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UF/IFAS Extension
Comings & Goings
FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN FOR EXTENSION



FLORIDA SEA GRANT STORMS EPAF

Laura Tiu, Marine Sea Grant EA II, Okaloosa & Walton Counties



Sea Grant Agents gather at the 2017 EPAF meeting in Fort Myers, Florida (photo credit: Laura Tiu)

The theme of the 2017 EPAF conference was Set Your Place at Florida’s Table: Food, Water Youth and Families, and Florida Sea Grant certainly had a place at the table, excelling in all categories. Sea Grant agents authored a total of twelve abstracts for the event and presented nine of seventeen abstracts in the Natural Resources and Outreach section. Agents scored in the Communication & Program Awards with eight accolades, including two FACAA Communication Awards, one FAE4-HA award, three FANREP Educational Materials Awards, one FANREP Achievement

Awards and one ESP Visionary Leadership Award. Sea Grant agents also hold four of ten leadership positions on the Florida Association of Natural Resource Professionals Board of Officers. EPAF is a great time to learn from colleagues, network and spend time with our peers, and this year was no exception, with Sea Grant agents committing themselves to an outstanding performance.

UF/IFAS Extension *Comings and Goings* is a monthly newsletter distributed by the Office of the Dean for Extension via e-mail and on the UF/IFAS Extension web site at <http://extadmin.ifas.ufl.edu>.

If you have any suggestions or would like to submit your own recognition or short article of interest, please send them to Valkyrie Shah.

Please feel free to also forward any questions or comments about this periodical to Valkyrie Shah at valkyrieshah@ufl.edu.

CALL FOR HELP FILLS A MAINTENANCE GAP

BJ Jarvis, Commercial Hort/Ag CED IV, Citrus County

Demonstration gardens are a fantastic Extension teaching tool, but they require a significant amount of labor. “Get your Master Gardeners to do it!” some would say. However, if you’ve managed Master Gardeners you know that many are aging and may have physical limitations (not to mention busy leisure schedules) that make this a difficult or at least inconsistent source of support. Some Extension offices benefit from county-paid positions, but Citrus County is not one of them. Asking the county leadership for an additional position might not be the highest priority if new resources became available.

In order to assure that our garden is safe and presentable, consistent staffing resources have been sought. Fortunately, the UF/IFAS Extension Citrus County CED successfully

applied for an individual from a federal Community Service Employment program grant, which helps aging displaced workers retrain for new employment. One staffer was assigned to Extension to work in the garden for approximately 20 hours per week. In exchange, the CED/Horticulture agent trains the candidate on a wide variety of gardening tasks in order to position them for employment as a green industry professional.

As a result of this opportunity, we have filled the landscape maintenance gap without utilizing any local or university funds. To date, we have saved between \$10,000 and \$15,000 annually. In addition, our learning landscape provides a positive face for Extension visitors and has trained individuals in Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ principles.

GARDENS TEACH THE IMPORTANCE OF INSECT POLLINATORS

Lynn Barber, Florida Friendly Landscaping EA II, Hillsborough Cty

Nicole Pinson, Urban Hort EA II, Hillsborough Cty



Girl Scouts work with UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County faculty and Master Gardener volunteers to obtain their Silver Award.



Girl Scouts prepare to plant the pollinator demonstration garden at the UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County.



The pollinator demonstration gardens teach visitors about Florida Friendly Landscaping™ and the importance of pollinators to agriculture.



The Girl Scouts identified the pollinator garden as a sustainable take action project. After planting the garden, 80 youth participated in pollinator programs at the Extension office.

