

Sedgwick County EXTENSION NEWSLETTER

Knowledge for Life

March 2026



A Season of Growth

Welcome to our March newsletter! As we head into spring, we're excited to share opportunities that bring our community together, from hands-on youth development and nutrition education to family-friendly events and healthy living challenges. Whether it's building skills over spring break, connecting through board games, or stepping into the Walk Kansas challenge, this season is full of ways to learn, grow, and engage.

At K-State Extension Sedgwick County our goal is simple: provide practical programs that make a real difference in everyday life. We're glad you're here and hope you'll find something in this issue that inspires you to get involved, try something new, and stay connected with our community.

Explore our [website](#) and [Facebook page](#), and [reach out to us](#) if you are looking for information and resources on any of our topic areas.

Kelli Anderson, Extension Director

Tools that Support Local Horticulture Education

Tools & Treasures Sale

A Fundraiser to Support the Sedgwick County
Extension Master Gardener Program



Shop new and gently used gardening tools, supplies, garden art,
landscape decor, and more, all while supporting a great cause.

Grow Your Garden for Less at the Tools & Treasures Fundraiser

Gardeners, DIYers, and outdoor enthusiasts are invited to the 8th annual Tools & Treasures three-day fundraising event supporting local gardening education. This shopping event will take place Thursday, March 26, through Saturday, March 28, 2026, offering a wide selection of affordable gardening and outdoor items.

Proceeds from the event support the educational outreach efforts of the Sedgwick County Extension Master Gardener Volunteer program.

Shop new and gently used gardening tools, supplies, garden art, landscape décor, and more! Last year's fundraiser supported over 29,400 hours of volunteer time and reached 1 in 5 Sedgwick County residents through educational outreach.

The fundraiser will be held at the Sedgwick County Extension Education Center (inside 4-H Hall), located at 7001 W. 21st Street N. in Wichita. Event hours are:

- Thursday, March 26: 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Friday, March 27: 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Saturday, March 28: 7:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Support a great cause while discovering amazing finds to add to your garden! [Visit our website to learn more and see the full sale schedule.](#)

Extension in Action: Spring Break Opportunities



Spring Break: A Week That Can Shape a Young Person's Future

Spring break may feel like a break from responsibility, but what if it's actually an opportunity to build confidence, leadership, and lifelong skills?

Stephanie Hays, Sedgwick County 4-H Extension agent, [explains how simple, hands-on experiences, like cooking a meal, planting seeds, volunteering, or learning a new skill, can have a lasting impact on youth development.](#)

Spring break is the perfect time for that process. Young people don't build confidence by being entertained. They build it by doing.

Backed by research from Tufts University and national 4-H data, the article highlights how real-world practice helps young people develop competence, character, and resilience. [Read the full article](#) to see how one intentional week can become a launchpad for growth.

For families looking for structured opportunities that emphasize hands-on learning and leadership throughout the year, local youth development programs, including Sedgwick County 4-H, provide project-based experiences, caring adult mentorship, and community engagement for youth ages 5–18. More information can be found at sedgwick.k-state.edu/4-h-youth or by contacting the Sedgwick County Extension Office at 316-660-0115.

K-State Extension Sedgwick County to Host Youth Lawn Mowing Clinic

This spring break, local youth will have the chance to sharpen practical skills, build confidence, and take their first steps toward entrepreneurship at the 2026 Youth Lawn Mowing Clinic.

Designed for students in grades 5–9, the clinic will be held **Tuesday, March 17, 2026**, and focuses on lawn care basics, equipment safety, and the fundamentals of running a small business.

Two sessions of the Youth Lawn Mowing Clinic will be offered on March 17. The morning session runs from 9:20 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., and the afternoon session runs from 1:20 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Both sessions will be held inside 4-H Hall at the Sedgwick County Extension Education Center, located at 7001 W. 21st Street North in Wichita, at the corner of 21st Street and Ridge Road. Both sessions are the same, so participants need only to sign up for one.



Tuesday, March 17th, 2026

Youth in grades 5-9 can learn how to start a safe & profitable lawn mowing business.

\$10 before March 9th, \$15 after
Register & learn more at: www.sedgwick.ksu.edu/events



Whether students are already mowing neighborhood lawns or just getting started in their own backyard, the clinic provides hands-on learning that combines lawn care know-how with real-world business skills.

