

FEATURE Story

It's all about the "After School"

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Many students hop on the school bus before 7:00 AM daily. They spend their day deep in their studies of Math, Science, and Reading and by 3:00 all they really want to do is hop back on the bus and go home. Many students do just that. However, in Madison County there are many students who remain at school until 5:30-6:00 PM. These students are participating in the Boys and Girls Club or an after-school day care program that are housed at 5 of the 7 schools in the county. (The 2 high schools do not have after school programs.) These programs are invaluable to many working parents because they know that their children are safe and are not at home alone.

So, this is where the "new" 4-H agent jumps into the picture! Back in September, I approached the directors of the various after school B&G Clubs and day care program to inquire about starting an after school 4-H Club with their already existing B&G Club students. There was an overwhelming positive response from all 5 schools and within 2 weeks I had already visited all 5 schools reaching 130+ students aged 5-15 years and set a schedule for the remainder of the school year.



It was my goal to peak the students' interest in what 4-H had to offer, so I started with learning activities relating to art and science. During this time, relationships were being built between the students and myself, and the students began to look forward to our meetings. As 2019 started, our meetings became more than art and science learning activities. Our new direction became more focused on healthy life choices, as I introduced the curriculum "Health Rocks!".

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April - June 2019

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Health Rocks! aims to:

- Reduce youth smoking and tobacco use
- Help youth build life skills that lead to healthy lifestyle choices with special emphasis on youth smoking and tobacco use prevention
- Help youth understand influences and health consequences of tobacco, drug, and alcohol use to make healthy choices
- Engage youth and adults in partnership to develop and implement community strategies that promote healthy lifestyle choices
- Build positive, enduring relationships with youth involved as full partners through widely varying "communities of interest" to address youth risk behaviors.



We continue to meet monthly, the Cloverbuds (ages 5-7) continue to enjoy their art and science learning activities, while the 8-15 year-olds are learning to make wise choices that will impact the

rest of their lives. What a great way to start my first 6 months as the Madison County 4-H Youth Development Extension Agent.

From the DISTRICT DIRECTOR



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Ten years of change in Florida Extension - in 10 facts

As I look back at how different Florida Extension is today compared to what it was when I started as your DED in 2009, here is what comes to my mind:

1. **Extension goes electronic:** meetings and interviews with ZOOM; on-line FARS approvals; DocuSign. Fewer papers, and a lot of time saved. Very good!
2. **Revenue enhancement** as part of the funding portfolio for Extension. In the 1980's, state faculty where exposed to a great new change: "you need to write grants

to fund your program". The same thing is happening to Extension. Rather than "another thing to do", revenue enhancement should be viewed by faculty as a way enhance program and a way to take control of their program finances. Still a lot of progress to make. Exciting!

3. **Strengthening of county programs through RSAs and SSAs and their regional and state-wide programs.** Long-gone is the time when specialized agents were synonymous of consolidation and loss of county programs. SSAs and RSAs are now supporting and enhancing county programs - through leadership and advanced technical expertise. Nice!
4. **T-4 and blogs.** The new way of communication. Makes a lot of sense with young audiences who consume their information on-line. We are ready to embrace blogs?

5. **The millennials have arrived in the workforce.** For some, this is a challenge; for others, this is an opportunity. One way or the other, they are here. Welcome; you make Florida Extension better!
6. **Faster turn over in agent ranks.** This is a national trend when the average tenure of employees is 3 to 5 years. With that, we will run out of Agent IV soon! How is academia going to adjust?
7. **4-H membership fees.** We finally got over this one. What is the worth of something free? You tell me!
8. **Youth protection standards and volunteer screening.** None of us like it; few of us know if they really work. But we MUST follow them. Welcome to the 2020's!
9. **Peer review of teaching.** Makes a lot of sense to me. We are teachers, and we should be good at it. This helps! Do it!

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Ten years of change in Florida Extension - in 10 facts...continued from previous page

- 10. **Emphasis on mentoring.** A long-time missing link in Extension. How are we supposed to know all we need to know about how to be a good agent? Time to take Amy Harder's Mentoring Certificate.
- 11. **Revamping of agent on-boarding through the new agent academy.** Another nice success of recent years in Florida Extension. Thank you PDEC! New agents are now academicians!
- 12. **Social media - a space for free speech without boundaries or hierarchy and with multiple truths.** The old say of Extension "if we do not talk to you, we talk about you" also applied to social media.

