

THE DAILY PLANET

Where Super Moms Get Their Information

APRIL 2010

**SAVE THE
DATE!**

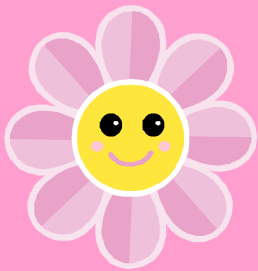
April 22

MOPS

Play date at
Kiwanis Park

May 13

Next MOPS



"You are never
too old to set
another goal or
to dream a new
dream."

C.S. Lewis

Farmington
MOPS
Mothers of Preschoolers

Confessions of a Brown Thumb by Donna Haug

Every year when spring comes around people start to get the urge to create beauty and color in their gardens to escape the dull drudgery of the last dragging days of winter. The dream of lush greenery, the dazzling colors and beauty of the flowers seem a long way away. Before beginning there is so much hard work to do: breaking the hardened ground, digging out the old dead rubbish, adding just the right amounts of fertilizer ...

I have watched this process from afar for many years. I've admired the results and longed for the same. However, my green thumb slowly seems to turn an unattractive shade of brown as the summer wears on. The heat of the searing sun, the lack of water, the inattention due to trips and the busyness of life ... well ... the end result in my garden leaves much to be desired.

Why is it that weeds grow so effortlessly?? They grow where no one has planted them. They shoot up much more quickly than those lovely flowers I tended so carefully! Even the heat of the sun or my lack of watering them won't kill them off!!

If I want to have a beautiful garden and be able to enjoy its loveliness throughout the summer, I will have to be diligent and faithful both in weeding out the unwanted intruders and watering it consistently. The results will be there for everyone to see. The hard work is required both of the novice gardener like myself or the experienced garden expert down the road. The difference may be in our attitudes to this work. My diligent neighbor may find comfort and rest as he tends his garden, whereas I only see those frustrating weeds!

Lord, you are the Gardener of my Soul! And what a job you have! Breaking up the hardened ground and preparing it should have happened when I gave my heart to you many years ago. Sometimes it seems like you have to start all over again breaking up the hardened soil of my heart. Yet, you don't give up on me. Your tender but determined hands use the appropriate tools to prepare the ground bringing forth the beauty you have in mind for me. You carefully plant the seeds and make available to me all that I need to grow. As time goes on sometimes I allow the heat of the trials of life to dry me up rather than soaking up the living water which you offer so freely to my outstretched limbs.

Then those awful weeds creep in. They dig their roots down so quickly and start to choke out the life in my garden. I don't invite them in but suddenly they are there and growing fast. Lord, you are always so faithful to root out those life-sucking weeds in my life. Sometimes I don't know the difference between what is a weed and what is a beautiful plant. I may cringe as you dig up my treasured beautiful strong ... weed. But Lord you know what is best. You know what is helpful to my growth and what will hinder it.

Then, just when my garden seems to be doing great ... I'm growing leaps and bounds and sending my green shoots everywhere ... there you come with those dreaded pruning shears! My heart cries out as you cut away at my beautiful branches and teach me to grow the way you want me to grow.

Faithful Gardener, help me to keep in mind the vision you have for me. Help me to accept your plans for my life. I want to make good use of all you provide for my growth and nourishment and not fight against the digging and cutting that are necessary in my garden. My desire is that others will see the beauty you have created in what would have been just an old abandoned lot, and that they will see the handiwork of the Gardener of My Soul.

Verse of the Week

"I am the true vine and my father is the gardener... Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me." John 15:1,4

HAM AND
EGGS - A
day's
work for
a
chicken;
A life-
time
commit-
ment for
a pig.



Crockpot Corner

Slow Cooker Italian Chicken Alfredo

Ingredients:
 cooking spray
 4 (4 ounce) skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
 1/4 cup water
 1 (.7 ounce) package dry Italian-style salad dressing mix
 1 clove garlic, pressed
 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
 1 (10.75 ounce) can condensed cream of chicken soup
 1 (4.5 ounce) can chopped canned mushrooms
 1 (8 ounce) package spaghetti
 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley

Directions:

1. Spray the crock of a slow cooker with non-stick cooking spray. Place chicken breasts in crock. Combine Italian dressing mix, and water in a small bowl. Pour over chicken; sprinkle with garlic, cover, and cook on Low 4 hours.
2. After 4 hours, whisk softened cream cheese and cream of chicken soup together in a bowl. Pour over chicken; stir in mushrooms. Cover and cook on Low for 1 additional hour.
3. Fill a large pot with lightly salted water and bring to a rolling boil over high heat. Once the water is boiling, stir in the spaghetti, and return to a boil. Cook the pasta uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the pasta has cooked through, but is still firm to the bite, about 12 minutes. Drain well in a colander set in the sink.
4. To serve, spoon chicken and sauce over hot cooked pasta and sprinkle with parsley.



Household Tips and Tricks

More Great Ideas From *Life Fixes: 50 Ways Moms Keep it Together* by Genoa Sibold-Cohn

Get it together

Stop wasting time looking for things you use often, like scissors, reading glasses, or baby wipes. Stock up and keep duplicates in the rooms where you spend the most time.

Create a file for coupons for your favorite restaurants and file them with take-out menus. Put the coupons that expire soonest at the front of the pack.

Set up a box for bills that need to be paid and stock it with stamps and envelopes.

Organize your favorite articles, parenting information, and recipes so you can find them more quickly. Place pages from online sites, magazines, and newspapers in page protectors and stash them in a three-ring binder.

Keep cardboard boxes labeled "donate," "trash," or "consign" in the garage or storage closet to routinely rid your house of unused items and clutter.

