

FEATURE Story

Homeflow Adds Value to Your Family

Stephanie Toelle

UF/IFAS Extension Duval County
FCS Agent IV
stoelle@ufl.edu

The Homeflow program integrates the elements of home maintenance and family cohesion to bring higher efficiency, function, and home stability for family success. In Duval County, the collaboration of agents Melanie Thomas, specializing in aspects of home maintenance and operations, and Stephanie Toelle, specializing in family communication and conflict management, take Homeflow to a new level. Duval County has 50 families participating in the Habijax program each year, in which families must take courses sponsored by Habijax, as well as participate in the building process, to acquire their new home. According to the US Census data for 2016, the median household income in Duval County was \$47,690. Further, 14.5% of the estimated population of 926,255 is in poverty. The Duval County agents initially piloted the Homeflow program with workshops at Habijax, but expanded into the wider Jacksonville community through branches of the Jacksonville Public Library and support of the Duval County Public Schools Parent Academy.

A question asked by program developer, Dr. Randy Cantrell, is the economic

value of stability and home ownership. How can owning a home and staying in a neighborhood add value to your net worth, as well as build the resiliency and cohesion of your family?

As the family relationships agent, my interests are variables regarding the flow of relationship qualities. Pre- and post-testing examined factors such as perceptions of increased personal and family well-being, ability to build family strengths, meeting individual needs, behaving and communicating in a manner to help home occupants to get along, understanding and reducing conflict, encouraging children's positive behavior, increasing positive while also decreasing negative interactions in family relationships, increasing positive bond, and increasing the happiness and satisfaction in relationships. Every variable showed an increase, from 10% to 35%, with all scores above 85%. This is exciting preliminary data, and we'll anticipate the results of follow-up with these families in the future!



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From the DISTRICT DIRECTOR



Eric Simonne

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

Proper scheduling is key for good time management

Happy new year, everyone! It is hard to believe 2018 is already upon us! For me, 2018 started with a couple of days of e-mail catch up. Lots of e-mails had accumulated over the Christmas break. This one caught my attention: "Sorry I didn't reply earlier [about again missing the deadline for returning a mandated federal form] but I am at the Southern Happiness Meeting and we were in a bus tour that started at 8 am and ended at 10:30 pm. I know my CED's secretary emailed the dates this form was due to you and made sure the minutes were filed after we reviewed them. I just have not had the time to search for the form again since I had the livestock auction, a funeral and the heifer showmanship show Thursday and the heifer show Friday. Both days I left the office after 11 pm and had others with me tallying results and getting ready for the shows. I was out most of the day Monday, had a farm bureau board meeting that night before heading to Merry County. I will send you the form tomorrow when I get back to the office."

Does this sound familiar? What does this story make you think?

Three conflicting thoughts quickly went through my mind. First, wow! This agent works a lot. Upon further review, this agent is busy - too busy? Second, I had to laugh: what an accumulation of bad circumstances! Then I immediately wondered... what ELSE will happen

The tip of the month

When it comes to responding to e-mails, silence is not golden!

What is the best way to handle a legitimate e-mail request from a client, a peer, or God forbids, from Extension Administration? (all these e-mail senders are referred to as "authors" below)

- Delete the e-mail thinking it will make the request go away.
- Acknowledge reception of the request; work on it; if requires several steps communicate with the author about partial progress; then send a complete response when available.
- Read the request, work diligently on the request even if it will take several days, and some time weeks. Then, when the response is ready, share it with the sender.

On a bad day, answer A is tempting ... but not recommended. It is the e-mail version of the ostrich putting its head in the sand to avoid reality. This was easy. Answer C is also tempting as it will get the job done and the response will be communicated to the author. Yet, in the meantime, you know you are working on it, but the author does not know that and may think you are ignoring him/her. So, yes, B is the best approach. If you are working on a request or even going to miss a deadline, let the author know. Life happens. Silence is not a good means of communication.

between now and tomorrow. Finally, reality set in: this is a typical case of poor scheduling resulting in impossible time management. It is so tempting to say yes to everything, promise to be everywhere every time, be nice to everyone, and loose sense of how long it takes to do everything we promise.

