

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



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Professional Development Mini-Grant Issue

Each year since 2007, UF/IFAS Extension administration offers the opportunity for state and county Extension faculty to compete for Professional Development Mini-Grants. Professional growth and development are key factors to job satisfaction and effectiveness. We have set aside funding to support local, state, national and international initiatives. Each year the Office of the Dean for Extension sends out the current application, guidelines and timeline. In 2019 we were pleased to offer 54 Professional Development Mini-grants worth \$80,000 to UF/IFAS Extension faculty. This issue of UF/IFAS Extension Comings & Goings features the reports of last year's awardees.

TAYLOR DAVIS

Livestock and Natural Resources EA I, Highlands County

The South Florida Beef-Forage Program (SFBFP) group submitted a Search for Excellence in Livestock Production to the National Association County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) and was selected as a Top 3 National Finalist. In conjunction with their award, I was recognized for my Florida Association of Agricultural Agents (FACAA) State Award in the Individual Newsletter category. I was selected by the SFBFP to travel to Fort Wayne, Indiana to the **NACAA National Conference** to receive these awards.

In search of grant money to cover the cost of expenses, I applied to my district director for a 2019 UF/IFAS Professional Development Mini-grant and a Conference Funding Request. I was able to receive funding from both applications! This granted me the opportunity to travel to the national conference to network with fellow educators across the country, I learned about new program topics for educational events, and innovative teaching styles to better serve my clients.

Thank you for granting me the opportunity to travel to the NACAA national conference to receive acknowledgement on the awards we earned, to gain knowledge in my program area to overall better serve my clientele, as well as share my experiences and knowledge within my fields of livestock and natural resources!

UF/IFAS Extension Comings and Goings is a monthly newsletter distributed by the Office of the Dean for Extension via e-mail and on the UF/IFAS Extension web site at <http://extadmin.ifas.ufl.edu>. If you have any suggestions or would like to submit your own recognition or short article of interest, please send them to Valkyrie Aldrari. Please feel free to also forward any questions or comments about this periodical to Valkyrie Aldrari at valkyriea@ufl.edu.

GABRIELA MURZA

Family and Consumer Sciences EA II, Osceola County

I attended a **StrongWomen/StrongBodies** training in Wisconsin in August 2019. The 12-week program was developed to teach strength training exercises to women in middle to older age to help improve strength and balance, decrease the risk of injury from falls, improve flexibility

and coordination, and prevent or slow the progression of osteoporosis. The training itself was a one-day course that focused on executing the series and teaching the exercises correctly. Most of the attendees came from different parts of Wisconsin, so they were surprised that I had traveled all

the way from Florida “just to attend the training.” While this series was initially developed for women, it has expanded to include men, teenagers and young adults; basically anyone who wants to build strength and improve their health. I plan to teach this series in early 2020 to older adults in Osceola County.

NICK SIMMONS

Livestock CED II, Escambia County

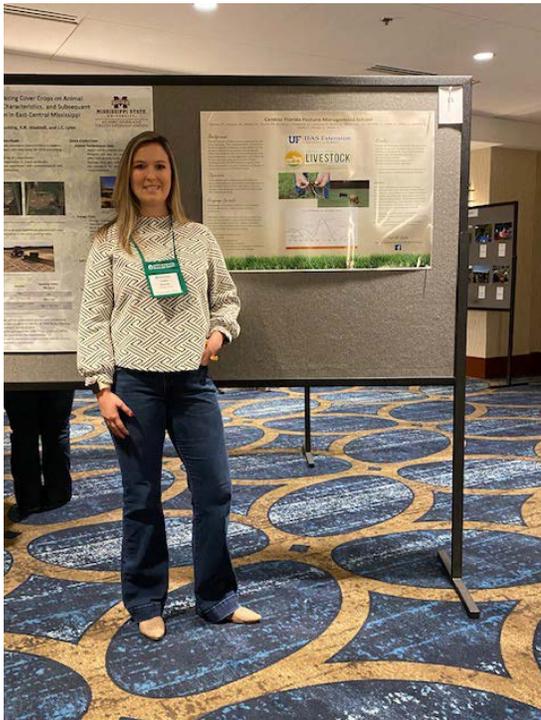
In November of 2019, I attended the **Disney Institute: Leadership Excellence** course held at the Coronado Springs Resort at Walt Disney World in Orlando, FL. This event is hosted by the educational branch of the Walt Disney Company and is offered in both Florida and California. The objectives of the Disney Institute are to educate leaders from various workforces in how to implement the proven leadership tactics of the Disney Company into their own organization. This one-day class provided an in-depth look at new and innovative leadership methods that provide guidance and direction to one of the

largest organizations in the world. I met leaders from across the country who had the same interest in learning more about their personal leadership skills, as well as how they can make their company more effective and profitable. We spent most of the morning hearing lectures, doing round-table discussions and activities and sharing our own experiences. For the afternoon session, we were able to take a private tour through the workings of Disney’s Animal Kingdom to see in person how leadership skills are used every day at Disney’s parks. I believe that one of the most important things I learned in my experience was the idea that an

organization’s vision can and should change, but its values never change. I thought of this regarding UF/IFAS. We still provide valuable information and strive to provide research-based information to improve the lives of Floridians, but we now use various teaching methods and have adapted our topics to include program areas like urban Extension. I thoroughly enjoyed my experience at the Disney Institute and look forward to expanding programming in this area in the future. I appreciate the support from the Dean to allow for professional development opportunities like this.

