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Dr. Dawn-Elise Snipes has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology with a specialty in Behavior Modification, a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, and a Doctoral Degree in Counselor Education with a specialty in wellness in law enforcement and the emergency services. Dr. Snipes holds licenses and certifications as a Mental Health Counselor, Rehabilitation Counselor and Fitness Practitioner and belongs to the American Counseling Association and Chi Sigma Iota, the National Counseling Honor Society.

Currently Dr. Snipes serves as the Chief Executive Officer and Clinical Director for Dawn-Elise Enterprises, Inc. which has grown over the past few years to include three companies: Affordable Wellness, The Addictions Counseling Alliance and Police-Counseling.com. In addition to her private practice, she has worked for two years as the Clinical Director of a large multi-level substance abuse and mental health treatment facility in Gainesville, Florida.

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PBA wishes to express appreciation to Dr. Snipes for contributing this helpful column for the benefit of our members.

A Public Service Column for Members: A Look At Wellness

Saving Money and Spending Quality Time

Most people are not happy to tell you their husband bought the farm, but mine actually did. He bought me a farm! I am like a little **Eddie Albert** (Green Acres). "Green Acres is the place to be! Farrrrm livin' is the life for me..." I digress. I have no clue what I am doing, but I am learning. People are feeling the financial crunch all around, but — okay, brace yourself for the rose-colored glasses — through the loss of some of our activities, we can find others that actually bring the family closer together. As the cost of gas and utilities climbs, we have to find ways to cut corners. For example, hunting and camping, while often recreational, can be a great time for families to reconnect, and can help put meat on the table. Yup! Now you have an excuse to go out hunting with the guys (as long as you dress your own deer).

For non-hunters and smaller children, gardening is another inexpensive hobby. It is awesome to see your kids faces light up when they announce that what they are eating came out of their garden. Even if you are short on space, there is a new method called square-foot gardening (squarefootgardening.com) which eliminates much of the wasted space and time of traditional gardening. Don't want to spend lots of money on raised beds? Try using old tires. You can plant giant liriopse or another short evergreen around it to hide the tire, use mortar and let your kids stick small stones on it to make something of a mosaic, or paint it and turn it into a conversation piece. The first year you will have to shell out the cash for some good planting soil, but after that, you can have compost just waiting for each planting season. Visit your county's waste management site to find free or low cost composting bins. These are most practical for most yards, as they keep the insects to a minimum and are less obtrusive than a wire bin.

Another cool option, although a bit more expensive to start, is vermicomposting. That is, using worms to make the compost. There are many sites to help you along in this, and kids love to play with the worms. (Oh, and if you fish, you have a constant supply of big, fat red wigglers). See the following website for more information: www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eeek/earth/recycle/compost2.htm

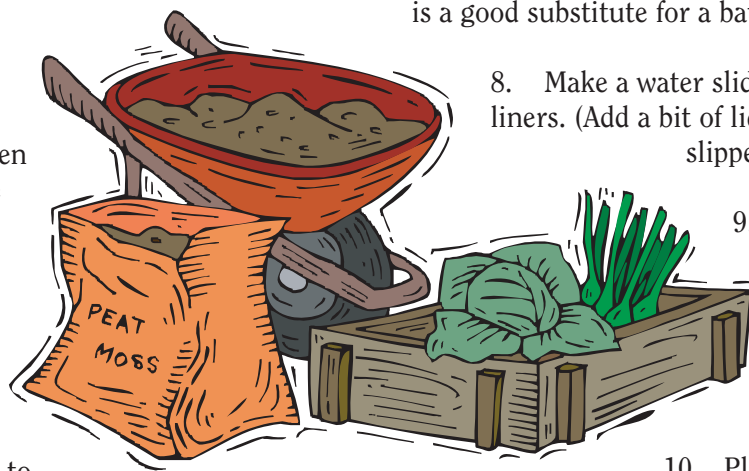
Still a third option in many places are community gardens which are hosted in the local parks and other green space areas. This works well, because if you have ever had a garden, you know that inevitably, you produce more than you can eat. In community gardens, you have the opportunity to share/exchange parts of your harvest and get tips from more experienced gardeners.

Not everyone is interested in hunting, fishing or gardening, but there are other ways you can save.

Other things you can do to save money and spend quality time with the family:

1. Order off the internet. Until shipping prices catch up with gas, it is still often cheaper to have stuff delivered straight to you. You can also get many things cheaper from online stores because they have lower overhead.
2. Take up the lost art of bike riding again.
3. Spend the afternoon at the library—not only do they keep it really cool in there, but you can also check out movies and computer games—oh, and books too.

4. With digital television phasing in, many people can get the basic 3 or 5 channels without having to have cable.—What will we ever do without Law and Order and Hanna Montana? Well, you can watch many full-length shows on the computer now.
5. Do all your cooking for the week on one day so you only have to heat up the house once.
6. Run the dryer and dishwasher when you are not home, so you are not heating the house while you are there.
7. Invest in a pool. You do not have to get fancy, just a place to cool off and splash around. The kids will never want to come in. (Mine try to convince me that the pool is a good substitute for a bath!)



8. Make a water slide out of old shower curtain liners. (Add a bit of liquid soap to make it extra slippery)
9. Let the kids play in the sprinklers while you water the lawn. Put a little shampoo in their hair for a great redneck shower.
10. Play in the rain.
11. Have water-gun fights. Add a bit of food coloring to the water and wear old clothes and you can play a cheaper version of paint ball.
12. Organize a sports "league" in your neighborhood. Most younger kids don't care about going to tournaments. They are just as happy with a scrimmage, and it lets them get their energy out.
13. Set aside one day each week to have a games day in your neighborhood. Party/kids games like sharks and minnows, red light green light, dodge ball, balloon stomp, blob tag/amoeba tag, balloon war, blowing bubbles (dogs love to pop 'em), crack the whip and much more!
14. Make a petting zoo! If your neighbors have a variety of animals, bring them out for a day of learning. You can also invite local pet rescues to come and teach about their animals. Go to petfinder.com to find out about the types of rescues in your area.
15. Volunteer to foster an animal—all the love and none of the cost. Most pet rescue organizations pay for all of the food, toys and vet bills of your fosters. This is another great way to teach responsibility.

The possibilities are endless. Ask yourself, what did my parents used to do when they were kids? Believe it or not, there was life before cable and the internet. 🍷



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