FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Small Steps to Health and Wealth™

Online Free six-week Challenge 2013

This program will be held from Sunday, January 13 through Saturday, February 23, 2013

Petersburg, VA – Just in time to keep those New Year’s resolutions to improve health and personal finances, Cooperative Extension is launching its new online Small Steps to Health and Wealth™ (SSHW) Challenge called “Winter 2013 SSHW Challenge.” This free six-week program is open to anyone who enrolls online and will be held Sunday, January 13, through Saturday, February 23, 2013. Prizes will be awarded for participants who report the highest point totals.

The SSHW Challenge is part of Small Steps to Health and Wealth™, a national Cooperative Extension program developed to motivate Americans to take action to simultaneously improve their health and personal finances. SSHW was built around a framework of 25 research-based behavior change strategies. The Challenge was originally developed in a “paper and pencil” format with printed worksheets and is now available online.

The Petersburg Virginia Cooperative Extension Office is taking part of this National challenge. The Family and Consumer Sciences department would like to demonstrate to the national audience that we in Petersburg VA understand the importance of being financially fit as well as physically fit for living a healthier lifestyle every day.

It has been well documented that, when people monitor their behavior and measure how they’re doing, they are often inspired to do better and achieve positive results. As a participant in a SSHW Challenge you are reporting on an honor system. If the participants “cheat” on reporting their points, they are only cheating themselves by not following the recommended daily practices.

The SSHW Challenge is based on the performance of ten recommended practices on a daily basis: five that involve health and nutrition and five that involve financial management. Ten points are given for performing each one for a maximum of 700 points per week and 4,200 points for the entire challenge.

The five daily health and nutrition practices are: eat at least 4 cups of fruits and vegetables; get at least 30 minutes of exercise; drink water or unsweetened beverages instead of sugar-sweetened beverages; walk 10,000 or more steps with a pedometer; and learn something new about health and nutrition.

The five daily financial management practices included in the SSHW Challenge are: save a $1 bill (or more) and/or pocket change; invest $5 or more per day (including automated retirement savings plan deposits); track money spent throughout the day; eat lunch prepared at home; and learn something new about personal finance. All of this can be accomplished by visiting web sites, attending seminars, or by reading, listening to, or viewing media reports related to nutrition and finances.

Doing even one of the ten recommended daily practices is a great way to get started on the path to better health and improved financial security. To sign up for "Winter 2013 SSHW Challenge," visit http://njaes.rutgers.edu/sshw/. Go to online registration, agree to the terms then continue with registration.
process. While filling out the form make sure to select “Petersburg” as the county, at the bottom of the page click on “Create an Account.” A new page will come up and you are registered; at the bottom of the menu click on “My Challenges,” then enter a new challenge. When the list appears, click on the “Winter 2013 SSHW Challenge.” You will be successfully entered in the challenge. When you click on the challenge, your reporting form will appear and you can read over the list of challenges and check off the ones you do every day.

We want as many Petersburg and surrounding area residents, employees, those involved in Petersburg to join! So, go ahead – take the Challenge and sign up online. Once you sign up, please contact me at kirby2@vt.edu for additional information.

Extension is a joint program of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and state and local governments.

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