Make the Difference

September, 2007

2007 Walk to School Day

Let’s promote good physical activity here in Chatham County. Join others in registration for this worthwhile event.

This October 3, 2007, communities around the country will join nearly 40 countries to celebrate walking and bicycling to school. Registration is free and is now open and available to all Walk to School event organizers in the USA.

By registering, Walk to School organizers have a chance to win prizes for students and gain access to a variety of downloadable items, including certificates, printable sticker templates, media materials and more. Registrants can also subscribe to a Walk to School e-newsletter with tips and resources for walk to school events.

Visit www.walktoschool.org to register an event or to sign up as a resource person for Walk to School events. Registered events will be displayed on an interactive map on the Walk to School web site, so that neighboring communities, media and other organizations will be able to view participating events.

The National Center for Safe Routes to School at the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center serves as the national coordinating agency for International Walk to School events in the USA.

For more information on planning and resources for Walk to School activities, please visit or contact:

www.walktoschool.org
Jennifer Bonchak at bonchak@hsrc.unc.edu
919-843-4859
Nancy Pullen-Seufert at pullen@hsrc.unc.edu
919-962-7419.
Young C.H.E.F.S -
Young C.H.E.F.s is a cooking program designed to bring your children into the kitchen and teach them how ingredients work together to create flavors and textures. It is a fun and creative way for youth to see, taste and experience the product of an effort put forth. Cooking can be of educational value as well -- science, math and art all rolled into one - and what a tasty way to learn!

Ages: 8 – 18 years old are welcome!!
Time: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Cost: $8.00 per youth (Covering materials and samplings)  FEE IS NON-REFUNDABLE
Enrollment: Limited to 12 youth, advanced registration required due to food purchases

Saturday, September 9th:
September 22nd (repeat of September 9th)

Basic Knife Skills
Learning to handle the knife is a major part of being in the kitchen. Learning correctly, one can fashion foods into equal or unique shapes and sizes. Knife safety, a few classic knife cuts and specialty cuts, knife maintenance and sharpening techniques.

Additional information contact, Phyllis Smith, 919-542-8202, phyllis_smith@ncsu.edu

Chatham County Extension and Community Association

Chatham County Extension & Community Association members strive to promote a better quality life for all through education, community service, and leadership. This organization has committed themselves to taking positive action towards securing equal opportunity of membership regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability.

The primary mission is to carry out informal educational programs planned by ECA leaders to provide a better and more meaningful life for themselves, their families, and their communities. Active members attend monthly meetings and receive educational information through a leader or guest presenter. Clubs are present all around the county.

Pittsboro Needle Crafters

Are you prepared to have some fun, meet new friends, and learn new techniques with fabric and other related crafts? Everyone, beginner or expert, is welcome to join us.

The Pittsboro Needle Crafters meet at 6:30 pm, the second Thursday from September through May in the auditorium of the Agriculture Building, Pittsboro, NC. There is a $5 fee (payable each month you come to a meeting), which covers refreshments and specific supplies for that month's class.

In addition, "Beginning Quilting", a six-week class, will start on Thursday, September 27th, 9:30 am — 12:00 noon in the Chatham County Agriculture Building. The cost is $50 which covers various supplies and beverages. RESERVATIONS REQUIRED due to limited space.

R.S.V.P. to Joan (jomylek@yahoo.com) or Kathy (knichols@touchnc.net). Remember, you don't have to take part in the activity every month, just come and share your projects, enjoy the food and especially CHAT and learn.
Check the Packing List for College-bound Students
Planning goes a long way, but Freshmen still forget a lot of necessities

From Wal-Mart to PBTeen to Bed Bath & Beyond, retailers want you to shop them to stock up the bedroom, the bathroom, the backpack and even the medicine cabinet. And many have taken steps to make the experience as effortless as possible. Surprisingly, many colleges and universities don't offer the quintessential list of what's needed, sending students to sites like collegeboard.com or CollegeView.com. But there's little question that planning goes a long, long way.

