

TAKING TIME

by Rebecca Escott

Extension Home Economist



It's Done!

The past couple weeks I have been reminded how good it feels to actually get something done! Now that the holidays have passed and my schedule has slowed down a bit, I've begun to tackle some long-put-off projects around the house and at work.

The results? Well, I have a new arrangement of dried flowers proudly displayed in the living room. New shelving in the kitchen has reduced clutter in cupboards. "Draft dodgers" are now trying to hold heat in and keep cold air out of our home, and three gallons of paint patiently wait to be applied in the bathroom. (Not all projects are done. Judging from our past record, those cans could be there for a while!)

I disciplined myself to make some phone calls regarding new program efforts here at the Cooperative Extension office. "Cold calls" are always difficult for me. But now I can say that the wheels are turning. I also had the pleasure of throwing away several "To Do" notes that have been stacked on my desk.

The secrets? Well, one you may not be able to duplicate-my husband has been out of town for

more than two weeks. The other, you can practice! Each day I made a plan to address one specific project or part of a project. The goal-setting is important.

Just after the holidays, I made a list of things to be done including starting a file of tax forms and year-end summaries, undecorating the tree and taking it to the recycling center, writing thank you notes and exercising. Then I followed a basic set of steps that you can use to accomplish the tasks on your list.

- Prioritize the list. What is most important?

- Compare the list to your calendar and schedule. Select a time and date to work on one or two specific tasks. Remember, break down jobs into smaller, manageable parts. One evening shop for supplies or read instructions. Another time, prepare the work space.

- Vary your tasks. Do something outdoors or something active. Then tackle a job that takes reading or writing.

- Ask for cooperation from your family members: Who can help? Can someone else pick the children up from practice? Who can drive to town for the supplies?

When do you want them to stay out of the room? Talk about the upcoming tasks in advance, if you need their help, AGREE on a time. Don't impose one.

- As you accomplish one task, take a second look at your list and schedule a working time for the next one. You do not need to begin immediately.

- Be patient with yourself and your limitations. There is no glory in pushing yourself to fulfill "Superwoman" or "Superman" images.

As I worked, I found it helpful to turn off the TV. For me, the TV was a distraction. I found myself lingering in front of it instead of working. But for balance, I did reward myself with breaks. Then I'd watch a favorite show or relax with a delayed serving of dessert.

By modeling this pattern of goal-setting, you are presenting a wonderful example for the children in your family. They each need to learn how to plan, prioritize, break tasks into smaller parts, and meet deadlines. Use these same steps as you guide them through completion of science fair displays, 4-H projects, music lessons, term papers and Shakespeare plays.

Just so you know that I'm human and you're normal too-I still have QUITE A FEW items on my list that are not yet accomplished! And several nights this past week, I postponed my planned project. But the secret of accomplishing goals is to be specific about your plan. Make it manageable, and have a deadline for completion.

It does feel good to say, "It's done!"

LF Announces Winners Of Farm Show Drawing

EPHRATA (Lancaster Co.) — First prize winner of the drawing held at the Lancaster Farming booth during Farm Show week is Dave L. Dohner, Mount Joy, who received an express wagon. The

five entries who received a two-pound Wilbur chocolate bar are Kathy Konkus, Pottsville; Kathy Henry, Clearfield; Scott Womer, Middleburg; Eric Reese, Ephrata; and Arlene Keener, Airville.

Newsletter Adapted For Children With Disabilities

NEWARK, DE — "Great Beginnings" is an age-keyed newsletter series that currently provides timely information to more than 2,000 Delaware parents of infants and toddlers. Produced by University of Delaware Cooperative Extension, the newsletter is under revision to meet the needs of families who have children with disabilities.

According to Dr. Patricia Tanner Nelson, Extension specialist for family and child development and editor of "Great Beginnings," the revised version of the newsletter will help all families understand the challenges of families who have children with disabilities. Nelson hopes others will recognize the importance of including these special families in their social support networks.

The specialist recently received a \$50,000 grant from the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council to revise the newsletter.

Consultants for the publication include the University of Delaware's department of individual and family studies and the director of the Parent Information Center.

The research-based information in this series is being used statewide in projects that focus on preparing every child to succeed in school. These include the Governor's Readiness for Success Commission and the Governor's Commission on Families. Nelson has also received a grant from the Department of Health and Social Services to design a prototype portfolio of information to be given to all parents at the birth of their baby.

"Great Beginnings" has reached more than 9,000 Delaware families since its inception 13 years ago. The series was cited this year by the National Governors Association as a pacesetter in meeting the needs of changing American families.



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