Holidays on a Budget Workshop Recap

The holiday season can include a lot of unexpected expenses. Gifts for loved ones, possible travel, and a lighter work schedule could all affect your finances this season. Here’s some tips to stay on track.

Tips for Holiday Budgeting

1. Analyze your debt
   - Before you begin to add new expenses to your budget, consider any debt you have. If there are urgent expenses, make sure to pay those first, before you begin spending extra cash.

2. Project your holiday income
   - If you have a part-time job, your hours could look very different over the holidays. Alternatively, you may receive extra pay for working on or around a holiday. Keep this in mind and try to estimate your monthly income as accurately as possible.

3. Calculate your budget
   - If you already keep a budget, make the above adjustments to ensure accuracy. If you do not keep a budget, now is a great time to start. Take some time to understand your financial situation, using these tips to start. You can also look into apps like Mint and YNAB, which allow you to set goals for specific categories and alert you when you are nearing or pass your goal.

4. Calculate holiday spending
   - Based on your budget, calculate how much you would like to spend on things like gifts, travel, or even special holiday meals. We know it isn’t fun to find a gift you’re really excited about and have to say no, but it can greatly reduce financial and emotional stress now and later. Try to be reasonable.

5. Track prices
   - Keep an eye out for Black Friday and other holiday sales that may offer a gift you’re looking for at a lower price.

6. Stick to it
   - Sticking to your budget is the most important step. You will be successful if you are honest with yourself, set reasonable goals, and keep long-term wellness in mind. Try to think about following your budget as a positive (you could even give yourself a reward for doing so) rather than a negative or a restriction.

Your Craft Kit

Your craft kit includes:
- 1 set of watercolor paints
- 1 paintbrush
- 5 sheets of watercolor paper
- 1 fine-tip pen
- 12 colored pencils
- Toothpicks and cotton swabs
- 5 pieces of patterned paper
- Informational packet on watercolor use
- Informational packet on the UO Craft Center

Jenna from the Craft Center walked us through painting a pomegranate with watercolors. You can use the fine-tip pen to write a message on your card, too. Jenna chose to write “Happy Holidays.” Jenna also showed us how to make an envelope from patterned paper. You can put your card in this envelope or use small envelopes to hold small gifts. Remember that handcrafted gifts are a very cost-effective alternative to bought gifts, and can be even more thoughtful. Making a craft can also be a great way to de-stress in this stressful season.