

FEATURE Story



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4-3-2-1, then 1-2-3. When is 4 coming back?

Happy new year to you all! Yes, I mean it!

As always, this new year comes with new expectations, new goals, and new hopes. Look at the bright side: we are way ahead today than 12 months ago – as we now have almost a year of professional experience in operating in “co-vid mode.” We quickly went from blue skies to phase 1. We are still in phase 3 and we never shut down. So, let’s say goodbye to 2020, and welcome 2021

with open arms – wishing for blue skies soon again.

Here are some of the lessons 2020 taught me:

- When 2020 took away from us our bread-and-butter suite of client meetings, face-to-face visits, one-on-one consultations, you reacted in a positive way.
- When 2020 showed us how a carefully planned and methodically communicated UF response to the pandemic reached us, you survived.
- When the 2020 challenge unfolded, you stepped up to the plate, reacted, and found new ways to deliver programs and reach clients.
- When 2020 showed us how sensitive to a pandemic our food systems are, you stepped up to educate farm workers and food-handling plant personnel.

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January – March 2021

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ALACHUA, BAKER, BRADFORD, CITRUS, CLAY, COLUMBIA, DIXIE, DUVAL, GILCHRIST, HAMILTON, LAFAYETTE, LEVY, MADISON, NASSAU, SUWANNEE, TAYLOR, AND UNION COUNTIES

4-3-2-1, then 1-2-3. When is 4 coming back?...continued from previous page

- When 2020 glued us to our screens, you developed immunity to zoom fatigue. (just kidding!)
- 2020 guidelines from the CDC told us a clear message: Do not touch MEN (that is mouth, eyes, nose) and follow WOMEN (that is - wash your hands, obey social distancing, mask up, exercise and eat well, no un-necessary crowding). How hard is this to remember?
- 2020 reminded us (mostly you, county faculty) how difficult it is to serve two masters (UF and County) that have two different opinions and sets of rules.
- 2020 blurred the line between public health management, academic administrative decisions, and political stances. You all have been tactful in navigating these differences. Keep it handy: we will need this skill again in 2021....
- 2020 (re)taught us that if someone repeats the same thing over and over, loudly and with conviction, self and others will believe it: "we can get through this!" This method first developed at the beginning of the XXth century by French psychologist and pharmacist Emile Coué is based on the effect of positive autosuggestion

through the words: picture yourself in the state that you wish to be in. Any idea that gets engraved in our minds tends to become a reality in a plausible world. Throughout history, this method was used as a powerful self-motivation method and propaganda strategy as well.

Yes, 2020 is gone. Really, not much has changed today since last year. So, continue to seek the successes you had in 2020, use, the same methods - and apply them to 2021. Covid has been an accelerator of processes that were already happening, slowly and quietly. This is the new normal. Welcome 2021!

"Our **JOB AS LEADERS** is to **CALM MORE CRISES** than **WE CREATE.**" ~ The Crown

Well Done

People like Lori Wiggins are and always will be our greatest asset. She is an important member of our team and her abilities and contributions will be an important part of our continued success.

Over the years we have enjoyed the Northeast District newsletter which has been made possible because of her individual efforts as editor, as well as the efforts of the team members. Her talents have helped to achieve excellence in many ways. As a symbol of our

appreciation for her dedication and loyalty we would like to say thank you Lori for a job well done!



Lori Wiggins

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District newsletter, while I served as the editor, during the past five years. During this time, I enjoyed working with many talented and hardworking agents across the district and helping to share about wonderful programming taking place in our district and for this I am grateful. I would encourage you to continue submitting articles or even get involved and join the newsletter committee. I believe the newsletter is beneficial to us agents both professionally and academically. I am honored to pass

the torch to Kim Griffin who will be your next newsletter editor and I know that she will do a great job. Thank you again for the opportunity to serve you. Stay safe and healthy!

In Her Own Words

Happy New Year! I wanted to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your contributions to the Northeast

From the DISTRICT DIRECTOR



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Extension Refresher

All extension programs should seek to reach one of the five levels in the planned-change theory

In Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (Theory of Planned Behavior (umass.edu), the five levels of target transformation are (1) awareness, (2) knowledge gain, (3) intention to change behavior, (4), behavior change, and (5) cause advocate. This model is the frame of all activities and measure of success in Florida Extension.