CAITLIN BAINUM

Livestock EA I, Marion County



I used my professional development funds to travel to Greenville, SC to the **American Forage and Grassland Council Annual Meeting**. I presented a poster on two of the days and had some great networking opportunities. This was an industry-driven conference and interacting with industry was extremely helpful when talking about building future Extension programs. It was helpful to hear from the people who depend on the great work we all do.

Caitlin Bainum presents a poster at the American Forage and Grassland Council annual meeting.

JENNIFER BEARDEN

Agriculture EA II, Okaloosa County

I attended the **2019 National Association of County Agricultural Agents Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference** in Fort Wayne, IN. It was an excellent conference where everyone had the opportunity to share knowledge and learn from each other. I presented a poster on soybean variety trials performed at the UF/IFAS West Florida REC. I also attended the Communicators Awards Luncheon as a state winner. Further, I fully participated in the

NOELLE GUAY

4-H Youth Development EA I, Palm Beach County

Through a 2019 UF/IFAS Professional Development Mini-Grant, I was able to attend the **Intercultural Development Inventory's (IDI) Qualifying Seminar Training**. The training was originally to be held in Portland, OR, but was provided via a virtual setting due to COVID-19. This seminar enabled me to be trained and licensed to use the Intercultural Development Inventory. The inventory assesses intercultural competence, specifically the capability to shift cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior to cultural differences and commonalities. The IDI is the only developmental assessment of intercultural competence. This fundamental focus allows individuals and groups to focus on increasing their intercultural competence (from how they currently engage cultural differences to how they can more effectively engage diversity). The IDI facilitates cooperative conversations and actions directed toward growth and development, rather than judgment and resistance. The IDI has been validated to provide a powerful and accurate profile of respondents' orientations toward a wide range of "other culture" groups, including nationality, ethnicity, gender and other diversity categories.

As a member of the UF/IFAS and FAE4-HA Diversity and Inclusion Committees, as well as CAFÉ Latino, the IDI training enables me to facilitate the IDI questionnaire to other Extension agents in order to expand the diversity and inclusion initiatives within UF/IFAS. Having the training and access to IDI increases my ability to tangibly contribute to the

WHITNEY ELMORE

Urban Horticulture EA III, Pasco County

Having been a CED/Extension agent for over five years, I found myself wanting more specific leadership training skills. I had attended various trainings and workshops, but wasn't finding what I needed to make the next step in growth toward servant leadership. I applied for the UF/IFAS Professional Development Mini-grant in 2019 and was honored to be awarded with funds to travel to New York to attend the **Dale Carnegie Advanced Leadership Training** over a three-day period in January 2020. The sessions were intense and averaged eight hours each with more than five trainers in the room each session. They were highly interactive, challenging and covered a variety of topics, many of which I had faced myself in my current position. Specific techniques for conflict

professional development opportunities, such as lectures and tours. The tours were very educational; I gained knowledge and ideas specifically pertaining to drones or other agronomic production programs from other agents around the country to improve my programs in the county, district and state. The COVID-19 pandemic has limited my drone programming for 2020, which was originally scheduled for early June. I still plan to hold the drone workshops when I am able to.

Diversity and Inclusion team. I will be able to use the IDI to produce a customized, Intercultural Development Plan (IDP) for agents that will guide them through a series of activities and self-reflections that developmentally build intercultural competence. Additionally, as a 4-H agent in a diverse state and county, this training enabled me to assess my own cultural competency and work towards improving how I interact with youth, volunteers, and parents who have cultures that differ from my own. This increased awareness and improved cultural competency will better equip me to serve my county's population. I will be able to develop more diverse and inclusive activities for youth, create new 4-H programming and develop more encompassing trainings for my volunteers. I will also be able to share this knowledge with other agents within IFAS/Extension as a trainer so they can do the same to meet the needs of their local audience. Diversity and inclusion is something that I am deeply committed to, and I know it could be improved upon in Palm Beach County and within UF/IFAS. Now that I have completed this training, I plan to continue to expand my role in the Diversity and Inclusion Team as well as the Diversity and Inclusion Committee within FAE4-HA. As I continue to learn and grow, there will be tools, resources and contacts I have made because of the training that I can provide to the committees in order to help UF/IFAS achieve its goal of increasing its cultural awareness and outreach.

resolution, team leadership, aggressive (but not pushy) negotiation tactics and much more were addressed in the training.

