Families Matter

September 25, 2024

Fall officially began September 22 – just a few days ago. It is the time when we start pulling out brown, orange, and dark green decorations. AND – it’s the month that marks that we are less than 4 months from Christmas!

My K-State Research and Extension colleague in Sedgewick county, Elizabeth Brunsheen-Cartagena offers this note about fall: The reality that one of the most joyous – and often busiest - - times of the year is closing in can be a welcome reminder. The beginning of fall gives us time to plan and manage our finances in preparation for the upcoming winter holiday.

Here are a few tips to help you navigate the fall season as you brace yourself for the calendar days to follow:

**Create a budget for gifts.** “Make a list of all the people for whom we plan to give gifts and assign an amount you want to spend,” she said. “Gradually save that money and put it in an envelope with the person’s name on it.”

**Recognize talents.** If a child or other person likes to cook, buy a simple cookbook and the dry ingredients for one of the recipes. If another person likes to paint, gradually buy brushes, paint or a canvas and put it in a decorative bag.

**Plan your get-togethers.** If family is meeting up for holiday cheer, decide on whether there will be a gift exchange involving children, adults or both. Assign chores or dinner responsibilities to different families instead of taking on all the work and cost.

“Planning for the holidays will save us time, money and energy. “At the same time, it will bring us peace of mind, good relationships and a lot of happiness for us and our loved ones, which is the purpose of the holidays.” Planning will also bring happiness and relaxation for our pocket!

Don’t let the fall season lull you into complacency. If you bite off tasks in small chunks, you’ll avoid choking when the winter holidays are at your doorstep!

*Making connections for youth, families, and communities – Deb Andres*