A Salute to Volunteers
by Wendi Williams, Editor

“I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.”

-Mahatma Gandhi

No theme was set for this issue of Metro News, but as fate would have it, there are several articles on volunteerism. Therefore, we devote this issue to the volunteers who help the Alabama Cooperative Extension System continuously meet its goals and objectives. We salute you for the contributions that you have made over the years. Without your help, Extension would not be as successful in touching the lives of thousands of people across the state and around the world!

Thank you and best wishes in the New Year!

Visit these web sites for more information on volunteerism:

www.globalvolunteers.org
www.unv.org
www.usafreedomcorps.gov
www.national_service.org

AAMU Students in SPACE
by Mary W. Hurt

In its publication, Reconnecting Youth & Community, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (Administration for Children and Families) clearly recognizes the advantages of involving youth in community activities. It encourages professionals that work with youth to focus on the strengths or the "positives" of youth rather than the negative attributes that you so often hear in the media today. Like adults, young people need structure, a sense of belonging to some group or organization, a sense of self-worth, responsibility, and support. Involving youth in volunteer activities is certainly a way to meet these needs as well as the needs of the communities they serve.

Committed students at Alabama A&M University (AAMU) account for the tremendous success of a campus volunteer community service program. The Students Promoting Action/Community Education (SPACE) is a volunteer service organization that has proven to be an invaluable community-wide outreach tool to many local agencies, organizations and schools.

According to SPACE Coordinator Mary W. Hurt the accomplishments of AAMU’s SPACE program are attributed to the efforts of SPACE Site Manager Eunice Tibbs, Vista worker Linda Rodriguez, and other collaborative partnerships, especially the partnerships with the Madison County District 6 County Commissioner Dr. Prince Preyer, Jr. (a partner since the inception in 1991), and AAMU deans, department chairs, faculty, staff and students. In January 2002 an agreement was formed with AAMU’s Community Development Corporation (CDC) VISTA program and its Executive Director Mr. Joseph Lee. Dr. Preyer has been instrumental in providing insurance coverage, transportation and consultants for tutorial/mentoring training, while Mr. Lee aided in the SPACE Program implementation with a VISTA volunteer worker.

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We make a living from what we get. We make a life from what we give. What we do for ourselves dies with us. What we do for others and the world is immortal.

– George Eliot

In every corner of the world you will find individuals who unselfishly devote their time, energy, and talents to serve humanity regardless of the cause. On occasion these nameless faces put their lives on the line in the heat of war, natural disasters, and times of political unrest. What makes them persist? Perhaps they are driven by some internal passion linked to an incident that transpired in their lives – like a mother who volunteers her time to a runaway shelter in hopes of finding her own son or daughter. Then there are the "court ordered" who perform community service, or the parents who participate in fundraising activities at their child’s school to satisfy an educational criterion. The reasons why people volunteer are as numerous as the cause.

It cannot be determined when the act of volunteering actually began. Some speculate that it is as old as mankind, but what is certain is that volunteerism continues to be a meaningful pastime for young and old alike. According to researchers Lucy Fischer and Kay Schaffer (1993), a volunteer is more likely to be:

• A woman in her 30s or 40s, but men more readily volunteer;
• Individuals with higher incomes and education levels;
• Individuals with time available;
• Individuals in good health;
• People with a strong belief or need to help others; and
• People who enjoy recreational and other activities.

Yet, a recent national survey (Hawaii & Alaska excluded) conducted by Dr. Michael Cheang (2001) at the University of Hawaii reveals that individuals age 50 and over now comprise a significant portion of the volunteer population. Dr. Cheang discovered that senior volunteers generally follow the same national trends reported by Fischer and Schaffer: they had more education, were younger in age, were mainly women, and had higher incomes than non-volunteering citizens in their age group. Seniors, like most volunteers, are altruistic – they have great concern for the welfare of others. Undoubtedly, volunteer work is beneficial to both the volunteer and the people or institutions they serve.

Through acts of kindness, volunteers gain a better perspective on life by helping those who are less fortunate. They have an opportunity to gain new knowledge or skills, to improve the community in which they live, and certainly, to make a difference in someone's life. Organizations such as churches, social service agencies, civic groups, educational institutions, healthcare facilities or even political organizations also benefit by having access to a low-cost or cost-free labor pool. While volunteer costs are minimal compared to hiring a full or part-time staff person to perform the same duties, organizations still must do their fair share to retain a competent volunteer pool.

Volunteers, like regular paid staff, should be recruited, screened, and trained. They should be assigned to perform tasks befitting of their skills and experience, and they should be the recipients of comfortable work environments. In addition, volunteers should be rewarded for the work they perform, although such rewards are not expected. Conversely, volunteers ought to be equally selective about the organization or cause they support.

When choosing a worthy cause, volunteers need to research and analyze the issues that are important to them to find the best match. Consider what skills you have to offer and the experience you could possibly gain. Also, consider how much time you have to volunteer and what it means to genuinely give from the heart. If you cannot find a good match, then why not start a volunteer service of your own.