Approximately one-third of the food we eat comes from animal-pollinated plants. Recognizing the importance of maintaining healthy populations of native pollinators, three Girl Scouts partnered with UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County to create a pollinator demonstration garden. The cadettes earned a Silver Award through the process of designing and constructing the garden and volunteering 50 service hours. Agents focused on developing the youths’ leadership and life skills. The project promoted via newspaper articles, press releases, radio interviews and docent tours. Establishing a pollinator teaching and demonstration garden on the grounds of the UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County enables youth and their families to visit the gardens and to learn about pollinators. This summer, 80 youth participated in pollinator programs at the Extension office. In post-workshop

surveys, 96 percent of youth (n = 80) correctly identified the names of three pollinators. When asked to write two things they learned from the garden, student responses included: “Some bugs eat other bugs,” “A wasp is a pollinator,” “Some insects nest underground,” “Bees carry pollen to flowers,” and “It’s like a buffet to pollinators when there are bunches of flowers.” When asked about one thing they could do to help pollinators, 29 youth (n=50) indicated not to harm or bother bees and 29 youth said to plant pollinator-attracting plants and flowers. Students enjoyed using the jeweler’s loupe and magnifying lens to look at bugs closely. Two youth indicated the garden “was calm,” and other youth enjoyed eating fresh garden tomatoes. Involving youth in creating pollinator demonstration gardens benefits Extension and residents who learn from the examples displayed.

CREDIT UNION PARTNERSHIP WITH EXTENSION ENABLES A FRESH START

Lisa Leslie, Program EA IV, Hillsborough County

Checking accounts are an essential personal finance tool. Unfortunately, many residents with low credit scores or bank overdrafts are often not eligible for checking accounts. Such unbanked individuals end up using expensive alternative financial service options such as prepaid cards and check cashing outlets, which can cause further economic insecurity. Fortunately, a local Tampa Bay credit union is partnering with UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County to help these residents get back on the path to financial security. The credit union offers a Fresh Start checking account

for a reasonable monthly charge. Members are required to demonstrate 12 months of satisfactory handling and attend an Extension financial mentoring session. During the session, financial goals, expense tracking and saving are discussed. Participants also receive a packet of tools and resources. Once requirements are met, they can transition to a no-fee checking account. Clients often comment that, while they attended a mentoring session because of the requirement, the information significantly changed how they think about their finances. Since February 2017, 35 people have

completed the Fresh Start program and have received financial mentoring. It is estimated that these residents will reduce the money paid for financial services by \$30 - \$318 per person annually. In addition, the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston identifies several unquantifiable benefits, such as that people with bank accounts are more likely to build a good credit history and increase their assets. These benefits usually occur at some point in the future and so they're not easily measured, but they can provide long lasting financial security.

UF/IFAS EXTENSION AND BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS: A FRUITFUL PARTNERSHIP

Brenda Marty Jimenez, FCS EA III, Broward County | Angelika Schlanger, Broward FNP, Public Health Specialist

Did you know that nearly 260,000 Broward County residents receive food stamps through SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)? The mission of the UF/IFAS Extension Family Nutrition Program (FNP) in Broward County is to teach the county's SNAP-eligible population about good nutrition, eating healthy on a budget, and the importance of physical activity. FNP does this by providing free, fun, evidenced-based nutrition education classes to low-income individuals of all ages. Many of our classes include food demonstrations, tastings and exciting activities for children.

To enhance the adoption of nutritional concepts, FNP began conducting cooking lessons in 2015 using the curriculum, *Cooking Matters in Your Community*. Through hands-on demonstrations and taste testing, this comprehensive curriculum teaches participants how to shop strategically and prepare healthy snacks and meals for themselves. Cooking sessions focus on a variety of topics, such as incorporating more fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy into one's diet; identifying healthy snack choices; and limiting sugar intake. All participants leave with a nutritious and tasty recipe that they can prepare at home. (FNP educators are SafeStaff-certified to ensure food safety practices are adhered to during food tastings and cooking demonstrations.)