Registration costs \$10 through March 9, or \$15 after that date. Space is limited, and sessions do fill quickly. [Visit our website to register and learn more.](#)

People Who Power Extension: Lacey Grunden



Creating Healthier Futures, One Lesson at a Time

Since 1969, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) has helped youth and families with limited resources build practical skills for healthier living. Through a series of interactive nutrition education sessions, participants learn how to prepare more meals at home, increase their intake of fruits and vegetables, choose healthier beverages, stay physically active, and build habits that support long-term well-being.

This month, EFNEP is proud to highlight Lacey Grunden (Mrs. G), Sedgwick County Extension Nutrition Assistant.

Lacey joined the nutrition education team in June 2025 and has already made a strong impact in the community. She teaches the Create Better Health curriculum to adults and the Choose Health: Food, Fun and Fitness curriculum to fourth- and fifth-grade students in area schools. Since joining EFNEP, Lacey has delivered 78 hours of nutrition and fitness instruction, reaching 231 students.

Her work will continue this summer as she takes on a third curriculum, Jr. Chef, a camp-style program offered at three sites. Jr. Chef combines hands-on nutrition education with practical kitchen skills, giving youth the confidence to prepare healthy meals on their own.

The impact of Lacey's teaching is reflected in the words of her students:

- "Thank you! The lessons have encouraged me to eat more oatmeal."
- "The food and drinks you make are so good. I make them at home."
- "Thank you for teaching us nutritious habits and how to eat healthy. Thank you for showing us nutritious foods."

Lacey draws inspiration from a quote by Jack Canfield: "When you consistently make better choices you create better habits." It's a message she shares with her students, encouraging them to understand that small, consistent choices can shape a healthier future.

Thank you, Lacey, for the energy, care, and commitment you bring to EFNEP and to the families and youth you serve.

To learn more about EFNEP in Sedgwick County, visit sedgwick.k-state.edu/efnep.

Seasonal Solutions

Protect Yourself from Medicare Scams

Medicare Alert: Protect Your Number and Your Wallet

While our focus last month was also on the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP), the persistence of local scams and new billing errors makes these topics a priority as we settle into 2026. The K-State Extension



Sedgwick County SHICK office is continuing to see a rise in two specific areas: sophisticated phone scams and Part D billing errors.

Protect: The "Free Brace" Scam

Scammers are currently using "spoofed" local numbers—often showing familiar 316, 785, or 620 area codes—to call residents. They may claim Medicare owes you money or that you qualify for a "free" back or knee brace. They often ask to "verify" your Medicare number first. Remember: Medicare will never call you unprompted to offer free equipment. If you disclose your number, scammers can bill Medicare thousands of dollars in your name, potentially exhausting your future benefits.

Detect: Check Your Part D Statements

We recently assisted a beneficiary incorrectly charged a monthly penalty of over \$20. Medicare's system defaulted to his 65th birthday rather than his actual retirement date. If not corrected, these penalties are for life! Always review your Social Security statements; if you see a "Late Enrollment Penalty" (LEP) that seems high, you have the right to appeal.

Report: If you suspect fraud or a billing error, call our office at 316-660-0126 or 1-800-MEDICARE.

For more information: Tat Hidano, K-State Extension Sedgwick County Adult Development and Aging Agent, hidano@ksu.edu



Stay Active and Confident: Join A Matter of Balance

Many older adults limit daily activities due to a fear of falling, which can actually increase fall risk by reducing strength, balance, and confidence.

A Matter of Balance is an evidence-based program that helps adults recognize that falls are not an inevitable part of aging and that practical steps can be taken to prevent them.

Participants learn strategies to reduce fall risks at home, set realistic activity goals, and practice simple exercises to improve strength, balance, and coordination. The program also includes guidance on safely getting up and down from the floor and completing a home safety evaluation to support independent living.

The course features **eight two-hour sessions** led by trained coaches in a supportive small-group setting of 8–12 participants. Sessions include group discussion, problem-solving, gentle exercise, and skill-building activities designed to improve confidence, well-being, and independence.