There are many items that are no-brainers like a laptop (with built-in wireless connections), cell phone, bedding and bath gear. But most first-time college-bound students don't think about packing a roll of quarters or antacids and pain relievers or a can opener. They'll have mini-fridges, microwaves (assuming the school lets them) and MP3 players, but forget that 21 pairs of underwear and 30 pairs of socks is not excessive, particularly if they participate in sports.

Other items often missed include dental floss, Band-Aids and laundry stain removers. Shampoo and conditioner, conditioner, blow dryers, curling irons/straighteners, razors - they're must-haves for many students. Of course, university towns do have stores that sell paper towels, bar soap and laundry detergent.

"The important thing is not to panic," said Colleen McGovern, who is sending a second child to St. Norbert's College in De Pere, Wis., this year. "Inevitably you will forget something, but don't stress out. There's always a Wal-Mart or something similar near by."

Also Sears Roebuck, Target and the Container Store all have handy reference lists. Container stores, for example, help students get organized by offering three separate routes, one of which is called the "dorm room basic six" of categories closet, walls and doors, desk, laundry, bath and storage with items under each. They also have a "talk to an expert" service.

The practical essentials
Here are some other tips from experienced parents:

- **Have wash, need quarters.** More than a few parents said rolls of quarters were one way of helping do their children's wash without physically being there.
- **Duct tape.** It's not a joke. Students need it to tape down all those wayward cords, fix broken items and hang things.
- **Batteries.** All sizes, and don't forget chargers. Most students forget that camera and calculator batteries die with lots of use, and there's not a go-to drawer filled with batteries like there is at home.
- **Flip-flops for those community showers.** They forget too that college dorms can be welcoming venues for germs.
- **Flatware.** At least one fork, knife and spoon are necessary - and often more if students tend to lose them. A box of plastic utensils is one suggestion.
- **Lamps and flashlights.** Lighting in dorm rooms is notoriously poor.
- **Over-the-door storage units for shoes or extra hanging clothes or under-the-bed boxes.** Dorm rooms are small. Need we say more?

Know what you're getting
Some schools do endorse packages and services that students might want to use to outfit themselves. But at least one parent has waved a warning flag about them. Karen Anderson found out the hard way that university-backed packages from outside vendors are not always what they're cracked up to be. Stymied by the extra-long fit for sheets on twin beds, she was pleased to find a company endorsed by the University of Iowa that would provide all the necessary bedding at one affordable price.

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It was a good price and certainly fit the bill of what she would need in one easy order," she said of her daughter Katie's package that included sheets, pillows, pillowcases, comforter, blanket and other bed and bath items.

"When the box arrived about a week later I told my daughter there must be a second box coming behind it because I couldn't imagine two sheet sets, a comforter, two pillows, blankets, shower caddy and countless other items fitting in this tiny little box," she said. "I was wrong," she said. "Comfort should not have been part of the word describing the comforter and the pillows were as thick as the sheets. The blanket, however, was the icing on the cake." An order-taker suggested they pick the indigo color to match the sheets. Anderson said the tone is not like any indigo color she's ever seen and that the blanket itself was transparent.

The load out
Packing the car or in many cases, the cars - doesn't have to be a nightmare. Bed Bath & Beyond, for one, offers a "pack and hold" service that allows students to shop at stores near home, then pick up merchandise from stores near school. And, of course, there's always shipping, which some retailers offer for free or reduced fees.

Finally, parents say that financial issues like banking, debit cards and checking accounts cannot be overlooked or left to the usually inexperienced college-bound student to handle alone. Sharon Considine suggested that parents open a joint or custodial account at a college-town bank that also has branches in their home city.

"Make sure that you have access to their bank account," she suggested after she sent her son to the University of Notre Dame. "You then have the option to deposit funds or, more important, to keep an eye on their spending."

She also suggested opening the account at a bank that does not hold parents' accounts to keep the bank from dipping into your money if funds are not available in the child's account. "Trust me, I know this from experience," she added.

Jennifer Waters is a reporter for MarketWatch based in Chicago.

