging poster, a plastic bag in a tree — to create a cleaner backdrop for flags, decorations, or outdoor watch parties. Minor improvements add to the festive mood.

Upcoming Events



Jan 1-2- Office Closed

Jan 12- Executive Board Meeting

Jan 15- Selection and Care of House Plants

Jan 19- Office Closed

Jan 24- Equifest of Kansas 4-H Horse Project Field Trip

Connect with us!



K-State Extension is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Program information may be available in languages other than English. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, including alternative means for communication (e.g., Braille, large print, audio tape, and American Sign Language) may be requested by contacting the event contact Jo McLeland two weeks prior to the start of the event (insert deadline date) at (913-299-9300 or jo1@ksu.edu). Requests received after this date will be honored when it is feasible to do so. Language access services, such as interpretation or translation of vital information will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request.

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