



Elkhart County
Extension Homemakers

Over The Coffee Cup Newsletter



*November/December
2025*

In This Issue:

- Letter From Your President—pg. 2
- Mark Your Calendars —pg. 3
- Extension Homemaker News—pgs. 4-13
- Health & Wellness— pg. 14
- Human Development—pg. 15



Extension - Elkhart County

Purdue University prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, genetic information, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, or status as a veteran.

Letter From Your County President

Hello friends,

Many artists have sung the song “Forever Young”. From Bob Dylan to Rod Stewart, their raspy voices allow us to hear the soul stirring words. When my two sons left for college and my brother moved out of state, I must have played this song 100 times. It often brought tears to my eyes while listening as I knew I would soon be seeing them off on their next journey in life.

At Achievement Night last month, I spoke nervously (haha) to ladies about doing things that help us feel young. One of the things that helps to keep me young is volunteering. Extension Homemakers is full of volunteers. We are all a blessed group of ladies who feel the need “to pass on to others that which has benefited us”. What more pleasure is there in life when we are able to lend a hand to someone who is in need? The real fun happens when we can bless someone whom we will never meet. Volunteers are known to give of themselves in big and often small ways.

The holidays are right around the corner. It is that time of year when we make cherished memories with family and other loved ones. At Christmas time, most of us will be fortunate enough to celebrate with others. As we listen to our favorite Christmas music, we begin getting in the mood to shop, bake, and think about the meaning behind Christmas. I personally will be delighted as I watch my grandchildren’s laughter and excitement as we do fun activities that this time of year offers. During Thanksgiving, many of us will be gathered around a table full of delicious food. As we listen to football or the Macy’s Day Parade in the background, we may be preparing some of our favorite dishes to share with others. These are the moments when we attempt to slow down and take in what our spirit is trying to offer us.

Holidays can be a difficult time for many. I think about my two sisters who both lost a daughter when each of their daughters were only 30 years old. Yes, I said that right. BOTH of them lost their 30 year old daughters just a few years ago. Each of my nieces left beautiful and very young children behind whom will have to navigate this world without their mother.

We all know of someone who will have difficult moments during the holidays. Maybe that someone is ourselves. This is the time to not only be generous to others, but also to be kind to oneself. Buy yourself a gift that you normally wouldn’t buy. Take a warm bubble bath. Have a glass of your favorite wine. Call an old friend and invite them to coffee. Turn on some of your favorite music and dance. Reflect on whatever needs reflecting. SLOW DOWN. Limit our screen time. Bundle up and step outside. Give ourselves permission to let our tears swell up as we think about the beautiful and painful memories.

Happy Holidays Extension Homemakers,
Lisa Stephens
Elkhart County Extension Homemakers
County President

Mark Your Calendars

November 2025

- 11 VCS Sewing Day, Maple Hall—9 am to 3 pm
- 11 Office Closed
- 13 County Officers Board Meeting, Ext. Conference Room—4:30pm
- 27-28 Thanksgiving—Office Closed

December 2025

- 9 VCS Sewing Day, Maple Hall—9 am to 3 pm
- 10 EH Lesson “Stress & Your Health”, Ext. Conference Room—1:00pm *Rescheduled from November 20th*
- 24-25 Office Closed

Upcoming HFA Committee Meeting Dates

*(All meetings are in the Clover Hill building
between Gates 5 and 6)*

Thursday, October 30, 2025—6:00pm

Thursday, December 4, 2025—6:00pm

Thursday, January 22, 2026—6:00pm

Thursday, February 26, 2026—6:00pm

Thursday, March 26, 2026—6:00pm

Thursday, April 23, 2026—6:00pm

Thursday, May 28, 2026—6:00pm

Thursday, June 25, 2026—6:00pm

2026 Fair Dates: July 24-August 1, 2026



November— Paula Adams, Sandra Bartoe, Sherry Berry, Sharol Cloud, Barbara Geiger, Ruth Anne Gray, Angela Gwinn, Lisa Honey, Cortney Jones, Linda Miller, Sonya Miller, Becky Randolph, Shirley Snyder, Kay Stewart, Caroline Troyer, Sheila Taylor, Linda Weybright, Susan Williams, and Catherine Yoder

December— Patsy Berkey, Kathy Case, Lana Evans, JoAnne Graber, Patty Janowski, Paula LaPlace, Fern Mast, Karen Meade, Ruth Middleton, Theo Outman, Madeline Smith, Kathy Stoltzfus, and Vicky Stroman

Extension Homemaker News

Welcome New Members!