Your First Year of College:
25 Tips to Help You Survive and Thrive Your Freshman Year and Beyond

- Go to all the orientations.
- Get to know your roommate and others in your residence hall.
- Get organized.
- Find the ideal place for you to study.
- Go to class.
- Become the expert on course requirements and due dates.
- Meet your professors.
- Get to know your academic advisor.
- Seek a balance.
- Get involved on campus.
- Strive for good grades.
- Take advantage of study resources on campus
- Don't feel pressured about making a hasty decision about a career or a major.
- Take responsibility for yourself and your actions.
- Make connections with students in your classes.
- Find the Career Services Office.
- Don't procrastinate; prioritize your life.
- Stay healthy / eat right.
- Learn to cope with homesickness.
- Stay on campus as much as possible.
- Seek professional help when you need it.
- Keep track of your money.
- Don't cut corners
- Be prepared to be overwhelmed.
- Most IMPORTANT: Make time for yourself.

Resource: Dr. Randall Hansen, Founder of Quintessential Careers
Packing Safe School Lunches

Millions of Americans carry “bag” lunches. Food brought from home can be kept safe if it is first handled and cooked safely. Perishable foods must be kept cold while commuting via bus, bicycle, on foot, or in a car. After arriving at school, perishable food must be kept cold until lunchtime.

Why keep food cold? Harmful bacteria multiply rapidly in the "danger zone" – the temperatures between 41 and 135 degrees F. So, perishable food transported without an ice source won’t stay safe long. Here are a few recommendations to prevent foodborne illness from “bag” lunches.

1. Perishable food, such as raw or cooked meat or poultry, must be kept cold or frozen at the store and at home. Eggs should be purchased cold at the store and kept cold at home. In between, transport perishable food as fast as possible when no ice source is available. At the destination, it must be kept cold. Food should not be left out at room temperature more than 2 hours (1 hour if the temperature is above 90 degrees F.) Pre-packaged combos that contain luncheon meats along with crackers, cheese, and condiments must also be kept refrigerated. This includes luncheon meats and smoked ham which are cured or contain preservatives.

2. At lunchtime, discard all used food packaging and paper bags. Do not reuse packaging because it could contaminate other food and cause foodborne illness.

3. Pack just the amount of perishable food that can be eaten at lunch. That way, there won’t be a problem about the storage or safety of leftovers. It’s fine to prepare the food the night before and store the packed lunch in the refrigerator. Freezing sandwiches helps them stay cold. However, for best quality, don’t freeze sandwiches containing mayonnaise, lettuce, or tomatoes. Add these later.

   Insulated, soft-sided lunch boxes or bags are best for keeping food cold, but metal or plastic lunch boxes and paper bags can also be used. If using paper lunch bags, create layers by double bagging to help insulate the food. An ice source should be packed with perishable food in any type of lunch bag or box.

4. Prepare cooked food, such as turkey, ham, chicken, and vegetable or pasta salads, ahead of time to allow for thorough chilling in the refrigerator. Divide large amounts of food into shallow containers for fast chilling. Keep cooked food refrigerated until time to leave home.

   To keep lunches cold away from home, include a small frozen gel pack or frozen juice box. Of course, if there’s a refrigerator available, store perishable items there upon arrival.

   Some food is safe without a cold source. Items that don’t require refrigeration include fruits, vegetables, hard cheese, canned meat and fish, chips, breads, crackers, peanut butter, jelly, mustard, and pickles.

5. Use an insulated container to keep food like soup, chili, and stew hot. Fill the container with boiling water, let stand for a few minutes, empty, and then put in the piping hot food. Keep the insulated container closed until lunchtime to keep the food hot—135 degrees F or above.

Source: US Department of Agriculture
Healthy School Lunches

Provide healthy options for your child’s lunch box. Here are some ideas when packing school lunches.

**Whole grains.** Foods made with whole grains (bread, rice, cereals, pasta, etc.) typically have more fiber and other nutrients than those made with refined grains, like in white bread. To identify whole grain foods, look for those that list whole wheat, barley, oats, or another grain as the food’s first ingredient.

**Low fat milk.** As an alternative, especially if your child is already drinking 16-24 ounces of milk a day, you might go with water or 100% fruit juice at lunch, but avoid soda and fruit drinks. Low fat milk (for kids over age 2 years) is usually the preferred beverage to go with your child’s lunch.

