

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for October 18, 2021
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about why it's good to have fun, and as always, look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

Last week was an enjoyable week for a few reasons. I got to share the Generation Rx program about safe medication practices with the Coshocton County Church Women United and spoke to the Junior Women's Club about mindfulness. Our office staff also celebrated National Dessert Day together last Thursday, October 14. Though National Leggings Day is not until tomorrow, we deliberately incorporated it into our indulgent celebration.

I'm grateful that we do fun things like this at work. A few years ago, our administrative structure changed dramatically within OSU Extension. Duties that had mainly been one person's were dissected and divided into stewardship responsibilities amongst all staff. It was an adjustment for us. After about a year we decided that something was missing. So, we created our own "Steward of Fun" to keep us connected and keep our spirits up during the season of change.

One of our favorite ways to incorporate fun is to celebrate some strange national holidays that exist. We've celebrated everything from National Nacho Day to Ugly Christmas Sweater Day. We also enjoyed making a super big deal out of not one, but two fiftieth birthdays in our office this year, complete with dozens of balloons and streamers hanging from the ceiling.

Ohio 4-H identified and developed several resources for Mental Health Month back in January. One of these is titled "Find Your Fun." Engaging in activities that are fun and bring joy reduces stress and contributes to an overall feeling of well-being. Depending on the activity, fun provides mental and physical health benefits. A decrease in stress hormones, release of endorphins, and stimulation of the mind improves mood, boosts creativity, and can improve relationships and connections to others.

Three suggestions they have for finding your fun include:

1. Connect with Nature: Visit a park, walk your dog, or play a nature scavenger hunt. Just 20 minutes with nature can make you happier.

2. Learn Something New: Pick up a new hobby, become active in a new activity, volunteer at a local charity, explore a new city, join a book club, or visit a museum. Embracing lifelong learning can add fun to your life.

3. Laugh Out Loud: Listen to a funny podcast, spend time with people that make you laugh, research new jokes to share with others. Benefits of laughter are best gained by using humor that does not criticize or degrade others.

The Department of Health of Western Australia has a list of 170 fun activities to help improve your mood. I found it interesting that some items on the list were not an actual experience but recalling a past experience- remembering beautiful scenery, recalling past parties, thinking about past trips. Our family tried this without really meaning to the other day. As we reflected on some of the places we've been and experiences we've had together, it was a chance to relive the fun, and actually boosted our moods.

Do you know someone for whom you could be a Steward of Fun this week? You could pick up a funny card and drop it in the mail. Or maybe text or call to catch up and be intentionally positive with that person. It may be something very small, but with a fun attitude, you can add a little love and light to someone's day. Here are some fun, and wise, autumn words from Linus Van Pelt of the Peanuts, "Never jump into a pile of leaves with a wet sucker."

Thanks to the more than 1300 people who ventured out this weekend for the Fall Foliage and Farm Tour, and especially to the host stops for welcoming everyone to their facilities. Also, I will be teaching a Holiday Jams and Jellies Class at Clary Gardens on Thursday, November 4. We'll be making some uniquely flavored jams and jellies, perfect for Christmas gifts- including Pomegranate Jelly, Carrot Cake Jam, and Low-Sugar Apple Pie Jam. You can find registration information on our website, coshocton.osu.edu.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!