

FEATURE Story

The Success of a Team

Beth Moore

UF/IFAS Extension Florida 4-H Youth Development program Madison County Extension Agent II
elizabethmoore@ufl.edu

March 16, 2020:

Summer Day Camps planned. Camp Cherry Lake week planned. Club meetings and county council meetings scheduled and planned. County Events scheduled and planned. Chick Chain project scheduled and planned.

March 17, 2020:

Call from County Manager, "We are short staffed at the Emergency Operations Center for county emergency management, can you

report to the EOC to help out during the pandemic?"

March 18, 2020:

4-H Agent reports to EOC and worked from there until May 4, 2020.

My first thought was, "I am a 4-H agent, not an emergency management specialist or office assistant." My second thought was, "No, I am a team player and my team (Madison County) needs me!"

Merriam-Webster's definition of a team player is someone who cares more about helping a group or team to succeed than about his or her own success. So, I reported to the EOC building to

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Beth Moore is pictured with Leigh Basford, UF/IFAS Extension Madison County Director.

June – August 2020

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

The Success of a Team...continued from previous page

assist the Emergency Management director during a time unlike any other our community had experienced. The uncertainty, the questions, and the nervousness began as we learned more about the virus. Businesses, restaurants, and offices closed, and many were sent to work from home. Daily I answered phone calls from concerned citizens with questions that at the time no one had clear answers for. I organized emergency meal kit deliveries for the citizens of Madison County. I took minutes at Community Safety Partner meetings. I helped organize and distribute PPE (personal protective equipment) to local health care agencies. There were also several days the county experienced severe weather and tornadoes touching down. All while fulfilling my 4-H and extension obligations. We changed our club meetings to online Zoom meetings, cancelled our summer camp plans, reorganized County Events and restructured our programs to an online/at home format—as a team!

I have been on many teams in my life (sports, clubs, schools) and now I am proud to say that I am a member of the



UF/IFAS Extension team! This team is not afraid of change or challenges, which has been evident in the response to this COVID-19 global pandemic and adjusting our program services/areas. What I see is a team full of “Team Players” working together for the success of our mission!

In 4-H we are striving to teach our youth life skills and one is citizenship/community service. Continue to teach

our youth by your example of teamwork and by “taking one for the team”. And sometimes we have to step outside of our comfort zone (and into the EOC) to take one for the team and learn new things. Because I was at the EOC for a month and a half, I learned things that can help improve my 4-H program!

So team, keep up the good work and remember your success is dependent on the success of the team!

Sensory Station Increases Awareness of Agricultural Industries of Florida

Alicia Lamborn

UF/IFAS Extension Baker County
Environmental Horticulture,

Alicia Halbritter

UF/IFAS Extension Baker County
Agriculture/Natural Resources

Shaina Spann

UF/IFAS Extension Baker County
4-H Youth Development

Agricultural products in Baker County have over \$13 million in market value. But despite being a rural community, only a small portion of Baker county residents (population 28,000) are involved in commercial agricultural production. While residents generally