As our job descriptions say, we need to plan, deliver and evaluate educational program. Are we planning adequate time for each of these three aspects? Are we living catch up days as unscheduled time? Are we scheduling time to keep up with e-mail or time to write publications and reports? Yes, we should.

And by the way... yes, I had scheduled two days of catch up when returning from Christmas break. Next year, I will schedule three days - just to

be on the safe side. That's my new year resolution!

"Stress is created when you brain and reason says 'no', but your heart and mouth say 'yes'".



PROFESSIONAL Development



Debbie Nistler, Ph.D.

UF/IFAS Extension
Bradford County
Extension Director
4-H Youth
Development Agent
nistlerd@ufl.edu

The Danger of a Single Story-TED talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Chimamanda grew up in Nigeria. When she was young she wrote stories. She drew from the only stories she had access to as a youth. All her characters were white and blue eyed.

TED RADIO HOUR

They all played in the snow, ate apples, and talked about the cool rainy weather. Things she would not experience in Nigeria, but it was the only story she knew. Her experience in college in the United State with other students demonstrated that the American students only had a single story of life in Nigeria. They based their opinion of her on this story, which did not resemble her life in Nigeria.

How often have we based our views of people or situations on a single story? What do we base our opinion on? How do we gather information, form perceptions, develop bias? As Extension

professionals we provide education to all parts of our communities and all types of people. Some come to us with fully formed perceptions and bias, how do we help them shape their views? Can we or should we try to change their views?

As educators our job is to provide many stories. Provide our communities with glimpses into stories they have not heard. Provide facts and research to help them write their own stories and better understand the stories of others. How will you help fight the danger of a single story?

To learn more about this TED talk and watch other talks please visit <https://www.ted.com/>

DISTRICT Life

Putting a SPIN on Traditional Clubs

Kelsey Haupt

UF/IFAS Extension Duval County
Agent I, 4-H Youth Development
khaupt@ufl.edu

Florida 4-H is one of many youth development organizations competing for the attention of today's youth. Among these, many of which are superb, organizations, how does 4-H stand out? 4-H has a strong foundation, quality programming, and unique projects and yet, we are still fighting to add the quantity to our organization. The Duval County

4-H Expansion and Review committee met and decided to use a new approach to program expansion.

The process identified various 4-H deserts throughout Jacksonville, a 4-H desert is an area within the county that lacks 4-H clubs. Duval County 4-H struggles with convincing members to commit to a full year of programming. To combat this struggle and to reach this goal of expansion Duval County 4-H is implementing a SPIN club program, utilizing interns from local Universities and Colleges to facilitate the clubs. A 4-H SPIN Club is where

five or more youth learn about a topic of interest, known as a 4-H Project, for a short-term commitment. **SPIN** stands for **Special Interest**.

This SPIN Club program will provide a platform for youth to get a sampling of all that the 4-H program has to offer and meet the county needs as identified by the expansion committee. The goal is for the families to get a sense of belonging to the organization and thus participate in other programs that turns a short-term special interest project into a long-term engagement within the Duval County 4-H program.

TEACHING Tips

Engaging clients through Mailchimp

Genevieve Mendoza

UF/IFAS Extension Levy County
4-H Youth Development Agent
mendozag@ufl.edu

I know we have almost all thought of it before - how do I better engage my clientele when I am so pressed for time? While there is tremendous value in maintaining a strong social media presence, what agents could really benefit from is a way to



streamline their social media presence with other correspondences that are ongoing. That's where Mailchimp has been my saving grace and a tool I want to share with my fellow agents. Through Mailchimp, you have the ability to set up e-mail lists, send periodic e-mails and announcements, and post

the same announcements to social media. Moreover, there are cool analytics that come with it! It is extremely insightful to see how our clientele par in comparison to industry averages and to measure engagement with e-mails and social media posts based on the data collected through this program. The best part, it is a no-cost, seemingly smooth process for engaging clientele on multiple platforms with just a few clicks of a button.