On the last day of training, we were asked to give impromptu speeches to the group (24 individuals) concerning a specific situation, how we handled it, the outcome and what we would now do differently given our recent training. The speech could not be more than three minutes or less than two-and-a-half minutes. I chose to discuss a particularly challenging situation I had dealt with concerning stakeholders. I discussed the trials and tribulations, the outcomes and what I had learned. At the end of the training, we were all asked to stand up and were labeled by the trainers with one word describing our

personality traits relative to our speeches and the overall impression we left on the trainers throughout the training. I was labeled as a “risk-taker”. That shocked me – I was the only one in the class labeled as such. I was slightly offended at first, but then the explanation of the label came with an unexpected twist – an award. I was selected as the “best leader” in the class, which was a shock. Risk-taker, to me, had a negative connotation. The lead trainer explained that change will not come without risk, which most of us recognize, and I was reminded that my role as “Extension agent” comes with the expectation of change through education. As an Extension agent I was leading change and doing so carefully and methodically while serving the greater good. I was serving through leadership, even when that meant taking risks. I was rewarded for taking risks – creating change. That single experience was worth the entire trip to me and solidified my purpose and place in Extension. I came back to the office with a renewed spirit for education, Extension and the will to

spread this knowledge to others thus empowering them to lead positive change as well.

Since the training, I have provided three leadership trainings for my team involving information gleaned from the training in New York, I was recognized as a leader by county administration, and my team is now more enthusiastic about the future as ever – even during a pandemic, which has upended our daily lives and work in unexpected and often negative ways. However, the team was prepared for change because of our leadership experiences together, they have risen to the occasion during a very difficult time, and we are moving forward with new and exciting changes in Pasco County – much of which I can attribute to my training with Dale Carnegie. I hope to be able to travel again one day for more advanced training with the institution. It was the professional development experience I had been needing and wanting.

JUANITA POPENOE

Commercial Fruit Production EA IV, Lake/Orange/Marion Counties

The **55th Annual Meeting of the Caribbean Food Crops Society** was held in the Dominican Republic in 2019. A team of UF/IFAS Extension agents and specialists put together a proposal to provide a workshop on “Tapping into Distance Diagnostics – How to and Available Resources” to provide training for Caribbean Extension agents on diagnostic best practices and how they can utilize a form of the Distance Diagnostic and Identification System (DDIS) now being made available to countries in the Caribbean. The proposal was well received, and we were asked to provide two half-day sessions to accommodate all that wanted to attend. This mini-grant allowed me to attend and teach at this program.

Each agent and specialist brought a different aspect of their experience to the program, from field identification of insects and plants to quick disease diagnosis, best ways to photograph the issue to submit for distance diagnostics, and various resources available to assist in distance diagnostics.

The program was so popular that they have asked us to return and provide it again. Unfortunately, 2020 was not a great year for international travel and it will have to wait for another year.

In addition to teaching this program, I was able to attend several of the oral presentations and poster sessions to learn more about tropical fruit production. We also toured some of the horticultural areas and learned about Dominican Republic production, a close neighbor with similarities and differences in horticulture that were intriguing and enlightening. We learned that English is often a second language for many of the attendees, but not all. Having translators was a new experience for us and a steep learning curve as to how fast you can talk, how technical your language is, and how much more time it takes to teach in this fashion. The grant allowed me to provide education to a new group, and in turn to be educated myself in horticulture production in the Caribbean.

MATT LOLLAR

Commercial Horticulture EA II, Santa Rosa County

The 2019 UF/IFAS Professional Development Mini-Grant provided the funding for me to attend the **2019 National Association of County Agricultural Agents annual meeting/ professional improvement conference** in Ft. Wayne, IN. At the conference, I co-presented a “super seminar” on video production. The seminar was presented to 25 Extension agents and specialists from around the country. At the end of the seminar, all participants were able to edit and produce an educational video with two different video editing products.

The conference also offered professional development tours. I was lucky enough to go on a tour of Beck’s Hybrids Headquarters in Atlanta, IN. This is the location of their main research farm where they develop hybrid corn and soybean seeds. At the farm we were able to tour Beck’s greenhouse facilities where they use different spectrums of light to manipulate plant growth for seed production.

MARK MAULDIN

Agriculture and Natural Resources EA II, Washington County

The funds provided by the 2019 UF/IFAS Professional Development Mini-Grant covered travel and registration expenses associated with attending the 2020 **American Forage & Grassland Council (AFGC) Annual Conference** in Greenville, SC.

The AFGC annual conference is a relatively small conference focused on a specific topic – forage production and management. The conference focuses on the intersection of research and practical application and features a unique mixture of attendees, representing both academia and industry. The combination of these factors made the conference an excellent environment for insightful conversations and making connections with producers and colleagues from other states. Evidence to that point: the formation of the new Florida Forage & Grassland Council was the result of conversations had at the conference.

At the conference I had the opportunity to attend many presentations, all of which related directly to my largest Extension program – Livestock and Forage Production and Management. These educational opportunities helped further my knowledge base, ultimately helping me be a more effective agent for my local clients.

At the conference I presented a poster, “Extension Programs for New and Beginning Forage Producers”. The poster was well received, and the presentation sessions provided an excellent opportunity to network with Extension faculty from other institutions with shared interests.

Attending the conference was a very enjoyable and beneficial experience that would not have been possible without funding from the professional development mini-grant.