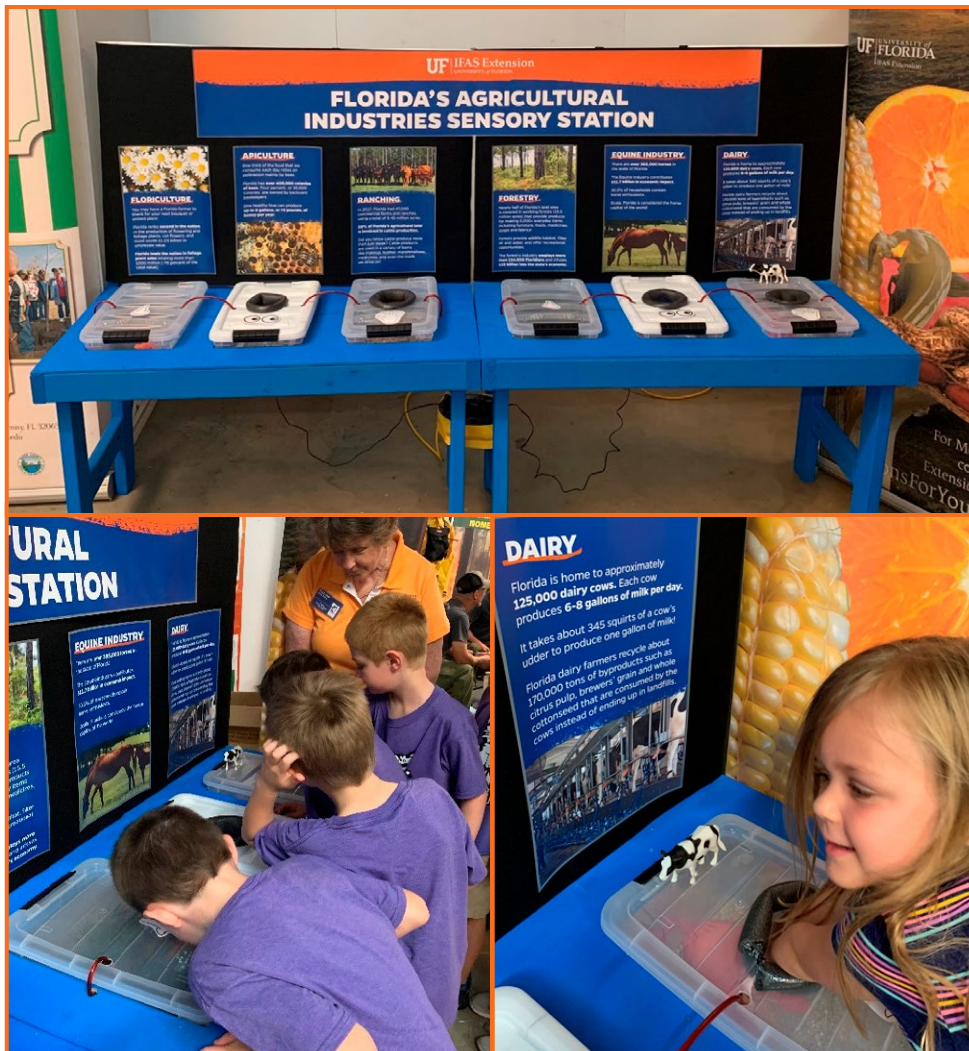
have a positive view of agriculture, they may not work to support the industries or recognize their importance on a local and statewide level. Therefore, extension agents in Baker County partnered to establish an Ag awareness and appreciation program with objectives based on UF/IFAS Extension statewide initiatives.

To prepare for the program, a sensory station was built to promote interactive engagement and learning through the senses. Custom built tables were made to hold plastic bins with materials that engage the senses of sight, touch, and smell. Each bin was accompanied with an educational poster highlighting agricultural industries of Florida including floriculture, apiculture,

ranching, forestry, equine, and dairy. Using the senses allowed participants to recognize familiar objects associated with the corresponding agricultural industry and connect with the educational content presented. To capture their interest, smells of flowers and pine trees were used to represent the floriculture and timber industries. Equine radiographs and a video looking inside of a beehive represented the equine and apiculture industries. Touching the corn, cotton seed and grain in livestock feed brought attention to the diverse aspects of Florida's ranching industry, while the milking of a simulated udder (everyone's favorite activity) symbolized Florida's dairy industry.

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Sensory Station Increases Awareness of Agricultural Industries of Florida...continued from previous page



Since opportunities to engage with residents are greatest at community functions, the sensory station was utilized during family-friendly events to reach people of all ages. Presentations, discussions, and educational poster content were all used to raise awareness of the types of agricultural production, the variety of everyday products produced from those industries, and their economic importance to the state. Since the environment accommodated different learning styles while being fun and interactive, it appealed to a broader audience.

At least 2,540 individuals interacted with the station during three community events in 2019, with an estimated 60% gaining knowledge of Florida's agricultural industries. Additionally, at least four students identified by teachers as having sensory disorders overcame their fears to participate and learn about agriculture using their senses. With the station's popularity and ease for changing the educational content, future plans include highlighting additional agricultural industries. For example, during the Baker County Spring Garden Festival of 2021, the focus will be on Florida's horticulture and green industries.

From the DISTRICT DIRECTOR



Eric Simonne

UF/IFAS Extension
DED - NE District
esimonne@ufl.edu

What I learned (or re-learned) in the last eight weeks

As what we think we knew is challenged every day during the COVID-19 pandemic, I have found myself pondering and re-evaluating communication strategies. Maybe we have more time. Maybe people communicate more. Maybe the pandemic itself generates a lot of talks and articles world-wide. In all this "noise", I found leadership lessons, uncovered debating strategies, learned new roles for grammar, and wondered more than ever about the role of science in decision making.

Leadership lessons:

- Knee-jerk reaction is no substitute for leadership. Thought: Has it ever been?
- Making statements that are not supported by science and then failing to take responsibility for consequences is cause for firing in most professional situations. Do not do it! Note: That's why Extension is science based
- The 1927 Eisenberg incertitude principle stating that "the position and the velocity of an object cannot both be measured exactly at the same

What I learned (or re-learned) in the last eight weeks...continued from previous page

time, even in theory", seem to also apply to democracy and freedom: individual interests (position) are often times incompatible with the collective common good (velocity). Comment: Houston, we have a problem!