In addition to nutrition education, Broward FNP promotes public health approaches that increase access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity. To implement community-wide initiatives, FNP collaborates with numerous organizations and government agencies. One of our most fruitful partnerships has been with the Broward County School District. This collaboration has enabled FNP's innovative programming to reach thousands of students in the district's Title I schools since 2008. Here are some examples of FNP's impact within Broward County schools:

- Each school year, FNP Program Assistants teach a series of fun and interactive nutrition lessons to elementary students. Developed by nutrition experts at the University of Florida, the YUM (Youth Understanding MyPlate) curriculum focuses on the MyPlate food groups and encourages school-aged children to make healthful food choices and become more physically active.
- The agent, FNP Food Systems Specialist, and FNP Public Health Specialist work collaboratively to educate Broward County School Board cafeteria managers on Smarter Lunchrooms Strategies to increase selections and consumption of healthy food; improve school lunch participation; educate youth; and reduce food waste. In addition to training food service staff on how to implement Smarter Lunchroom techniques, the FNP team provides specific tools and resources—including a list of creative food names and food design techniques—that can make fruits and vegetables more enticing to students.
- Whenever possible, FNP supports farm-to-school initiatives that bring fresh and local produce to students. In the past, Broward County Schools Food and Nutrition Services has procured locally grown fresh corn and, most recently, 40,000 pounds of Plant City strawberries to serve during lunch. The FNP public health specialist developed "PICK ME!" messaging that was displayed (and encouraged) on the days the strawberries appeared in the school cafeterias. When Broward FNP, YUM lessons, farm-to-plate agricultural efforts, the school district and student food selection all converge, it is a win-win for everyone.
- In schools where FNP is teaching, the food systems specialist works with teachers to establish and/or support existing edible food gardens that will be used to educate

students about gardening and nutrition. Upon learning nutritional education, tasting new foods and participating in cooking lessons, gardening allows participants to be fully engaged in their eating habits. Gardening provides an opportunity to connect with food and take ownership of what is grown, prepared, and eaten. (See the story below for more information.)

- The agent, FNP public health specialist, and FNP food systems specialist work as a team to promote wellness practices in schools. A collaborative effort between the school district, FNP and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has included certifying district schools as part of the HealthierUS Schools Challenge.

- The FNP public health specialist successfully advocated for revisions to the school district's wellness policy that promote physical activity; smarter lunchrooms strategies; farm-to-school efforts; healthy fundraisers, celebrations, and rewards; and enhanced nutrition education and promotion in the schools. In October, the school board unanimously voted-in these and other changes – nearly 20 in total – to support healthier school environments.

The Broward agent's and FNP's collaborations with community-based organizations and government agencies are a powerful vehicle for bringing about behavioral changes that improve the health of the community and its citizens. Broward FNP's partnership with Broward County Public Schools has proven to be one of its most sustainable, fruitful and successful partnerships to date.

BROWARD COUNTY SCHOOL GARDEN IMPACTS

Brenda Marty Jimenez, FCS EA III, Broward County | Lisa Gonzalez, Broward Food Systems Specialist



Two of the eight raised beds supported by Broward FNP at Sheridan Park Elementary School

During the 2016-2017 school year, FNP staff provided 10,667 Broward County students with more than 20,220 minutes of nutrition education. Thus far during the 2017-18 school year, FNP has already reached 3,200 students across Broward County. Here are some of the gardening impacts that have occurred in Broward thus far during the 2017-18 school year:

pre-k through fifth grade are engaged in the school garden and each grade has 1-3 raised beds to plant and utilize. In addition to the school garden, FNP provides nutrition education to students in the classroom using YUM curriculum.

- In October the food systems specialist, a history teacher from **Anabel C Perry K-8 School** and two eighth-grade classes built additional raised beds for their school garden. The teacher herself was educated at FNP's Gardening for Nutrition training held at the Broward Extension office. She was inspired to engage her classes with the school garden and to incorporate gardening into her history lessons. School gardens offer a great opportunity to enhance learning by providing a practical, hands-on application of academic concepts. FNP hopes to build upon these successes in the coming year by bringing the Youth Understanding MyPlate (YUM) curriculum to elementary students during the spring of 2018.
- **Colbert Elementary Magnet School** has a vibrant school garden enjoyed by many students and supported by FNP and the food system specialist. Students from