Cooperative Extension, like 80% of the non-profit organizations in this country, relies heavily upon its volunteer efforts. In a period when funding is in short supply, these unsung heroes are hot commodities worldwide. With a little ingenuity, specialists and agents must continue to create a climate that is mutually beneficial to Extension, the volunteer, and the communities they serve.

According to the Universal Declaration on Volunteering, "Volunteering is a fundamental building block of civil society. It brings to life the noblest aspirations of humankind – the pursuit of peace, freedom, opportunity, safety, and justice for all people."

Be a volunteer today!
SPACE fulfills its purpose when it recruits student youth volunteers from all educational disciplines of the various academic schools at the university. The program helps to build character, good citizenship qualities, and the work ethic skills of student volunteers. The SPACE program also utilizes terms associated with space. For instance, the agencies where the students perform volunteer service in Madison County are called "Satellite Centers" because of the area's ties to the space industry.

At least 200 AAMU student volunteers were recruited in the spring of 2002 and approximately 108 youth volunteers participated in the Blast-Off orientation and training session in February 2002. The Coalition on At-Risk Minority Males' (COARMM) Director Earnest Starks, Extension Specialist Edna Coleman, and Ollye Conley, director of the Bo Matthews Center of Excellence, conducted the mentoring and tutoring sessions in preparation for community service.

As a result of the collaborative work between the SPACE program, COARMM, the Bo Matthew Center of Excellence, and AAMU's CDC/VISTA Program, youth volunteers were able to significantly improve the grades and behavior of students who attended five regular schools and after school tutorial programs in the Northwest Huntsville school district. Nearly 500 Madison County students benefited from the spring activities. Most of these students showed a significant improvement in grade point averages. Reports indicate a positive change in classroom behavior and attitudes. Students enrolled in various after school programs also showed a significant improvement in study habits and behavior. The SPACE program, together with the various university disciplines and social service organizations, fills a niche in the community. "SPACE students are committed," commented Hurt. "They volunteer to perform outreach to the disenfranchised and hard-to-reach consumers within Madison County."

Additionally, SPACE sponsors several major community outreach projects on an annual basis: a Thanksgiving food drive, a children's holiday gift drive in December, and a blood drive during the spring of the year.

Impact data evaluation from collaborative and community-based agencies/organizations over the past 11 years, reported that student volunteers taught community disaster education classes (American Red Cross) to middle/high students; stimulated the cognitive, intellectual, social and physical development of children at the J.O. Johnson High School Parenting Lab (an educational lab for teen parents); and tutored/monitored the progress of adults and high school dropouts at the Adult Learning Center, Meadow Hills Initiative, the Bo Matthew Center of Excellence and Upward Bound, just to name a few.

SPACE is now currently operating statewide in six county Extension offices (Madison, Lawrence, Montgomery, Talladega, Mobile and Jefferson). Since 1991, program educators have trained more than 1,500 youth volunteers who provided volunteer service with community-based agencies and organizations. These volunteers have generated more than 11,930 volunteer hours and have reached over 36,830 consumers.

The SPACE program continually lives up to its adopted motto by Mother Teresa, "Unless life is lived for others, it is not worthwhile."
Volunteer? Who? Me?
by Jean Hall Dwyer

The word is out. Everyone from the President on down is expecting Americans to pitch in and perform some volunteer work. It's good for the nation and even good for us--so they claim! Well, fine. They want us to volunteer, but what do they expect for us ordinary citizens to DO as a volunteer? Do you know? Who exactly is qualified to volunteer anyway?

Here are some thoughts on volunteering and exactly what qualifications are needed:

- If you can read out loud, you can volunteer to read to a blind person. Yes, there are books-on-tape available, but what about the local newspaper? Even you could spend an hour or so reading the news to someone who can't read it for themselves. Couldn't you?

- If you like to sew, quilt, crochet or knit, how about working to make layettes for newborns at the local hospital. Lots of new parents can't afford to buy a special outfit and blanket to take their baby home from the hospital. You could make a family extremely happy by just practicing your hobby and donating the efforts.

- Do you really like to cook? How about baking up several dozen cookies or some cakes or pies and donating them to the local homeless shelter? Ask ahead to find out how many are needed and be sure to include any information about items that contain nuts or even eggs since some people are allergic.

- Is your hobby shopping? If so, you could budget in a few dollars each time you shop for purchasing items to donate to a local charity. The holidays are just past, but people are ALWAYS in need of food, personal care items, clothing, diapers, and school supplies.

- If you're handy with tools, how about building toys? Foster care children often have nothing to call their own, and a small toy built just-for-them would bring a lot of cheer into a frightening situation.

- Another idea for someone good with tools is repairing bicycles. Oftentimes the police or another agency collects used bicycles to fix up and give to needy children. Most of these are given out at Christmas, but the repair work needs to go on all yearlong.

- No time for a hobby? You could even team up with a volunteer who has the time to make something to donate, but would really appreciate someone helping out with the expenses.


Researchers and engineers at Alabama A&M University's (AAMU) School of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (SAES) and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) recently demonstrated its first testing of a customized transportable satellite unit. The unit provided Internet2 connection for H.320 presentations at AAMU’s Faculty and Staff Winter Conference. A wireless access point in a minivan connecting the dish provided satellite Internet2 connectivity for computer presentations during the conference. The transportable satellite dish, two fixed-site satellite dishes, a mobile interactive video van, and a communication tower are part of a multi-technology and wireless communication network for providing low-cost Internet access for rural/urban distance teaching, research, and outreach programs.