Debating strategies

In many situations, **HOW** ideas are presented, explained, or articulated is more convincing than **WHAT** message they carry. RE: what is new about that? Here are a few common communication strategies:

- Distraction which consists in providing an answer that does not match the question, is as old as debate itself. When a response starts with "First of all,..." be on the lookout! Note: What was the question again?
- Avoidance (sometimes seen as a variant of distraction) consists in providing a long, detailed answer to a question that call for a "yes" or "no" answer. By the time the speaker is done answering, the audience forgot what the question was. Example: "Was your experiment replicated?" Answer: Scientists who tend to see things in true or false have a hard time practicing avoidance to their advantage.
- Diversion (changing the topic of conversation) is a handy tactic when a discussion does not unfold in your favor. Note: it does not solve the issue but surely buys time.

- Blame shifting is a convenient substitute to accepting responsibility. Example: my sister made me do it!
- Starting an explanation with an incorrect statement and immediately following it up with a commonly accepted truth is a strategy sometimes called "**covering up**". Ending with a statement that both sides can agree on widens the already established impact of the incorrect statement.
- Reverse accusation (claiming the other side is doing what you actually did) is an advanced technique that combines diversion and blame shifting. Example: when 6 and 8 years-old siblings fight on the family car back seat: "she looked at me first". Note: brilliant!
- Denial helps take the high moral road and leaves the speaker beyond question. If questioned later, a quick qualifier can bring you back to the low road. Example: I have never lied. That's right; I have never lied...to you. Thought: you are in trouble!

Use grammar to your advantage

We always thought that grammar is only a set of conventions and rules that guide and clarify communication. How about using grammar as a misleading strategy?

Starting a sentence and not finishing it is a strategy that allows the expression of an idea without saying anything. Adding qualifiers to the nouns

further allows to create associations or characterizations that are more important than the phrase itself.

Using "this" in an ambiguous way is a very simple way to confuse your audience.

What about science?

- If science is not the basis for decision making, then what are the decisions based on?
- Classifying data as "good" when it supports one hypothesis and "bad" if it does not, is not a scientifically sound method. Data are data; only interpretation and applications are matters of choice.
- Expressing results as percentages, and then performing additions, subtractions or further combining them is a great way to hide what the data originally showed. RE: accountants call that "cooking the books".
- Using false linear scales (spreading points equidistantly on the X-axis that represent different day increments for example) is a simple way to give a misleading linear trend.
- Sorting data by decreasing trend and failure to mention in on the X-axis is also a powerful way to alter the original message of the original data - and "borderline" scientifically dis

Information TECHNOLOGIES

Plug In to the Extension Cord

Taylor Clem, PhD

UF/IFAS Extension Alachua County
Environmental & Community Horticulture Agent II
taylorclem87@ufl.edu

While working remotely, Alachua County's Taylor Clem took the opportunity to start UF/IFAS Extension

Alachua County's new podcast called "Extension Cord," which is now available on all major platforms (<https://anchor.fm/ExtensionCord>). Extension Cord is a new podcast where the county agents discuss special topics in Alachua County by speaking with Master Gardener Volunteers, researchers, specialists, and

community members contributing wonderful impacts to our community.

Although the intention was to record episodes in the recording studio created by the agents, the new home-studio was more unique. While working from home, Taylor and his wife would share

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Plug In to the Extension Cord...continued from previous page



a work space. Therefore, to record episodes, Taylor's son, Scotland, was more than willing to allow his dad to set-up a temporary studio at his arts and crafts table.

Episode topics include an introduction to extension in Alachua County, food safety, summer vegetable gardening, and the Florida-Friendly Landscaping program. Subscribe to the podcast on your favorite carrier and check-out our current episodes. If you are interested in participating in any future episodes, reach out to Taylor.

What's WORKING?

Watermelon Season Re-cap

(two pictures go with this)

Tatiana Sanchez, DPM

UF/IFAS Extension
Commercial Horticulture
tatiana.sanchez@ufl.edu

Watermelon in the Suwannee Valley region which represents $\frac{1}{3}$ of the state's acreage always comes with challenges. Although dry and hot weather at the beginning of the season kept the crop disease-free for several weeks, foliar diseases went rampant from mid-season until the end. Two major enemies, downy and powdery mildew, were the focus for most growers. If not managed preventatively, these foliar diseases (in particular, downy mildew a.k.a "wild-fire") will destroy the leaves, depriving the fruit from food and essential sun coverage. An underground enemy, Fusarium wilt, kept affecting the crop longer than previous seasons possibly because of the unusually cold weather experienced during April, which favors Fusarium. Other issues included squash bugs, aphids, rindworms, virus and many instances of lightning strikes. All these issues and management recommendations (including nutrients)



were promptly communicated to growers by a team of extension agents who work together in delivering weekly

text updates and other in-season support. **After all this effort, it is now time to enjoy local watermelons!**

