

# Keep your family posted

Linda Hanson, Published August 17 2008

School starts in a couple of weeks and soon family calendars will fill up with activities.

To help you fine-tune your system of keeping organized at home, we asked readers for their tips on how they do it. We also checked in with a professional organizer, Kim Schlichting-Yeakle of Northland Organizing Inc. in Duluth.

## THE PRO SUGGESTS:

Kim Schlichting-Yeakle said it helps to have a main calendar at home that shows everyone's activities.

She uses a whiteboard that has a calendar on one side and room for writing messages on the other. She writes each family member's activities and appointments in a different color on the calendar. A strip of cork along the bottom is used for pinning up notices.

She also has what she calls a "mom binder," a three-ring binder with tabs to categorize the information she keeps in it, such as her kids' sports schedules and medical information.

It also helps for each child to have an in-basket, where such things as fliers from school and information on longer-term school projects can go, she said.

Being organized can help people save time, Schlichting-Yeakle said.

"It's frustrating when you can't put your hands on something you need," she said.

Being organized is not about trying to be Mary Poppins or Martha Stewart, she said. "You've got to do what works for your family," Schlichting-Yeakle said.

## READERS RECOMMEND:

No matter if Jerelyn Fern of Duluth is at work, home or somewhere else, she knows what her family's commitments are.

That's because she not only keeps a master calendar on her refrigerator, she also enters her family's commitments into her Microsoft Outlook calendar on her work computer and into her cell phone.

"I try to be organized," she said.

Jerry and Julie Frederick of Esko use the Microsoft Outlook calendar on their home computer to keep track of commitments, but they also transfer the information to their Timex data link watches with a USB cable.

The watches are inexpensive — about \$50 to \$60 — and they are easy to find by searching on the Internet, Jerry Frederick said.

Everything the family has to do is entered into the computer, including the many sports commitments of the couple's 10- and 12-year-old sons, doctor and dentist appointments, volunteer commitments and meetings.

Every day he scrolls through the information on his watch to find out what everyone in his family is supposed to be doing, Frederick said.

"Rather than print out a schedule, you have it on your wrist," he said.