- FNP plays a large role in supporting enhanced nutrition at **Sheridan Park Elementary School**. FNP program assistants have already provided YUM nutrition lessons to 372 students this school year. The food systems specialist has worked with the school garden champion to procure and plan the school garden. On November 20, the food systems specialist and an FNP program assistant, Miss B., worked with seven classes at Sheridan Park Elementary to plant five new raised beds. One of the second grade students engaged in planting exclaimed, "Miss B., this is the BEST day ever!" This complemented the three raised beds planted earlier this school year. Students were thrilled to plant a vegetable garden alongside their FNP program assistant and to make a connection between the nutrition education they are receiving and the school garden.
- The food systems specialist and the **Holy Cross Hospital** Grow Together coordinator are collaborating with Broward County educators to provide training related to youth gardening. On October 21, the food systems specialist gave a brief presentation to 100 childcare providers attending Holy Cross Hospital's Gardening for Nutrition Training on UF/IFAS Extension and the benefits of partnering with the Family Nutrition Program. On January 8, 2018, the Food Systems Specialist plans to provide a gardening workshop at a Holy Cross Hospital-led school garden training for public school teachers.

BUILDING THE FUTURE OF CLAY COUNTY

by Jack Payne, jackpayne@ufl.edu, [@JackPayneIFAS](https://twitter.com/JackPayneIFAS)



Dr. Jack Payne



Kelly Mosley and Bradley Burbaugh

In Clay County, there's a new alternative emerging to the tired old urban-rural clash.

A community with a proud history of farming is turning to 21st century agriculture to embrace commerce without sacrificing culture. Clay County is looking at old things in new ways as it determines its destiny.

On a quarter acre in Green Cove Springs, a farmer is trying to become one of the first in Florida to successfully grow hops to supply proliferating microbreweries with homegrown ingredients. A newly arrived 4-H agent hopes to punch up the cows-and-sows program by giving kids hands-on experience with farm-bots that can plant, water and fertilize crops. The fairgrounds have potential to bring more concerts and festivals – and money – to the community between county fairs and rodeos.

Clay County government has lots of in-house expertise to make these efforts more likely to succeed. In fact, one of its departments is a portal to the 5,000 faculty experts of the state's flagship public university.

The UF/IFAS Extension Clay County office is connecting that aspiring hops farmer with an environmental horticulture assistant professor based in a research center west of Orlando.

They just hired the 4-H agent, a Ph.D. in agricultural and biological engineering, as one of the state's first STEM 4-H agents. Her job will be to infuse science, technology, engineering and mathematics into 4-H programming. Anne Elise Creamer wants the next generation of 4-Hers to consider careers in agriculture that include law, business, engineering and laboratory science in addition to farm management.

Extension has also brought in experts from the UF College of Design, Construction & Planning's School of Architecture to help develop a plan for the fairgrounds' future.

As the "local" university in all 67 counties through the Extension service, UF has its own aspirations. Among them is to help communities define what they want their futures to be. The next decade will be a momentous one for Clay County and an opportunity for UF/IFAS to advance its mission to promote healthy Floridians, healthy communities and healthy economies.

Change doesn't have to cleave Clay County into rural versus urban camps. With proper planning, the First Coast Expressway under construction can be an economic lifeline for a community that still uses some of its land to raise cattle, mules, horses, timber, blueberries – and maybe even hops.

It will take a little planning and expertise to keep agriculture in the mix. The expressway will at the least bring in a lot of newcomers who can use it to commute more easily to jobs in Jacksonville and St. Augustine.

It may also bring in more folks who buy 10 acres with a vision of becoming a part-time Clay County farmer, and ask, "Now what?" UF/IFAS Extension agriculture agent Luke Harlow is out on the grazing pastures

and farms of all sizes to bring the full expertise of UF to that question.

What the Extension office is not is a satellite ivory tower. Instead, it's the clubhouse where the Clay County Cattlemen's Association meets every month. It's where 90 local Master Gardeners have learned to beautify their yards and communities with Florida-Friendly Landscaping™. It's where 4-H summer campers come to learn how to cook, identify plants, canoe and learn about insects.