SUCCESS Stories

Employee Wellness Program

Annie Sheldon

UF/IFAS Extension Duval County
Family & Consumer Sciences Agent
aasheldon@ufl.edu

Chronic disease is the leading causes of death in the United States. Responding to the need to address chronic disease at the workplace UF/IFAS Extension Clay County has partnered with the Clay County School District, Clay County Board of County

Commissioners, and Aetna Insurance Company to provide wellness programs to their employees. Employee wellness programs strive to promote a healthy lifestyle for employees, maintain or improve health and wellbeing, and prevent or delay the onset of chronic disease.

During 2017, over 360 employees participated in interactive grocery store tours and onsite wellness workshops on topics including stress management, healthy eating, and heart health with over 80% of participants reporting that they would implement a new healthy practice within the next week.

Workshops included hands on activities such as creating a healthy salad in a jar and practicing stress management techniques.

A growing body of research indicates that these programs can change employees' behavior, improve their biometric risk profile, increase work productivity, and reduce use of and spending for health care services. According to a 2014 study by the Rand Corporation efforts to help employees prevent and manage chronic illnesses through worksite wellness interventions save \$3.78 in health care costs for every \$1 invested in the effort.



Salad in a jar prepared by program participants



Program participants practicing stress management through adult coloring

SUCCESS Stories...continued

A Horse Rescue

Kelsey Irvine

UF/IFAS Extension Nassau County
4-H Youth Development
kelseyirvine@ufl.edu

On Tuesday, January 16th a 24-year-old horse was rescued after falling into a septic tank. Nassau County 4-H Agent Kelsey Irvine, along with the Hippology co-leader, directed and facilitated the rescue. This coordinated effort involved other local agencies including: Animal Services, Fire Rescue, Sheriff's office and BOCC Road & Bridge. To remove the horse, septic fluid and sludge had to carefully be pumped from around him and out of the pit. A portion of the fence also required removal to allow heavy equipment access to the horse. Strategic tow straps were placed ensuring the animal would be safely



remove. The horse was hypothermic, dehydrated and nearly in shock, but fortunately responders and UF/IFAS rescued the elderly horse and within 45 minutes he was walking on his own. 4-H Agent Kelsey Irvine and the 4-H volunteer stayed on the scene until late evening to ensure the horse's condition was stable.



UF Training and Organizational Development

Courtney Moon

UF/IFAS Learning & OD Specialist

UF Training and Organizational Development's strategic purpose is to help improve the performance of UF faculty and staff. By providing ongoing personal and professional development opportunities, our overall goal is to help increase UF employees' effectiveness—and their ability to contribute.

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retreat planning and facilitation, customer service assessments, performance needs assessments, retreat planning and facilitation, team development services, department training visits—tailored for specific environments and related to identified competencies—and meeting facilitation.

For additional information please feel free to contact us at 352-392-4626 or training@ufl.edu.



Visit the Leadership Toolkit: hr.ufl.edu/leadership-toolkit

What's WORKING?

Middle Schoolers learning Nutrition Education

Lori Wiggins

UF/IFAS Extension Taylor County
FCS Extension Agent III
lwiggins@ufl.edu

Middle school students are often in control of what they put in their mouths, but many times they do not make or do not know how to make healthy choices. It is crucial to instill nutritional concepts in middle school children, because the way they eat now is likely to be the way they eat as adults. The University of Florida Cooperative Extension Program is working to help motivate local middle school youth to take charge of their health by making nutritious eating choices through a series of educational lessons.

Children in middle school, are still growing rapidly, which makes healthy eating a vital part of their lives. Middle school students need the vitamins, minerals and anti-oxidants found in a variety of foods, which makes nutrition an important part of their education. Middle-schoolers also benefit cognitively from eating a variety of nutrient-dense foods, including fruits, vegetables, lean protein, milk and whole grains.

Water Workshop

Anne Elise Creamer

UF/IFAS Extension Clay County
4-H Extension Agent
ac864@ufl.edu

Clay County 4-H used a 2-day water workshop to teach youth about environmental sustainability while developing life skills. For dinner on the first night, youth carefully studied each ingredient of the "taco bar" to guess how much water was used to produce each item. After, the 4-H agent taught about how lakes are formed, youth modelled, measured, and mapped their own lakes



As middle-school students gain more independence, they are more likely to begin making their own meal choices, which often include unhealthy foods like cheeseburgers, pepperoni pizza, French fries and soda. This is where local Extension faculty is helping to educate the youth about making smart food choices and about the importance of being active.

