

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dr. Andrew Koeser	2
Marie Arick	2
E. Vanessa Campoverde	2
Dr. Carissa Wickens	3
Julie McConnell	4
Stacey Ellison	5
Judy Corbus	5
Lisa Hickey	5
Laura Valencia	5
Grantly Ricketts	6
Kalyn Waters	6
Daniel Leonard	6
Savanna Barry	6
Maxine Hunter	6
Lara Milligan	7
Brittany Scharf	8
Jill Breslawski	8
M. Jennison Kipp Searcy	8
Holly Abeels	8
Alicia Betancourt	8
New Hires	10
Departures	10
Retirement	10

UF/IFAS Extension *Comings & Goings*

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN FOR EXTENSION



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 a Professional Development Mini-Grant. 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 2017 we were pleased to offer 23 Professional Development Mini-grants worth a \$30,000 to UF/IFAS Extension faculty. This issue of UF/IFAS Extension *Comings & Goings* features the reports of last year's awardees.



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 Shah at valkyriea@ufl.edu.

DR. ANDREW KOESER

Assistant Professor, Urban Tree & Landscape Management, GCREC

This past September, through the support offered by the Extension Professional Development Mini-grant program, I was able to travel to the **2017 Arboricultural Association Amenity Conference** at Exeter University, United Kingdom, to present on Extension efforts conducted with the Central Florida Tree Diversity Working Group. Through this partnership, which includes nursery growers, tree/landscape management professionals, local/county governments, and UF/IFAS Extension agents/specialists, we are working on a number of participatory research efforts to overcome current barriers to tree diversity. The theme of the conference was biosecurity – which can be enhanced at a city or regional scale, in part, with increased species diversity. In attending the conference, I learned that the United Kingdom faces many of the same problems we are working to address here in Florida. The UK is somewhat protected by the surrounding ocean, but there are numerous ports of entry where pests and invasive plants can be brought in. This constant threat has been somewhat compounded by uncertainties related to Brexit, as much of the research and protection funding is tied to the EU.

MARIE ARICK

FCS EA I, Jackson County

While attending the **Southern Obesity Summit** in Atlanta, I was fortunate enough to serve on a Q & A panel with a former Extension colleague from Texas A&M, Michael Lopez. He graciously applauded my presentation on The Diabetes Belt Distinction in response to a question from a participant regarding the combination of exercise, nutrition and barrier removal. With my response, I also noted that his (Lopez's) plenary session presentation also helped me (and I am certain many others) to acknowledge that the presentation of local parks, neighborhoods and other venues that could be utilized for exercise, plays a key role in whether they are utilized or not.

When an area's presentation appears uninviting (e.g., broken playground equipment, hazardous fencing, graffiti and/or lack proper patrolling by police or a neighborhood watch program), people tend to shy away from the resource, as they feel unsure/unsafe. In general, people tend to gravitate toward warm and inviting places and are more willing to socialize and participate in this environment—this is known as the “Broken

Window Theory”. Many of us know this, but we tend to forget about or minimize this barrier as we encourage our program participants to exercise, and fail to remember how impactful this can be.

I have since enhanced addressing this issue in my various programs to bring awareness of the phenomenon to the participants. Instead of just acknowledging that some may have this disadvantage, I have also provided information and resources on how they can proactively address this in their neighborhoods and communities. This includes contacting the local law enforcement to create neighborhood watch programs, increasing police patrols, working with local non-profits and faith-based organizations to help with clean up, repairs and/or safety patrols.

The day I gave my talk, Hurricane Irma was working its way across Florida. This experience inspired me to host the Natural Disaster Preparation and Response Conference. The event, sponsored by the Florida Forest Service, International Society of Arboriculture Science and Research Committee, and Arboricultural Research and Education Academy, was held at the Gulf Coast REC this past February (featuring a speaker from the UK in the main program and one of the pre-conference workshops). The program was very strong and well received by the audience, providing the tools and background needed to prepare for the next hurricane. Videos for many of the presentations are posted on my lab youtube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRFdf9mRw3c3sfMF3NP-ZTk4UcethLg1F>). I am using the insights gained from the program to draft a new industry BMP to be published by the International Society of Arboriculture.

