From the Executive Director’s Corner

We hope you had a productive Financial Literacy Month!

Personal financial literacy is critical to succeed in today’s world but, study after study show that many Americans are in need of a deeper understanding of financial concepts. While an abundance of financial education exists, it is clearly underutilized.

The majority of people believe we should provide financial education in high school. According to the recently released Survey of the States by the Council for Economic Education, only 20 states require students to take a high school economics course to graduate, and only 17 require a course in financial literacy. In order to address this problem, we must make it a priority in our schools, as well as in our homes and workplaces.

With programs like MoneySKILL, teachers have a comprehensive curriculum that they can customize to supplement their math, social studies, business, family and consumer sciences, economics, or wherever personal finance is taught, while meeting national and state standards.

To date, over 850,000 users have benefitted from MoneySKILL and, as you know firsthand, the program continues to evolve, from a content and technology perspective. We are pleased to announce a few specific updates to include:

- MoneySKILL en Español will be publicly available in a matter of days.
- We have revised the already existing Operating a Vehicle module and are in the process of adding the following two new modules to the curriculum:
  - Preparing to Acquire a Vehicle
  - Vehicle Financing
- All of the charts within MoneySKILL are currently being recreated.

In this edition of MoneySKILL Matters!, you will find our spotlight article on Kim Blanton, author of the Squared Away blog, sponsored by the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College. You’ll also find our “Ask MoneySKILL” section of the newsletter.

Please reach out to me with any questions or comments and thank you for all that you do!

Rhonda Ashburn
Executive Director
AFSA Education Foundation

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All modules to be available in Spanish.
Getting Financial Matters “Squared Away”

To help bring interactive and visual elements to the MoneySKILL® curriculum, as part of the relaunch late last year, we compiled several video aides that will help you and your students be even more engaged with the MoneySKILL program. It was during this process that we discovered theSquared Away blogand its author, Kim Blanton. MoneySKILL Matters! interviewed Kim to learn more about this effort, sponsored by the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College.

**Squared Away: Financial Behavior: Work, Save, Retire** is not a personal finance blog - there are dozens of those. This blog covers everything having to do with financial behavior, college financing, psychology and the U.S. money culture. The blog hopes to provide any information that might help Americans of all ages better understand their money and behavior so that they can act in their own best interest - and get their all-important financial matters “squared away.”

As a veteran financial and economics reporter, Kim started the blog in 2011, writing two blogs per week (100 posts per year!). Her topics are widespread, from student debt to retirement and everything in between. According to Kim, “I’m not just a reporter anymore, I also do this important work in order to educate.”

FINANCIAL GOALS FOR TEENS, YOUNG ADULTS:

1. Follow a budget.
2. Have an emergency savings account.
3. Strive to become debt-free. Pay credit cards in full.
4. Negotiate your salary.
5. Save for retirement to secure employer’s 401(k) match.

Given her passion and work in this space spanning many years, we asked Kim if she had any tips to share with our MoneySKILL Matters! audience. She directed us to a blog (with video) that she posted which cites five financial goals for teens, young adults:

1. Follow a budget.
2. Have an emergency savings account.
3. Strive to become debt-free. Pay credit cards in full.
4. Negotiate your salary.
5. Save for retirement to secure employer’s 401(k) match.

Good advice.

And, as we commemorate Financial Literacy month (April), Kim has this to share, “Americans, of all ages, are simply not saving enough. They are behind the financial eight ball and that often is because they do not get enough education or training. Get educated, it really does matter.”

We think you’ll agree that Kim’s work is important and we encourage you to read the **Squared Away blog**.
Ask MoneySKILL!

Q I’ve recently experienced technical issues when trying to log into MoneySKILL, can you advise?

A We were working to implement new technologies recently and you may have experienced some intermittent delays. Things should be fixed now but a good rule is to clear out your browser history, including cookies, when opening the MoneySKILL website.

Q Will the new modules that you are putting in place affect my current classes?

A No, current classes will not be affected. You and your students can start using the new modules in the coming weeks when you create a new class.

Q Will the new modules affect the Pre/Post Test?

A Yes, the Pre/Post Test will now include possible selections from the new modules and the default number of Pre/Post Test questions will be 37.

Q Are there any additional steps I need to take as an instructor?

A Maybe, if you customize your default class setup, you will need to update your default module listing. You can do this by logging into your MoneySKILL instructor administration and clicking default modules on the left hand menu. You do not need to take any additional actions if you use the default module order.

Every quarter we answer questions about the Foundation, MoneySKILL, and anything pertaining to educating students of all ages on personal finance.