Transition Times

11/23/2010
Winter 2010

Carnegie Mellon University, 5000 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213
http://www.psy.cmu.edu:16080/~transitiontimes

Inside this issue:

Dear Transition Times Families,

The days are getting shorter, the weather is turning colder, and another holiday season is upon us. In this newsletter, we share a little bit about what everyone in the study is doing, a few tips for budgeting in this difficult economic time, and some uplifting (hopefully) recipes for the holidays.

One group of you completed the Transition Times Study last spring, another group of you finishes the study this coming spring, and another group of you just started the study. We submitted a grant proposal to the National Institutes of Health earlier this month to continue the study and should hear back some time next year. We will keep you posted. We have published 15 articles from this study so far and hope to start writing some papers next summer from the Transition Times Study. Look for preliminary results in an upcoming newsletter.

Thank you again for all of your support.,

Vicki Helgeson, Ph. D.

Transition Times Study Participant Update!

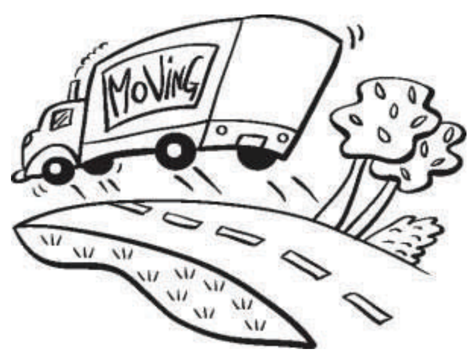
What have the participants in the Transition Times Study been up to?

Well, 56% of you have gone on to continue your education, 25% are working and going to school, and 10% of you are primarily working. Another 3% are in the military.

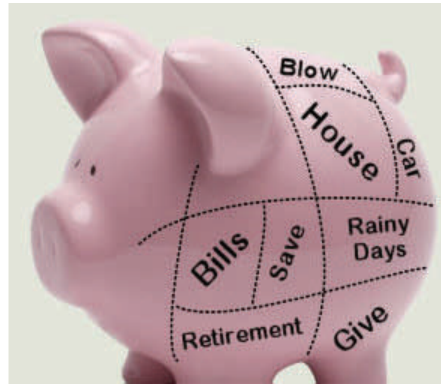
Of those who went on to continue their education, the majority have chosen to enroll in four year public colleges. Some majors include fashion, health science, sports management, and criminal justice.

The most popular jobs among those who are working are in the field of sales. Some other jobs include football assistants, childcare aids, and machinists. Two people in the study went on to play junior hockey in Canada!

As far as location, many of you have moved within the past year. It looks like the average distance that people have traveled is about 190 miles. However, some of you have moved as far as 2,500 miles away!



Budgeting 101



What is a budget?

- A budget is a money plan. It is like a blueprint of how much money you earn and how and where you spend it.

Why use one?

- Creating a budget can be helpful whether you have a lot of money or just a little! A budget can help you reach a financial goal because it allows you to control how much money you are spending and saving. With a budget you are less likely to blow your money on random, daily spending.

What are some good online resources?

- Google docs! There are hundreds of free online budgeting worksheets that are designed for different goals. Go to this website if you would like to find links to budgeting docs: http://carrieanddanielle.com/top-10-online-budgeting-worksheets/

Steps to Become A Successful Budgeter!

Budgeting probably isn't at the top of your "to do list," but creating a budget is an important part of managing your money. Budgeting is the best, most practical way to keep track of your spending—and more importantly, to keep a steady hand on it!

Here are some steps to start your budget now.

1. Make a list of your expenses.

Make a list of your fixed expenses, such as rent or car payments. Then, create a list of your fluctuating expenses, such as dining out, hobbies, and other items that do not have a consistent payment. This will allow you to map out and understand different expense categories.

You may find it helpful to look at past bank statements so you can get a good estimate of how you are spending your money.

2. Forgotten Items

Gifts for birthdays, weddings, or parties are examples of items that are often not accounted for in the budget. When making your budget, pull out a calendar to remind yourself of some occasions that may be coming up in the near future, and set some price ranges for yourself.

3. Separate your wants from your needs.

After you have compiled a list of the items that you are spending your money on, circle the items on the list that you think you can cut back. Also, circle items that you could eliminate all together.

4. Make sure your expectations are realistic.

This is a pretty common mistake. For example, if your food costs are about

$600 a month, it isn't practical to try and cut that cost in half in an effort to try and save money. Even if your expectations for your budget are good in theory and you aim to save money, try and stay realistic and set fair goals for yourself.

Thinking about saving up for a car?

Buying a car can be a pretty daunting task. How do you find a car with an affordable price tag that also meets your personal wants and needs? Here are some helpful tips and resources.