Equipment, training and satellite time for the transportable satellite unit along with two fixed-site units were purchased and provided as part of a National Science Foundation grant awarded to the American Distance Learning Consortium (ADEC) that utilizes Tachyon technology. SAES and ACES provided additional funds for equipment, fabrication, and technical support. The transportable and fixed-site units are now part of AAMU, ADEC, and the Advanced Internet Satellite Extension Project (AISEP).

Project Director Dr. Taylor Byrd said that ADEC has 65 members, including 1862, 1890, and 1994 land-grant institutions. The first
transportable satellite unit completed on AISEP was built by Ohio State University and demonstrated at the 18th Annual Conference on Distance Teaching and Learning at Madison, Wisconsin in August 2002. The second transportable unit completed was built for Prairie View A&M University by Turtle Top Industries in Goshen, Indiana and demonstrated in Orlando, Florida for the Sloan-C ALN Conference held in November 2002. The third transportable unit was built by AAMU (trailer and mount fabricated by Built Rite Manufacturing in Huntsville, Alabama) in cooperation with the ADEC Advanced Internet Satellite Expansion Project. Engineering Technician Oliver Dillard calibrated the location for the satellite's signal strength (10.5) for the H.320 test. The unit will also be tested at the national conference level.

**Black Belt Fixed-Site Satellite Dish**

AAMU's USDA-funded project "Distance Instruction for Adult Learning (DIAL) in Rural Alabama" for the Micro-Venture Incubation Center (M-VIC) headquarted at Greene/Sumter Enterprise Community (EC) in Livingston, Alabama, recently began testing a fixed-site dish satellite Internet2 link for an Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT) job training class. "A major benefit of this technology is its ability to provide rural and limited resource communities low-cost Internet access without the use of a local Internet service provider," said Dr. Byrd.

The USDA distance-learning equipment grant focused on job creation, increasing income levels, welfare-to-work training, and regional job-related skills. The M-VIC's facilities and staffing were made available in cooperation with the Greene/Sumter EC and the Sumter County Commission. The second fixed-site satellite unit is located at the Federation of Southern Cooperative-Land Assistance Fund Training Center in Epes, Alabama. This unit will provide satellite Internet2 connection for small farmer information and management programs, seminars and the Federation's literacy training program.

**Fixed-Dish Serves the AIDT Fast Tract Job Training Class**

The Greene/Sumter EC in cooperation with the AIDT have developed an Alabama Workforce Development Plan for the local EC area. EC Director Ms. Herlecia Hampton reported that 11 EC area students are enrolled for a 10-week Fast Tract course that provides trainees with entry-level skills needed in most Alabama industries and businesses. Trainees who pass a final comprehensive examination earn an "AIDT Certified Worker" status. Certificates are awarded to those individuals who have proven work skills and abilities to show how they met employment standards. Fast Tract graduates may choose to go directly to work or to pursue advanced skill development and certification in manufacturing technology and information technology through additional Alabama Works training. They also have the option of pursuing an academic degree from a partner institution in the Alabama College System.

Steve Marlowe, AIDT special projects coordinator, reported that Fast Tract Training is currently available in Montgomery, Montgomery County; Anniston, in Calhoun County; Eutaw, in Greene County; Greensboro, in Hale County; and Selma, in Dallas County (starts this fall).
Forty-five nursing students from the University of North Alabama participated in the Traveling Health Fair program. This program is designed to teach middle school students (grades 5-8) about the dangers of tobacco use. The fair travels from school to school and the curriculum is used in conjunction with health education classes. The nursing students served as volunteers, visiting 13 schools and instructing 2,669 youth about the importance of not smoking.

Lauderdale County Extension Agent Mary Andrews and Pat Mackey from the Partnership For A Tobacco Free Shoals trained the nursing students.

The goals and objectives of the program are as follows:

What's the Message?

Goal: To increase student awareness of the techniques employed by advertisers to manipulate consumer behavior and to teach students how to resist these techniques.

Objectives: To discuss the purpose of advertising, to identify common advertising techniques, to identify and analyze tobacco advertisements, and to discuss alternative ways of responding to tobacco ads.

Don't Get Bagged

Objective: Students will practice making responsible decisions.

Life Skill: I will make decisions that promote health.

Chewing the Cud

Objective: Increase a student’s awareness of the dangers and risks involved in using smokeless tobacco.

Prepared for Spring in the Yard

As the days begin to get longer and the sky less dreary, your thoughts should be turning to your yard. The brief holiday from raking leaves and mowing grass is soon to end. In fact it is almost time to start waking up those plants.

Plants that flower in the summer or fall can be pruned during the winter months. Ornamental grasses such as Pampas, Monkey or Mondo grasses should be mowed or cut back in February or very early March, before growth begins. If these "grasses" have become too large or are spreading where you don't want them, you can also separate them by digging up sections of the plant and replanting them in a new location.