Friends & Neighbors welcomes **Cortney Jones**. She grew up in Syracuse and now lives in New Paris with her husband Todd and three sons ages 12, 7, and 3. Cortney home schools her two younger sons and enjoys baking, golfing, watching baseball, and watching true crime. Cortney is eager to learn from her club.

Busy Homemakers and Day Club Crochet welcome **Pauline Hostetler**. Pauline was born and raised in Mishawaka, and has lived in Mesa Arizona, South Bend, and finally Goshen where she lives with her husband. Pauline reports having had many interesting experiences in her life, but notes having had tea with Vincent Price in the 1980's. She enjoys antique cars, knitting, crochet, embroidery, scrapbooking, gardening, and car shows.

Creative Homemakers welcomes **Sandra Fawley**. Her husband is recently deceased. Sandra was the middle of five children. She has lived in Elkhart her entire life. Sandra does a lot of reading and enjoys machine embroidery and quilting. She worked 20 years in the kitchen at Heinnies Back Barn. Sandra also reports having bowled for 53 years; she was involved in a lot of state and national tournaments and saw a lot of the United States in this way.

Bailey Honey was born and raised in Goshen. She owns her own photography business and has done professional photography for three years. Bailey's hobbies include photography, painting, thrift-ing, and antiques. She enjoys visiting Disney World multiple times a year. She has joined Clinton Clique.

Kara Kauffman lives in Goshen where she was born, living in Daytona Beach for a number of years. She has joined Clinton Clique. She hasn't been married and currently is a live-in caregiver for her father. Kara enjoys walking, hiking, biking, kayaking, and cooking. She is a retired public-school counselor. This work allowed her exciting opportunities for summer travel including visiting Peru.

Clinton Clique also welcomes **Kristy Kramer** to their club. She is retired from thirty years at General Motors where she started in production and later as a millwright (anything working with steel). She lived in Wisconsin for 42 years and was transferred for work in 2011. Kristy enjoys rock painting, hiking, boating, and anything involving the water. She says she loves massage and spa days, yoga, walking her dog, and traveling. She reports having seen the Grand Canyon, whitewater rafting in Oregon, and spending two

weeks in "the sticks" (way out there) in Alaska. Kristy has been married three years to a wonderful husband. Between them they have several children and grandchildren.

Date Change—November EH Lesson

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the date of the "Stress & Your Health" program on Thursday, November 20th has been changed. **The new date is Wednesday, December 10th at 1:00pm.** Homemakers who have signed up through the office have been emailed. Please notify Jenn at the Extension Office if you will still be attending on the new date or if another member of your club will be attending at 574-533-0554 or email fink24@purdue.edu

2025-26 Lesson Sign-Ups

The following clubs need to submit their lesson sign-up sheet for the current club year to the Ext. Office:

- Busy Homemakers
- Clinton Clique
- Modern Homemakers

2025-26 Yearbook Updates

Please make the following updates in your 2025-26 Yearbook:

- Pgs. 14 & 49: Council Meeting location has been changed to LifePoint Church (1006 S 16th St., Goshen)
- Pg. 17: Remove Cansie Witcher from the Cultural Arts/Heritage Skills Committee
- Pg. 18: Add Kathie Alonzo, Pauline Hostetler, and Ramona Huber to the Fall Holiday Program Committee
- Pg. 18: Remove Deb Hoffman, Patty Janowski, and Stephanie Szabo from the Fall Holiday Program Committee
- Pg. 20: Remove Betty Kern from the HFA Committee

