



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

CLICK ON THE STORY YOU WANT TO READ

Sign Up for a Free Meal Kit and Cooking Demonstration

Financial Wellness for the Holidays

Spread Holiday Magic with Franklin County Children Services

Setting Boundaries and Prioritizing Self-Care During the Busy Holiday Season

Learn how to Manage Change



SIGN UP FOR A FREE MEAL KIT AND COOKING DEMONSTRATION

HOSTED BY YELLOWBIRD

End 2024 on a delicious note with the final Yellowbird meal kit of the year! Join Maddie Bidwell, Registered Dietitian & Benji Ballmer, Owner of YBFS, to learn how to make your very own Butternut Risotto. Use fresh Ohio produce -grown with organic practices- and the cleanest non-GMO or local products to create a satisfying and healthy meal that everyone will enjoy. Increase your knowledge and awareness of local produce, cook along, and feed your family with this innovative & fun Meal Kit Demo!

HOW IT WORKS:

- **Meal Kit Delivery:** Kits will arrive between December 18th and December 20th, 2024. Each kit includes all necessary ingredients and a recipe card.
- **Cooking Demo:** A prerecorded demo will be shared via email on December 18th. Follow along at your own pace and create a delicious homemade meal!

Important Note: Each household is eligible for one free meal kit per year. If you have already received a free meal kit in 2024, you are still welcome to participate but will need to cover the cost of this meal kit.

HOW TO REGISTER:

Use coupon code **THRIVEON2024** at checkout to receive your meal kit at no cost (if eligible). The **registration deadline is December 8th, 2024.**

If you already have a Yellowbird account, sign in to register—no need to create a new account. Forgot your password? Click “Forgot Password” or email brittany@yellowbirdfs.com.

New to Yellowbird? Sign up and create an account to register.

Don't miss this opportunity to enjoy a cozy evening of cooking and savoring a hearty meal made with love and local ingredients!

ORDER YOUR MEAL KIT





FINANCIAL WELLNESS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

CELEBRATE WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK

The holiday season is a time for joy, connection, and celebration, but it can also bring financial stress. From gift-giving to hosting gatherings, the expenses can add up quickly. However, with a little planning and creativity, you can navigate the season meaningfully and affordably, ensuring your holidays are rich in memories—not debt.

BUDGETING FOR A STRESS-FREE HOLIDAY

Start by setting a realistic budget that covers all aspects of your holiday plans, such as travel, gifts, and celebrations. Divide your budget into categories and track every purchase to avoid overspending. By staying organized, you'll prevent the shock of an inflated credit card bill in January.

Consider opening a holiday savings account to prepare for the season year-round. Even small monthly deposits can add up, giving you a cushion for holiday expenses. If your savings fall short, simplify your plans and focus on what truly matters—spending time with loved ones.

HOSTING A MEMORABLE GATHERING ON A BUDGET

Holiday hosting can be special without being expensive. Start with invitations that set the tone but don't cost a dime. Digital invites are a thoughtful, creative way to reach out to guests. Keep the guest list intimate and request RSVPs to avoid overbuying food or supplies.

Decor doesn't have to drain your wallet, either. Tap into nature by using greenery, pine cones, or branches for beautiful, budget-friendly centerpieces. Re-purpose old decorations or thrift unique finds for a charming, eclectic look. To set the mood, light candles or hang twinkling lights to create a cozy, festive atmosphere.

When it comes to food, plan a menu that satisfies without splurging. Opt for appetizers or food stations instead of a full-course meal, and use affordable, seasonal ingredients. Hosting a potluck is another excellent way to share costs and involve your guests.

THOUGHTFUL GIFT-GIVING WITHOUT OVERSPENDING

Gift-giving can be one of the most stressful aspects of the holidays, but it doesn't have to be expensive to be meaningful. Focus on immediate family and close friends, and consider heartfelt, low-cost options like handwritten notes, baked goods, or DIY crafts. Non-monetary gifts, such as offering babysitting or helping with a home project, can be equally impactful.

For larger gatherings, skip individual gifts in favor of group activities like Secret Santa or a fun gift exchange. These alternatives reduce costs while adding an element of excitement to your celebration.

TRAVELING SMART AND AFFORDABLY

If travel is part of your holiday plans, book flights early to secure the best rates and aim to travel on less busy days, such as Tuesdays or Wednesdays. For road trips, budget for gas, accommodations, and meals in advance, and consider staying with friends or family to save on lodging.

CREATE MOMENTS THAT MATTER

Simple activities like karaoke, cookie decorating, or board games can bring everyone together. Check out seasonal markets, craft fairs, or holiday parades. These events often feature free or low-cost activities, live entertainment, and unique shopping opportunities.

The holidays are not about extravagant spending—they're about creating lasting memories with those you care about. By budgeting carefully, embracing creativity, and focusing on shared experiences, you can celebrate the season with joy and financial peace of mind.

For financial education and more information to reach your financial goals, access Enrich through ThriveOn.

1. Log into your ThriveOn portal at fccThriveOn.com
2. Find and click the Enrich card on the Wellness Hub tab.

SPREAD HOLIDAY MAGIC WITH FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

SUPPORT THE HOLIDAY WISH PROGRAM

For over 60 years, Franklin County Children Services has been brightening the holidays for children through the [Holiday Wish program](#), made possible by the generosity of community members like you. This program doesn't just provide gifts; it creates unforgettable moments for children and their families, fostering joy, connection, and cherished memories.

This year, you can help bring magic to thousands of children served by Franklin County Children Services. Here's how:

BECOME A WISH GRANTER

When you sponsor a child through Holiday Wish, you become a true Wish Granter. The program supports children ages 10 and younger, allowing them to choose their own special gift up to \$50. Sponsors purchase the gift, helping to make a child's holiday dream come true.