If you have Bermuda or Zoysia lawns, you can apply a pre-emerge weed control product for March spring weeds. However, putting "weed and feed" down in March is a waste of money since the plants are not very active and will not take up the nitrogen. There are several other commercial products available for Bermuda and Zoysia. Some pre-emerge products specify that your lawn must be fully dormant before application, so read the labels carefully before you make a purchase.

Fescue, for example, should have a pre-emerge treatment in the fall. Do not apply pre-emerge in the spring unless your fescue is in a shady location and typically survives the summer heat. If you have a significant wild onion and/or wild garlic problem in your Zoysia and Bermuda lawns, they can be controlled with the pesticide 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D). Onion and garlic should be actively growing and you may need to reapply the pesticide 2,4-D in 10 to 14 days. Spray only when the wind is calm and do not water for 24 hours.

Your soil should have been tested in the fall but if you have not done so, it is still a good time to take a sample to your County Extension Office. Soil pH should be between 6.0 and 6.5 for fescue and Bermuda. You are advised to begin the fertilization program for Bermuda in mid-April, and Fescue should not be fertilized in the spring unless it is in a shady location.
such a will. Ethical wills range in size from a few paragraphs to volumes long and can be in multimedia formats. The goal is to capture in the best way possible your philosophies on life, the moral to your story, or specific hopes and ideals that you would like to share with a family member or friend— anything about yourself that you would like to endure.

Recently, I was introduced to this latest trend at an estate planning conference. I was a bit of a skeptic at first. Unsure of what to expect, the name stirred connotations of a document that would be a peculiar blend of law and morals. In addition to the complexity that can arise when those two concepts are combined, I thought what would be the value of such a document to anyone involved in planning for their estate. I learned, however, that there are three main purposes for ethical wills: 1) leaving an intangible legacy, 2) personal satisfaction, and 3) their utility during the estate planning process.

First, bequeathing ideals and personal messages for your loved ones as part of your legacy is not a new concept. However, applying the same kind of concern that you would to physical objects may strike some as odd. Even as it is important to ensure that your material possessions are properly taken care of, you may want to consider the value of your life lessons, beliefs, and experiences. Not only do these things apply to your own life, they can also cross generations, family lines and even cultures. Take for example a father, once a doctor, that revealed in his ethical will his regret in giving up medical research for a more lucrative position as a surgeon. In his words to his son, he left him with this revelation, "There's no greater compensation than being happy in your work."

Second, the process of creating an ethical will is personally beneficial, and can be comforting and encouraging to your loved ones. In recent responses to ethical wills, individuals spoke of how cathartic it was to truly reflect on their life and what they had learned or nearly forgotten. It is a time of introspection that focuses on the positive aspects of your experiences. If you are considering preparing an ethical will, there are books, websites, and even counselors to aid the process. For examples of ethical wills, visit the ethical will website at www.ethicalwill.com. Also, Jack Riemer, a rabbi and co-author of So That Your Values Live On: Ethical Wills & How to Prepare Them (Jewish Lights Publishing) offers advice on how to avoid being critical or preachy.

Finally, for all of the pragmatists in the audience, there is a legal utility for ethical wills. Increasingly, attorneys are suggesting that their clients have one made in conjunction with their Last Will and Testament and other end-of-life documents. An ethical will can assist an attorney in executing the affairs of your estate in a manner that is agreeable with your values and interests. It can also be used to support or offer basis for intent in a variety of probate matters such as trust funding and asset distributions. When an attorney has access to your ethical will, they can better personalize your legal matters.

Ethical wills go beyond concepts of either law or morality. They are not just for the religious, nor are they simply for those with extensive estate planning. Consider it as a memory that will live forever.

"Just keep on living!" My grandfather used to say that phrase whenever I reached a point at which I thought I had seen it all. I remember those words well, but there are so many lessons that he garnered in life and sought to pass on. Yet, he is no longer with us, and over the years I cannot recall them all. Imagine what it would mean to you to have some words of encouragement or wisdom from a loved one that is no longer with you.

In the precarious world that we live in, many people have asked that question and decided to take decisive action in the new option called an "ethical will." This is not a legal document in and of itself; rather it is a public record of your nonrepresentational wealth. It is a way to concretely pass on those things that may be otherwise inaccessible or even forgotten. In much the same way that parents would like to see that their children are financially provided for in their absence, some are leaving emotional and philosophical provisions as well.

Essentially, an ethical will is what you make it. There is no set format or content guidelines; however, as interest grows, counselors and attorneys are offering guidance for those who would like to prepare...
It was an overcast September morning as over 150 local residents of Triana, Alabama and guests from as far away as New Jersey, gathered in Flamingo Park and the Flamingo Wildlife Refuge to celebrate their first Arbor Day. They didn't mind – the sun was shining all around as far as they were concerned.