Simply stated, a reminder of the importance of things you already know, but feel you have not effectively communicated along with potential resolutions, can affect your program participants' success.

E. VANESSA CAMPOVERDE

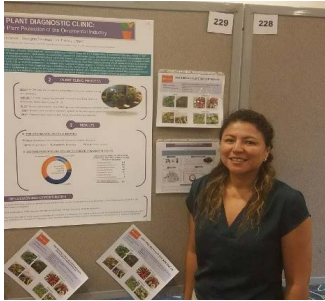
Agriculture and Ornamental Horticulture EA II, Miami-Dade County

Let me share my experience attending the **Annual Conference of the American Society for Horticultural Science (ASHS)**. This association is 115 years old and is recognized around the world as one of the most respected and influential professional societies for horticultural scientists. That sounded fascinating, so I was hoping to have a chance (aka funding) to attend one meeting! “Just one!” I said to myself, and I got my wish granted.

It all started when I got brave enough to apply for an Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant. AGAIN! Yes, I had applied and received that sweet letter of rejection before. But not last year, when I received funding to attend this ASHS annual meeting in beautiful Hawaii (I know!). I was excited about location, of course, but let me share with you all the amazing benefits that this professional development



Hawaii Volcanoes National Park



Proof that I worked during the poster session!



With Juanita Popenoe at the Hall of Fame celebration for her great uncle, Wilson Popenoe.

opportunity allowed me to bring into my professional advancement.

First, there is a niche for everyone in the horticultural world during this conference. I wanted to attend almost every one of the sessions, which got me into a physical conflict trying to be in two places at the same time. That never happens to me in any other conference (except EPAF, obviously).

During daily sessions, I found UF/IFAS friends and met colleagues from other states. Researchers, teachers, Extension educators, graduate students were all there. In my field, as a commercial ornamental crops Extension agent, I was able to choose between sessions on Floriculture, Plant Nutrient Management, Nursery Crops and International Horticulture Issues/Commercial Horticulture.

DR. CARISSA WICKENS

Extension Equine Specialist, Department of Animal Sciences

I am extremely grateful for the funding support provided through the UF/IFAS Professional Development Mini-Grant program. The 2017-2018 mini-grant covered travel expenses which made it possible for me to attend the **2017 American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, and Soil Science Society of America Annual Meeting** held October 22-25, in Tampa FL. Attending this meeting afforded multiple experiences that have served to enhance my professional development. Equally, if not more importantly, this opportunity resulted in knowledge gain and information gathering that will have wider, positive impacts on the ability of our small farms manure management team to carry out applied research projects and educational programming focused on best practices for equine manure storage and management to protect water quality. This experience represented an important and highly relevant collaboration

I attended many talks and got to put a face to names I've only seen on journal papers. I even met four new UF/IFAS TREC faculty for the first time, all attending this meeting. We traveled almost 5,000 miles from our own state to do this — but hey it happened, and it was wonderful!

I learned about biodegradables containers evaluated for ornamental crops, as well as about how diagnosing the species of a *Phytophthora* pathogen can affect pesticide efficacy, and many other cool topics for plant lovers.

I also witnessed our own Juanita Popenoe, representing her great uncle, Wilson Popenoe, who was honored in the ASHS Hall of Fame for his contributions to research, Extension, education and service to Latin America and the US. She wore a beautiful Guatemalan outfit to honor his time in that country.

I attended an Extension lunch talk on the importance of partnership for the Hawaii floriculture industry, a dual dialog between one grower and the associate Dean for Extension in Hawaii, who showed us the importance of collaboration among tropical nursery crop industry and Extension services.

Finally, I have to confess that I will be back this year — not to Hawaii, but to the next ASHS annual conference. I don't know how, but I was elected a committee Chair for 2019 and my duties begin in 2018. Also, I find that this conference is full of innovative applied research applicable to the ornamental nursery industry, and that it is my duty to be able to educate myself to provide up-to-date research-based information to my clients.