If we take the example of a smoking cessation program (which is typically a transformational program taught by health agencies and community partners), awareness is teaching that "tobacco is bad for you"; the audience may say "ah, I did not know that". The

knowledge gain phase consists in teaching how tobacco is bad for you, and how it affects your body, your finances, and your relationships. In this state, an audience member now knows how tobacco adversely affects his/her life. In the third step, a member of the target audience may declare that "based on what you taught me, I think I should quit smoking". The actual behavior change (in the case "quitting") is reached in step 4. A former smoker who is so transformed by his/her journey and smoking cessation may reach level 5 by becoming an advocate for the cause and help teach others how to quit. This progression applies to all extension programs.

Note that all the objectives listed in section B of our logic models should have some connotation of the step they target. It is acceptable to have some objectives "only" seeking phases 1-to-3 (awareness, knowledge or intention to change). Yet, the expectations of Extension are that all programs (with few exceptions) will have some element of behavior change (step 4) in one objective.

Recently, more focus has been given to collecting outcome and impact indicators measuring "intention to change." Intention to change data are handy for situations when follow-up is impossible, either because it's not feasible to do so or when working with clientele for whom reporting practice change could threaten their competitive advantage in the market (e.g., the adoption of specific innovations by private industry). Intent to change data can also provide insight into how to improve a program (which is still a primary goal of evaluation which we often overlook). That said, short term outcome data are always limited by not knowing what participants really did after their interaction with Extension. Whenever possible, and certainly in any situation where there is a desire to estimate or determine the real value of an Extension program, Extension faculty should collect medium-term outcome data and not rely solely upon intent to change.

Hopefully, this article will change your behavior about...the Theory of Planned Behavior!

On-line TEACHING BEST PRACTICES

Disruptive Zoom Participants: What Can be Done?

When a registered attendee acquires the link and password of an Extension event and engages in making inappropriate comments in the chat area during the program, what should you do as the meeting host? Below is a way to handle disruptive attendees:

1. Always use a Registration with password set up (prevents zoom-bombing)

2. Include verbiage on the registration confirmation that inappropriate language or content will not be tolerated.
3. Ensure the host or co-host knows how to disable chat and/or remove participants if needed.
4. Report incidents to your CED and DED.

Language for the registration confirmation (use wording exactly as such): Inflammatory and inappropriate actions will not be tolerated. We reserve the right to remove any participant who is disruptive or distracting to others in the meeting.

To remove unwanted or disruptive participants: From that Participants menu, a host or co-host can mouse over or click on a participant's name and several options will appear, including Remove. **Click Remove to kick someone out of the meeting.** Note: When you do remove someone, they are blocked and cannot rejoin that meeting.

Hope it is helpful and that you never need it. For additional information, contact Chris Vivian AVP, UF/IFAS Communications (cvivian@ufl.edu; Office: 352-294-3329; Cell: 727-644-5791)

Information TECHNOLOGIES



Victor Blanco
UF/IFAS Extension
Taylor County
Marine Extension
Agent II

Events during the pandemic: What about Pheedloop?

For many years UF/IFAS Extension and Florida Sea Grant (FSG) have partnered with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to coordinate and hold regional and statewide events related to the Artificial Reef program, one of the largest and

most important programs in the US and maybe the world. Every five years FSG and FWC plan the Florida Artificial Reef Summit (FLARS), which bring together regulatory agency, researchers, reef managers, county managers, divers, angler associations, contractors and many other stakeholders to discuss the current situation of the State program and the future for the following 5 years. After the pandemic and the restrictions imposed at the state and UF levels, the Steering Committee had to find out a way to keep participants engaged and provide a friendly platform to get the most out of the summit. The committee evaluated several options, like Zoom or TEAMS, but decided to go with [PHEEDLOOP](#), a paid platform which provided the option to

have a user friendly interface for all the different channels (including social media), sessions (presentations), exhibit hall (for sponsors), showcase (for the poster session), and a networking area. Each participant would have access to a personal profile where they could include their position, affiliation, short cv, interest areas, contact info, photo, and channels for one-on-one to group communications. All presentations were pre-recorded, but the real time engagement was up to almost 75% of registrants. Online engagement and participation have become the most challenging aspects to deliver extension programming during the pandemic, so exploring new alternatives is key to maintain and increase target audience participation.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT Corner