EH Council Meeting Minutes—August 28, 2025

Submitted by Stephanie McIntosh Szabo

Call to Order was done by Lisa Stephens, President at 6:33pm. Pledge was led by Lori Bontrager of Clinton Classics. Creed was given by Lisa Stephens. Positive Thought, Roll Call, and Secretary's Report was given by Stephanie McIntosh Szabo, Secretary. Secretary's Report was approved as written (Stephanie/Louanne Gressman-Dunn)*. Treasurer's Report was given by Becky Carrington. Becky Carrington reported she moved the rest of the money from the Nancy Miller signage and had income from the pottery that Elkhart County EH donated at the State Conference last month. Treasurer's Report approved as reported (Louanne/Sherry Weaver)*.

Lisa opened the meeting with discussion on VCS (Volunteer Community Support) and Matter of Balance Forms. They need sign-ups with a minimum of 8 people to have the class, which led into a discussion regarding attending educational events to bring back to our respective clubs. Lori Bontrager and Stephanie affirmed each other with their experience. Michelle Blough suggested looking on the IEHA website for more information.

Lisa did ask that no one leave a Council meeting confused. She encouraged questions to be asked throughout the meetings if anyone is confused. Lisa reported Emily Christ, our Extension Educator will be back at the end of September from her maternity leave.

Lisa shared her goal for this year for each of the clubs: "Focus on Volunteering!" Please, if your club can, after October 14th, volunteer at Volunteer Community Support! Club presidents, reach out to Kris Peterson about when your club can attend this year! (Don't forget to stay for lunch!). Please take picture to send to Deb Pepple and Jenn Fink at the Extension Office. Thank you.

Lisa shared the State Form: Volunteer Community Support Reporting Form (which is completely different than the Club point form). This is for volunteering in the name of Extension Homemakers in the community. When your club, as a group of 2+ members work together, volunteering for something in your community, these are the hours that are to be noted on this form.

Lisa shared the State President's project: "Bloomers" with a handout. Please take this back to your respective clubs and share. Presidents will need a grand total to give to Lisa before year end. Please read the sheet and get the numbers back to Lisa in plenty of time for her to be able to report. Socks and underwear are the most needed and the least donated.

Committee Reports:

- **Achievement Night:** Lisa reported they've had two meetings. They are working on celebrating the 2024-25 year. Lisa Honey is reported to be doing a welcome of our president from last year, Louanne Gressman-Dunn. This is a tradition Lisa shared has been lost along the way and the committee is bringing it back!
- **Auditing:** Becky got a report back and "all is good!"
- **Cultural Arts/Heritage Skills:** Jenny Huffman spoke they will meet for the first time on October 8th.
- **ELKO Retreat:** Jenny Huffman & Jill Cohen reported there are at least 22 registrants!

- **Fall Holiday Program:** Sherry spoke of the Silent Auction that will take place again this year. She encouraged everyone to share this event and to bring a neighbor or a friend along! The signup table for membership will be there with Louanne! She shared there will be a contest amongst clubs: "Gingerbread Contest" any medium no larger than 12"x18" that needs to be at Sherry's home by October 24th. They will sell raffle tickets for the Gingerbread items. Think outside of the box! Be creative! She is hoping to have 98 people in attendance!
- **Fashion Show:** Stephanie reported for Patty Janowski.
- **Historian:** Kim McCreary is new in this position! Please send her pictures from your club activities for social media publication!
- **Home and Family Arts:** Deb Pepple shared that at the follow up meeting with the committee held on August 19th they came out ahead financially! She discussed moving the Nancy Miller sign next year. She did say the surveys returned had a lot of positive comments and suggestions! There were 1,048 projects entered in Open Class & that is without the quilts!
- **Home and Family Arts Fundraising:** Kim reported the Silent Auction of 51 items raised \$4,545 plus they received a \$5 donation! Biggest thus far!
- **Home and Family Arts Landscape:** This category no longer applies.
- **Membership:** Louanne announced the two new special interest clubs: AM & PM Crochet have 9 & 8 members respectfully. The County Agriculture people are working on a club for men! She has processed 21 interest forms for new members with lots of excitement! Louanne is hoping to have a membership meeting soon!
- **Nominating:** Vickie Gortney reports she has no report.
- **Past County Presidents:** Michelle Blough reported there will be more in the Spring.
- **Volunteer Community Support:** Jenny reports they have not met yet. She reported she took 415 baby hats & 15 blankets to Elkhart General today!
- **Yearbook:** Vickie Gortney had no report.