CLAY COOPER

Agriculture and Natural Resources EA I, Citrus County

Being a newer agent attending meetings, trainings and other professional development activities can be a challenge, especially if and when funds are limited. As a result of the UF/IFAS Professional Development Mini-Grant, I was able to attend and present at the **Weed Science Society of America’s Annual Meeting**. Without the supporting funds, this professional development opportunity would not have been possible. It allowed for me to present on the research being conducted here in Citrus County and also to collaborate with other colleagues focusing their programmatic efforts in the area of weed science along with industry representatives. In all, the professional development mini-grant was instrumental in allowing me to attend this meeting and aiding my professional development as a young agent.

NICOLE CRAWSON

4-H Youth Development EA II, Holmes County

In November of 2019, I attended and completed the **Real Colors Facilitator Certification Training** and am now a Real Colors Certified Facilitator. The Real Colors training was exceptional, as it provided me with valuable tools to evaluate how others react to situations differently, how to teach others to communicate with each other and what others value and motivate each other. Unfortunately, because of the major holidays immediately following and then the coronavirus pandemic, the two Real Colors workshops I was scheduled to facilitate were cancelled. Rescheduling is in the planning stages now to deliver to both volunteer and youth workshops in the fall/winter, in accordance to UF, CDC, and county social distancing guidelines. I look forward to facilitating these trainings.

An additional and unexpected positive to note is that I met many great professionals at the training and have been working with several Extension professionals from another state that also took the Real Colors Facilitator certification training. We have been working on several different multi-state and national Extension programs during the covid-19 pandemic, not related to Real Colors, because of our relationship from the training opportunity.

Thank you for this wonderful opportunity through the mini-grant award!

LISA KRIMSKY

Water Resources RSA III, Southeast District

In 2019, I was fortunate enough to receive a UF/IFAS Professional Development Mini-Grant to support my travel to attend two conferences, the **Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (CERF) 2019 Biennial Conference and the 10th US Symposium on Harmful Algae**. Both conferences were held during the same week in coastal Alabama. My participation in these conferences, while exhausting, allowed me the unique opportunity to present at an international conference and network with national experts in harmful algal blooms as well as my UF/IFAS colleagues, who were also attendees. As we all know, networking is often the most important and enjoyable part of conferences. At a conference-hosted social event, Betty Staugler (UF/IFAS Florida Sea Grant) and I were invited to join the Steering Committee to develop a Florida Harmful Algal Bloom conference. Although these plans were eventually put on hold due to Covid-19, we are looking forward to continuing the planning process for 2021. We also discussed a stakeholder concern regarding algal bloom signage with a colleague from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Over beers and oysters we were able to share and find a simple solution to this issue that had been challenging our counties. Lastly, a conversation with someone sitting next to me at my presentation session resulted in an invitation to submit a statement of interest for a USGS grant. While ultimately not accepted, this conversation led to a new multi-state collaboration and hopefully additional opportunities in the future.

NATALIE PARKELL

4-H Youth Development EA I, Martin County

There is not a day that goes by that I do not awaken with gratitude for my opportunity to serve as a county agent within UF/IFAS Extension. Arriving at this position was the culmination of years of attempts – specifically, seven applications around the state and four final interviews for various posts. In my case, the seventh time was the charm. And because of this “pinch-me-to-see-if-I’m-dreaming” mindset, whenever offered a further opportunity to improve my professional skills or other experiences, I jump.

I was provided financial support during the 2019 UF/IFAS Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant cycle to attend the **National Association of Extension 4-H Agents (NAE4-HA) Annual Conference** in White Sulphur Springs, WV. And while I was one of many 4-H professionals from Florida in attendance, I was the only member of the delegation to have not attended a national event. (Tragically, three weeks prior to the conference, my mother passed away after a very long and painful chronic illness, leaving me personally distraught and in more need than ever in my life to “get away.”)

The host of the conference turned out to be a world-renowned resort [and former emergency bunker for U.S. government officials] known as the Greenbrier – a national historic treasure and landmark. Viewing the grounds of the resort during the fall season in the Appalachian Mountains was visually stunning, and quite the stark contrast with sunny South Florida. From the terrain to the manicured landscape to the West Virginia cultural heritage, the week far exceeded expectations.

Highlights of the conference included significant networking with 4-H professionals across the nation. Award-winning agents from Nebraska shared their programmatic highlights, livestock specialists from Iowa wowed with their innovative virtual project resources, and colleagues from Ohio inspired accessible and “do-able” drone lessons to easily transition to my Martin County stakeholders. There was ALWAYS something interesting going on, and I gained a depth of appreciation for my professional organization way beyond our state lines. Seated next to a veteran 4-H administrator from Maryland (my home state), he sagely professed to me at our

awards banquet that, “You can take as little or as much of this as you want – and you can run with it. The choice is yours.” As a young(ish) professional, this was a valuable nugget of wisdom just tumbling out, reinforcing that even in the midst of my deep sadness, I could find inspiration and motivation to keep striving, keep trying, and keep serving as my resilience could allow.