The residents had accomplished a number of goals over the past six months. They had accepted an offer to participate in a Cooperative Extension-led research project to determine the impact of a tree-based community revitalization project on social issues. Trees are seen as a valuable asset in the larger urban forest ecosystem and are known to reduce negative social problems such as teen drug abuse, domestic violence, and unemployment. Therefore, in a predominately African-American community like Triana on the fringe of the more trendy "new urbanism movement," trees serve as a vital social commodity for families and communities located in at-risk areas. Based on the research presented to Triana residents, the community was quite receptive to several initiatives proposed by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

Marilyn Simpson Johnson, a family welfare specialist at Alabama A&M University (AAMU), had seen rapid urban growth absorb the character and tradition of other at-risk communities across the state and did not desire the same for Triana. What was needed, she reasoned, was a spark – a project that would bring the residents together to work toward the common goal of revitalizing the community and building a solid campaign to articulate their own "smart growth" agenda. She sought consultation on an urban forestry idea and was linked with Dr. Brenda Allen, a forestry assistant professor at Auburn University. The researchers were awarded a grant from the Alabama Urban and Community Forestry Association and launched a tree-planting initiative on the impact of urban forestry on social well-being.

Special emphasis was placed on helping Triana to qualify for Tree City USA status. A tree board was organized to spearhead the procedural requirements of the Tree City USA process. The community completed their application prerequisites with the Arbor Day celebration on September 21.

Extension also worked with the board and other public and private partners to undertake the revitalization of both the town park and wildlife refuge, including a tree-planting plan. Installation of an outdoor learning center utilizing the USDA Forest Service Project's Learning Tree curriculum, and a walking tour on the social, economic, and environmental benefits of trees were also implemented. A four-week public radio campaign on AAMU's campus with youth from the Triana Boys and Girls Club promoted the campaign "Trees Are Your Friends." The Alabama Forestry Association grant enabled the town of Triana to plant over 20 flowering trees.

A New Day

The Arbor Day Celebration, including the tree-planting ceremony, marked a number of milestones and a new day for Triana. Funding through the Alabama Forestry Association paved the way for Extension to create family and community-based resource development programming -- "the hook" for town revitalization. The urban forestry project offers practical, community-based strategies for "re-humanizing" at-risk communities at the urban/rural interface into healthier and more livable communities.

"All you have to do in Triana is plant a seed and we will nurture it and water it," observes Triana Mayor Marvelene Freeman. "This has been made possible through the efforts of a lot of local people, but the person who really got it going was Ms. Johnson."

In addition to planting new trees, the residents planted new hopes and breathed new life into their community.
Hedging Options for the Pink Slip
by Bernice Wilson, Ph.D.

Because the economy is slow and not making a big bounce into recovery, layoffs may be coming in the near future. Unemployment is rising; therefore workers in many regions and factions need to brace themselves for pink slips. Have you thought about what you can do to prepare for an uncertain layoff? These timely tips can help you prepare for such an event.

• Prepare a written budget. A budget will help you see where your money is going.

• Get rid of debt. Any debt (high interest credit cards) other than a mortgage and car payment could be a problem while you’re unemployed.

• Build a cash reserve. You should consider building a cash reserve that will cover your expenses for 3 to 6 months.

• Cut expenses. Cutting expenses frees up cash to pay off some of your debt and to create an emergency fund. Look at what expenses you could do without or reduce if you become unemployed. Do not try to maintain your employment lifestyle by using your credit cards, dipping into retirement savings, or running through your lump-sum severance package.

• Get a line of credit. Try establishing a line of credit with a financial institution while you have a job. You will not be able to get one if you lose your job. Warning, consider this very carefully because big risks are involved here such as the loss of your home. In other words, consider all your options before you use your home as collateral for a loan. Be sure to keep up the monthly payments if you should have to use your line of credit.

• Begin to search for a job. Look at all available employment opportunities at other firms or job possibilities with your current employer.

• Negotiate an exit package. If the pink slip arrives, you may be eligible for a severance package. For example, you may be offered a lump sum or a salary continuation package that includes health care coverage or retirement benefits that are offered beyond severance. Try to negotiate a stronger exit package than the one being given. Get professional financial help if needed.

• Continue health insurance. It is unwise to do without health insurance. If the health coverage is not a part of the exit package, ask your employer to let you continue your health coverage under COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act). This is a federal law that requires many employers to allow unemployed workers to continue group coverage up to 18 months as long as the worker pays the premiums.

• Don’t count on unemployment insurance. Unemployment benefits will not begin to make up for your lost wages, although every little bit helps. Keep in mind when calculating your post-layoff income that unemployment insurance income is taxable and it is only available for a short time.

• Don’t touch your retirement funds. Try to avoid borrowing or withdrawing funds from your retirement account, or spending lump-sum retirement buyouts from your former employer. Your layoff situation may be temporary, but retirement is not. Pulling funds out early could cost a lot in taxes, penalties and lost growth opportunities.

While the economy is in slow growth, you may face a layoff. If you are financially prepared, then you will weather a layoff and place yourself in a position to avoid accepting an undesirable job.
Tackling Childhood Obesity: Make it a Family Affair
by Jannie Carter, Ph.D.

Childhood obesity has escalated to epidemic proportions in the United States creating major health problems for some youth. Statistics reflect that high percentages of African-American, Hispanic and Native-American children are obese. What does this mean for our youth population? Along with psychological and emotional consequences, obesity is linked to high levels of blood sugar, blood pressure, and blood fats that put overweight children at risk of diseases such as diabetes. Findings from a study of school-age children showed an increased incidence of type II diabetes among those who were overweight.

