

Star Student



SARAH HOPPER

Ms. Beth's Star Student of the Week
RSES Kindergarten

Tax tips for students

Income tax season is approaching, and students may want to consider these tips from the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) to help the process go more smoothly.

Although you may not have earned enough to be required to file, you may be able to get a refund if your employer withheld taxes from your pay. Before you file, discuss the situation with your parents. They may be able to claim you as a dependent, which could save them thousands of dollars. Students and

parents may be able to take advantage of these programs on their federal taxes:

American Opportunity Credit, available for the first four years of college.

Lifetime Learning Credit, available if a taxpayer or a dependent is taking college courses to acquire or improve job skills.

Tuition and fees deduction, which lets taxpayers deduct qualified education expenses paid during the year for themselves or a dependent. The expenses must be for college.

Student loan interest deduction, which lets people deduct up to \$2,500 per year on federal taxes for interest paid on federal student loans.

For more detailed information about federal programs, go to www.irs.gov to download the free Publication 970 Tax Benefits for Education. Kentucky also offers a tuition tax credit for undergraduate students who attend state colleges.

Tax rules may change from year to year, so make sure you have the most up-to-date information before filing. KHEAA is the state

agency that administers Kentucky's grant and scholarship programs, including the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES).

The agency also provides financial literacy videos at <http://itsmoney.kheaa.com> and free copies of "It's Money, Baby," a guide to financial literacy, to Kentucky schools and residents upon request at publications@kheaa.com. For more information about Kentucky scholarships and grants, visit www.kheaa.com; write KHEAA, P.O. Box 798, Frankfort, KY 40602; or call 800-928-8926, ext. 6-7214.

January is National Radon Action Month

TEST YOUR HOME TO DETERMINE RISK OF RADON GAS EXPOSURE

You can't see it, smell it or touch it. The #1 cause of lung cancer outside of smoking is a radioactive gas that everyone breathes in every day, usually at low levels, according to the National Cancer Institute. Radon gas is produced from a natural breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water. This radioactive gas can be detected in homes, offices and schools; it enters buildings through cracks in floors and walls, construction joints or gaps around service pipes, electrical wires and sump pits. When radon gas exceeds acceptable levels, the result can be deadly. Scientists estimate 15,000 to 22,000 lung cancer deaths in the U.S. each year are related to radon. People who breathe in radioactive particles, swallow water with high radon levels or are exposed to radon for a long period of time are susceptible to lung damage and lung cancer. The Environmental Protection Agency says nearly 1 out of every 15 homes in America is estimated to have elevated radon levels. In Utah, the ratio is 1 in every 3 homes that have been tested. Dr. Wallace Akerley of the Huntsman Cancer Institute in Salt Lake City likened living under such conditions to smoking one or two packs of cigarettes a day. In May 2015, he was questioned for an article while treating two women diagnosed with stage-four lung cancer. Neither was a smoker. [HYPERLINK "http://www.good4utah.com/news/local-utah-state-news-/radon-causes-100-lung-cancer-deaths-in-utah-every-year"](http://www.good4utah.com/news/local-utah-state-news-/radon-causes-100-lung-cancer-deaths-in-utah-every-year) Akerley said there was little doubt what caused damage. [HYPERLINK "http://www.good4utah.com/news/local-utah-state-news-/radon-causes-100-lung-cancer-deaths-in-utah-every-year"](http://www.good4utah.com/news/local-utah-state-news-/radon-causes-100-lung-cancer-deaths-in-utah-every-year) to their lung tissue: breathing in radiation. But this is a preventable cancer

gerous areas for radon exposure, features have been added to lower radon levels. For uranium miners, millers and transporters who have certain health problems as a result of exposure during atmospheric nuclear weapons tests or while employed in the uranium industry during the Cold War arsenal build up from 1945 to 1962, the U.S. government has established the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act.

Other Resources Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Department of Justice, Environmental Protection Agency, National Cancer Institute.

On a separate note, it is important to point out that Kentucky is one of the unhealthiest states in our nation; but, a few healthy lifestyle choices could change this. First, eating normally proportioned helpings of nutritious foods including at least five fruits and vegetables a day can lower weight and reduce heart disease and diabetes. Second, exercising about 30 minutes per day can lower blood pressure. Third, avoiding the use of tobacco products can reduce several types of cancer. Finally, making sure you get your needed preventive screenings can detect diseases early and greatly increase your chances for a positive health outcomes, while receiving your recommended vaccinations can prevent acquiring disease in the first place. Visit our website at www.LCDHD.org and click the "52 Weeks to Health" banner to learn more about each of these areas. While at our website fill out the

Health Calculator & Wellness Profile to take the first step toward personal wellness AND to be entered for a

chance to win \$1,000.00. Source: National Safety Council 01-17

BANK OF JAMESTOWN
THREE LOCATION TO SERVE YOU:
MAIN OFFICE - 400 Monument Sq., Jamestown
INDUSTRIAL OFFICE - 2115 N. Main St., Jamestown
EAST 80 OFFICE - 43 Hwy. 910, Russell Springs
FDIC 270-343-3186 • www.bankofjamestown.com

