



EXTENSION REPORT

Alabama Cooperative Extension System/
Baldwin County Office
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Baldwin County Master Environmental Educators have been very busy. The Master Environmental Education (MEE) Program was developed in 1995 by Emily Kling so Baldwin County residents would have an understanding of and appreciation for the environment in their own backyards. Volunteers for the program receive an intensive two-day training each year. The Master Environmental Educators, give back at least 20 hours a year, they teach lessons in the community, and set up educational exhibits at special events in our county. The MEE topics that may be presented at schools or for community groups include: recycling, the water cycle, household hazardous waste, groundwater pollution, the septic system, solid waste management, non-point source pollution, aquatic nuisance species, and backyard wildlife habitat.

Since September, a total of 41 educational programs have been presented to approximately 1190 students in our county. The programs were presented by Master Environmental Educators and Baldwin County Agent Assistant, Crystal Oates. For more information on the MEE program, contact the Baldwin County Extension Office at 937-7176 or 943-5611/928-0860, ext.2222.



Master Environmental Educators, Miles Doolittle and Jill Byerly present a program on the Water Cycle beginning with music.

Alabama In Motion

Plans are being made for this year's Alabama in Motion (AIM) Program. This is an eight-week fitness program. This program is an easy and fun way to burn fat, lose weight, and strengthen your bones and muscles. Each participant logs the miles they walk during the eight weeks. Participate as an individual or form a team of up to eight members. An entire classroom may participate in the youth division. For more information about AIM, contact the Baldwin County Extension Office. There's no better time than now to start aiming for better health.

National Wear Red Day – February 1st

As part of February's American Heart Month, Friday, February 1, is National Wear Red Day. National Wear Red Day activities are in partnership with *The Heart Truth*, a national awareness campaign for women about heart disease sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Heart Truth* launched the Red Dress as the national symbol for women and heart disease in 2002 to deliver an urgent wakeup call to American women.

The truth is not pretty. More women die of heart disease than any other disease. Here are the risk factors for heart disease. Do you have high blood pressure? Do you have

high blood cholesterol or diabetes? Are you inactive? Are you a smoker? Overweight? If so, this could damage your heart and lead to disability, heart attack, or both. It is critical to care about heart disease. Talk to your doctor to get answers that may save your life. *The Heart Truth* is, it is best to know your risks and take action now, www.hearttruth.gov.

Earned Income Tax Credit

Here is a tax tip from Rick Zapata, Regional Extension Agent , Consumer Sciences and Personal Financial Management.

One of the most overlooked refund aids is the Earned Income Tax Credit (EIC). This credit is available to low income families who have dependent children. It does not matter if the parents or the grandparents are raising children if they meet the basic requirements for the tax credit.

To be eligible to claim the EIC or to claim a child as a dependent you must meet two key requirements: 1. The child must live in your house for more than 6 months during the year. 2. You must provide for more that 50% of the financial care of the child. School records showing the address of the child the same as your address will be beneficial in the event of an audit.

We encourage you to contact your local tax professionals or go to IRS.gov for more information. (Written by Susan Wingard, County Extension Coordinator)

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