As middle-schoolers continue to approach adulthood, they need to learn healthy eating habits, because the way they eat now is likely how they will eat as grownups.

with playdough. Dr. Chris Martinez, of UF Landscape Conservation, delivered a fun and wet activity, where youth created an urban landscape and demonstrated urban water transport under a variety of conditions. Dierdre Irwin, Water Conservation Coordinator at SJRWMD, brought models and interactive activities to engage the youth on groundwater, water quality, and conservation. Luke Harlow, the County Agriculture Agent, separated the youth into teams to play a game about urban water conservation! The youth reported that they have a better understanding

Even though they are more advanced academically, middle school students still respond to hands-on learning activities. One specifically that is being utilized is food preparation skills. The students get the opportunity to cook on their own and sample the food prepared. All the recipes the students prepared were healthy and to some of the student's surprise, tasty as well.

Nutrition education is an evidence-based, cost effective way to improve health outcomes and foster healthy eating habits for a lifetime.

of water conservation and 94% of youth agreed that they "will try to save water because of this workshop".



What's **WORKING?**...continued

Taylor County 4-H Afterschool...Making a Difference

Abbey Tharpe

UF/IFAS Extension Taylor County
4-H Extension Agent I
abbeytharpe@ufl.edu

Afterschool programs (sometimes called OST or Out-of-School Time) serve children and youth of all ages, and encompass a broad range of focus areas including academic support, mentoring, youth development, and physical activity. The activities in which youth engage while outside of school hours are critical to their development, highlighting the need for quality afterschool programs in all communities. The demand for afterschool programs is strong; current estimates suggest that nearly 10 million youth participate in afterschool programs annually, 10 million in summer camps, and 6 million in 4-H programs alone (Yohalem, Pittman,



and Edwards, 2010). Through the development of Taylor County 4-H Afterschool, we were able to meet the needs of parents and youth in our community by providing youth with a healthy snack each day, assistance with homework, and the opportunity to participate in a variety of 4-H project areas, in a safe environment.



Let's Meet **WHO'S NEW TO EXTENSION**

The NE District Welcomes Ms. Ivonne Black as new Office Assistant

We are glad to announce that starting on February 12, Ivonne will be our District's Office Assistant III. Ivonne has been with UF/IFAS for 2 and half years. She started as an OPS worker in the Soil and Waters Sciences and was then hired in the UF/IFAS Human Resources office. She enjoys nature walks with her son. Together, they have a goal of going to all the State Parks in Florida. Feel free to introduce yourself to Ivonne - by stopping by the office or sending an e-mail. Welcome, Ivonne!



Got a minute?

Heather M. Janney

UF/IFAS Extension Hamilton County
4-H/FCS Agent II
hfutch@ufl.edu

When's the last time that you were able to sit in a silent room and not do anything, not think about work or kids or family, not have to move, nothing? I know when we are completely honest with ourselves, there's likely very few that can say that they have probably EVER done that. Well, the good news is that this is an option that will help you find better personal wellness.

When you focus on an experience in the present moment (the feeling of

breathing, perhaps, or the sounds in a room), your mind tends to quiet, and a space can open in your head that allows you to see what's going on more clearly. As you become aware of what's happening in your mind and body, you tend to be better at not focusing on results but focusing on responding to the current situation. This allows you the opportunity to reframe how you view a situation and allows you to choose to speak and act in a way that is best aligned whether it be quieting, focusing, seeing, reframing, caring, or connecting.

Next time you are sitting in a completely silent room, take a few minutes

to just say in your head "breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, breathe out." Only focus on where it is that you feel your breath and place your hand where you feel it the strongest: your throat, your chest, your stomach. Start with doing this for one minute, and then gradually extend the time that you do this by 30 seconds each time. Set a timer if this helps. When you realize how your mind has wandered to your kids' soccer game after work or what you're cooking for dinner, simply draw yourself back in, repeating "breathe in, breathe out." Just try it... you'll be amazed.

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 (chair), Jessica Altum, Larry Figart, Alicia Lamborn, Natasha Parks, Carree Musgrove, Debbie Nistler, Abbey Tharpe, Denise DeBusk, Stephanie Connor

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