- 13. **Valorisation of county office staff as the first contact with Extension and new responsibilities in accounting.** Long overdue. Thank you ladies!
- 14. **Emphasis on agent's skills assessments and professional development plan.** This also makes a lot of sense to me. Know yourself - your strengths, and weaknesses... and do something about them!
- 15. **Event budgeting** - Wow! We now have a tool to do what we are supposed to do. Check it out on-line!

at times. Changing is painful and challenging - but the perspective of not changing into today's fast world does not look appealing either. This may be the efforts needed to remain relevant. Yet, for new agents, this is not "new"; this is Florida Extension today! The challenges are for those who need re-trained. I am optimistic. Yes, we can teach new tricks to old dogs. If we know how to change the behavior of our clients, we can certainly change our own behaviors!

(and for those who know how to count to 10, have noticed I cannot!)

What a list! It represents a lot of change and new initiatives - that feel daunting



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Florida Extension, you are officially a "senior" agent. Another reality is that we are going to be busy with packets - mid-careers, promotion packets, and permanent status packets. Get ready!

Another reality is that we are going to run out of options for agents serving on UF and IFAS committees requiring rank IV.

NE District Faculty: Who Are We?

The facts: As of December 31, 2018, the NE district faculty was comprised of 69 faculty members. Rank distribution was 22 agents I, 28 agents II, 4 agents III, and 15 agents IV (Fig. 1). Early career agents (EA I and EA II) represented 72% of the agents, while mid-to-advanced career agents (EA III and EA IV) represented only 28%. A total of 30 agents had permanent status (44%), while 39 did not (56%).

The reality: we have done a lot of hiring in the last three years. Florida Extension has recruited an amazing pool of talented individuals. To guide these new agents on the path of success, "senior" agents will need to step up, become mentors, and help guide new agents. By the way, if you have more than 4 years of Experience in

		Permanent Status		Accruing		Permanent Status	
		Ellison	Stacey				
		Dacey	Justina				
		Korus	Kevin				
		Clem	Taylor				
		Griffin	Kimiko				
		Broughton	Rhoda				
Ward	Marnie	Blanco	Victor				
Turner	Savanna	Barry	Savanna				
Tharpe	Abbey	Barrett	Charles				
Spann	Shaina	Athern	Kevin				
Sale	S. Derby	Sheldon	Annie				
Poppell	Kristen	Sanchez	Tatiana				
Olson	Matthew	Moore	Beth				
Morgan	Amanda	Michelon	Izabella				
Miller	Luke	Mendoza	Genevieve				
Irvine	Kelsey	Tomlinson	A. Paulette				
Hobbs	Wayne	Wynn	Keith				
Haupt	Kelsey	Vann	Chris				
Harlow	Luke	Thomas	Melanie				
Halbritter	Alicia	Soft	Carolyn				
Ellis	Sarah	Nistler	David				
Straughte	D'Alicia	Conner	Stephanie				
Corbitt	Haile	Lamborn	Alicia				
Cooper	Clay	Figart	Larry				
Capasso	Jay	Fennemar	Dan	Parks	Natasha	Hart	Jana
Cant (Grif	Jane	Janney	Heather	Wiggins	Lori	Douglas	Diann
Kerr	Beth	Harlow	Erin	Nistler	Debbie	Bickers M.	Martha
Altum	Jessica	Burbaugh	Brad	Houghton	Holly	Allen	Katherine
		EXT AGENT I	EXT AGENT II	EXT AGENT III		EXT AGENT IV	

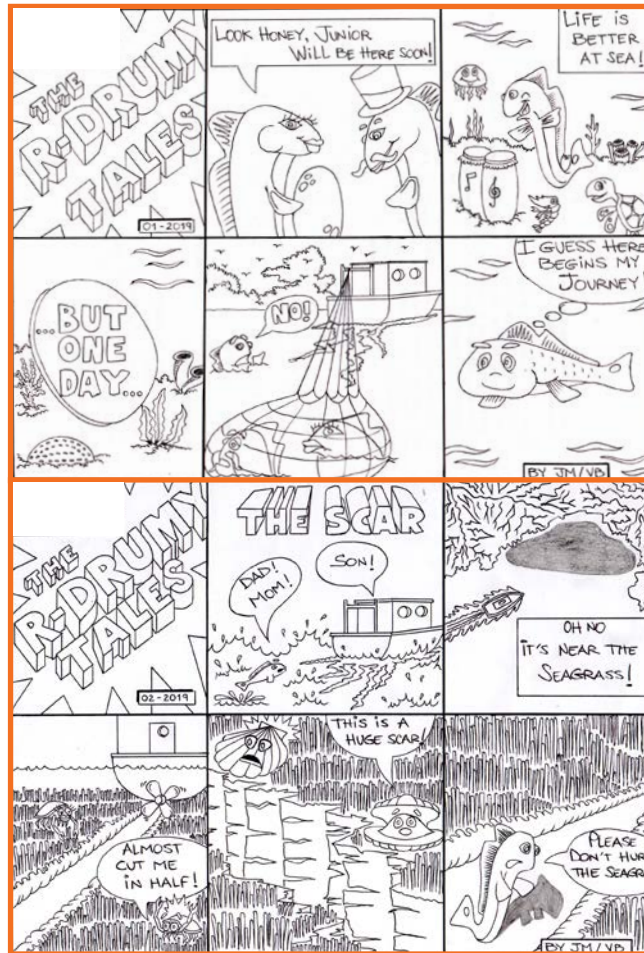
Fig. 1. Rank distribution and permanent-status-holding agents in the NE District (Dec. 31, 2018).