New Business

- **By Law Amendment:** Louanne spoke on an amendment to our By Laws. This has already been brought to the Board. There will be an additional "Article X" added. [Note: this must be brought to two meetings for discussion before a vote can be had.]
- **Resource Catalogue:** Louanne shared that many clubs do not

know where or who to ask to speak at their meetings, since there are only 4 required lessons to be presented in a year. She did say she will be contacting the club presidents to get a list of who they have used over the years to supplement their calendars. She will then complete a resource catalogue, per se. There will be more on this as she takes on this project!

- **Hex Rural Meeting Change:** Due to a fire at their longstanding location, they will have to have a meeting location change. They are hoping to meet at the Pizza Depot in Millersburg. More to be reported on this at the next Council.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:08 pm by Lisa. (Louanne/Sherry)

*(M/S/C) = Motion/Second/Carried

Achievement Night—Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Submitted by Lisa Stephens

On September 16, 2025 around 80-85 ladies celebrated our annual Achievement Night. Kathy Graber from Homemakers of Today was our new Homemaker of the Year. Hex Rural won Club of the Year. We had 4 officers from Huntington County as our special guests. They were part of our Host-A-Hoosier program which is similar to our Exchange a Club, only we exchange with counties. Louanne Gressman-Dunn, our outgoing President from 2024-2025, spoke about her gratitude for the support that she received this year from the county. Lisa Stephens, our incoming President for 2025-2026, spoke about the importance of finding the enjoyment from our clubs and committees.

We had several ladies and clubs honored for Membership and Club Tenure. Some of those included:

- 70 Years—Carol L. Kauffman (Modern Homemakers)
- 65 Years—Theo Outman (York Homemakers) and Martha Weirich (Clinton Classics)
- 55 Years—Patsy Berkey (Hex Rural), Ruby Snyder Bontrager (Clinton Classics) and Maryann Zerbe (Four Seasons)
- 50 Years—Ruth Hupp (Bloomin' Dandelions) and Marilyn Potthast (Bloomin' Dandelions)
- 50 Years—Bloomin' Dandelions
- 55 Years—Four Seasons
- 90 Years—Jefferson
- 95 Years—York Homemakers



2025-26 County Officers

Back left to right: Becky Carrington, Louanne Gressman-Dunn, Lisa Stephens, and Stephanie Szabo

Front left to right: Sherry Weaver and Susan Rowe



2025 Club of the Year Hex Rural

Left to right: Linda Weybright, Patsy Berkey, Debbie George, Donna Hibschan, and Georgia Gouin



2025 Homemaker of the Year

Kathy Graber,
Homemakers of Today

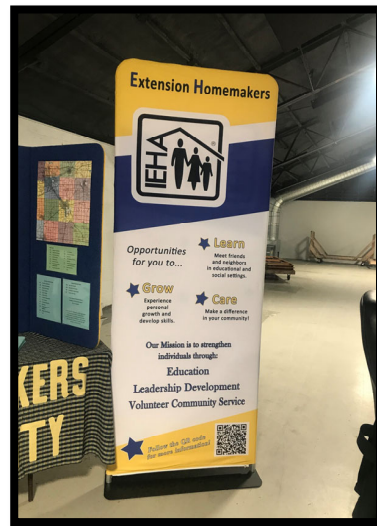
A Note from Homemaker Sharol Cloud

To all the homemakers of Elkhart County I want to say my deepest "thank you" for all of your healing wishes and sincere words of encouragement over my very unexpected medical concerns. My foot is slowly getting better, remain non-weight bearing and I'm getting around in my wheelchair, which I decided to name Willow, quite well. She and I can do much more than I thought. I've learned to dust and mop my floors using her. I thought that was a good homemaker skill to maintain. 😊 Wishing you all the best and again thank you for your support!