SUCCESS Stories

FriYAY with 4-H

Kelsey Haupt

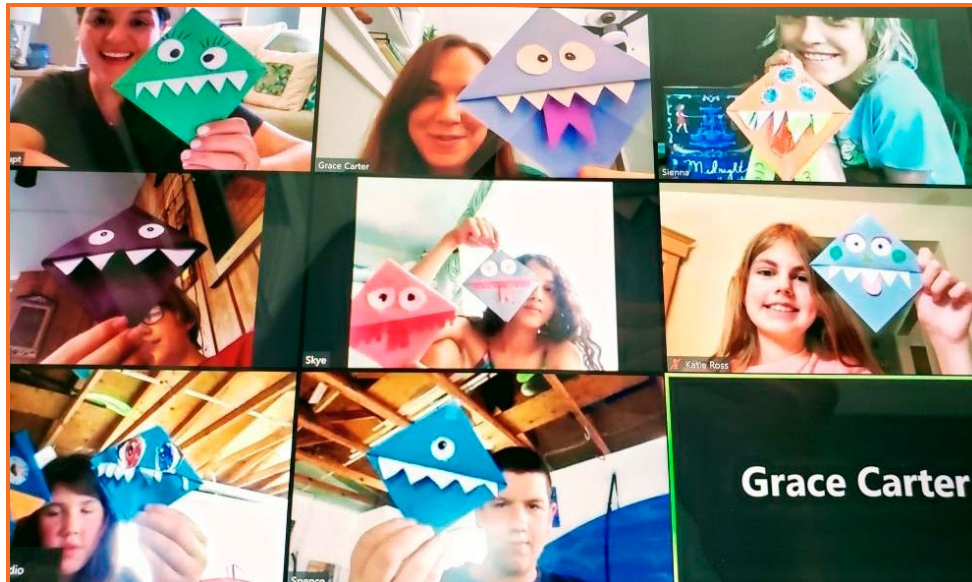
UF/IFAS Extension Duval County
4-H Extension Agent
khaupt@ufl.edu

Grace Carter

UF/IFAS Extension Duval County
4-H Extension Agent
grace.carter@ufl.edu

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced youth to take online classes, watch more virtual lectures, and spend less time with friends. Bartlett and Vivrette (2020) argue, "to support healthy child development during COVID-19, children and youth need to maintain regular age-appropriate connections to important youth and adults in their lives... Even short periods of time playing, reading, going outdoors, and talking can bolster children's sense of safety and security during uncertain or scary times."

In Duval County 4-H, we recognized that social distancing does not have to mean relational distancing. Our 4-H members needed a place to connect with their friends, so we created FriYAYs with 4-H. FriYAYs happen each



Friday at 2:00pm for junior and intermediate 4-H youth via a secure zoom platform. FriYAYs feature an activity with household supplies, games, and time to catch up with friends. Past FriYAYs have included nature art, homemade ice cream, popsicle catapults, and so much more.

But our primary focus is on connections over content. Youth who

have joined FriYAYs with 4-H are experiencing 30-45 minutes of time a week laughing and engaging with caring adults to bring some "normal" moments to their lives. Our Duval 4-H members have been observed laughing, learning new skills, and sharing what they have learned with others, building a sense of belonging in the Duval 4-H program.

4-H In Action: Meeting Community Needs

Marnie Ward, Ph.D.

UF/IFAS Extension Florida 4-H Youth Development
Program Citrus County
Extension Agent I
mlward@ufl.edu

Citizens across the country have stepped forward in this time of need to support their communities. Many have provided healthcare workers with meals and a place to stay, volunteering at food distribution sites, or staying home to stop the spread. Americans are unified and strong. Young people are also engaged in these community conversations, using their skills and expertise to make a difference in their communities.

Diana Ward, a Citrus High School Senior dual enrolled at the College of Central Florida, is the president of the 4-H Cre8 sewing club. The Citrus County 4-H program empowers youth with hands-on experiences learning the skills to lead for a lifetime. When news outlets began reporting the COVID-19 virus was moving across the country, she began researching to learn more about the disease and its impacts on people and communities. This young lady has a passion for science and a drive to educate her community. Earlier this year, she shared with her fellow 4-H members the value of immunizations and the responsibilities of citizens to one another.

When asked about the pandemic, she stated "I had heard about a novel virus in China, but I didn't realize it would come to have such an impact on my life." By the end of March, all Citrus County Schools were closed and all County 4-H Club meetings were cancelled. She then learned that the virus could be spread by close contact and that facemasks could reduce the spread. Here, Diana saw a way to help.