Affording Monthly Payments By the time you decide to negotiate a price with a car dealer you should already have an idea of what amount best fits with your budget. Visit this website to become more familiar with key financial terms for buying a car, such as down payments, interest rates, loan terms, etc.: http://autos.msn.com/loancalc/newloan.aspx

If you are interested in calculating auto loans and how much interest you would pay over time for a particular loan, visit this website: http://www.bankrate.com/calculators/index-of-auto-calculators.aspx

Buying New Vs. Used Vehicles depreciate in value rather quickly. Typically, a new car decreases in value by 25-40% in the first two years. So, it might be smart to let someone else take the initial 40% hit and buy a slightly used car.

Find out the invoice price of the car on the web. Before negotiating how much you are going to pay for the car, be aware of how much the dealer paid for the car and compare that to the sticker price of the car. You can expect to pay more than invoice but less than sticker.

Putting $0 down Save up your money for a down payment. Be weary of dealers that advertise a brand new car with no money down! If you do not put a payment down when purchasing a car, the taxes and fees that go in to a new car purchase are rolled into your loan. This could be dangerous. Remember, vehicles depreciate in value rapidly. If you decide to finance the full purchase price, you may find yourself upside down on the loan (meaning that you owe more on the car than it is worth). So, if you want the flexibility of selling or trading your car later on, you probably don't want a $0 down car payment.

Fun Holiday Recipes

Pumpkin Brownies

What you need:

1 cup Pumpkin, canned, unsalted
1 1/4 cup whole wheat flour
1 cup packed dark brown sugar (or brown sugar substitute)
1 tsp low sodium baking powder
2 tsp ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp ground nutmeg
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp baking soda
1/4 cup low fat buttermilk
1/4 cup vegetable oil
2 tsp vanilla extract
2 eggs , well beaten
1/2 cup finely chopped walnuts
1 cooking spray

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Coat a 13 x 9 X 2 inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray.

2. Combine all ingredients and beat well. Pour into prepared pan and bake for 30 to 40 minutes.

3. Cool on baking rack; cut into bars.

Nutrition Facts:

Makes 24 servings; Serving Size: 1 piece

Amount Per Serving 104.1 Calories, Total Carbs 15.1 g, Dietary Fiber 1.3 g, Sugars 9.5 g, Total Fat 4.5 g, Saturated Fat 0.7 g, Unsaturated Fat 3.8 g, Potassium 110.2 mg, Protein 2 g, Sodium 87 mg

Dietary Exchanges: 1 Fat, 1/2 Other Carbohydrate, 1/4 Starch

Fireside Beef Stew

What you need:

1-1/2 pound boneless beef check pot roast

1 pound of butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into 1-inch pieces (about 2-1/2 cups)

2 small onions, cut into wedges

2 garlic cloves, minced

1 14-ounce can of reduced-sodium beef broth

1 8-ounce can of tomato sauce

2 tablespoons of Worcestershire sauce

1 teaspoon of dry mustard

1/4 teaspoon of ground black pepper

1/8 teaspoon of ground all spice

2 tablespoons of cold water

4 teaspoons corn starch

1 9 ounce package of frozen green beans

Directions:

1. Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 1-inch pieces and place in a 3-1/2 to 4-1/2 quart slow cooker. Add squash, onions, and garlic. Stir in beef broth, tomato sauce, Worcestershire sauce, dry mustard, pepper, and all spice.
2. Cover and cook on the low-heat setting for 8-10 hours or on the high-heat setting for 4-5 hours.
3. If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. In a small bowl combine cold water and cornstarch. Stir cornstarch and green beans into the slow cooker. Cover and cook about 15 minutes more or until thickened. Makes 6 (1-1/3 cup) servings.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving:
Servings: 6 (1-1/3 cup) servings

Calories 206, Total Fat 4g, Saturated Fat 1g, Monounsaturated Fat 2g, Cholesterol 67mg, Sodium 40mg, Carbohydrate 15g, Total Sugar 5g, Fiber 3g, Protein 27g

Hot Cranberry Cider

Makes 25 (4-ounce) servings
Preparation Time: 15 minutes
Total Time: 40 minutes

What you need:

4 quarts apple cider
3 quarts cranberry juice
2 tablespoons splenda brown sugar blend
8 cinnamon sticks
2 teaspoons whole cloves
2 lemons, thinly sliced

Directions:

1. In a large pot, combine apple cider, cranberry juice, splenda brown sugar blend, cinnamon sticks, cloves, and lemon slices. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 15-20 minutes. With a slotted spoon, remove cinnamon, cloves, and lemon slices. Serve hot.

Nutritional Information Per Serving (1/25 of recipe): Calories 150 | Calories from Fat 0 | Fat 0g (sat 0g) | Cholesterol 0mg | Sodium 10mg | Carbohydrates 38g | Fiber 1g | Sugars 35g | Protein 0g