As a result of the attendance of this conference, I subsequently applied (and was accepted) to present at the National 4-H STEM Conference in Pittsburgh, PA this May – but unfortunately, COVID-19 derailed that opportunity. I will still have the chance to present in 2021, as hopefully, we will be out of pandemic mode by that point. Regardless, if that should not come to pass, the experience at NAE4-HA in West Virginia was a “once in a lifetime” experience I will never forget. As my career in UF/IFAS Extension unfolds, I am eager to determine just how much of that I want and how I will “run with it.” Thank you for that opportunity.

HANNAH WOOTEN

Commercial Horticulture EA I, Orange County

The 2019 UF/IFAS Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant awarded me with a training opportunity that I have been eyeing since before the start of my career in Extension. The training is a highly regarded and expensive **Hydroponic Tomatoes Intensive Short Course** hosted

by the University of Arizona. The training not only elevated my level of understanding and practicing concepts hands-on, but it also connected me with other students with expertise from Singapore, Saudi Arabia, India, Germany, the Navajo nation and many states! UF is undoubtedly one of the

best, but it was refreshing to be in a totally different place with diverse people to discuss our passions and practices that make us successful both individually, and collectively. The mini grant gave me the opportunity to step back, think, and just love learning.

NEW & NOTABLE PROGRAMS

Saqib Mukhtar, Associate Dean for Extension

GET GROWING – SUSTAINABLE HOME FOOD PRODUCTION

Find some general guidelines to keep in mind as you contemplate starting your edible garden or raising backyard chickens and even wondering if that snake is Friend or Foe? You can find all that and more here:

<https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/get-growing/>

Watch some great educational videos and get the fact sheet to *Building a Floating Hydroponic Garden*. Contact Wendy Wilber for additional information.

FLORIDA SEAFOOD AT YOUR FINGERTIPS LIVE

Florida Sea Grant is creating a series of seafood-centric Facebook Live cooking demonstration videos that provide step-by-step guidance for selecting and preparing seafood. In “Seafood at Your Fingertips LIVE,” viewers learn about smart seafood choices, sustainable fisheries and the health benefits of eating a diet rich in seafood. Agents also teach about the seasonality of Florida seafood and what can be substituted if a certain product is not available at your local market.

Live videos can be viewed at 6 pm EST on Wednesdays on the Florida Sea Grant Facebook page www.facebook.com/floridaseagrant. For a schedule of upcoming “Florida Seafood at Your Fingertips” live events, previously recorded videos, recipes and more, visit <http://www.flseagrant.org/seafood/seafoodatyourfingertips/>

Support our fisheries and encourage people to purchase local seafood!!

- Dr. Maia McGuire, Interim Associate Program Leader for Sea Grant

FLORIDA SUPERNATURE

Join James Stevenson, Natural Resources Extension Specialist, for a series of webinars on Florida’s Supernature. Participants will learn about the wonders of the plants and animals frequently encountered in Florida. The series will cover a range of topics from “Bugs and Butterflies in Your Backyard” to “Spice Science” and aims

to inspire a desire to protect these “super-beings” and their natural habitats.

Classes take place online in a webinar room every Wednesday, 2-3PM. To view upcoming Florida’s Supernature webinar topics and to register visit: <http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/pinellasco/2020/04/28/exploring-the-wonders-of-plants-and-animals-in-florida/>

VIRTUAL WATER AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Join UF/IFAS Extension for the Virtual Water Ambassador lunch and learn webinar series.

The Water Ambassador Program is an educational partnership between Martin County and UF/IFAS Extension that unites and empowers residents who have an interest in protecting local waterways and giving back to their communities. The program provides a way for motivated individuals to learn more about specific water resource topics. Weekly webinars bring in guest speakers

to address a variety of local (Indian River Lagoon) and statewide water resource and management topics. Webinars include water quality, water conservation and restoration.

Classes take place online in a webinar room every Tuesday, 12-1PM. To view upcoming Virtual Water Ambassador webinar topics and to register, visit: <http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/2020/05/27/virtual-water-ambassador-program/>

- Dr. Holly Ober, Interim Associate Program Leader for Natural Resources

SUCCESS STORIES

A LIVE LESSON IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Katherine Allen, Family and Consumer Sciences EA IV, Suwannee County



Suwannee County 4-H club members meet with Supervisor of Elections Glenda Williams (top left).

I have always felt that the 4-H programs like Legislature and 4-H Day at the Capitol were important ways for youth to have a non-threatening look into the world of politics. Suwannee

County 4-H had a group of six youth that were registered for 4-H day at the Capitol. We contacted Glenda Williams, the local Supervisor of Elections, to see if we could get a glimpse inside their office and what they do. Even though they had just moved into a new building, Ms. Williams graciously offered to take the youth for a tour of her facility and go through the voting process on test ballots. Three adults and four youth attended and learned that there are 16 local precincts and 26,000 registered voters in Suwannee County. The group also learned that the only position in Suwannee County that is not elected is the police chief, who is appointed.