An avid sewer, Diana began sewing when she was 8 years old. She had designed and sewn dresses, bags and blankets for her family, friends and herself. Over time, she began to use her

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4-H In Action: Meeting Community Needs...continued from previous page

growing sewing skills to help those in her community. In 2017, when Hurricane Irma passed over Citrus County, Diana and her sister made personal air conditioners for linemen restoring power. The air conditioners were sewn to form a tube of fabric, filled with cooling beads the tube could be placed across the back of the neck. Diana also organized her 4-H club to make blankets to donate to needy children and later to sew pillowcases for hospitalized children.

Recognizing the need for face-masks, Diana began sewing them for her family and friends. While 4-H clubs were not meeting, Diana continued to talk by phone and Zoom teleconferencing software, with her sewing mentor and 4-H club leader, Sue Collins. When the call came that a local home healthcare business needed masks, Diana was quick to respond and get to work. Her



Diana Ward, 4-H Cre8 Club president and a Citrus High School graduating senior, sewing face masks as a way to support Citrus County during the COVID-19 pandemic.

days are now filled with online high school and college classes, and evenings with mask making. She has moved on from the disappointment of losing Senior Prom, Awards Night, and face-to-face Graduation in May; instead, she is focused on a plan for the future and the difference she can make.

In July, Diana will begin classes in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the University of Florida where she plans to study microbiology and genetics.

The 4-H program is open to all youth ages 5-18 years old, and uses a learn-by-doing approach to help youth gain knowledge and skills to become responsible, productive citizens. Contact the UF/IFAS Extension Citrus County office to learn more about our available programs, including sewing.

How Does the UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA Work?

What's the difference between a UF Change Fund and a UF Petty Cash Fund?

Change Fund

A Change Fund is used solely to make change for customers purchasing goods or services from the University. No purchases or disbursements can be made from a Change Fund. The balance of the Change Fund must remain the same at all times, therefore, Change Funds do not require replenishment. No documentation is necessary when providing change for customers.

Petty Cash Fund

A Petty Cash Fund provides a convenient way to pay for minor allowable business purchases. Departments should limit their Petty Cash Fund to the lowest amount that will meet their needs. Petty Cash Funds should not be used for payments to research participants.

New UF system to report outside activities and conflict of interests to open to IFAS on July 1, 2020

Beginning July 1, 2020, UF is transitioning IFAS to a centralized reporting and approval process for Conflicts of Interest and Outside Activities called UFOLIO.

Any new reporting for outside activities to begin after July 1 must go into the UFOLIO system and not sent to UF/IFAS HR for routing.

More information about UFOLIO may be found here: <https://coi.ufl.edu/>

Good TO KNOW

Teladoc ... it's real, not junk mail

Heather Janney

UF/IFAS Extension Columbia County
Extension Director
hfutch@ufl.edu

Did you receive an envelope labeled Teladoc right after all of this COVID-19 crazy started happening? If you're super neat at home or you are really good at weeding out junk mail you probably threw it away. However, like most 4-H agents (sorry guys, but I did only say most), I'm messy and I added it to my stack of mail on the kitchen table...right near my Alternative Work Location...and thought nothing else about it. Well, a month and a half later rolls around and I'm getting all these headaches, a fever, a cough, and a toothache. Yes, it all sounds like I had the "Rona"... a "Rona Toothache Sinus Infection Flu" is what I called it, anyways. But after days of a fever and feeling horrible, I finally looked back through the mail and found the letter from Teladoc and



decided to give it a go...after I shared my sickness with the District Director and Assistant County Manager who both told me I needed to see a doctor, of course.

It was easy, I downloaded the app, put in my information, medical history,

and selected "Request a visit." Within 3 minutes I was sitting on my front porch having a video conference with a doctor from Maryland who was able to send a prescription straight to the pharmacy for me. It was perfect!

Now, if you're like me and a child of medical parents who raised me to believe that you better be bleeding or have a bone poking out before you go to the emergency room, or you just really hate the doctor, Teladoc is perfect. With your state insurance, the governor made sure you have access to it for free in one of his earliest proclamations. So, no more excuses, take care of yourself and your family and give it a try. During this time, it's best if we all stay healthy and not avoid caring about ourselves. The world will go on without us but we want you to stay a strong and healthy part of our Extension Family. As a follow up, I did get the nose swab (no it wasn't fun) and I am officially free and clear of the COVID-19, like I thought and thanks to Teladoc, I am recovering!

DISTRICT Life

One simple question, "What is a 4-H Member?"

Stephanie Conner

UF/IFAS Extension Florida 4-H Youth
Development Program Clay County
Agent II
Sconner04@ufl.edu

I was recently asked a simple question that made me pause before I answered. The pause was not because I didn't have an answer, rather because I had two answers. The first is quick and simple, while the second answer is more in depth and meaningful. So, what was the question you might ask, it was "What is a 4-H member"? The short

answer, a 4-H member is any child between the age of 5-18 who has joined and participated in a 4-H program. To truly answer the question though, I focus on the second answer which provides a deeper perspective of just what a 4-H member is.

