

Family Living Focus
by **Mary Ann K. Oyler**
Franklin Co. Cooperative Extension



'Tis The Season
'Tis the season to be short on time, short on money, short on patience, and in my case, short on good decisions!
In a moment of weakness we allowed our 11-year-old to sign up for a craft booth at our local high school Holiday Farmer's

Market. Katrina's convincing ways led us to believe that this was a "do-able" project for an 11-year-old. More fun than selling her craft wares to her brother, sister and parents, Katrina felt this was an excellent opportunity!
What sounded fine two

months ago is now a stressful reality as the fair will be held soon and we are not yet ready. As the county music song goes, "What were we thinking?"

Actually we were thinking about all the things Katrina could learn through this venture. She has learned record keeping, time management, display skills, pricing, profit margins, crafting skills and most importantly she has gained quite a bit of self confidence.

As you and your families are now fully engaged in the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, I hope you are making sound decisions on family routines and activities to reduce your holiday stress (unlike me).

Here are some ways to deal with holiday stress: Concentrate on people instead of objects. For example, it's more important to have fun making cookies than to have beautiful cookies. Children will remember that they helped make the holiday cookies, not whether they were perfect.

Prepare children for holiday visits by sharing photos of family members they may not have seen for a long time. Talk about who is going to be present and help children remember names. Plan celebrations during children's

best coping time of the day.

Let children be part of the festivities by sharing in the responsibilities such as picking up toys, setting the table, and so forth. Even a five-year-old can wrap presents. They may not be picture perfect and they may be hard on the tape but they are a part of the festivities.

Incorporate quiet times during your day. Soft slow music, quiet, cuddly stories, or a walk outside may help you and your child's activity and anxiety levels go down. Schedule activities over several days so all the excitement doesn't get overwhelming for everyone.

Be selective about the activities you choose to involve yourself in. Choose those which are important to you and your family.

Try to have regular, sit-down meals and improve your nutrition. Slow down rather than eating on the run. Avoid tasks or people that anger or irritate you, or change your attitude about them.

Don't expect anything to come off as planned. A child may develop the flu, the electricity may go off in the middle of your holiday dinner or a storm may prevent relatives from visiting.

Real people and real families are not perfect. Don't expect yours to be.

May you and your family enjoy your holiday experiences. Remember that 'Tis the season to be realistic about what you can accomplish.

Happy Holidays!

Food Handlers Recertification Course Offered

DOYLESTOWN (Bucks Co.) — Penn State Cooperative Extension-Bucks County will offer a 7.5-hour food safety and sanitation course on two consecutive Mondays, Jan. 5 and 12 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Neshaminy Manor Center. The cost of the course is \$89 and includes all

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