I encourage you to apply for these professional opportunities, and don't get discourage over one, two or maybe three rejections (but who's counting?). Otherwise, I would not have had this chance. We have so many wonderful fields of expertise and our job never ends, but that should drive you to push your limits even more and never stop learning, because we should remain relevant to our clientele. We owe it to ourselves and to the people that depend on us. ¡Nos vemos!

between UF/IFAS state and county faculty. The opportunity to present data from our west central Florida equine manure management practices and educational needs assessment survey project in the ASA Environmental Quality Section, Nutrient Dynamics and Management in Livestock Production Systems, provided a venue for international recognition of the work we are conducting, resulting in significant scholarship for team members and the ability to network and share ideas with other experts. Participating in the South Florida Grazinglands Tour increased my knowledge of forages and forage management practices in our region and has fostered relationship building with our UF/IFAS Agronomy specialists, which is leading to the development of collaborative project ideas and preparation of grant submissions. Attending the Generation Image-Photography 101 for Communicating Science and Research Workshop has caused me to take a



Moderators and speakers in the Nutrient Dynamics and Management in Livestock Production Systems section of the 2017 ASA, CSSA, SSSA Annual Meeting, October 23, Tampa, FL.

more proactive and meaningful approach to taking photos of our research and Extension activities, bringing richness and clarity to how we explain science and tell our story. Specifically, I have been experimenting with Instagram to learn how to better engage people in what is taking place within the captured images and short video clips and how what

the viewer sees relates to scientific principles and findings. I consider myself “a work in progress” when it comes to disseminating science to public audiences through technology and social media, but the workshop provided some important tips and tools that will be helpful in future presentations and outreach efforts. Finally, attending the meeting gave me the opportunity to serve as a judge for the Students of Agronomy, Soils and Environmental Sciences Undergraduate Research Poster Contest. I enjoyed meeting with the students as they walked me through their respective projects, and appreciated the chance to critically evaluate their research. This has led to a greater familiarity with and understanding of the methodologies currently being employed to address important questions regarding forage production practices and the environmental impacts of livestock operations.

Link to abstract and meeting presentation: 2017 ASA, CSSA, SSSA Annual Meeting Presentation titled *Manure Management Practices and Educational Needs of Florida Small Scale Equine Operations* available at <https://scisoc.confex.com/scisoc/2017am/webprogram/Paper106554.html>

JULIE MCCONNELL

Horticultural EA I, Bay County



Adam Dale drilling into roots for tree injection.



Tree injection equipment.



Julie McConnell demonstrates spill cleanup protocol.

UF/IFAS Pest Management

University (PMU) holds multiple courses throughout the year at the Mid-Florida Research and Education Center (MFREC) in Apopka. This facility has an auditorium and lab-style classrooms. They also have some unique structures for in-depth training. Model structures include a framed-out house protected under a pole barn and a fully built house which provides the opportunity for hands-on structural pest control instruction. The research center facility also has ornamental beds, trees, and open turfgrass areas providing opportunities to reinforce

lawn and ornamental integrated pest management techniques.

Okaloosa commercial horticulture agent Sheila Dunning and I have attended four sessions at PMU: Foundations Lawn & Ornamental (L&O), Masters L&O, Foundations General Household Pest (GHP), and Masters GHP. PMU waives the registration fee for agents, but travel is not covered. The UF/IFAS Professional Development Mini-Grant was used to cover travel expenses for one course (Masters L&O, November 2017).

Since completing these courses, agents on the Panhandle Horticulture team have created and delivered a two-day

Lawn & Ornamental course, which was held in May 2018 and attended by pest control industry professionals preparing for the state examination. We are also planning to create and offer a two-day GHP course in the Panhandle. We incorporated some key concepts and teaching techniques learned from PMU, although we are not able to duplicate the course using resources available at MFREC. I strongly encourage attendance at PMU in Apopka; however, for companies with limited training budgets, our two-day Panhandle classes offer an alternate option for up-to-date unbiased training.

STACEY ELLISON

4-H RSA II

The Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant was used to fund my certification in the **Personal Resiliency Instrument**. This instrument measures an individual's capacity to respond to disruption and change, something Extension agents face on a regular basis. I will be using this certification as I co-teach a session on Personal Resiliency at the 2018 Northeast District Extension Faculty meeting and in the future will be piloting the instrument with youth audiences with senior-aged 4-H members engaged in high-level leadership programs.