**Lean Meats.** If using processed sandwich meats, choose those labeled as being ‘lean’ or ‘low fat’ and which have a low amount of sodium.

**Good carbs** are found in many fruits, vegetables, and whole grain foods.

**Good fats** are present in foods with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat. Avoid saturated fats (animal fats) and Trans fats, which are found in many processed foods, commercial baked goods, and snack foods.

**Avoid added sugar.** Check the ingredients list to avoid foods with added sugar, which might list sugar, corn sweetener, dextrose, fructose, corn syrup, fruit juice concentrate, honey, lactose, molasses, sucrose, or syrup.

**Nutritious snacks** don’t include ‘fruit snacks’ or bag of chips. Instead, provide healthier options like low fat yogurt or cheese, whole fruit, trail mix, oatmeal cookies, air-popped popcorn, granola bars, etc.

**Trail Mix for Kids**

4 cups small pretzel twists
2 cups roasted cocktail peanuts
2 cups fresh raisins
4 cups Cheerios cereal
2 cups of M&M’s

**Directions:** Combined all ingredients into a large bowl and mix together.
Store in air-tight container.

**Fruit ‘N Oat Crunch**

1 qt Quaker Oat Square Cereal
2 cups banana chips
2 cups raisins

**Directions:** Combined all ingredients in a large bowl and mix together.
Store in air-tight container.

**Quick Fix Mix**

2 cups mini pretzels
1 cup cheese snack crackers
1 cup honey roasted peanuts
1 cup raisins

**Directions:** Place all ingredients into a large plastic baggie, seal, than shake. Enjoy!

**Healthy Lunches**

Here is an example of a healthy lunch that you can put in your child’s lunch box.

- a sandwich made with whole wheat bread, low fat turkey breast lunch meat, and a slice of low fat cheese
- a side of chopped raw vegetables with a low fat dip
- a cup of low fat milk
- a cup of chopped whole fruit

As an alternative, consider sending your child to school with a wrap sandwich or thermos of vegetable soup.
North Carolina offers incentives for energy efficiency
released August 2007

Homeowners have opportunities to conserve energy through everything from light bulbs to household building materials, but beyond that, there are a number of financial incentives to be more energy conscious in North Carolina.

One of those options is the energy efficient mortgage (EEM), which offers a borrower special benefits and additional buying power when purchasing an energy efficient home or when retrofitting an older home with more energy efficient features.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the average home produces twice the greenhouse gas emissions of the average car. So, in addition to reducing power bills, ensuring that a home is energy efficient benefits the environment as well as the homeowner. The less energy we consume, the less greenhouse gasses are emitted, and the cleaner the air will be.

To determine whether a home or home improvement qualifies for an EEM, a qualified energy rater will do a Home Energy Rating Systems (HERS) audit. The rater will take into consideration factors such as types of windows, insulation, and other building materials; local climate; and utility costs. Based on the HERS rating, lenders determine what type of discounts or other advantages (such as a larger loan based on potential savings on power bills) can be offered through an EEM. Outfitting a new or existing home with energy-saving features may help qualify the buyer for an EEM, and should also increase the home’s property value.

Other financial incentives for being energy conscious are available through DSIRE (the Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency). Some examples of programs that help consumers outfit their homes for energy efficiency include:

- utility company loans, discounts or rebates for energy efficient features such as a new water heater or windows,
- property tax exemptions for renewable energy sources such as solar power tax credits for renewable energy systems.

The DSIRE web site also includes information on the legal aspects of outfitting property to use renewable energy sources; programs that provide and promote renewable energy, such as NC GreenPower; and state building energy codes.

For more information on energy efficient mortgages, see http://www.energync.net/efficiency/docs/EEM_brochure.pdf. More information about energy conscious programs in North Carolina is available through the DSIRE database, http://www.dsireusa.org.

For more energy conservation tips for your home, contact Phyllis Smith at the Chatham County Center, North Carolina Cooperative Extension. North Carolina Cooperative Extension produced this press release with funding from the State Energy Office, N.C. Department of Administration.
“Make that Difference”
is a Family and Consumer Sciences publication with
consumer and family information written or compiled by
Phyllis Smith, Family and Consumer Education Agent.
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