What's WORKING?

DRAWING THE MESSAGE: An alternative communicating tool in Marine Extension

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Communicating the marine extension programs to your coastal stakeholders can be sometimes difficult if the conventional communicating channels are not reaching your target audience. In Taylor County the use of social media, especially Facebook, has helped Marine Extension programs reach thousands but only a low percentage are county residents. To improve the reach and the way educational messages are delivered a new and complimentary communication tools is being used in partnership with the local newspaper. A series of comics are posted bi-weekly in the paper using a character specifically created for Taylor County and Big Bend residents. R-Drumy Tales (a red drum fish adventures) is a six frames comic where the main character face different



challenges related to the local coastal and marine ecosystems and resources. The comic is design to show situations where readers can identify themselves and the message is delivered easily for adults and promotes reasoning in children. The comic is intentionally created in black and white so at the end of the year a coloring comic book presenting some of the topics of the county marine extension programs can be edited and published. The concept and content of each comic series is created by the extension agent and a professional comics artist works closely with the agent to provide the best visual content in the outreach product. The comic was created to deliver messages that create awareness on important local coastal issues.

How to become a Leader

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Anyone can demonstrate leadership qualities. It's not about winning a popularity contest. You don't have to be liked to be respected. It's about serving and influencing others regardless of their job title in the effort to achieve a certain goal. More than anything, it's about creating conduciveness in an environment where people want to work together.

So, what does it take for you to become a leader? Leadership can be a struggle

to develop, as there are intrinsic qualities that are tough to cultivate. But if you're willing to face the challenge, and follow these tips, then you'll be on the right path to becoming a great leader.

1. Build trust

When it comes to leading a team, you must be willing to go out on a limb for your co-workers to show you have their back. Exhibiting a genuine interest in your team's well-being shows you care and are willing to protect them when necessary. When you build trust, it demonstrates that your own interests and actions will never

supersede the goals of the organization or your employees.

How can you build trust?

- Participate in day-to-day activities and make yourself available for questions.
- Make an effort to learn something about each of your employees.
- Be fair and consistent.
- Involve them in important decisions to show you value their input.
- Recognize an employee's contribution rather than taking credit for results.

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Do you BELIEVE IN SCIENCE?

Long Rumored, “Death by PowerPoint” Confirmed in Lab Study

A new laboratory study entitled “The Effects of Repeated Exposure to PowerPoint” has confirmed what many in the Extension community have suspected for years: PowerPoint can be deadly. Lead researcher, Dr. Mick Pace, revealed details of the study, which was simultaneously published today in the Journal of the American Medical Association, the Chronicle of Philanthropy, and the Journal of Extension.

“The tests were conducted on mice,” said Dr. Pace, “and we began by displaying PowerPoint presentations created by Extension agents.” The mice were confined in wire cages, and small screens were set up on all four sides so they could not avoid seeing the projected slides. Dr. Pace reported that

during hours 1-10 of constant exposure to slides created by Extension agents, the mice appeared confused, with many of the test subjects clawing at the cage bars seeking escape.

“During hours 11-20, we began showing slides created by Extension specialists and noticed an interesting shift in behavior,” Dr. Pace noted. Anticipating an eventual need for rest, the researchers had placed dozens of small, rectangular cotton “beds” in the cages, and while the Specialists’ slides were projected, most of the mice took the opportunity to sleep.

The most surprising results, however, were recorded in hours 21-30. “At this point, we began showing slides from administrators such as the IFAS Budget, Youth protection measures, and Federal accounting standards” said Dr. Pace. The mice became more agitated and started tearing up their cotton beds.