Class Details

- **Dates: April 8 – June 3 (no class on May 13)**
- **Time: 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**
- **Location: K-State Extension Sedgwick County Extension Office, 7001 W. 21st St. N., Wichita, KS 67205 (Sunflower Room)**

This program is ideal for adults concerned about falling, those who have limited activities due to fear, or anyone looking to improve balance, flexibility, and strength.

To register, please contact Jennifer Exline, Sedgwick County Extension office professional, at 316-660-0143.

Doing Good for Kansas

K-State continues to support the Kansas workforce at record levels

Kansas State University graduates are launching careers, advancing their education and strengthening the Kansas workforce at record levels, according to [the](#)



university's recently released post-graduation outcomes report.

More than 97% of fall and spring 2025 graduates are either employed or continuing their education — a powerful reflection of K-State's commitment to preparing students for life beyond college.

K-State continues to support the Kansas workforce, with 57% of all graduates choosing to build their careers in the state.

Learn how K-State is empowering graduates and driving economic impact.

Where You'll Find Us: Extension Events and Opportunities



K-State Garden Hour Webinar: Naturalistic Landscape Design Style - Kansas Perspectives and Flexible Approaches for Every Garden

Wednesday, March 4, Noon to 1 p.m.

Learn how Kansans perceive and implement a naturalistic landscape design style. Join Dr. Cheryl Boyer, Horticulture Extension Specialist, as she highlights flexible approaches to blending native and modern plants, applying landscape design principles that work for any size garden. Gain inspiration and actionable ideas for overcoming the common challenges of creating resilient, beautiful, naturalistic landscapes.

This free webinar will be presented live from noon to 1 p.m., and recorded and available online. Register for this and all of the upcoming webinars of 2026 at www.ksre-learn.com/KStateGardenHour.

Growing Growers!

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY Extension Impact Center

Crop Planning & Propagation Basics Workshop



March 15, 2026
2PM - 4PM

Bryan Mann
Guest Speaker, Local Grower

Register and learn more at sedgwick.ksu.edu/events

Sedgwick County Extension Education Center
7001 W 21st St. N. Wichita, KS 67205

COST: \$10
Registration Required

K-State Extension Sedgwick County to Offer Crop Planning and Propagation Basics Workshop

Wednesday, March 15, 2026, 2 - 4 p.m.

Get your garden season off to a strong start!

Starting your garden from seed is a practical, cost-effective way to grow food and build gardening skills. By learning the basics of crop planning, indoor seed starting, and succession planting, you can set yourself up for a more successful and well-organized growing season.

Join Horticulture Agent Abbey Draut and local grower Bryan Mann at the Sedgwick County Extension Education Center on Saturday, March 15, 2–4 p.m., for a practical, hands-on workshop focused on crop planning, propagation, and seed-starting basics.

Cost is \$10. Register today at sedgwick.ksu.edu/events



K-State Extension Sedgwick County to Host Board Game Mega Event

Looking for a fun way to spend March 21? Join us from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Sedgwick County Extension Center for the Board Game Mega Event, a full day of connection, competition, and community.

This free, family-friendly event is open to the public and features a board game marketplace where you can buy, sell, and trade games, plus plenty of opportunities to sit down and play. Whether you're a seasoned strategist or just love a good family game night, this is your chance to discover new favorites and bond through board games. Grab a friend and come play!

K-State Extension to Offer Statewide Walk Kansas Challenge

Ready to get moving this spring?

Join Walk Kansas, an 8-week healthy lifestyle challenge running March 22 through May 16, 2026. Gather a team of coworkers, friends, family, or neighbors and hit the virtual trail as you track your activity and work toward better health together. Whether your goal is to boost energy, build consistency, or simply enjoy more time outdoors, this program makes it fun and doable.

Registration is open March 1–31, and it's just \$10 per person. Sign up at [WalkKansas.org](https://www.WalkKansas.org)



This monthly e-newsletter is intended to inform citizens of events, activities and research-based information from K-State Extension Sedgwick County.

K-State Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

K-State Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, a program designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the well-being of Kansans. Supported by county, state, federal and private funds, the program has county extension offices, experiment fields, area extension offices and regional research centers statewide. Its headquarters is on the Kansas State University campus in Manhattan.



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