Ms. Williams allowed them to mark the test ballots and enter them into a machine. Since they “voted”, they all received an

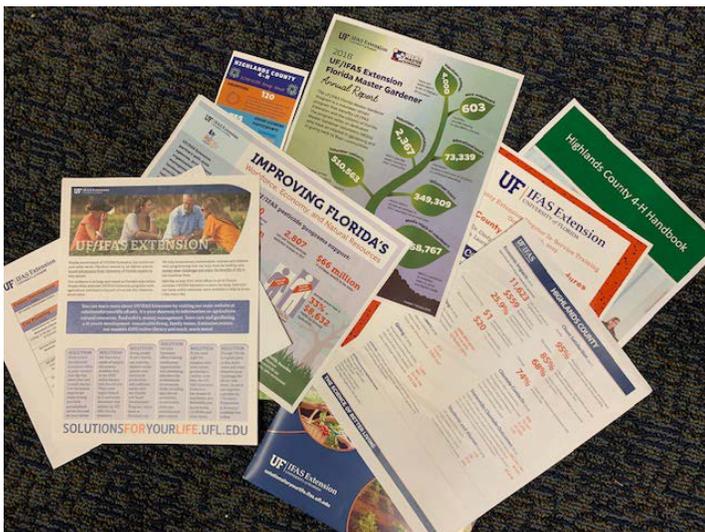
“I voted” sticker! They got to see the checklist for the boxes that are taken to each precinct during an election (to make sure the workers didn’t forget anything on election day!). The group was surprised that a phone and a can of compressed air were among the items. They were also free to ask questions during the tour. One asked what the difference was between Republicans and Democrats. Ms. Williams explained that your party is determined by the candidates who have similar beliefs to yours. Since the participants got to see at a county level what happens to legislation that is to be voted upon, all of the 4-H’ers looked forward to meeting the lawmakers and how they created the legislation.

Six Suwannee County youth joined others from across the state in Tallahassee to attend 4-H Day at the Capitol. This program provides youth with an opportunity to learn more about their state government and experience the political process firsthand. Our 4-H members had appointments with a representative, senator or a legislative aide to talk about how the Florida 4-H Program impacted their lives. During the day, participants heard from public officials, spent time in the Capitol Building, and saw their legislators in action.

Finally, a father who attended the Suwannee County Supervisor of Elections tour decided to take advantage of the opportunity and registered to vote while he was there. As a result, he will be able to vote in the upcoming election. Today, 4-H’s slogan of “Learn By Doing” engages participants involved in 4-H programming. Youth and adult participation can lead to cultural, social and economic changes.

LET’S TALK EXTENSION

Laurie Hurner, Fruit Crops EA III, Highlands County



Some of the materials shared with Highlands County’s leadership team.

Sometimes it is hard to tell folks exactly what UF/IFAS Extension is and what we do. As a county Extension director (CED), I find that I take for granted that those I work with the closest know these things. However, in the fall of last year it became clear to me that this was not the case.

In Highlands County, county operations fall under eight departments, each overseen by a department director who reports directly to the county administrator. In my position as CED, I serve on this leadership team. A few additional folks, like our public information officer, capital projects manager and legislative and grants coordinator, are also included on this team. Each week our team meets to discuss the issues of the county and what is happening in our departments. I began to realize that as I would give my reports, the questions and strange looks I would get from these folks told me my assumptions had been wrong.

After a conversation with my county administrator I decided it was time to remedy this situation. I set a date for a working breakfast meeting. This is how the idea of "Let's Talk Extension" was born. My team of six is known for a lot of great things in our community, but one thing we do that may be on the down-low is cook. We have some amazing chefs among us and we celebrate a birthday, birth or any other celebration in style. So, I huddled the chefs together and laid out a feast. We invited the leadership team to breakfast one hour prior to one of our Monday morning leadership team meetings. I sent out a formal invitation in advance which more than piqued some interest. I got a few texts asking what we were up to.

The morning of the breakfast, we had plenty of Florida orange juice, fruit, pastries, biscuits and gravy, and so on and so on. We decorated the conference room in a great fall manner and set the stage for an excellent program. We provided each guest with a packet of information about Extension and the programs we offer in the county. In the packet was also a 2020 UF/IFAS Extension annual report calendar. Highlands County Extension's commercial citrus program was lucky enough to be featured on one of the months.

I started off the morning with an overview of UF/IFAS Extension, how we are funded, what our purpose and mission

is and provided some overall information about our influence in the county and the county residents and beyond that we serve. Then each program area agent provided a short five-minute presentation about their program, the citizens they reach and their important program outcomes.

After the presentations, we opened up for questions and there was a lot of interest in how we could work with the other departments. Comments like, "I never knew that you guys did that" were heard more than once. We took the opportunity before the directors left to ask them to sign up as volunteers to help judge 4-H projects, help with the Master Gardener annual plant festival and many other things.

This was a very successful event. The county administrator was very pleased and encouraged other departments in the following weeks to do a similar type of program to highlight their program areas. As a result of this effort, the UF/IFAS Extension Highlands County is planning five lunch-and-learn sessions for county departments and a county commissioner, to further highlight our programs. Other departments have also reached out to see how we can form programming partnerships to serve the citizens of Highlands County.