[Sign up to be a Wish Granter today here.](#)

DONATE ANY NEW TOY

This year, donors have the chance to help create a unique holiday shopping experience for families. If a child aged 0-10 doesn't provide a wish list, their family will be invited to visit our Holiday Wish workshop and shop for their perfect gifts among donations. You can help by donating **ANY** new toy. Donations can be dropped off at:

Franklin County Children Services
855 West Mound Street
Columbus, Ohio 43223

Holiday Wish Hours:

Monday through Friday: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

(Closes at noon on Dec. 20)

Saturdays, Dec. 7th & Dec. 14: 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Sunday, Dec. 8th 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM

You can also shop the [Amazon Gift List](#) and have items shipped directly to the workshop. Holiday Wish is open for donations until December 20.

DONATE TO THE CHILDREN'S FUND

Your monetary donation supports programs like holiday and birthday gifts, summer camps, sports,

and even college scholarships for children in Franklin County's care. [Contribute online](#) and select from unique funds that meet your charitable giving goals.

NEW VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

This year, Franklin County Children Services is thrilled to offer volunteer opportunities for both individuals and groups. [Sign up for volunteer opportunities here.](#)

Together, we can make the holidays truly magical for children in Franklin County. For more information, contact the Holiday Wish Department at holidaywish@fccs.us or 614.275.2525.



SETTING BOUNDARIES AND PRIORITIZING SELF-CARE DURING THE BUSY HOLIDAY SEASON

UTILIZING MEQ

The holiday season is a time of joy, celebration, and connection, but it can also bring added stress and exhaustion. Between traveling, cooking, shopping, and socializing, the demands of the season often feel overwhelming. Research shows that 77% of people experience increased stress during the holidays, with common symptoms like irritability, fatigue, and tension.

To fully embrace the spirit of the season and protect your well-being, it's essential to prioritize self-care and set healthy boundaries. Here's how you can create a more balanced and fulfilling holiday experience.

PRIORITIZE SELF-CARE

Taking care of yourself is one of the best gifts you can give during the holidays. Here are some actionable tips:

- 1. Set Realistic Expectations:** The holidays don't have to be picture-perfect. Embrace imperfections

and focus on meaningful moments rather than striving for perfection.

- 2. Carve Out Time for Yourself:** Schedule quiet moments to recharge, whether that means reading a book, taking a walk, or meditating. These small acts of self-care can restore your energy amid the festive hustle.
- 3. Maintain Healthy Habits:** Staying healthy during the holidays is key. Get enough sleep, eat balanced meals, and stay hydrated. Balance sweet indulgences with nutritious foods like fruits and vegetables, and consider wearing a mask or keeping hand sanitizer handy to avoid illness.
- 4. Treat Yourself:** While shopping for loved ones, try to pick up something special for yourself. A little indulgence can boost your mood and lift your spirits.
- 5. Practice Stress-Relieving Exercises:** Simple movements can ease tension during hectic moments:
 - **Box Breathing:** Inhale, hold, and exhale for a count of five to stimulate relaxation.
 - **Shoulder Blade Pinch:** Squeeze your shoulder blades together to relieve upper-body tension.
 - **Head Turns:** Slowly turn your head side to side while breathing deeply to release neck and shoulder tightness.

SET BOUNDARIES

Setting boundaries is a vital act of self-care, especially during the busy holiday season. By clearly defining your priorities, you can protect your mental and emotional well-being while focusing on what truly matters.

Start by deciding what's most meaningful to you—whether it's quality time with loved ones, peaceful moments to yourself, or celebrating in your own unique way. Once you've identified your priorities, communicate your needs and limits openly. Honest conversations help prevent misunderstandings and encourage others to respect your boundaries.

It's also important to say no to invitations or requests that feel overwhelming. Politely declining allows you to preserve your energy for what matters most. Remember, financial boundaries are equally crucial—set a realistic budget for gifts, travel, and events to avoid unnecessary stress. By establishing

boundaries, you can enjoy a holiday season that feels both fulfilling and manageable.

REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT

If the holidays become overwhelming, don't hesitate to seek help. Share your feelings with friends or family, or you can text the Crisis Text Line. This organization provides free, 24/7, high-quality text-based mental health support and crisis intervention. Text **HOME** to **741741** to connect with a Crisis Counselor.

The holidays are a time for joy, but they should also be a time for you to care for yourself. By prioritizing self-care and setting boundaries, you can navigate the season with calm and confidence, making it a meaningful and enjoyable time for both you and your loved ones. To find more ways to manage your mental health check out meQ, offered through ThriveOn, by logging into your ThriveOn portal at fccThriveOn.com. Find and click the MeQ card on the Wellness Hub tab.

ATTEND AN UPCOMING WEBINAR

Join us every month for a series of engaging educational webinars brought to you by Franklin County Cooperative and ThriveOn, featuring a diverse range of topics including nutrition, financial support, health-related discussions, and much more from our trusted vendors.

EAP Group Sessions

How to Manage Change

Tuesday, December 17 at 1pm

Downsizing, acquisition, re-orgs, mergers, layoffs - these transitions can be unsettling to any worker. Change, especially rapid, stressful change, can be challenging and difficult — even for the most resilient employee. But, change can bring opportunities for growth and positive transformation. During this session we'll identify the emotional phases associated with change, develop strategies to make change more rewarding, and determine how to respond constructively to change in the workplace.

JOIN MEETING >

DOWNLOAD THE WORKBOOK >