First National Bank
THREE LOCATION TO SERVE YOU:
Main Office: Junction of Hwy. 127 & 80 • Downtown Branch: Corner of Main & Wilson St.
South Branch: S. Hwy. 127
HOURS: M-Th. 8:30-4:00 • Fri. 8:30-6:00 • Drive-thru: M-Th 8:00-4:00 • Fr. 8:00-6:00
Sat. Main Office Drive thru 8:30-12:00 Noon
www.fnbrs.com • 866-4343

Extension Notes
extension.ca.uky.edu
Family & Consumer Sciences
Russell County Extension Office

Winter is a great time for families

Source: David Weisenhorn, senior specialist for parenting and child development education

The winter months are a great time to catch up on much needed family time. Yes, it's cold. Yes, you cannot get outdoors as much, but around your home you have plenty of indoor activities to do with your children that can create a meaningful family experience and lots of wonderful memories.

Time with their parents is extremely important to the well-being of children. Studies have shown families who spend time together have happier, healthier kids who do better in school. Family time promotes emotional health in kids, which is linked to a greater likelihood that they will avoid risky behaviors, such as drug use, and have lower risks for depression.

The possibilities for meaningful indoor family time are as limitless as your imagination. Here are some ideas to get you thinking about activities to do with your kids.

Story time: While you can and should spend time reading to your children, there is so much more you can do with story time. Let your imaginations run wild as you make up stories together. Make up a silly story to tell your kids or involve them in the creation of a silly story. You can also take turns sharing your favorite family stories or memories.

Dance party: Dancing to music is a great way to improve everyone's mood and get your hearts pumping when outside physical activities are limited. Let everyone have a turn selecting a song. Remember to keep the music age appropriate, especially with younger children.

Kitchen time: Especially around the holidays, you can spend so much family time cooking in the kitchen. Whip up something sweet to share for an after-dinner treat. Have your children help you prepare food items that will be gifts for friends and family members. Not only will you be spending time together but you'll be teaching them valuable math and life skills that are central to food preparation.

Scavenger hunts: The premise of this game is to send a child or children with a list of objects to go find and retrieve. It is simple to create and can be as long or short as you wish. Start by making a list of items commonly found in or around your home. Continue to add items to the list that require creativity and/or adventure, such as "buried treasure" which you can define however you chose.

More information on parenting and families is available at your Russell County Extension office.

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How Do You Know if You're at Risk? The EPA reports elevated levels of radon gas have been measured in every state. Everyone is at some risk. Smokers who are exposed to elevated levels of radon gas are at higher risk of developing lung cancer. Testing is the only way to determine how much radon is present in your home or drinking water. Short-term (3- to 4-day) and long-term (3- to 12-month) test kits are available. In some cases, manufacturers of these kits will conduct analysis and post results online.

How Much is Too Much? No level of radon exposure is considered completely safe, however the EPA only recommends reducing radon levels in your home if your long-term exposure averages 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) or higher. A pCi is a measure of the rate of radioactive decay of radon gas. (These are the tiny particles that can get trapped in your lungs when you breathe.)

Reducing Radon Gas in Your Home The American Cancer society says a variety of methods can be used to reduce radon gas levels in your home, including sealing cracks in floors and walls and increasing ventilation through sub-slab depressurization using pipes and fans. The EPA recommends using a state or nationally certified contractor because lowering high radon levels often requires technical expertise and special skills. Two agencies have set the standard for participants seeking certification: National Radon Safety Board

January is National Radon Action Month The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has designated January as National Radon Action Month, a time when health agencies across the country urge all Americans to have their homes tested for radon. Schools, businesses and other buildings also should be tested, according to the EPA. Visit the EPA website for ideas on how to help spread the word about Radon testing and mitigation.

What is Being Done to Protect Employees The Nuclear Regulatory Commission and OSHA HYPERLINKset limits on exposure to radon in the workplace. In mines, one of the most dan-

This beautiful lady, Bonnie Sunshine Kimbler, celebrates her 95th birthday on Jan. 9, 2019.

Born Jan. 9, 1924, 1 of 5 children, Bonnie still lives on her home farm and is a member of Mt. Pleasant Church.



Babies of 2018

Baby's Name _____
Parent's Name _____
Date of Birth _____

Announce your precious new addition in the Times Journal's Babies of 2018 Special Edition

To be published on January 17, 2019.
Deadline to submit is Friday, January 11th at 1:00 p.m.
Cost is \$20 and will be printed in full color!

Please fill out this form and return, along with your child's picture, and payment, at our office located at 120 Wilson St., Russell Springs or mail it to The Times Journal, P.O. Box 190, Russell Springs, KY 42642.

Baby's Name _____
Parent's Name _____
Date of Birth _____ Phone # _____