

Organize

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one motion. "Ice cube bins take up half the space of a turntable," she said.

In the second half of the program, on paper clutter, she detailed how to use a planning notebook, a family organizer and a filing system. "The best moments in life are when you feel like you're in control," she said.

She outlined four file systems, categorized as Household Goods (such as booklets on appliances), Family Business File (use file folders for deeds and other important papers), Financial File (for each year's monthly bills) and a Reference File (for clippings on hobbies or other articles of interest).

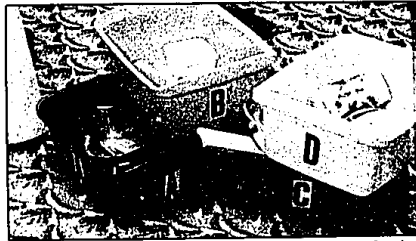
She said you also need four containers, file folders or boxes, labeled Financial In (for bills to pay and papers to keep and take action on), Financial To File, Ref-

erence In and Reference To File. The kids should have their own In and Out boxes. If you live alone, or handle all the paperwork, you can have one In File box and one To File box.



Paper chase: Purse/carrier holds planning notebook.

National Get Organized Week, which began Sunday, continues through Saturday. Schofield is the author of "Confessions of an Or-



Setting priorities: "A" items are those used every day in kitchen. Store these in the handiest place.

ganized Housewife," "Confessions of a Happily Organized Family," "Escape from the Kitchen" and "Springing the Time Trap."



Getting organized: Kathy Mangus (left) and Gloria Webber, both of Orchard Lake, discuss organizing tips at seminar.

Food aid available

ON AGING



RENEE MAHLER

Q. I have an elderly neighbor who is living on his Social Security and also getting supplemental security income (SSI). I don't think he is getting enough to eat and I have the feeling that he hasn't

enough money to buy food. How do I help him to get food stamps?

A. Food stamps are issued by your local Department of Social Services. They are actually coupons that can be used to buy food and seeds or plants to grow food for home use only. They cannot be used for items such as soap, paper products, alcoholic beverages, pet food or tobacco. Most grocery stores or food co-ops will accept food stamps.

■ The application, which is good for up to 12 months, must be completed and returned to the local Department of Social Security office.

In order to receive the stamps an individual must meet the income, asset and other eligibility rules as set by the government. Special income rules do, however, apply for persons 60 years of age and older. In that case household monthly income, less one or more of five allowable deductions, is used to determine eligibility. Income deductions include such items as shelter and medical expenses and a 30 percent deduction from any earned income. Households where at least one member is 60 or older may have up to \$3,000 in assets. Assets are cash, savings or checking accounts, property and vehicles. Assets do not include the person's home and goods, personal belongings, income producing property or burial plots.

In order to apply for food stamps the local Department of Social Services, which is listed in your telephone book, will either give you an application or mail one to you. You must have identification and proof of residence in the county you are applying; proof of gross income, house payments, insurances, taxes or rent payments, and proof of utility expenses. Applicants also must have proof of Social Security numbers and SSI benefits. The application, which is good for up to 12 months, must be completed and returned to the local Department of Social Security office. Each applicant is interviewed. If he or she cannot get to the office a home visit or telephone interview may be arranged.

Eligible individuals should get their food stamps by the 30th day following their applications. In emergency cases, the stamps may be issued within five days.

For more information, call your local Department of Social Services.

Renee Mahler is a gerontologist and the director of communications and admission at a Rochester Hills nursing facility. She is a former member of the Michigan State Commission on Services to the Aging. Send your questions to her at the Observer & Eccentric, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

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