TWO FELLOWS' EXPERIENCE IN THE NATURAL RESOURCES LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Ana Zangroniz, Sea Grant EA I, Miami-Dade County | Norma Samuel, Urban Horticulture EA IV, Sumter County | NRLI Class XIX Fellows



Florida Sea Grant Agent and NRLI fellow Ana Zangroniz, center, leads a discussion during a session. Photo: NRLI/Jocelyn Peskin



Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ and Urban Horticulture Agent and NRLI fellow Norma Samuel (front left) laughs with her cohort during the Sebring final session review. Photo: Ana Zangroniz

Last August, two Extension agents from different counties and programs embarked upon a journey as fellows in the Florida Natural Resources Leadership Institute (NRLI). NRLI is an eight-month professional development program with the UF/IFAS Extension. NRLI brings together professionals in sectors that impact or are impacted by natural resource issues. Each intensive

three-day session takes place in a different part of the state and focuses on a specific and contentious natural resource issue. Sessions included immersion in the issue through first-hand experience with the resource, engagement with stakeholders from diverse institutions/organizations and perspectives, and experiential training skills, concepts, tools and strategies

for effective collaborative decision-making, conflict management, communication and negotiation.

NRLI is not your typical professional development or in-service training offering. From the moment we walked into the room, we were "on" – in other words, engaged, participating, thinking, talking. It was intense. Our

agenda contained the following components: We were introduced to the overall natural resource issue by a content speaker who has worked or been a part of the particular issue. We took a field trip to view the actual resource and/or conflict, and we prepared questions for a stakeholder panel with individuals representing multiple sectors surrounding the issue. In between these segments were discussions and activities led by the NRLI project team, introducing us to the specific content focus of the session. Some examples were: dealing with challenging behaviors, identifying roots of conflict and understanding positions and interests. All of these pieces were woven together into an exhausting – albeit exhilarating and stimulating – syllabus.

The eight sessions that took us around the state included:

- August 2019: Ft. Lauderdale (Impacts of Port Expansion)
- September 2019: Ft. Walton Beach (Beach Nourishment)
- October 2019: Ft. Myers (Water Quality and Estuary Health)
- November 2019: Ocala (Wildlife Management: Florida Black Bear)

- January 2020: Okeechobee (Agriculture and Water Quality)
- February 2020: Sebring (Lake Istokpoga Management)
- March 2020: Zoom (Integrative Negotiation, Power)
- April 2020: Zoom (Program Recap, Final Presentations, Graduation)

With the onset of COVID-19 and subsequent impacts prohibiting travel, the NRLI project team adapted and overcame to deliver our final two sessions via Zoom, rather than postponing or canceling our opportunities altogether. Our class was the first ever to hold virtual sessions, for which we were incredibly grateful.

A critical component of NRLI is the practicum project, which is a practical application of the skills and concepts learned into conducting a gathering that will allow for conversation and deliberate decision-making. About half of our cohort was able to complete their practicum projects prior to the COVID-19-related closures. Recognizing the limitations surrounding in-person meetings, the project team again adapted. In the final session, fellows were permitted to discuss how they planned to run their

practicum, or how they could apply NRLI into their future work.

Participation in this program was a challenge, but a welcome one. These skills gained will be valuable in helping us to navigate the complex issues we face in Extension. By studying the curriculum topics and how they tie in with the diverse natural resource issues around the state, we have greatly expanded our knowledge base and we're better prepared to engage stakeholders and guide them towards making decisions. We have developed strong professional relationships with individuals from multiple agencies with whom we can explore future collaborative opportunities. We are now well-equipped to facilitate consensus-building not only regarding natural resource-related issues, but also issues related to Florida's population growth, climate change, and reimagining Extension's new role in recovering from the impact of COVID-19.

We highly recommend county and state faculty who work with, in or around natural resources to apply for the next cohort of NRLI fellows. For more information visit: <https://nrlifas.ufl.edu/index.shtml>.

PLANTING SEEDS OF VICTORY

Mark Bailey, Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems EA I, Marion County



“Food will win the war and write the peace.” That statement was made by Secretary of Agriculture Claude Wickard when he served as head of the War Food Administration during World War II. The first nation-wide effort was launched during World War I in 1917 with the National War Garden Commission,

which encouraged Americans to plant victory gardens. While America is not engaged in another world war, we have been engaged in a war on an invisible enemy that has caused economic damage and severe disruption to our daily lives.

Food insecurity is already an on-going concern for many in modern-day America, just as it was during World Wars I and II, and it needs to be addressed. Just like it is today, much of the outreach to encourage the planting of these victory gardens was via school programs, 4-H clubs, and Extension agents across America.

The purpose of promoting the victory garden was not simply to grow one's own food to “fight” in the war, but to encourage Americans to reduce waste, increase frugality, support local agriculture, and increase their self-sufficiency. We are working to encourage the same principles and actions several generations later. In an effort to rapidly respond to on-going challenges, namely food security, Extension agents from Marion and Columbia counties developed Victory2020 Garden Community.