Extension Homemakers Sign

Submitted by Lisa Stephens

This Extension Homemakers sign is available for any Extension Homemaker to use for their event. It is stored upstairs of the Extension Office. The sign breaks down and will be in a black canvas bag that is 3 ft. long and 1 ft. wide. There will be a clipboard available for sign-out and sign-in. This sign was donated in memory of Nancy Miller by her family.



SAVE THE DATE - May 2, 2026

Save the date for the Past County Presidents' Brunch. Digital invitations will be sent in the Spring. For those without email, a hard copy will be sent via postal mail.

Fall District Meeting

Submitted by Lisa Stephens

On October 7th, 2025, 8 people took the 2 hour drive over to Lake County to attend the Fall District Meeting. We were treated to delicious food and beautiful fall decorations. People brought donations for St. Judes House, which is a domestic violence shelter. Cathy Wilkymacky, our IEHA State President, gave an i-LEAD

presentation. She also talked about her desire for all Extension Homemakers to donate socks and underwear "Bloomers" to our local shelters. We learned that socks and underwear are the most needed and least donated items at shelters. We also were given a lesson on 'Plant-Based Eating'. It was a long but enjoyable day.

Cultural Arts Contest—April 2026

Submitted by Jenny Huffman

Just a reminder that the Cultural Arts Contest is coming up in April of 2026! We are hoping for a lot of entries to this contest. This is one of a few contests that is just for Extension Homemakers. The only restriction is you can't use a kit. Patterns are okay. You have 5 categories to choose from: Quilts, Needlecraft, Crafts/Misc., Knit & Crochet, and the Special Project. This year (2026) the Special Project will be a handmade/homemade book or toy for children of any age. Maximum size is 18"x18"x18", but it can be smaller. Use any medium—wood, paper, canvas, crochet, knit, quilting, etc. For books—no commercial printing/publishing, but parts can be printed from a printer and printed transfers can be used. The early toys were of natural materials...let's see what we can do!!! You will be the ones voting on these projects. Please call me if you have any questions—Jenny Huffman—574-370-0699. Keep your eyes open this Christmas season for what the kids are enjoying. More information will be coming next month.

Fall Holiday Program

Submitted by Sherry Weaver

On Saturday, October 25, 81 attendees enjoyed the Fall Holiday Program—Creative Crafts and Cuisine—Homemade for the Holidays. Extension members from three other counties besides Elkhart County were in attendance, as were a couple of Sherry Weaver's sister-in-laws who came from Pennsylvania.

This year the committee again served delicious foods and demonstrated many crafts for all the upcoming holidays. Everyone who attended also made two make and takes: Jenny Huffman demonstrated how to turn a tangerine, orange or grapefruit into a Jack

o' lantern and Sherry Weaver, committee chair, demonstrated how to make a Christmas card with an interesting fold.

Besides the guest appearance of Jenny Huffman, Deb Pepple brought samples of and discussed food for brain health.

Other notable favorite items demonstrated were Kathy Braid's Cowboy Caviar, Susan Garberick's Yo-Yo Christmas trees, Kathie Alonzo's Chocolate Truffle, Pauline Hostetler's East Coast Chocolate Fudge, and Lisa Honey's rope bowls.

The silent auction had 123 items, including a quilt from The Quilt Shop at Essenhaus, gift certificates from Hacienda, Cabin Coffee Co, Luxe Cafe, South Side Soda Shop and Aunt Tammy's Cupcakes.

For the first time this year, the committee had a specialty themed contest for local extension clubs. The theme this year was Gingerbread, and any medium could be used to create the item. This year's winner of the first annual specialty contest was Shirley Hershberger of York Extension, with her beautiful watercolor painting of a gingerbread house. Attendees voted on their favorite gingerbread items, and then all contest items were given out as door prizes.