4-H members come in all shapes and sizes, all economic backgrounds, religions, and educational paths. 4-H members are youth who want to explore their interests, grow their skills and make lifelong friends. These youth are workers and leaders; explorers and adventurers; public speakers and

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PROFESSIONAL Development

Taking Feedback Gracefully

(Part 2 of *We all need feedback, but what kind?*)

Beth Kerr

UF/IFAS Extension Hamilton County
4-H/FCS Agent

Inspired by the following TED talk: Thanks for the Feedback: Shelia Heen, TED Radio Hour Feedback. We receive it daily from people and from inanimate objects. Those jeans that are too snug... *feedback!* Your mom's smile when you surprise her with a visit... *feedback!* And, the performance evaluation from your boss... *feedback!* Feedback can bring us joy and sadness. Joyful responses to feedback are easy to give when the feedback is what we want. But what about the feedback that we do not want or like?

Rejecting Feedback

Feedback can be a painful experience. This partly because we have two basic needs as humans: We want to learn and grow, and we want to feel accepted, respected, and loved just as we are now. When we receive coaching that directs us to improve an aspect of our job performance, we often respond defensively. This response taps into our tendency to protect ourselves. Our initial response says, "He/she is wrong!" By rejecting feedback on grounds that it is "wrong," we can move on with life without acknowledging personal or professional shortcomings. If we acknowledge that some aspect of the feedback is right, we are faced with the need to change. Our tendency is to look for what is wrong with the feedback and to seek confirmation from others that the feedback **IS** wrong, and we are not.

We can *always* find fault with feedback. It may be due to our inability to face the

TED RADIO HOUR

truth about our performance. It is not easy to accept feedback that tells us that we need to change. Our response may be a reaction to the person delivering it. It may be difficult to separate the "who" from the "what" when receiving negative or constructive feedback. And, lastly, it may be that the feedback hits too close to our identity ~ who we are and our sensitivities.

And, it is just possible that 90% of the feedback **IS** wrong, but we need to consider the remaining 10% that **IS** right.

Receiving Feedback with Grace

1. Listen to understand. Don't decide immediately if you agree or disagree with the feedback. Place the impulse to reject the feedback on hold. Be open to the possibility that giver may have a few good points.
2. Work to understand what the giver means. Ask clarifying questions: *Can you help me understand what you mean? Could you give me an example? Please share with me the circumstances when I reacted this way? Can you suggest an alternative? Summarize what you heard. So, you are saying...Do you mean...*
3. Ask for time to process the feedback. Ask for a second meeting to revisit the topic. Some feedback may hurt, and you may need the time to process it to lessen your emotional response. Some feedback may be comprehensive, and you need time to adjust or incorporate the feedback.
4. Show appreciation. Giving feedback may be uncomfortable for the giver. Express gratitude for their willingness to provide information that may help you grow.

5. Enlist a friend for a valid, honest opinion. Don't ask them if they agree with the feedback but ask them if there is anything right about the feedback that you should consider. Ask a trusted co-worker, *"What's one thing you see me doing - or failing to do- that you think I should change?"*
6. Understand your own response. Evaluate why you had an emotional reaction to the feedback. What does your response tell you about your self-image, fears, or sensitivity?
7. See yourself accurately. Co-workers, your teenage son, or your best friend may have information about you that you are blind to. You have an impact on others around you. Work to understand that impact.

Receiving feedback with grace will allow you to process the information, consider the value, separate the *who* from the *what*, and provide you the opportunity to assimilate the new knowledge to make personal and professional growth.

To learn more about this TED talk and to view others, please visit <https://www.ted.com>

Part 1, We All Need Feedback, but what kind? appeared in a prior edition of the NE District Newsletter.

One simple question, "What is a 4-H Member?"...continued from page 8

community advocates. They come from hard working farms, the heart of our cities, and everywhere in-between. I know that's rather impressive, but it doesn't end there. There is so much more to 4-H members and as we go through COVID-19 we are reminded of that!

4-H members are strong, resilient and resourceful. When fairs and programs were being canceled our 4-H members stepped up to the plate and looked for the positive. While facing the stress of distance learning and social distancing our members pressed on and completed the projects and the record books they have been working on all year. Whether through zoom meetings and funny homemade mustache contests,

or "Teach Me in 3" and Lip Sync contest videos, 4-H members show their spirit, commitment and willingness.

So, when I was asked "What is a 4-H member," you can understand my pause before answering, which answer should I give. 4-H members are so much more than 5-18-year-olds who participate in our programs, and we as extension agents are blessed to have



the opportunity to work with and learn from these young people! So, I ask you... how would you answer one simple question, "What is a 4-H member?"

