

Family & Consumer Sciences Newsletter



Happy New Year!

January brings in a new year! It is a great time to refresh and renew yourself and your home. Dealing with clutter in the new year can create a more organized living space. Start by setting clear, achievable goals and tackle small areas at a time, using the Four-Box Method (Keep, Donate, Trash, Relocate) to streamline decisions. Apply the one-year rule to items you haven't used, and don't forget digital decluttering by organizing files and emails. Designate permanent spaces for your belongings and invest in storage solutions. Commit to maintaining organization and involve family members to share the process. Lastly, celebrate your progress to stay motivated. These steps will help you reduce clutter and foster a serene environment in 2026.

To start the New Year, this month's workshop will focus on creating a cozy, chunky blanket through finger-knitting. Check the "Community Events" section for more details. If you want to stay updated on the Family & Consumer Sciences program in the upcoming months, please send your email or mailing address to chelsea_johnson@ncsu.edu to join our mailing list.

In this Issue

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Year!

Dealing with
Household
Clutter

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Healthy Homes: DEALING WITH HOUSEHOLD CLUTTER



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
EXTENSION

What is Clutter?

Clutter is a collection of things lying around in an untidy mess, usually because we don't have a designated place for it. It can be all kinds of different stuff that people buy, receive and/or collect over the years. Clutter can accumulate anywhere – it can start in one small space, like a dining room table, and eventually spread to take over a whole room, or in severe cases, a whole house. Some prime sources of clutter include paper (mail, bills, etc.), books & magazines, toys & games, hobby materials, shoes & clothes, tools & hardware, cleaning supplies, and laundry.

Why Should You Be Concerned About Clutter?

Household clutter has a big impact on your health and quality of life. It can be so out of control that people fall and injure themselves because they cannot reach things or maneuver around piles of junk. This can be especially hazardous for elderly people or people with limited mobility. Most people spend 90% of their time indoors – a lot of which is spent at home. Home is the place you start and end your day, the place where you spend time with family and friends. Research has indicated that a clean house can positively affect your physical and mental health. By cutting down on “stuff,” you make room to socialize with the people who matter to you.

Does Clutter Really Affect Indoor Air Quality?

Yes – piles of clutter that are left undisturbed for long periods of time can accumulate dust, dirt and allergens, including pet hair and dander, pollen, dust mites and other pests. Mold can also develop undetected if the area is damp. If someone smokes cigarettes in a cluttered home, the walls and furnishings can become tinged with yellow and smell of smoke. This is especially hazardous for people with asthma, children, and the elderly.

Do You Have a Problem with Clutter?

If you think you may have a problem with household clutter, ask yourself the following questions:

Do you have to move things around or step over things to get around your house?

Are tables and counters filled with so many items that you have few (if any) free spaces?

Are your drawers, closets and other storage areas overflowing with “stuff”?

Do you have piles of papers that you plan to sort through but never do?

Do you lose things and have to search for them several times a week?

Do you keep things in a storage facility on an ongoing basis?

Are dirty dishes and empty drink cans left out for more than 24 hours?

Are you ashamed to invite company over to your house because of clutter?

Are your closets full of clothes and shoes that you no longer wear?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you have a clutter problem! Read on for steps you can take to de-clutter your home.

Take charge and clear your clutter

Assemble your very own Clutter Emergency Kit – stock it with large garbage bags, a broom and dust pan, a vacuum cleaner, storage boxes, a marker and labels, multipurpose and glass cleaners, a mop, paper towels, and laundry detergent. Why the cleaning products? After you clear the clutter, you will need to clean the newly exposed surfaces. You can also use different kinds of containers to help with your sorting – anything from boxes to different sizes of plastic containers or bags will work.

Start by sorting items into separate piles: keep, trash (or recycle), donate, sell, or uncertain. Experts estimate that people only use about 20% of the items in their home. This means the other 80% is potential clutter. Take a good look at your “stuff” and be honest with yourself about what you really use. Only keep things that you need and will use or that have a strong personal meaning to you. Don’t confuse things with memories. Our memories of people and events in our past will be with us long after the “stuff” is gone.