Some of the mice began weaving the loose strands of cotton into yarn, knitted small masks, and were able to cover their eyes. “Unfortunately, the mice who were unable to knit continued to stare at the screens,” said Dr. Pace, “and by hour 31, virtually all of the non-knitters had died from sheer boredom.”

Asked whether these results could be extrapolated to human subjects, Dr. Pace expressed uncertainty. “You cannot make a definitive prediction based solely on results with mice,” he said, “but we did notice that members of our research team who monitored the cages and were also exposed to the slides reported higher levels of anxiety, fatigue, and a general sense that life was meaningless. I am not sure we can get a full IRB to continue this project”

(To read the full study, click here, I mean April Fools Day. Hope yours was happy.)

PROFESSIONAL Development



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Why be Civil? Finding ways to communicate that make sense

Inspired by two TED Talks

- *Is civility a sham?* Teresa Bejan
- *3 Ways to practice civility* Steven Petrow

In our current climate, the term “civil” or “civility” takes on a life of its own. In an era of anonymous tweets and internet trolls keeping a conversation

TED RADIO HOUR

positive might take an act of congress (and that is a different conversation). Maybe we need to take a step back to the original definition of civil. The word is derived from Latin and French ultimately describing a “citizen”. Civility is when citizens give of themselves for the good of their community. In today’s world we do not think of this definition when we hear civility.

In common terminology to civility equates with decorum and politeness. In our political world the definition goes in a very different direction. On the right and left politically civility is almost a dirty word. For the right it is viewed at “political correctness” and a

way to shout down opposition. On the left it is a word used to stop protesting for its “uncivility”. Both views may be missing the mark.

We need to move towards respectful engagement and back to the roots of “civility”. Steven Petrow, in his TED talk 3 ways to practice civility, recommends a “Geneva Convention” for civility. An agreement for all sides to help us become better citizens in our community and country.

Let's Meet WHO'S NEW TO EXTENSION

NE District Welcomes



Jane Cant
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I am Jane Cant, the new Agriculture and Small

Farms agent in Duval County. For the past two years I have served as the Agriculture and Natural Resource agent in Suwannee county and am excited to start this new chapter in my career. I will be inheriting several established programs, such as the Backyard Poultry Class organized by Alicia Halbritter, and creating new educational opportunities based on client needs and advisory committee input. I am excited to target more horse owners through BMP and specialized extension programs, as well as continue to build on my livestock and forage program. Additionally, I will be serving the Small Farms sector of the county and will be assisting producers with the creation of management and economic plans to make their farms a success. My experience in Suwannee County has helped shape my passion for extension education, and I am looking forward to the challenges and opportunities provided in Duval County.

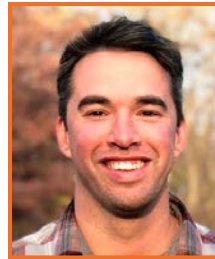


Luara Bertelli Canal
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My name is Luara Canal, I come from a family

of veterinarians from Brazil, where I graduated from vet school as well. For the past 2 years I have been working on my master's degree in Beef cattle Reproduction, under the supervision of Dr. Cliff Lamb and Dr. Nicolas DiLorenzo.

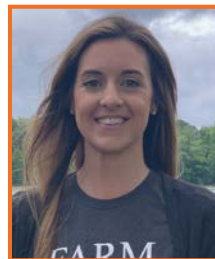
I have always enjoyed working with producers and I am very excited to have started my career as a Livestock and Natural Resources Extension Agent in Bradford County.



Dr. Taylor Clem
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Dr. Taylor Clem serves as the Environmental

and Community Horticulture Agent for Alachua County. Taylor has two degrees in Landscape Architecture and a PhD from University of Florida's Environmental Horticulture program. With a background in sustainable landscape design and water resource planning, Taylor plans on promoting Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ and sustainable home-food production in an urbanizing county. Through partnerships and stakeholder involvement, Taylor's program will work towards creating a model for sustainable urban development with water resources, environmental behaviors, and place-based bioregionalism as its foci.



De Broughton
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I am excited to join the Northeast District Extension

team as the new Regional Specialized Agent (RSA) for Row Crops. I have an inborn interest and love for agriculture in North Florida as I am a Suwannee County native, and grew up on a diversified row crop/vegetable farm. My background also includes 11 years of High School teaching experience of various agriculture and science

courses. With degrees in Agronomy and Agriculture Education and Communication, Extension seemed like the perfect fit combined with my farming background.