Victory2020 Garden Community consists of an eight-week online course that provides accessible information about best practices for growing a garden for food, as well as

related topics. Participants signed up through Qualtrics, which allowed program coordinators to begin communication with participants and to collect key information such as demographics and location. Currently, a total of 2,300 individuals have joined Victory2020 Garden Community. Each individual who elected to receive seeds would receive three or more different seed packets which consisted of corn, squash, cucumber, or cowpea and a printed letter about the program as well as gardening tips. From initial conception in March of this year, we have hand sorted, packed and sent more than 1,650 packages along with 4,950 individual seed bags to start a garden. The Victory2020 Garden Community Facebook page currently has 1,358 participants who receive regular updates and communication with the program coordinators. Canvas software is used to deliver an online vegetable-growing course where 1,123 participants have been actively engaging with the learning modules. These modules

are composed of a variety of written, recorded, and interactive learning material. The modules included the history of victory gardens; basics of plants and soil; garden site selection, planning & planting; pests and weeds; harvesting and storing crops; healthy lifestyles; harvesting your crop; food preservation and careers in agriculture. Participants also will receive a laminated Victory2020 Garden Community poster, which can be displayed next to their garden, increasing the visibility of the program. Over 100 youth who are signed up were provided with record books that tracks their experience and progress.

Program evaluations will be sent out to participants towards the end of the summer, after most crops have had time to be harvested. Given the encouraging feedback and active participation we are expecting very positive results. Ultimately, the victory garden can serve as one of the components that will help America recover from turbulent times.

BROWARD EXTENSION HELPS WEST AFRICAN MISSIONARIES USE FALLEN MANGOS

Brenda Marty Jimenez, FCS EA IV, Broward County



Making mango fruit leather.

UF/IFAS Extension Broward County Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) receives calls and emails from consumers requesting research-based information they can count on to provide solutions to problems. The requests can be local or even from other states and continents. FCS agent Brenda Marty Jimenez recently received a call and an email asking how

to use fallen mangoes in Ghana, West Africa; she had been referred from an agent in Montana Extension.

Montana Extension had located a 2018 blog article written by Ms. Marty-Jimenez, [“It’s Mango Season in South Florida!”](#) The caller sought information for missionary workers in West Africa, which had an excess of fallen mangoes that the villagers needed to use before they spoiled. Violent storms had hit the area, resulting in the fallen mangoes on their 40-acre orchard. The missionaries considered producing fruit leather and chutney to sell to generate income; they needed recipes that they could teach to the locals. They were also in search of what might work for future development of the use of this fruit.

The agent was able to provide recipes for items to be prepared.

Mango fruit leather: <https://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/nchfp/factsheets/dryingmangoleather.pdf>

Mango chutney: https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_06/mango_chutney.html

The agent also provided answers to questions on topics such as the use of ascorbic acid, vitamin C, browning, canning, and use-by-date. Ascorbic acid, which prevents browning, was not readily available and would have to be brought in from 14 hours away. Crushed vitamin C tablets were used as a substitute. Basic food-safety principles were exchanged, along with emails and photos. The local people enjoyed trying the new mango products, although they did not particularly care for the fruit leather or the chutney and preferred the flavor of fresh mangoes.

In addition, they were able to puree and freeze some of the fruit. Two local women used the mango puree to make mango cake, a take-off of a banana bread recipe, to supplement their income. One of them had temporarily lost her teaching position due to COVID-19.

Broward Extension’s Family and Consumer Sciences agent provides information for families and consumers, using educational resources to help solve everyday problems. This is an example of Broward FCS’s global reach, one of UF/IFAS Extension’s 10 core values. Blog articles such as the one mentioned above can sometimes have an unforeseen reach, coming full circle to provide solutions for life, from Broward County to West Africa!

COMINGS AND GOINGS

We would like to welcome the following newly hired and transferring faculty. These individuals were hired following a highly competitive search, screening and selection process. In some cases, candidates interviewed both on the UF campus in Gainesville and in a county Extension office. Selection was often difficult because we typically have two or three suitable candidates. These faculty are truly the best of the best!

NEW HIRES

Katherine Marin, CRD EA I, Miami-Dade County
Lisa Strange, Ag/NR EA II, Taylor County
Patricia (Lynn) Nobles, Ag/NR CED III, Marion County
Morgan Pinkerton, Sust Ag & Food Sys EA II, Seminole County
Jamielyn Daugherty, Residential Hort EA II, Lake County
Craig Frey, Commercial Hort CED II, Hendry County

TRANSFERS

Chris Kerr, Commercial Hort EA II, Duval County
Annie Sheldon, FCS CED II, Clay County
Kalan Taylor, Ag/NR EA I, Volusia County

We would like to wish the following agents the best of luck in their future endeavors.

DEPARTURES

Julianne Shoup Dinkel, FCS EA I, Jefferson County
David Nistler, Ag/Hort EA II, NE District
Jane Cant, Ag/Small Farms EA I, Duval County
Luara Bertelli Canal, Ag EA I, Bradford County

RETIRED

Diana Smith, 4-H YD EA IV, Manatee County
Gary England, RSA IV, HAEC
Diana Converse, FCS EA IV, Hillsborough County
Adrian Hunsberger, MG/FFL EA IV, Miami-Dade County
George 'Les' Harrison, Ag/NR CED III, Wakulla County
Lynda Spence, FCS EA II, Marion County