Health and wellness are important to individual and family well-being. But, good health doesn't just happen. It comes with practicing learned habits of eating right, making healthy choices and being physically active. In order to grow and develop properly, children need to eat a variety of nutritious foods as outlined in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2000 established by the United States Department of Agriculture. Whether or not children develop eating habits that promote healthy development depends largely on parents and the patterns that are set early in life. Health smart parents know that good eating habits mean setting good examples for their children. This includes buying and preparing nutritious foods and encouraging regular exercise.

Families should make it a practice to follow the Food Guide Pyramid to create a healthy balance of foods from each group. Consumption of foods that are high in fats and cholesterol should be controlled. Food labels provide essential information about the fat and cholesterol levels found in most foods. Sweets, snacks and fast foods are often high in fat, cholesterol and calories, so parents should encourage tasty alternatives. By eating more foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, families and children can get more of the vitamins, minerals, and fiber that the body needs.

Families are encouraged to work together to maintain good healthy eating. Do not be taken in by television, radio and magazine ads that offer quick solutions. Changes in family eating habits should be made gradually so family members can stay on course. Drastic changes may be short-lived. For best results in promoting behavioral changes, families should plan together and eat together. Consuming nutritious meals in a family setting can help young people make the transition to healthier eating.

Parents should provide opportunities for youth to get some exercise daily, especially on the weekends. Family outings that involve hiking, cycling, skating and swimming, promote good physical exercise. Small changes in our lifestyles can have big results. Make exercising and eating properly a family affair, and take comfort in knowing that you are not alone!

As a support base for parents, Extension educational outreach programs seek to improve a youth’s ability to make wise choices by enhancing their general knowledge of foods and food sources. Programs like the Urban Youth Farm Day in Madison County have improved the general awareness of urban youth about the origin of food products. In a recent effort, the Urban Affairs unit and the Madison County Extension office have partnered with the Madison County Commission, District Six, to pilot test a comprehensive program for urban youth that supports growing, preparing and eating nutritious foods for improved health. Contact your local Extension office for more information on health and nutrition programs for youth in your community.

References:


One of the commonly used definers in professional organizations today is the so-called boundary between professional and non-professional (or support staff), and a common complaint comes from some who perceive they are treated as lesser beings. To treat people who are working as part of the team responsible for delivering the service, as being somehow less important, is not only arrogant, it is truly unprofessional. It is unprofessional because it impacts on the quality of service that is delivered. People who do not feel valued do not perform at the optimum level. Arrogance undermines growth and learning, and the resulting stagnation negatively impacts the services delivered.

Another point? PETTY GOSSIP, BACKBITING, and legally speaking, "DEFAMATORY REMARKS," should be avoided at all costs.

Well, enough said about that. In writing this article, I came across a very short list of things that were given to new graduates as they embarked upon their first jobs. This list is appropriate for any employee to review.

### Professional Conduct

#### Code of Ethics: Develop one.

Don't fall into bad habits like taking freebies, excessive breaks, abusing the use of the Internet, the telephone, or fabricating excuses.

#### Chain of Command: Follow it.

If you have a problem, go to the appropriate person, not the president of the institution.

#### Salary: Don't discuss it.

Salary information should never be discussed with other employees.

#### Safety: Develop an intrinsic value for safety.

Not only on the job, but after work as well.

#### Punctuality: Be at work on time.

Do not leave early; do not miss work unless it is absolutely necessary. If for some reason you are unable to work, make sure you notify your supervisor as soon as possible.

### Resilience: Be resilient to problems, mistakes and criticism.

Don't let other people cause you problems.

I am by no means a Cooperative Extension specialist or expert in the area of professional conduct. And to be quite honest, nothing presented has been new. In fact, the bottom line can be encapsulated as follows:

Always practice the Golden Rule: **Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you.** This sounds so simple, but it's oh so difficult to practice in a work environment unless **you** develop a personal mindset consistent with its principles.

As we embark upon 2003 with new projects and new challenges, let us put away unproductive attitudes, perceptions, and mindsets, and portray professional conduct that will make our work environments an even better place to work.

With each of us spending more time looking honestly within ourselves and not so much time looking and pointing at others, office professionalism will be a consistent reality.
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| Wendi Williams (Editor/National-International News) | Jannie Carter, Ph.D. (County News) |
| wawillia@aces.edu | jcarter@aces.edu |
| Edna Coleman (Specialist News) | Julio Correa, Ph.D. (Spanish Programming) |
| ecoleman@aces.edu | jcorrea@aces.edu |
| Kevin Crenshaw, Esq. (Legal Issues) | Jean Hall-Dwyer (Print/Electronic Design) |
| kkeren@aol.com | jhall@aces.edu |
| Erica James (Administrative News/Distribution) | Jacqueline Johnson, DVM (Online Database) |
| ejames@aces.edu | jujohnso@aces.edu |
| Jeanetta Williams (Proofreading/Distribution) | |
| jwilliam@aces.edu | |

**Phone:** 256-372-5710  
**Fax:** 256-372-5840

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Un Saludo A Los Voluntarios
Por Wendi A. Williams

Esta edición va dedicada a los voluntarios que ayudan continuamente al Sistema de Extensión Cooperativo de Alabama a satisfacer sus metas y objetivos. Les saludamos por las contribuciones hechas a través de los años. ¡Sin su ayuda, Extensión no hubiera sido exitoso en alcanzar a los miles de personas a través del estado y alrededor del mundo!