After a couple of months transitioning into the Row Crop RSA position I began talking with agents and growers to gather feedback on common needs within the area on a region-wide basis. The underlying theme for agronomic agriculture in the region revolves around managing nutrients (mainly N) and water more efficiently, to minimize unintended impacts on our primary water resource, the Floridan aquifer. With around 300 documented Springs in Suwannee River Water Management District, one can understand why nutrient and water management of agronomic crops would be a hot topic for agriculture in the region, and should lend itself to the focus of a Row Crop Agent. In that case, my programs will emphasize working with county agents and growers on Best Management Practices (BMPs) to help them discover improved ways to grow their crops and become a more productive operation long-term, and help sustain the health of the surrounding environment and water resources. The BMP Manual of Agronomic Crops and Vegetables published by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) tells us that BMPs must be based on sound science, be technically feasible, and be economically viable. My goal is to determine which BMPs have the most science to support their efficacy and to help growers understand which ones are optimal to combat the specific nutrient and water related issues we are facing. I am looking forward to working with extension agents help growers discover ways to improve their bottom line in the process. A Best Management Practice is clearly not a good practice if it isn't one helping the grower become more financially

Let's Meet WHO'S NEW TO EXTENSION...continued

stable and sustainable in their business as well.

The Northeast District Row Crop Team, made up of county agents, Dan Fenneman, Jay Capasso, Keith Wynn, Chris Vann, Kevin Korus, Luke Miller, and Alicia Halbritter are holding

monthly in-person working group meetings at the North Florida Research and Education Center – Suwannee Valley to discuss projects and potential solutions to the challenges our growers are facing. Currently the focus has been implementing research projects and on-farm demonstrations on corn to

test the 4Rs of Nutrient Stewardship (**right place, right rate, right source, right time**). For information on these projects and details on other ways the team is reaching out to help producers in the Northeast District, please contact me anytime. deonne@ufl.edu or 386-362-1725

How to become a Leader...continued from page 4

2. Promote an open environment for two-way feedback

Part of the trust-building process is creating an environment where it's safe to take risks and allows you and your co-workers to comfortably exchange candid, honest and direct feedback without the fear of being punished. It's important you provide ample channels for two-way communication between employees and CED's, and solicit them for their ideas and contributions. This facilitates progress toward reaching organizational goals.

- Encourage employees to ask questions, discuss concerns or suggest ways to solve problems. Allow them to express opinions on important decisions.
- Don't talk over or dismiss a co-worker's viewpoint. All employees should respect their colleagues' opinions.

Knowledge is power. That's why you should ensure that every employee is provided up-to-date information about the organization's goals, performance successes and failures.

3. Be a coach

One of the main duties of a leader is coaching your employees. As a leader, you should foster trust and cooperation. Leaders can paint a vision of the future that inspires the team to do whatever it takes

to get there. And as a coach, you must inspire action that will help execute that goal. Reinforce an honest and candid environment without taking information personally. Equally treat everyone like you would want to be treated. Give credit where credit is due. Say "thank you," be encouraging, and try to put yourself in their shoes to better understand their everyday challenges.

Find ways to energize, motivate and show confidence in your team with the belief they can do anything they set their minds to. Take advantage of performance evaluations. Use the results of those evaluations to provide opportunities for employees to grow and develop specific traits or skills. Provide coaching and mentoring to build confidence and competence.

4. Show confidence in your decisions

When you undertake the responsibility of leadership, you have to be comfortable making big decisions and sticking to them. You can't be afraid to be decisive and make tough calls when circumstances require it. Ensure your choices are not just beneficial to you, but with the organization's goal in mind.

5. Take responsibility

We're all human. Mistakes will happen. But it's not always easy

to own up to mistakes and be receptive to feedback and change. Growth involves taking risks that don't always pan out. Be willing to stand up for your co-workers and their decisions when expectations aren't met. This will motivate your co-workers to feel they can accomplish what's needed to achieve the organization's goals. You should support and assist your team. Give them the confidence to take risks and speak up. Be credible – people want to follow an honest leader. Be candid about why things didn't work out, learn from the mistake and move on. People will trust someone who actively displays honesty.

6. Have a mentor

No matter who you are, it's always helpful when you have someone to look up to who is experienced with strong leadership capabilities. It makes it a lot easier to see someone perform in action than living by words on paper. If you do not have a mentor, reach out to your CED or DED to have them assign you one.

Sowcik, Matt. "Leadership Development." Straughn Center, Gainesville, Florida. April 3, 2019. Conference Presentation.

Exciting Opportunity Awaits you...Join the Newsletter Team

Sign up now to be part of the adventure of putting together the quarterly Northeast District newsletter!

Now is the time, don't wait! If you would like to be part of this team,
email Lori Wiggins at lwiggins@ufl.edu, you won't regret it!



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