Clear the clutter

Store your child's outgrown clothes in large plastic bins and affix labels such as "0 to 3 months", "6 to 9 months", "9 to 12 months", and so on. Once your child has grown out of a size, you can easily store the clothes, loan them to a friend, or take them to a consignment shop.

Turn your hangers backward at the beginning of every season. Anything left hanging on a hanger that's still turned backward at the end of the season hasn't been worn — give it away!

Get rid of one bag of clothes, toys, and books for every bag that comes into the house. It means less stuff to clean up.

Label shelves in the linen closet so family members know where items like beach towels and guest room sheets belong.

Open mail with the trash can nearby so junk mail and catalogs can be thrown out immediately. Even better, sign up with a free service for reducing junk mail like the National Do Not Mail List.



Inspirational Moments

Here are some ways to take care of yourself every day:

- **Get enough physical activity** Physical activity is an excellent stress-buster and provides other health benefits as well. It also can improve your mood and self image. Try to accumulate 30 minutes of physical activity a day through walking, yoga, dancing, housework, yard work or recreational sports (tennis, volleyball, squash). People who regularly engage in physical activity tend to eat more nutritious food which also can help the body better manage stress.
- **Maintain a healthy lifestyle** Treat yourself properly with adequate sleep and nutritious food.
- **Do something you enjoy** Pick up an activity you used to do but haven't had time for or take up a new sport or hobby you've always wanted to try – maybe music or horseback riding lessons.
- **Share your feelings** Talk to someone you trust – a friend, member of the family or clergy, or mental health professional – about what's bothering you.
- **Focus on the present** Don't waste energy worrying about the past. Keep your mind positively set on the present and future.
- **Laugh** Try finding humor in a situation. Humor is a powerful antidote to stress. It can be a great way to relieve tension and could be as easy as renting a funny video and watching it at home.

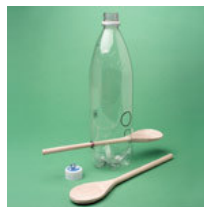


KIDS' SPACE

www.familyfun.com

Materials

- Clean 1-liter soda bottle
- Craft knife
- 2 wooden spoons
- small eye screw
- Length of twine for hanging



Instructions

1. Start by drawing a 1/2-inch asterisk on the side of a clean 1-liter soda bottle, about 4 inches from the bottom. Rotate the bottle 90 degrees and draw another asterisk 2 inches from the bottom. Draw a 1-inch-wide circle opposite each asterisk, as shown.
2. Use a craft knife to slit the asterisk lines and cut out the circles (a parent's job). Insert a wooden spoon handle first through each hole and then through the opposite asterisk, as shown.
3. Remove the bottle cap and twist a small eye screw into the top of it for hanging.
4. Finally, fill your feeder with birdseed, recap it, and use a length of twine to hang it from a tree.



OUT AND ABOUT

Farmington Public Library

Preschool storytime: 10:30-11am

Come and enjoy stories, songs and fingerplays. No registration required. Every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday during the month of April.

Farmington Aquatic Center

Parent/Child Playtime

Quite time in the leisure pool exclusively for adults with children 5 years old and younger.

Tues and Thurs: 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Fridays: 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Fee: \$2.50 per person
children under 3 FREE

Toddler Playdate at the E3 Children's Museum & Science Center every Wednesday from 10:00am-noon. Visit Tots Turf with your crawler, toddling walker, and climber. Playdates are designed for families with young children to develop early motor skills and find new playmates.

It's Easy Being Green!



Paper, Paper, Everywhere!

3 ways to cut the clutter—and save trees in the process (Good Housekeeping, April 2010)

- Get off junk-mail lists. Register with the Direct Marketing Association's DMAchoice mail preference service (dmachoice.org), and you'll see a significant reduction in mail after three months.
- Permanently place a recycling box at arm's length from your mail bin so you can toss any remaining junk mail pronto.
- Pay bills online, or set up automatic check paying from your bank account. No envelopes, no postage—and no late fees, if you're on an automatic plan.



According to recent research, women who worked out for just 20 minutes three days a week and alternated between slow and fast movements lost three times as much weight as those who exercised for 40 minutes (also three times a week) at a steady pace.

Switching speeds while exercising seems to increase the production of hormones called catecholamines which in turn induces fat burning. Even better news is that the women in the study lost most of their weight from their legs and buttocks. This is a workout that's doable for almost anyone—including overweight and older people.

Warm-up 5 minutes
Walk at a moderate pace (you're able to chat comfortably).

Workout 20 minutes
Alternate between 12 seconds at a moderate pace and 8 seconds of walking as fast as you can (you shouldn't be able to utter a complete sentence).

Cool-down 5 minutes
Return to a comfortable speed and walk.

MOPS NEWS

MOPS Playdate at the Park April 22, 9:30am

Bring the kiddos and pack a snack to bring to Kiwanis Park. We will be making flower pots out of recycled formula cans for you to take home!

Cell Phones for Soldiers

Please bring all your old cell phones and cell phone accessories (no cell phone cases). We will be sending them off in the spring to help send phone cards overseas to our military personnel so they can call home. The website for more info is cellphonesforsoldiers.com.



Our last MOPS meeting for this year will be

May 13th

We look forward to seeing you!

MOPS 2009-2010 Steering Team

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ChildHaven Fundraiser

We are going to have moms and children donate any change each month to a bottle we have at the front table to raise money for **ChildHaven**. Our goal is to fill it full of change throughout the whole year and then we will give ChildHaven

Do you have an article, book review, announcement or recipe you would like to submit to the MOPS **DAILY PLANET** newsletter? Send it to Jennifer Jackson at jacksonj002@yahoo.com.

Check us out, we're on the web! <http://www.orgsites.com/nm/farmingtonmops>