This year's Fall Holiday Program was again very successful. Please save the date of Saturday, October 24 from 9am to noon for next year's fun event.

Also, be sure to attend the Council meeting in April 2026, and bring your cultural arts entry. Everyone is welcome to attend, and all who attend can vote on which entries will go to state. This meeting will be held at LifePoint Church. At this April meeting, you will also have the opportunity to sign up for the 2026 fair craft demos and hostessing shifts. You will also have an opportunity to sign up for committees. If you enjoy being creative, consider joining the Fall Holiday Committee.



Health & Wellness

Setting Healthy Boundaries

Emily Christ, HHS Educator

Setting healthy boundaries is crucial for maintaining emotional and mental well-being, fostering healthy relationships, and achieving personal growth. Boundaries define the limits of acceptable behavior and interactions, helping individuals establish a sense of self-respect and self-care. According to psychological research, setting boundaries allows individuals to protect their physical and emotional space, ensuring they are not overextended or taken advantage of.

Healthy boundaries enable individuals to prioritize their needs and values, empowering them to make decisions that align with their goals and beliefs. This clarity enhances self-esteem and reduces feelings of guilt or resentment that can arise from overcommitting or tolerating inappropriate behavior. By communicating boundaries effectively, individuals establish mutual respect and encourage others to recognize and honor their limits.

Furthermore, setting boundaries is essential for cultivating meaningful and balanced relationships. When individuals clearly communicate their boundaries, they create a foundation of trust and understanding with others. Healthy boundaries promote honest communication and constructive conflict resolution, minimizing misunderstandings and fostering healthier connections.

In professional settings, setting boundaries can enhance productivity and job satisfaction by promoting work-life balance and reducing stress. Research indicates that individuals who maintain clear boundaries experience less burnout and are better able to manage their responsibilities effectively.

Ultimately, setting healthy boundaries is an act of self-care that contributes to overall well-being and personal growth. It allows individuals to assert their needs, maintain healthy relationships, and navigate life's challenges with resilience and confidence. By practicing boundary-setting skills and honoring their own limits, individuals can create environments that support their emotional and psychological health, leading to greater fulfillment and success in all aspects of life.

Human Development

Staying Strong

Emily Christ, HHS Educator

Flexibility, balance, and mobility play crucial roles in maintaining independence, reducing the risk of injuries, and enhancing overall quality of life as we age. As we grow older, our bodies undergo natural changes, such as reduced muscle mass, joint stiffness, and decreased bone density, which can affect our ability to move freely and perform daily activities. Flexibility, defined as the range of motion in joints and muscles, helps prevent stiffness and allows for smooth, pain-free movement.

Balance is essential for stability and preventing falls, which are a significant concern among older adults. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), falls are the leading cause of injury-related deaths and non-fatal injuries among adults aged 65 and older. Exercises that improve balance, such as tai chi or specific balance training programs, can reduce the risk of falls by enhancing proprioception and muscle coordination.

Maintaining mobility, the ability to move freely and easily, is vital for performing daily tasks, staying active, and participating in social activities. Regular physical activity, including aerobic exercise and strength training, helps preserve muscle mass, joint flexibility, and cardiovascular health, contributing to overall mobility and functional independence.

Moreover, flexibility, balance, and mobility are interconnected components of physical fitness that support each other. For example, improved flexibility can enhance range of motion in joints, which contributes to better balance and mobility. Likewise, strength and balance exercises can improve stability and reduce the risk of falls, thereby preserving overall mobility and independence.

Incorporating activities that promote flexibility, balance, and mobility into daily routines is essential for maintaining health and well-being as we age. These activities not only enhance physical fitness but also boost confidence and mental well-being, enabling older adults to continue living actively and independently. By prioritizing these aspects of fitness through regular exercise and lifestyle modifications, individuals can improve their quality of life and age with grace and resilience.