Featured County EXTENSION OFFICE

Featured Office: Columbia County

Amanda Morgan Pittman
UF/IFAS Extension Florida 4-H Youth Development Program Alachua County
amorgan133@ufl.edu

What are some interesting facts about Columbia County or Extension? The University of Florida was first housed in Lake City, Columbia County, FL in 1883 prior to being moved to Gainesville in 1905.

- When was your office built and what year did Extension start in your county? THE Extension Hall of Fame was opened October 2019 and our office Grand Re-Opening was held on February 26th.
- What is one thing that makes our office different? Not sure how different this is but we have a different style of communication when in the office. All 5 agents of different program areas share a hall way and we are notorious of, when in the office, basically having an agent meeting from within our own offices (aka

speaking across the walls and down the hall while never leaving our desks). We've really done a good job of creating a partnership with one another.

- What has been the most surprisingly successful idea implemented in the office? The move to TEAMS and making everything go online before all of the rush to go to virtual technology! This made our transition to the "new normal" so much easier!
- What is the 1st thing you want people to think when they walk in the door? Wow, this office really has it together and can offer me a lot.
- Describe your Extension office facility? New, rounded, and ready for lots of new activities
- What is your favorite physical feature about your office? The neatness without tons of clutter..yet.
- If you could create your dream Extension office, what is one thing you would make sure to add? An auditorium with extra classrooms and an outside greenhouse

with outdoor classroom and storage areas.

- What has been a main shift in Extension that has put us in the direction of where we are today? Just a change in leadership, shifts in the trust levels between the county and university and difficulties meeting in the middle sometimes.
- What is the size and population of your county? 801 sq mi and 67,531 (2010 census)
- How many people does the Extension office serve? Cumulatively for fiscal year 2019, we served 41,386 people.
- What is one office tradition your office has? Being together as an office is still slightly new so we are working on developing some new traditions. Checking in regularly and taking care of each other is something we've started and seems to be sticking. As well as opening up communication lines and being more trusting of each other.

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

Heather Janney

UF/IFAS Extension Columbia County
CED/4-H
hfutch@ufl.edu



Ted Karsch,

UF/IFAS Extension
Nassau County
4-H Agent

Hello, my name is Ted Karsch. I am the new 4-H Extension agent for Nassau County.

Prior to becoming a 4-H agent, I worked at West Nassau High School as a Spanish teacher for five years. My first day on the job was November 1st. Prior to working as a Spanish teacher, I was a teacher of English as a second language at a private language school in Ft. Lauderdale.

I am passionate about teaching and my biggest goal is to reach as many young people as possible in the community with relevant, creative and engaging learning programs. In addition, I am eager to use my Spanish language abilities to reach out to the Latino communities living in Nassau County.

Please contact me directly by email at tkarsch@ufl.edu or call the extension office at 904-530-6350.



Lisa Strange,

UF/IFAS Extension
Taylor County
Agriculture and
Natural Resources
Agent II

I planned my career a long time ago to be able to

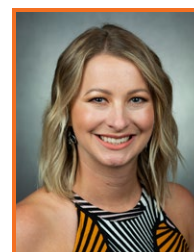
teach Horticulture from the "signs" throughout my growing path. With an Associates and Certifications in Ornamental Horticulture, a B.S. degree in Environmental Science/Minor in Landscape design from Florida

Southern College and a Master's and Education Specialist degrees in Adult Education Curriculum Design Instruction, I know "how to teach". As a Master Gardener (class of 1999) I had the fortune to have a passionate mentor with enthusiasm that proved contagious and sparked interest in volunteering. A good leader has charisma and enthusiasm. Mine hopefully, will motivate our agriculture and green industry, residence, and Master Gardeners to learn, contribute time and interest in beautifying, preserving, our landscapes and natural resources. The hands-on and informal educational spectrum that extension service provides is where I am most comfortable and is my way of life.

I am very anxious to get to the farms, nursery's, and citrus operations as well as homeowners to see what is needed to help the Taylor County community. A previous owner of Hamlin orange grove planted in the 1980's (took 30 years to show signs of citrus greening) had to be pushed over and burned. The land provided me with opportunity to sport a hobby growing cold hardy palms successfully. After the economy dropped in 2008 selling the nursery inventory, another opportunity led me back to the University of Florida to Dr. Bill Castle, Emeritus, participating in a pilot program growing pomegranates as an alternative crop. After 25 years, I came from Hillsborough county working for FDACS Division of Plant Industry where I inspected Citrus groves and greenhouse operations and served as Nematode specialists. Then moved onto the Division of Agriculture Water Policy Division where I worked with the ranchers, agronomy crops and strawberry growers, promoting and enrolling producers in the Best Management Practices. I have served extension in Hillsborough and Polk County as program coordinators for the Florida Yard & Neighborhood and the Compost Happens programs.

