



FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY NEWS

Money Talks! Have You Heard?

As much as \$5657 or more could be waiting for you!

Did you work in 2009? You may be eligible for the Earned Income Credit—even if you don't owe income tax.

If you worked in 2009:

- Did you have one child living with you? Did you earn less than \$35,463*? You can get an EIC up to \$3043.
- Did you have 2 children living with you? Did you earn less than \$40,295*? You can get an EIC up to \$5,028.
- Did you have 3 or more children living with you? Did you earn less than \$43,279*? You can get an EIC

up to \$5,657.

- If you had no children living with you, did you earn less than \$13,440* in 2009? Were you between the ages 25 and 64? You can get an EIC up to \$457.

You could get a DTC refund too!

Many families that earned more than \$3,000 may qualify for the Child Tax Credit (CTC) refund—up to \$1,000 for each qualifying child under age 17.

File a Federal Tax Return to get the EIC and CTC: GET FREE HELP!

- VITA-Volunteer Income Tax Assistance -helps people fill out returns for free
- For a site near you, call 1-800-906-9887.

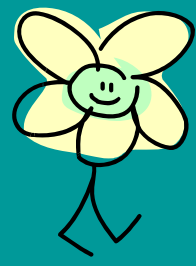
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DOES YOUR CHILD NEED A COMPUTER?

Computers for Kids, Inc. is a non-profit 501C3 organization that donates computers to students throughout the State of Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. They would like to help your child receive a home computer of their own. No child will be turned down. There are no income

guidelines. **A \$35.00 processing fee covers a computer available with Windows XP and 512 Memory, Internet Ready, monitor, keyboard and mouse.** Optional items, such as printers, speakers, upgraded

memory, and flat screen monitors may be added at an additional cost. For more information and to download an application, please visit their website at cfkidaho.com or call 345-0346. Applications are also available through your FSS coordinator.



Special points of interest:

- This quarter, we've chosen to focus on RESOURCES, RESOURCES, and more RESOURCES.
- The resource providers listed in this newsletter represent just a few of the places to which we make referrals.
- We are happy to seek out and research all available resources in the community. If you are in need of anything, call your coordinator.

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TRiO Educational Opportunity Center



Thinking about going back to school, upgrading your skills, completing a post-secondary degree? The Educational Opportunity Center can help you form realistic career objectives and identify programs that can match those needs. They can assist with program advising, applications, financial aid, testing, course selection, and more. They are here to make further education attainable for you, and because they are funded by a federal grant, all of their services are free. Please contact them.

TRiO Educational Opportunity Center—364-9925.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact your coordinator.

ONLINE NETWORKING TO UNCOVER JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The Idaho Department of Labor

1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month

10: 30 a.m. –12:00 p.m.

219 West Main Street, Boise



Learn to use online networking tools to build and cultivate relationships and uncover new job prospects.

During this FREE WORKSHOP, you will learn :

- the importance of defining your goals before going online,
- about the more popular social and business networking sites ,
- how to register and get connected on one of the most popular networking sites, LinkedIn.

To be successful in this class you will need basic computer skills and know how to navigate the internet.

For more information, please contact Alisa Bondurant at 208-332-3575 X3545 or

Alisa.bondurant@labor.idaho.gov.

PROMOTE YOURSELF BY KNOWING YOUR SKILLS

If you are currently seeking employment, be sure you know what your skills are. Many times people are reluctant to talk about their skills, assuming that if a potential employer knows his or her past job titles they will know what skills are involved in performing that work. Not true! (Think about it; if someone tells you she is an engineer, would you know what specific skills are involved in performing that job? It really depends on what kind of specific engineering skills she has performed.)

When you approach an employer, describe your skills, which will tell them what it is you can do. Tell them the

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Job Club Boosts Energy, Provides Leads

Are you currently out of work? Being unemployed can sap your energy, just when you need it most.

The Idaho Department of Labor office located at 219 West Main Street in Boise has a FREE Job Club that meets on the second and fourth Friday of each month from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Attending Job Club will help you help yourself by providing support and job leads. Have you been spending hours worrying about your unemployed status? Participants who attend report a renewed commitment to presenting themselves to employers in the best possible light. You won't be disappointed.

Time Flies

Take positive steps by checking out the Job Club.

Each participant in the Family Self-Sufficiency program signs a five-year contract. That sounds like a long time, right? But your FSS Coordinator often hears "How much longer do I have on FSS?" followed by "Are you kidding me? Only one more year?" The moral of this story is **'Keep in touch with your coordinator!'** Your coordinator's job is to listen, to offer referrals, to brainstorm possible solutions with you, to review your personal goals and to help you get back on track when you feel discour-

Thoughts About Time

aged. We have many tools and ideas to help you succeed. Please do not hesitate to call or e-mail your FSS Coordinator at any time.

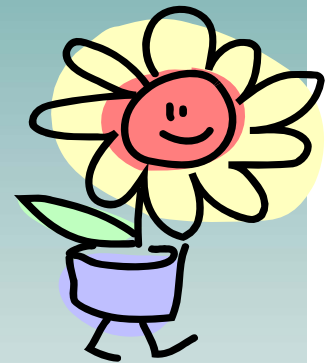
All people, regardless of gender, race, creed, or national origin have exactly the same number of hours in a week. Everyone gets 168 hours to spend each week --- no more, no less.

Time is an unusual commodity. It cannot be saved. You can't stockpile time like wood for your stove or food for the winter. It can't be seen, felt, touched, tasted, or smelled.

