

Kindness is more than just being nice; It's good for your health

By Pat Melgares, K-State Research and Extension news service

Manhattan, Kan. — Holding the door for someone is a nice gesture, but Kansas State University community health specialist Elaine Johannes says there's a deeper, more impactful practice that benefits both giver and receiver.

She calls it 'intentional kindness.'

"Being nice keeps social lubricants moving," said Johannes, the Kansas Health Foundation's Distinguished Professor of Community Health at K-State. "But being kind is more intentional. It has to do with our relationship with people and the world. It takes a little bit more interaction to be kind and to show that with our acts."

Johannes said there is a growing body of research indicating that intentional kindness is a critical component of physical and mental health, as well as economic wellbeing.

"We've known for some time that toxic, hostile environments can trigger fight-or-flight responses," she said. "Those places can be argumentative; it's not a kind place. When we're in those spaces, our bodies tense up. Cortisol builds. Our capillaries and veins constrict. Our heart pumps faster. Some peo-

ple freeze because they don't know how to get out of that place."

On the other hand, an environment of kindness can benefit health.

"When we're around people who treat us kindly, our bodies relax," Johannes said. "We produce oxytocin — which is often called the love hormone or bonding hormone — which helps improve everything from heart function to breathing."

Johannes said K-State Extension has recently released a fact sheet titled Kindness Matters that aims to help communities, schools, families and workplaces understand and implement more intentional acts of kindness. The publication can be downloaded online for free.

Johannes said kindness should happen naturally, but also can be planned. She even suggests writing intentional acts of kindness into a calendar, or store on a computer app.

"Yes, kindness can be random, but it can also be scheduled," she said. "You can put it on your calendar or app — check in with a colleague, grab someone coffee, or take out the office trash. These small, thoughtful acts have ripple effects."

Kindness Matters, which was written primarily by K-State Extension

family and consumer sciences agent Lisa Newman, includes resources and ideas for building kindness into daily habits. From volunteering to active listening, the guide offers practical suggestions for individuals and groups.

One section even explores the economic benefits of working in or investing in businesses and organizations that promote kindness.

Johannes said in cardiac care and cancer treatment units, for example, studies have shown that physicians working in kind environments stay longer and patients actually recover faster.

"Kindness isn't just about grand gestures," Johannes said. "It's about being present, listening, and recognizing the humanity in each other, even strangers."

She adds: "This is something we can all do. Whether it's intentional or spontaneous, the act of being kind — to others and ourselves — creates healthier, happier communities. And it might just become a habit worth keeping."

A longer discussion with Johannes is available online on the weekly podcast, Sound Living, produced by K-State Extension.

More information also is available at local K-State Extension offices.

K-State food scientist says canning helps spread tomato fun year-round

K-State Research and Extension news service

Manhattan, Kan. — Many gardeners plant tomatoes, and while making salsa and spaghetti sauce or eating them whole during the summer months are popular choices, the fun can be extended well into the rest of the year.

Kansas State University food scientist Karen Blakeslee said tomatoes are also popular for freezing, canning or dehydrating to use later.

"Having basic options such as whole tomatoes, tomato juice or tomato sauce allows you to use tomatoes in many more recipes," Blakeslee said.

Canning allows many more tomatoes to be stored, she said. Freezing tomatoes is limited by available space in the freezer.

From a food safety standpoint, Blakeslee said tomatoes require acidification, which means adding acid to increase the acid content during canning.

"The natural pH (acidity level) of tomatoes — no matter the variety or color — is at or above 4.6," Blakeslee said. "Therefore, many tomato varieties are low acid foods. While they might taste acidic or have a sour taste, the actual pH measurement is the true indicator of acid content."

What that often means

for canning tomatoes is that bottled lemon juice, citric acid or vinegar must be added.

"Do not use fresh lemon juice because the acid content is inconsistent," Blakeslee said. "(Adding acid) is a must for either water bath canning or pressure canning tomatoes. Recipes that use tomatoes as an ingredient — such as salsa — will also have lemon juice or vinegar to acidify the product. Do not alter the amounts of ingredients."

Blakeslee said a K-State Research and Extension publication — Preserve it Fresh, Preserve It Safe: Tomatoes — includes a handy chart to aid in adding the correct amount of acid to canned tomatoes. The publication is available online for free from the K-State Research and Extension bookstore.

"While it may still be summer, keep in mind that as the fall season and colder temperatures approach, do not can tomatoes that have been subjected to a frost or freeze," Blakeslee said. "This causes the acid content in the tomatoes on the vine to change too much, which makes them unsafe to can using recommended practices. The quality of the tomatoes also will be reduced."

In addition to tomatoes, Blakeslee said many other

foods can be canned. She shares the following food safety tips:

•Take time to learn the proper steps to home canning.

•Read recipes before starting the canning process to be sure all ingredients and supplies are available.

•Make sure equipment is in good working order. Replace parts, if needed.

•Do not use a jar size larger than what is stated in the recipe.

•Give yourself plenty of time for the canning process. Rushing any steps can lead to mistakes and possibly spoiled food.

Blakeslee, who also is coordinator of K-State's Rapid Response Center for Food Safety, suggests a website -- Preserve it Fresh, Preserve it Safe -- for guidelines on safe canning at home. She said the U.S. Department of Agriculture also has an online resource, called the USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning.

Blakeslee publishes a monthly newsletter called You Asked It! that provides numerous tips on being safe and healthy. The August issue contains numerous articles with tips for canning foods safely.

More information is also available from local extension offices in Kansas.

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Rice County Council on Aging and Public Transit will be closed on Monday September 1st for Labor Day

NOTICE

USD 405-Lyons is accepting sealed bids on a 2007 Chevrolet Impala LS with approximately 229,000 miles until September 2, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. at the Frisbie Education Center (800 S Workman in Lyons). You can view the car by contacting Rocky Summers at 620-257-5114. USD 405-Lyons has the right to reject any and all bids. 8/28

SALE

ESTATE SALE — Tom and Shirley Frederick, 206 Fourth Street, Alden. Thurs./Fri., Aug. 28/29, Noon-6; Sat., Aug. 30, 9-Noon. This is an Amazing Sale with Antiques, Collectibles, Furniture, Few Outdoor items, Memorabilia and more. Most furniture is Century or Ethan Alan. There will be a second sale in Sept. in Lyons with overflow from family. Date to be announced at sale. Do Not Miss This one for great deals and a trip to Alden! (73-35)

LEGAL

(Published in the Lyons News on August 28, 2025)

City of Lyons PERFORMANCE PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The City of Lyons will hold a public hearing on Monday, September 15th, 2025 at 6:00 PM at Lyons City Hall, 201 W Main St, Lyons, KS 67554, for the purpose of evaluating the performance of Grant No. 22-HR-006 for Housing Rehabilitation in the target area bounded by West Main street to the North, North Douglas Avenue on both side of the street, from the corner of West 2nd street and N Douglas Avenue and corner of West 2nd Street and East Avenue N on both sides of the street, North Pioneer Avenue south of the railroad tracks on both side of the street, West Avenue N south of the railroad tracks on both sides of the street, and East Avenue N to the West. Eleven (11) homes were rehabilitated under the program. This grant was funded primarily by the Kansas Department of Commerce, Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and supported by the Kansas Weatherization Assistance Program (KWAP). All aspects of the grant will be discussed and oral and written comments will be recorded and become a part of the City of Lyons CDBG Citizen Participation Plan. Reasonable accommodations will be made available to persons with disabilities. Requests for accommodations should be submitted to the City of Lyons City Clerk by September 10th, 2025.

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