To become reality, plans require investments. One of the toughest conversations a community can have is how to cover the upfront costs. County officials tapped UF/IFAS Clay County Extension Director Bradley Burbaugh to walk that tightrope as facilitator of a recent discussion of what kind of taxes would be a good fit for Clay.

Burbaugh has also led trainings for 500 county employees on how to become better managers so that every public dollar delivers the best possible service to the taxpayers who pay their salaries.

In a way, all of Clay is asking "Now what?" Knowing that the community is going to look a whole lot different in 10 years, Clay residents are asking themselves how they want it to look.

With our long history in agriculture and embrace of technology, UF/IFAS has a perspective that brings together tradition and innovation. Clay is at a crossroads in which proper planning could help bring together those two things as well.

We at UF/IFAS know better than to tell you how to use your land or what your dreams should be. But in public higher education, we're in the business of developing potential. We want to be your partner by encouraging you to make your dreams as big as Camp Blanding.

Brad Burbaugh, with his academic training in leadership and communications and his experience walking the rows as an ag agent, is comfortable in barn and boardroom. If it's the will of the people of Clay County, we hope Burbaugh and his UF team can help Clay achieve a future with plenty of both.

SEW WHAT? SEW SUCCESSFUL!

Marnie Ward, 4-H EA I, Citrus County



Sewing campers grow in their skills to become sewing instructors.



Campers build confidence through construction.

In 2014, I was approached at the door of the Citrus County Fair's competitive exhibits building by a long-time fairgoer. She was dismayed by the low number of projects and the overall level of creativity in the youth exhibit area, and she wanted to know how she could help. She was a skilled seamstress, with experience in clothing construction, costuming, pattern design, mending and alterations. So here I was with a need, and here she was with a solution.

We worked together to plan the first Science and Sewing Day Camp in 2014, and we've offered it every summer since then.

The 4-H camp has become so popular that all the seats are filled and we are always asked to add "just one more." Parents recognize the value of our camp and the sewing skills their children gain. Not only do they tell us how their kids go home from camp and keep on sewing, they keep asking us to have a camp specifically for them. That's right - the parents want to come to camp so they can learn to sew! Months after camp, I had one mother tell me her son was now in charge of mending in their house, because she (the mother) had never learned this essential life skill.

This volunteer then went one step further. Recognizing how much the kids were getting from the sewing camp and wanting to keep their enthusiasm, she decided to start a 4-H Club, and 4-H Cre8 was born. The members chose the name to spark creativity and attract sewers, crafters and artists.

This club, though small, has answered a need in our community. Sewing/mending are essential life skills, which can evolve into a hobby that pays. The average cost for hemming one pair of pants is \$5; if you want cuffs, that's \$10.

This year the club voted to use their skills to give back to the homeless in their community. They cut, crafted and sewed 50 "personal air-conditioners." These cooling neck wraps were donated to a local shelter where they will be used by homeless residents working in the shelter's gardens.

4-H JUDGING PROGRAMS LEAD TO GROWTH IN KNOWLEDGE, LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Megan Mann, Livestock/Crops EA II, Lake County



Youth grow in knowledge and leadership skills through 4-H Judging programs.

Morgan S. has been a Lake County 4-H member since 2009. In 2014 she joined the 4-H Horse Judging Team, mentored by UF/IFAS Extension Lake County livestock agent Megan Mann. Morgan attended weekly practices where she learned how to objectively evaluate horses, make decisions regarding the ranking merits of contemporary groups of animals, and defend those decisions orally in a high-stress

environment. At the onset of her experience Morgan was shy, reluctant to take a firm stance, and lacked confidence in her decisions. After years of hard work she has completely transformed into an assertive, confident, and knowledgeable judge, leading her team to multiple state titles in horse judging, hippology, and the Horse Bowl, and earning the right

to represent Florida at regional and national competitions. In 2017, Morgan, now a graduating senior, took on the title of team captain and led her teams to a strong third-place finish in horse judging and a win in hippology. During the spring of 2017, while the team coach was out on leave for 5 weeks, Morgan organized and coached a quizbowl team to a first place finish at the state level. In four short years