Time is a nonrenewable resource. If you are out of wood, you can chop some more. If you are out of money, you can earn a little extra. If you're out of love, there is still hope. But when you're out of time, that's it. When this minute is gone, it's gone.

Approach time as if you are in control. Sometimes it seems that your friends control your time, that your boss controls your time, that your kids or somebody else controls your time. Maybe that is not true. When you say you don't have enough time, you may really be saying that you are not spending the time you do have in the way that you want.

If you are challenged by time-management and the whole process of planning for your



"There are always flowers for those who want to see them."

- Henri Matisse

KIDS CAN HELP

Many hands make light work. Let kids get in on the cleaning act. You'll be teaching them valuable life skills, empowering them with "important" work, and lessening the load on yourself. Here's an age-appropriate breakdown.



AGES 2 TO 3	AGES 4 TO 5	AGES 6 TO 8	AGES 9 TO 13
-Put toys in bin.	-Stack newspapers.	-Load and unload dishwasher.	-Clean refrigerator.
-Fill pet's bowl.	-Sort or help fold laundry; match socks.	-Make own snacks or lunch.	-Put away groceries.
-Put clothes in hamper.	-Dust table legs and chair legs.	-Sweep and damp-mop floors.	-Load and unload washer and dryer with presorted garments.
	-Empty waste-baskets.	-Put away clothes.	-Straighten and organize linens.
		-Dust table surfaces.	-Iron clothes.
		-Wash bathroom sink and tub.	-Vacuum all carpets.
			-Wipe mirrors and wash windows.
			-Polish furniture.
			-Dust lampshades.
			-Clean tiles and toilet.
			-Wipe shower doors.



NATIONAL FINANCIAL EDUCATION CENTER

AT DEBT REDUCTION SERVICES

Debt Reduction Services (DRS) is a non-profit, financial education center. They have trained specialists who can assist you with household finances, building and using credit wisely, getting out of debt, and developing effective spending habits and behaviors. Approximately 4 times a year, we invite DRS to present a 4-part financial workshop series at the Housing Authority.



However, if you are in need of financial guidance, you don't have to wait for us to offer these workshops. You can visit the DRS offices and receive the same information. Every Tuesday from 4:00 to 5:00, DRS offers the same series of FREE financial education workshops at their office at 6213 N. Cloverdale Rd, Ste 100. You may also meet one-on-one with a counselor between 9:00 am and 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday. For more information, please contact 378-0200.

Does your money keep getting away from you?

2010 VITA Checklist-What to Bring with you to prepare taxes

If you need help completing tax forms, a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site near you can help. Call 1-800-906-9887 to find the nearest location. When you go to a VITA site, or if you choose to go to a commercial tax preparer, be ready. **Take these items with you:**

- If married, filing jointly, you and your spouse will both need to be there.
- Valid picture ID
- Copy of 2008 tax return (if you have it)
- Social Security numbers or Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITIN) for you, your spouse and any children born before December 31, 2009. (If available, bring Social Security cards or ITIN letters to ensure information is copied correctly onto the tax return.)
- Income documentation including:
 - W-2 forms from all jobs worked in 2009
 - All 1099 forms showing other income received in 2009
 - A blank check for direct deposit of your refund (if you don't have a checking account, bring your bank account name, number and the 9-digit American Bankers Association (ABA) routing number. Contact your bank if you need assistance identifying the ABA number.)

If any of the following apply to you, take documentation with you:

- Child care expenses, including the provider's address and federal ID#
- Additional forms of income such as: prizes and awards, scholarships, lottery or gambling winnings
- College tuition and student loan interest statements

If you lost or do not have all these items, you can still get your taxes prepared. Call the IRS helpline at 1-800-829-1040 to find out what you need to do and how to obtain replacement documents.

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Make sure you get the new Making Work Pay Credit

Many workers got the new Making Work Pay Credit in 2009 in their paychecks. But if you were self-employed, or didn't earn enough to have income tax withheld, you can claim this credit on your tax return.

SOME FREE TAX HELP LOCATIONS (call 1-800-906-9887 for a site near you)

2717 Vista Avenue

(please enter through the laundry room at the back of the building)

Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs: 2pm-8pm

Saturdays: 10am-4pm

Through April 14, 2010

Boise Senior Citizens Center

690 Robbins Rd

Tues,Thurs: 8:30am-12:30 pm

Through April 3, 2010

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kind of work you're looking for. Don't expect them to analyze your qualifications and tell you where you might fit into their organization.

Skills sell the product -- and the product is YOU.

Think about the following kinds of skills and specific tasks that demonstrate them:

Can you identify your skills using data and information? (e.g., obtain information from existing sources, evaluate its relevance and accuracy, use computers)

Can you identify your "people skills"? (e.g. contribute on a team, work toward agreement, help others learn, communicate well, serve customers)

Can you identify any skills using equipment or machinery? (e.g., fixing, operating)

Are you skilled using ideas? (e.g., generate new solutions, demonstrate the ability to visualize, know how to learn and apply learning)

In addition to these broad areas of skills, you probably have other skills. **Personal skills** such as responsibility, dependability, friendliness, the ability to persevere toward work goals, self-control and honesty are all "skills" that are highly valued by most, if not all, employers.

Determine to take some time to write down your current skills. Don't stop writing until you have written all you can think of; then ask others who know you well if they can think of more. This exercise will instill you with confidence and prepare you for the hard work of finding a job. If there are skills you would like to learn, think of formal and informal ways of acquiring them. Discuss training options with your FSS Coordinator. Also, don't overlook part-time volunteer work as a way to develop your skills.

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