A New Webinar Series in the NE District: IDEA Talks

The Northeast Extension District Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access (IDEA) Committee is organizing a webinar series focusing on inclusion, diversity, equity, and access that aim at starting conversations,

increase familiarity with and provoke thoughts on IDEA topics among all Extension agents in the Northeast District. Starting in January 2021, these webinars are scheduled on the third Thursday of each month beginning at 10 am via zoom. Ivonne Black will send zoom invites. During each talk the speaker will have 25 minutes to discuss

relevant issues with a five-minute question and answer session at the end. Upcoming zoom invitations with information on topics and presenters will be shared monthly. For more information please contact D'Alicia Straughter or Victor Blanco.

SUCCESS Stories



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A Successful Peanut Butter Challenge!

With the 2020 Peanut Butter Challenge wrapped up, it is important to reflect on the success we had last year from the support and donations we received by the community. This challenge is an annual jar collection that started in the Florida Panhandle back in 2012 to stock local food pantries ahead of the holiday season. In the wake of Hurricane Sally and higher demand among food pantries in the wake of the COVID-19

pandemic, counties throughout Florida joined in to help with the challenge.

Peanut butter is a popular food item in food pantries because it is healthy, nutrient dense, and has great shelf stability. Also, peanuts are a major crop grown in northern Florida contributing \$154 million to the state's economy in 2017 (Florida Agricultural Statistics Service). Not only is peanut butter

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A Successful Peanut Butter Challenge!...continued from previous page

versatile in helping hungry families, but it can be bought fresh from Florida helping support local agricultural businesses.

The Peanut Butter Challenge ran from October 1st to November 25th. During this time, local extension offices and businesses collected unopened peanut butter jars to donate to a local food pantry. The UF/IFAS extension Suwannee County Office collected 510 jars of peanut butter with the help from donations, local business, and community-based organizations. The peanut butter jars collected in Suwannee County were donated to Love Inc. of Suwannee County to assist those in need during the holiday season.

Overall, in northeast Florida, 14 participating Extension offices collected over 3 tons of peanut butter and delivered the jars to local food pantries. In addition to the community donating jars, the Florida Peanut Producers Association and Florida Peanut Federation contributed to the collection efforts by matching donations collected. The Florida Peanut Federation matched the overall donations and donated peanut butter jars to Florida Gateway Food Bank in



Lake City. This food bank serves four counties in the region and partners with 33 different agencies to provide food for families in need.

Without community support, we would not have been able to complete such an amazing challenge. We at UF/IFAS Extension Suwannee County want to

personally thank all those involved who helped make this project a success. When times are hard, communities come together to help each other, and we saw this clearly through the 2020 Peanut Butter Challenge. We are excited for the next challenge and look forward to future collaborations.

Featured County EXTENSION OFFICE

Featured Office: Gilchrist County

Amanda Morgan Pittman
UF/IFAS Extension Florida 4-H Youth
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What are some interesting facts about Gilchrist County or Extension?

We only have one stoplight in the whole county. Our office is in walking distance within the government office. Gilchrist has the most springs out of all the Florida counties.

When was your office built and what year did Extension start in your county?

It was built before Marvin Weaver so at least fifty years ago. It was added in 1925 when the county was added as the 67th county in the state. We think Extension started in Gilchrist in the 1950's.

What is one thing that makes your office different?

Our office and community are like a family. We also have one of the

smallest populations in Florida but still have a large 4-H membership of around 300 4-H members.

What has been the most surprisingly successful idea implemented in the office?

This year the mailbox club that allows youth to still be involved despite COVID-19 even with the challenges of rural internet. Also, we held the first Holiday Ornament Contest and had over 100 members sign up.

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Featured Office: Gilchrist County...continued from previous page

What is the first thing you want people to think when they walk in the door?

That we can solve whatever problem they may have.

Describe your Extension office facility?

It once was three office buildings but is now one after knocking down walls. Our desire is to build a new office with more meeting space and a more functional layout. One good feature is that we have a bunch of storage. We also have a 4-H Clubhouse and a new outdoor teaching facility.

What is your favorite physical feature about your office?

The amount of storage that we have and our new Keurig coffee maker.

If you could create your dream Extension office, what is one thing you would make sure to add?

An auditorium that doubles as a gymnasium. Something with a basketball sized floor that can be suspended, has sound system, stage and a big kitchen.