Maintenance

To maintain your clutter free home, the whole family has to understand that everyone needs to pick up after themselves. Doing a little cleaning and straightening every day can save you the hassle of going through this whole process again. Use the 60 second rule – if it takes no longer than 60 seconds to put something away, then go ahead and put it away instead of laying it down for “the time being.” Make a chore chart and assign age appropriate jobs for everyone in the house, so everyone knows that they are expected to do their part to keep things clutter free. Stay firm and don’t do anyone else’s share of the work or one of two things will happen – you will always do their share of the work or the clutter will slowly build back up. Remember, it takes two weeks minimum for a new chore to become a routine.

Instant Pot Collard Greens

Total Time

Prep: 10 min. Cook: 20 min Additional Time: 25 min



Recipe and photo from allrecipes.com

Ingredients

- 1 bunch collard greens
- 4 thick slices bacon, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 4 cups water
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- 4 cups chicken broth
- salt to taste

Directions

1. Rinse collard greens; remove and discard thick parts of stems. Chop greens to desired size.
2. Turn on a multi-functional pressure cooker (such as Instant Pot) and select Saute function. Cook bacon until brown and crisp, about 5 minutes. Turn off Saute function. Pour in water and vinegar. Scrape the bottom of the pot to release stuck bits of bacon. Add collard greens and stir to coat. Pour in chicken broth and season with salt. Close and lock the lid.
3. Select high pressure according to manufacturer's instructions; set timer for 5 minutes. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for pressure to build.
4. Release pressure using the natural-release method according to manufacturer's instructions for 20 minutes. Quick-release remaining steam, according to manufacturer's instructions, about 5 minutes. Unlock and remove the lid. Season with more salt if necessary.

KNITTING WORKSHOP

Participants will learn how to finger-knit a chunky throw blanket! Each person should bring 3 skeins of size 6 or 7 yarn to the class. Knitting needles not required. Class is FREE however, yarn will not be provided.

Friday, January 23rd

4:00 PM to 5:30PM

**Yadkin County Agricultural Building
2051 Agricultural Way, Yadkinville, NC 27055**

Contact Chelsea Johnson to
register at
Chelsea_Johnson@ncsu.edu
or 336-849-7908 or scan the
QR code





DR. WAYNE MATTHEWS MEMORIAL FUNDRAISER

BINGO

Saturday, February 21, 2026

Yadkinville United Methodist Church

204 West Main Street, Yadkinville

Doors Open @ 5:00 p.m. & Games Begin @ 6:00 p.m.

Proceeds support Smart Start Early Literacy and Family Support activities for young children in Yadkin County.

\$35 packet includes:

- 20 games
- 1 coverall game
- 5 door prize tickets

Pre-ordered packets include a ticket for a FREE \$8 meal!

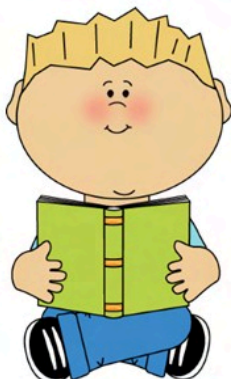
Food will be available for purchase!

2 hotdogs, chips, dessert & drink – \$8

2 slices of pizza, chips, dessert & drink – \$8

1 hotdog, chips, dessert & drink- \$6

1 slice of pizza, chips, dessert & drink-\$6



**For questions or to pre-order packets, call the
Smart Start office at 336-677-1125 or 336-677-1124**

Financial information about this organization and a copy of their license is available from the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at 919-807-2214. The license is not an endorsement by the State.

JANUARY 2026

Some events require advance registration and payment. Please call 336-849-7877 or email Chelsea_Johnson@ncsu.edu for inquiries.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 HOLIDAY	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 EXTENSION AT HOME 12P-1P	14	15	16	17
18	19 HOLIDAY	20	21	22	23 KNITTING WORKSHOP 4P-5:30P	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



Extension At Home

Helping You Improve Your Life!





Every Second Tuesday of The Month 12:00 pm ET



Find us at go.ncsu.edu/extensionathome

January 13 - Cut the Clutter

February 10 - Positively Plant-Packed Meals

March 10 - Discover the Power of Nutrition

April 14 - Mindfulness Fundamentals

May 12 - Fire Up the Grill: Grilling & Food Safety Tips

June 9 - Savvy Meat Cuts: Budget Better



NC Cooperative Extension is an equal opportunity provider.

**Yadkin County Cooperative
Extension**
2051 Agricultural Way, Suite 201
Yadkinville, NC 27055
336-849-7908
Monday - Friday ~ 8AM - 5PM

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