MANHATTAN, Kan. – It may seem like saying ‘thank you’ for a good deed, or pausing to appreciate a child’s hug, are very simple moments in life.

But done routinely – and intentionally – they make a difference. Jennifer LaSalle calls it cultivating an attitude of gratitude.

“It’s a relatively new area of study in psychology, but what researchers have found is that having an attitude of gratitude reaps great benefits,” said LaSalle, a family and consumer sciences wellness agent with K-State’s Research and Extension’s West Plains District.

LaSalle will present the webinar, Cultivate an Attitude of Gratitude, on Jan. 26 as part of the online series Living Well Wednesday, which is provided free from 12:15 p.m. to 1 p.m. (CST). Registration is available online.

“Part of practicing the art of gratitude is being thankful; when you practice that, it becomes more of a habit,” LaSalle said. “But it’s not just being thankful. It’s also appreciating the little things you have in life. What the research shows is that having an attitude of gratitude benefits you physically and interpersonally.”

LaSalle noted studies indicating that people who practice gratitude are more healthy, have more motivation to exercise, sleep better at night and even are more productive – and happy – at work.

“One of the benefits is happiness,” she said, “and isn’t that what we all want in life: to be happy? The two correlate together.”

The session’s featured speaker is John Calvert, the director of the Kansas Department of Education’s Safe and Secure Schools unit.

“We had a similar program with (Calvert) last year,” Bonilla said. “This year, he will give us an update on the social media apps to be aware of as parents, and tips to keep our children safe.” Statistics indicate that 90% of children ages 13-17 have access to and use social media apps.

“John does a really good job of providing tips and examples of how we can set limits with our teenagers and young adults,” Bonilla said. “He can help us make sure we are able to keep them safe in a world that we really have no control over what is put out there.”

Part of Calvert's mission as director of KSDE’s Safe and Secure Schools unit is to keep track of what apps are trending among school-aged kids.

“There are apps out there now that I had no clue existed,” Bonilla said. “So much is evolving. If we, as parents, are not on top of what we should be looking out for, there are a lot of things that can fall into the cracks. It’s nice to have someone we can trust to provide us with that information.”

More information on Living Well Wednesday is available online or from local extension offices in Kansas. A one-time registration gives viewers access to the entire 2022 webinar series, which will be held on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month.

FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story
Living Well Wednesday (registration and information), https://www.ksre.ksu.edu/fcs/livingwellwed
K-State Research and Extension local offices, https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html

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