Morgan has grown from a shy youth lacking confidence to a true leader amongst her peers. In her own words, she credits the 4-H Horse Program with "giving me confidence to achieve my dreams". Morgan is only one of 10-20 youth in Lake County who annually participate in 4-H unmounted horse teams. According to a 2005 study, these programs can positively affect the development of animal industry knowledge and are influential on the development of communication, decision making, problem solving, self-discipline and motivation, teamwork and organization. All of these skills are useful for workforce preparedness. Graduates of the Lake County program are attending colleges and graduate schools, working in the livestock and horse industries, and serving as professional judges.

FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER EDUCATION

Sarah Ellis, FCS EA I, Citrus County

In 2014 I began teaching financial literacy programs in Citrus County because community partners were reaching out asking for programs. The statistics speak for themselves: Citrus County has the third highest unemployment rate in the state of Florida at 6.5%; currently there are 797 homes in or at risk of foreclosure and approximately 270 residents filed for bankruptcy from June 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017.

Filing for bankruptcy or having a foreclosure has long-term negative consequences for the consumer, including a decreased credit score. Having a low credit score can lead to denied credit, higher interest rates to borrow money or insufficient credit to purchase or rent a home. To help consumers avoid this negative cycle and improve their financial management skills, practical financial management education is needed.

A variety of educational programs have been offered to residents, and while I have been able to fill classes, I was not reaching a very important demographic – young adults aged 18-39. I knew that this demographic was out there and people were struggling to take control of their finances. I was offering high quality programs, held during the evening and partnering with other organizations. Yet I was still struggling to engage this group.

So I did what any good Extension agent would do – I started researching. I learned that adult financial literacy programs work best when they are audience-specific and coincide with a specific financial activity and event. But what financial

activity or event would draw my target audience? Little did I know, a partnership with the County Housing Services would help me solve this problem.

Citrus County Housing Services and UF/IFAS Extension have partnered to offer First-Time Homebuyer Education. This is a four-week (8 hours total) educational program designed to increase the homebuyer's knowledge and skills needed to understand and improve their credit score, prioritize needs and maintain their home. It also helps save money: homebuyers who improve their credit score can save \$30 to \$100 a month through lower interest rates.

Over the four-week program, educational concepts are reinforced through hands-on activities such as writing smart goals, creating a spending plan and tracking expenses. Participants are encouraged to obtain their credit reports from the credit reporting agencies to check for errors or discrepancies, gather documents that are required for mortgage qualification, and take control of their finances.

The First-Time Homebuyer program was the silver bullet I needed to reach the young adult audience. Approximately 93% (n=28) of the participants were in this demographic. From this program I was able to introduce participants into other programs, including financial counseling. Currently, several participants are working on increasing their credit scores to qualify for mortgages that require little to no money down, and one couple is getting ready to close on their first home.

ARRIVALS

Wendy Mussoline, Ag EA II, Flagler/Putnam County
Lisa Sanderson, Residential Hort EA II, Sumter County
Taylor Wilken, 4-H EA I, Okaloosa County
Laura Bennett, Ag EA I, Pasco County
Allison Leo, 4-H EA I, Leon County

DEPARTURES

Bridgete Alfonso, 4-H EA I, Seminole County
Blake Thaxton, Com Hort EA I, Santa Rosa County

NEW POSITIONS

Ashley Stewart, 4-H EA I, from Marion to Highlands County
Crystal Snodgrass, CED II, from EA II to CED II in Manatee County
Jennifer Rodrigues, FCS EA I from FNP to FCS in Orange County
Tanya Darress, 4-H EA I, from Martin to St. Lucie County
Martha Maddox, FCS EA IV, from Sumter to Alachua County
Carree Musgrove, Assistant Director, IFAS Extension Business Services, from CED II, Columbia County

RETIREMENT

Maisielin Ross, FCS EA III, Palm Beach County