¡Gracias y mejores deseos en el Año Nuevo!

Estudiantes De Alabama A&M University en Programa De Voluntarios
Por Mary W. Hurt

Estudiantes Promoviendo Acción y Educación Comunitaria (SPACE, siglas en inglés) es una organización de servicio de voluntarios la cual ha demostrado ser una herramienta valiosísima para muchas agencias locales, organizaciones y escuelas. Por lo menos unos 200 estudiantes de Alabama A&M University fueron recrutados en la primavera del 2002 y aproximadamente 108 jóvenes voluntarios participaron en la orientación y entrenamiento efectuada en febrero del 2002. Estos jóvenes voluntarios fueron instrumentales en el mejoramiento de calificaciones y comportamiento de estudiantes de cinco escuelas en el noroeste de Huntsville. Cerca de 500 estudiantes en el condado de Madison se beneficiaron de las actividades llevadas a cabo en la primavera. Muchos de estos estudiantes demostraron mejoras significativas en el promedio académico. Actualmente el programa SPACE sirve seis condados (Madison, Lawrence, Montgomery, Talladega, Mobile, y Jefferson) en el estado de Alabama.

Los Héroes Más Poco Celebrados En El Mundo
Por Wendi A. Williams

En cada rincón de la tierra uno siempre encuentra individuos que, a pesar de la causa, desinteresadamente devotan su tiempo, energía, y talentos al servicio de la humanidad. Las razones por la cual la gente se ofrece de voluntario son tan numerosas como la causa. De acuerdo a Lucy Fischer y Kay Schaffer (1993), un voluntario es más probable que sea:

- Una mujer en los treinta o cuarenta, aunque los hombres son más dispuestos a ser voluntarios;
- Un individuo con educación e ingreso alto;
- Un individuo con tiempo disponible;
- Un individuo con buena salud;
- Una persona con una gran creencia o necesidad de ayudar a otros; y
- Una persona que disfruta de las actividades recreativas.

Al igual que el empleado regular, los voluntarios deben de ser recrutados, examinados, y entrenados. En adición, los voluntarios deben de ser recompensados por su trabajo y deben de ser selectivos sobre la organización o causa que respaldan.
Opciones Para Un Posible Despido
Por Bernice Wilson, Ph.D.

Dado que la economía está mala y no está recuperando bien, existe la posibilidad de despido en un futuro cercano. El desempleo está aumentando, por lo tanto trabajadores en muchas regiones y facciones necesitan estar preparados. Los siguientes consejos pueden ser de gran utilidad en dicho evento:

- Prepare un presupuesto escrito.
- Libere de deudas.
- Tenga una reserva de dinero efectivo.
- Corte los gastos.
- Obtenga una línea de crédito.
- Comience a buscar trabajo.
- Negocie un convenio de despido.
- Continue el plan médico.
- No cuente con el seguro por desempleo.
- No toque su fondo de retiro.

Testamentos Éticos: Recuerdos Que Continúan Revelando
Por Kevin H. Crenshaw, Abogado

Un testamento ético es un documento público el cual expresa cosas que pueden ser inaccesibles o más aun, olvidadas. Los testamentos éticos fluctúan en tamaño y pueden tener un formato de multidifusión. La meta es capturar en la mejor forma posible las filosofías de vida, las moralejas de cuentos, o esperanzas e ideales que usted desea compartir con miembros de familia o amistades. Los tres propósitos de un testamento ético son: 1) dejar un legado intangible, 2) satisfacción personal, y 3) su utilidad durante el proceso de planificación de la herencia. Un testamento ético puede asistir a un abogado en la ejecución de los asuntos de su herencia en una manera de acuerdo con sus valores e intereses.

Sembrando Árboles Y Esperanza
Por Marilyn Simpson Johnson, LMSW

En una mañana nublada en septiembre, más de 150 residentes locales de Triana, Alabama se reunieron en Flamingo Park y Flamingo Wildlife Refuge para celebrar su primer día del árbol. Los residentes habían aceptado participar en un proyecto para determinar el impacto de los árboles sobre los asuntos sociales. Se ha observado que los árboles son valiosísimos en la reducción de problemas sociales tales como el uso de drogas en los adolescentes, la violencia doméstica, y el desempleo. La celebración del día del árbol, la cual incluyó la ceremonia de siembra, marcó un nuevo día para la comunidad de Triana.

Combatiendo La Obesidad En Niños: Hágalo Un Asunto De Familia
Por Jannie Carter, Ph.D.

La obesidad en niños ha escalado proporciones epidémicas en los Estados Unidos. La obesidad está relacionada con altos niveles de azúcar y grasa en la sangre, y la alta presión sanguínea. Esto significa que niños en sobrepeso corren riesgos de contraer enfermedades tales como la diabetes.