My immediate goals for Taylor County are to increase the active membership numbers of the Master Gardener's, diversify the programming they can offer such as the Florida Friendly Landscaping Program™, Fire-wise Landscaping Program, start monthly Plant Clinics, expand the demonstration gardens at the Extension office, and organize much needed "Field Day's" on sites for the various commodities in our area.

Growing up on the Chesapeake Bay, born under the sign of Aquarius (water bearer) I enjoy any activity associated and love anything edible that comes from it! With my kayak I look forward experiencing the springs, Suwannee and Steinhatchee rivers. Of course, gardening I especially prize orchids, camping, fishing, antiquing and are activities I enjoy. Learning how to play the fiddle is my dream; but a barrier not likely to overcome.



Annie Sheldon,

UF/IFAS Extension
Clay County
Extension Director

Hi NE Extension District, although you probably already know me as an FCS Agent in the

district, I am so thankful for the opportunity to introduce myself as the new County Extension Director for UF/IFAS Extension Clay County.

I am a 5th generation Floridian and former 4-Her from Union County and now live in Orange Heights with my fiancé Marcelo (some of you may know him) and dog Lizzie on our pecan orchard. In my spare time, I enjoy cooking and home interior design projects. Sounds just like a true FCS Agent right?!

continued on next page

Let's Meet Some Agents: new...continued from previous page

Over the past ten years I have served as FCS Extension Agent and FNP Coordinator in Orange, Alachua, and Clay Counties where my educational programs have focused on nutrition and food systems, healthy lifestyles, and financial management reaching over 159,000 participants. I have been successful in securing over \$2.8 million in grants and \$195,000 of in-kind support which would not have been possible without the collaboration of numerous community partners. My work

has also been recognized by my peers resulting in 10 national/regional awards and 22 state awards.

During my experience with UF/IFAS Extension I have had the privilege to work with and lead many amazing Extension Program Assistants, support staff and now Extension Agents. I value the importance of developing and retaining good employees and feel that this is critical to the future of Extension. I owe much of my professional success

to the many wonderful Extension leaders who have mentored me over the past ten years, and I am excited for the opportunity to have a larger leadership role as a County Extension Director.

I am looking forward to this new chapter in my career and continuing to focus on my Family and Consumer Sciences educational programs while leading the amazing team and operations of the UF/IFAS Extension Clay County office.

UF/IFAS EXTENSION Northeast District Offices – Find your local office at <http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/map/>

Alachua

2800 NE 39th Avenue
Gainesville, FL 32609
Phone: 352.955.2402

Baker

1025 W Macclenny Avenue
Macclenny, FL 32063
Phone: 904.259.3520

Bradford

2266 N Temple Avenue
Starke, FL 32091
Phone: 904.966.6224

Citrus

3650 W. Sovereign Path, Suite 1
Lecanto, FL 34461
Phone: 352.527.5700

Clay

2463 SR 16 West
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043
Phone: 904.284.6355

Columbia

971 West Duval Street, Suite 170
Lake City, FL 32055
Phone: 386.752.5384

Dixie

99 NE 121st Street
Cross City, FL 32628
Phone: 352.498.1237

Duval

1010 N McDuff Avenue
Jacksonville, FL 32254
Phone: 904.255.7450

Gilchrist

125 E Wade Street
Trenton, FL 32693
Phone: 352.463.3174

Hamilton

1143 NW US HWY 41
Jasper, FL 32052
Phone: 386.792.1276

Lafayette

176 SW Community Circle, Suite D
Mayo, FL 32066
Phone: 386.294.1279

Levy

625 N Hathaway Avenue, Alt. 27
Bronson, FL 32621
Phone: 352.486.5131

Madison

184 College Loop
Madison, FL 32340
Phone: 850.973.4138

Nassau

543350 US Hwy 1
Callahan, FL 32011
Phone: 904.879.1019

Suwannee

1302 11th Street SW
Live Oak, FL 32064
Phone: 386.362.2771

Suwannee Valley Ag. Ext. Center

7580 County Road 136
Live Oak, FL 32060
Phone: 386.362.1725

Taylor

203 Forest Park Drive
Perry, FL 32348
Phone: 850.838.3508

Union

25 NE 1st Street
Lake Butler, FL 32054
Phone: 386.496.2321

NENEWS Editorial TEAM

Lori Wiggins (editor), Jessica Altum, Kim Griffin, Alicia Lamborn, Abbey Tharpe, Stephanie Conner, Amanda Morgan Pittman, Victor Blanco, Heather Janney, Marnie Ward, Eric Simonne

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