

Article for 4/22/15

Whew! I did it! Did you? Although nearly 8 out of 10 US tax filers get tax refunds, according to www.money.cnn.com, some of us must fork out money this time of year to pay additional income tax. It hurts!

As grueling as it is to pay money to Uncle Sam, it's probably not the worst thing that's ever happened to us. Losses of some sort are inevitable, but we can prepare for some losses, much the same way we save money to prepare to pay those taxes on April 15th each year!

Did you know that the month of April is also known as Financial Literacy Month! How appropriate when you think of income tax due dates! But, what is the purpose of Financial Literacy Month? It is to bring awareness and resources to people, encouraging them to make a commitment to their financial future in an effort to achieve financial wellness.

Financial wellness? Yes. A quick internet search will probably lead you to the Money Management International site that offers 30 Steps to Financial Wellness! This site highlights a 30-step plan to help get your finances in order, and Step 14 even reminds us to "expect the unexpected". You know how much I love reminding everyone how important it is to plan ahead! Well, finances are no exception!

You might want to "use this month to ensure you have adequate insurance, a plan to pay bills, and an alternate way to access financial and personal records," as suggested by FEMA. They even offer free, downloadable information through "Operation Hope" and have created and share the free "Emergency Financial First Aid Kit" (EFFAK). This kit walks you through the process of identifying important documents, medical records and household contracts, while encouraging you to include pictures and/or video of your home and belongings and store them in a safe place. They offer several other fantastic tools in the form of checklists and forms, too. You can check it out at www.fema.gov!

Just taking the time to allow financial wellness to cross your mind is a positive beginning! Use the free resources out there, like the "fridge friendly personalized goal certificate to help you stay motivated", the free webinars offered, and prepare to "expect the unexpected" so that you can Be Safe Out There!