Para un crecimiento y desarrollo adecuado, los niños necesitan comer una variedad de alimentos nutritivos tal y como la Guía Dietética para Americanos (2000) delinea. Sin embargo, el desarrollo de hábitos de comida que promueven un desarrollo saludable depende en gran medida de los padres y los patronos establecidos a temprana edad.

El consumo de alimentos con altos contenidos de grasas y colesterol debe de ser controlado. Por lo tanto, los padres deben de estimular el consumo de alimentos alternativos. Alimentos tales como las frutas y vegetales (verduras) contienen más vitaminas, minerales, y fibra de lo que el cuerpo necesita.

Para mejores resultados en la promoción de cambios de comportamiento, las familias deben de planificar juntos y comer juntos. Consumiendo comidas nutritivas en un ambiente familiar puede ayudar a los jóvenes a hacer la transición hacia hábitos de comida saludables.

Los padres deben de también proveerle oportunidades a la juventud de poder hacer ejercicios diarios, especialmente durante los fines de semanas. Salidas familiares que envuelven caminata, ciclismo, patinaje, y natación promueven buen ejercicio físico.
Preparandose Para la Primavera En El Patio
Por Cathy Sabota, Ph.D.

A medida que los días se ponen más largos y el cielo más gris, sus pensamientos deberían de estar enfocados hacia el patio. Plantas que florecen en el verano u otoño pueden ser podadas durante los meses de invierno. Plantas ornamentales tales como las hierbas Pampas, Monkey o Mondo deberían de ser cortadas en febrero o temprano en marzo antes de que el crecimiento comience. Si estas hierbas se han puesto muy altas o se están propagándose hacia lugares que usted no desea, las puede separar por medio de un transplante hacia otro sitio.

Si su grama es Bermuda o Zoysia, puede aplicar un herbicida antes del surgimiento de malezas en marzo. Si su grama es Fescue, entonces debería de tratarl en el otoño. No aplique un pre-emergente en la primavera a menos de que su Fescue esté en un área sombreada y sobrevive el calor del verano. Aplique cuando el viento está calmado y no riegue agua por 24 horas.

Si no ha hecho el análisis de suelo, todavía está a tiempo de tomar una muestra y llevarla a la Oficina de Extensión más cercana a usted. Recuerde que el pH del suelo debe de estar entre 6.0 y 6.5 para Fescue y Bermuda. En adición, es aconsejable fertilizar la Bermuda a mediados de abril, y el Fescue no se debe de fertilizar en la primavera a menos de que esté en un área sombreada.

Unidad de Satélite Transportable
Por Oliver W. Dillard Y Taylor Byrd, Ph.D.

Investigadores e ingenieros de la Escuela de Ciencias Agrícolas y Ambientales de Alabama A&M University y del Sistema Cooperativo de Extensión de Alabama demostraron recientemente la primera prueba de una unidad de satélite transportable. La unidad se utilizó para proveer conexión al Internet2 para las presentaciones H.320 que se llevaron a cabo durante la Conferencia Invernal del Personal Docente y No Docente de Alabama A&M University. En una minicamioneta, un punto, sin acceso a cable, conectado a un disco pudo proveer una conectividad Internet2 para las presentaciones en computadora durante la Conferencia Invernal. El disco satélite transportable, dos discos satélites fijos, una camioneta con video interactivo ambulante, y una torre de comunicación son parte de una red de comunicación multi- tecnológica sin acceso a cable para proveer acceso al Internet a bajo costo para la educación e investigación lejana.

Voluntarios En Acción
Por Mary J. Andrews

Cuarenta y cinco estudiantes de enfermería de University of North Alabama participaron en la Feria de Salud Ambulante. Este programa fue diseñado con el propósito de educar estudiantes de escuela intermedia (grados 5-8) sobre los daños nocivos del tabaco. La feria viaja de escuela en escuela y el currículo se usa en conjunto con clases de salud. Los estudiantes de enfermería, los cuales sirvieron de voluntarios, visitaron 13 escuelas e instruyeron a 2,669 jóvenes sobre la importancia de no fumar. Mary Andrews, Agente de Extensión en el Condado de Lauderdale, y Pat Mackey, representante de Partnership For A Tobacco Free Shoals, adiestraron a los estudiantes de enfermería.
¿Voluntario? ¿Quién? ¿Yo?
Por Jean Hall Dwyer

Del Presidente para abajo, la nación completa quiere voluntaries. Ahora, ¿qué es lo que se espera que el ciudadano común haga como voluntario? ¿Quién exactamente está cualificado?

A continuación se ofrecen algunas ideas sobre las cualificaciones requeridas:

- Si usted puede leer en voz alta, puede hacer trabajo voluntario leyendo para ciegos.
- Si a usted le gusta coser o tejer, puede hacer trabajo voluntario haciendo ajuares de bebé en los hospitales locales.
- Si a usted le gusta cocinar, puede hacer trabajo voluntario cocinando galletitas, bizcochos y pasteles al horno para personas desamparadas.
- Si a usted le gusta ir de compras, ¿porque no hacer un presupuesto que le permita comprar artículos que luego pueda donar a un grupo caritativo?
- Si usted es diestro con las herramientas, ¿porque no construir juguetes o arreglar bicicletas para la época de pascuas.

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