What has been a main shift in Extension that has put us in the direction of where we are today?

The internet and accessibility. Our office is a little different though since most of our clientele rely on the newspaper, phone calls and in-person programs.

What is the size and population of your county?

We have around 18,000 residents which means, we have more cows than people. Gilchrist County itself is 355 square miles.



Gilchrist County Office staff and agents. From left to right, Jessica Altum Cooper, Sheila Langford, and Tyler Pittman.

How many people does the Extension office serve?

Nearly the entire population. Through school enrichment we reach every kid since we have programs in all elementary and high schools. Private and home schools all interact with 4-H as well. The newspaper goes to 2,000 households which end up being around 8,000 people total. So, we reach over half with newspaper and programs alone.

What is one office tradition your office has?

We have a couple such as some type of Christmas dinner, going to the homecoming parade together, and we have coffee together every week to do a check in/mini staff meeting.

Tell us a little bit about the people in your office.

Shelia Langford is our Administrative Assistant and has been at our office for 35 years.

Tyler Pittman is our Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent and has been here for about a year.

Jessica Altum Cooper is the CED and 4-H agent and has been in Extension for eight years and in Gilchrist County for the last five years.

Thank you to Jessica Altum Cooper for answering the questions for this article.

Let's Meet Some Agents: **NEW**

Kim Griffin

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Samara Purvis,

UF/IFAS Extension
Bradford County
CED/4-H Agent

Samara "Sam"
Purvis serves
as the County
Extension Director
and 4-H Extension

Agent in Bradford County. She has been a part of the UF/ IFAS Extension family for 7 years. In previous roles she served as the Family and Consumer Science Extension Agent in Bradford County, Program Assistant in Duval County, a volunteer and 4-H club leader. Sam enjoys working with the community and feels that community in whole is an extension of family. Sam graduated from Johnson & Wales University with a degree in Culinary Arts and Strayer University with a Master's in Human Resources. Everyone has a story to tell about how they connect to Extension and her story started with an experience she had when working with youth one summer as she was new to Jacksonville from Hampton Virginia. It was the professionalism of Agents in the Duval Office and sense of connection and never-ending opportunities to learn, grow and connect that cultivated the passion she has for extension. It's being able to help the community find solutions for their lives. Samara has a passion to serve others and in her free time she serves as a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Incorporated as well as the Order of the Eastern Stars; both community service based organizations that serve the needs of youth and community through scholarship and community service.



Carolyn Saft,

UF/IFAS Extension
Suwannee County
CED/Horticulture
Agent

Carolyn Saft started
her Extension
career in Palm
Beach County.

First working in Mounts Botanical Garden and then as a Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Agent. In 2006, she became the liaison for UF/IFAS to the Suwannee River Partnership and Horticulture Agent for Suwannee County. Overtime her role changed to Horticulture Agent and Master Gardener Coordinator. In 2021, Carolyn accepted the opportunity to lead the extraordinary Suwannee team of Agents and staff as the County Extension Director.

The family orchid nursery piqued her interest in plants and led her to UF to pursue a bachelor's degree in Ornamental Horticulture. She then returned to UF to earn her master's degree in Ag Communications and Education. Carolyn has earned the Master Gardener Professorship award, UF/IFAS Community Service award, national awards for mushroom production and numerous FACAA and FANREP communication awards.

One of Carolyn's hobbies is playing and promoting the sport of disc golf. Loading up her Golden Retriever and Black Lab mix, she travelled to Washington State in search of disc golf courses to challenge her skills. She shares her passion for the sport with youth. One of the youth she's worked with and supported earned a sponsorship from a major disc company to attend the Junior World Championships in the summer of 2021. An exciting

opportunity for a youngster from rural Suwannee County.

Carolyn is proud to be a sixth generation Floridian but has lived in Colorado and St. Martin in the Lesser Antilles. She has been fortunate to experience different cultures by travelling to Denmark, Stockholm, Russia, Canada and throughout the United States.

Carolyn's advice to new agents is, "to work hard and play hard" and maintain a work/family balance. She also emphasizes, "have a plan, but stay flexible and seize new opportunities- you never know where they may take you!"

For past Northeast News issues, visit:
EXTADMIN.IFAS.UFL.EDU/COMMUNICATIONS/NENEWS

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