JUDY CORBUS

FCS EA IV, Washington and Holmes Counties

I received a 2017 Professional Development Mini-Grant to extend the timeframe to complete 1,000 hours of financial counseling experience required for the **Accredited Financial Counselor (AFC) Certification Program**. As a result of the extension, I have completed the required counseling hours and am completing the final steps towards obtaining my AFC certification. Without funding for the extension, I would have had to have begun the certification process all over again and retake the examination. The mini-grant has enabled me to achieve my professional development goal of obtaining AFC certification, which will enable me to carry out my county educational programs in financial management and homebuyer education with greater competency, and to serve as a resource to assist my colleagues in the Northwest District and throughout the state.

LISA HICKEY

Urban Horticultural EA II, Manatee County

In April 2018, I attended the **National Urban Extension Planning Conference** to build skills necessary for professional development as a county Extension agent. Part of the programming was to exchange ideas on how to offer programs in non-traditional communities. Exposure to other colleagues' work and their successful program outreach helped me better understand the definition of food systems and the dynamics behind outreach in underserved communities. During the conference, I gathered ideas of programs that I could use locally. Additionally, I presented how I expanded my program outreach into non-traditional communities. Manatee County minority populations are male, Hispanic, Afro-American, Asian, and Native American. Prior to my program outreach in food deserts, my program demographics were female and Caucasian. I shared how I successfully increased the diversity of the demographics in my program outreach in a two-year period through a gardening project in our food deserts. The networking experience was an incredible opportunity. Six agents who heard my presentation want to start a similar program in their state. We are now working across the states to share our efforts and develop a broad-focus program that we all can utilize in our non-traditional audiences.

LAURA VALENCIA

4-H EA I, Osceola County

Through the cultural competencies training, **Navigating the Differences (NTD)**, I was able to explore and learn about five cultural competency skills: Cultural Awareness, Cultural Understanding, Cultural Knowledge, Cultural Interaction and Cultural Sensitivity. NTD training helped me become more aware of my own personal and organizational culture. It helped me examine and understand how these cultures affect my ability to work across differences in both negative and positive ways and explore theoretical approaches to diversity work. As we explored the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) and the Value Orientations Method in detail, I had the opportunity to reflect and identify the impact of cultural differences in Extension work. Our core values/value orientations can have an impact on how we develop and deliver our work, as the theory explains how there is diversity within a culture. I learned what my intercultural conflict style is and how it is designed to help me to better understand different approaches to resolve conflict when interacting with others.

NTD training gave me the tools to apply new skills in my work when working not only with youth and volunteers, but also with my colleagues. I am looking forward to the follow-up Train the Trainer and being able to implement in UF/IFAS what I've learned.

GRANTLY RICKETTS

Commercial Horticultural EA I, Osceola County

I attended the **Trees Florida 2017 Conference and Trade Show**. The conference provided me with the latest updates on tree problems, helped me to accurately diagnose tree problems, and learn the different tree treatment techniques. This conference made me more informed about Texas Phoenix Palm Decline disease, which is currently plaguing the local palm industry. I also learned more about pruning, chainsaw maintenance and safety. After attending this conference I conducted a Pruning, Chainsaw Maintenance and Safety training for landscapers in February 2018, which was attended by 42 landscapers. This training will be an annual event.

KALYN WATERS

Agriculture and Natural Resources CED, Holmes County

The Professional Development Mini-Grant provided funding which allowed me to participate in a 90-day online course through the American Society of Agronomy. The **Fundamentals of Applied Agronomy** course explored soil science and crop production practices that increased my overall knowledge of cultivation practices, determining soil types, identifying erosion and other applied production practices as they relate to soil preparation. In addition to the knowledge that was gained, this course served as an excellent example of a model that can be modified for a beef cattle production course. As a result of this course, I plan to develop an online module that will focus on beef cattle production for new and beginning producers.

DANIEL LEONARD

Horticultural EA I and Master Gardener, Walton County

The Professional Development Mini-Grant I received in 2017 allowed me to attend the **UF/IFAS Evidence-Based Turf Management Short Course on Pest Management**. This was without a doubt one of the best trainings I have ever attended! The course was an intensive two-day event with both classroom and interactive lab sessions on weed management, IPM, resistance management, disease management, nematode management, BMPs for Pesticide Selection, and new turf cultivars. Drs Unruh, Shaddox, Harmon, Crow, Kruse, and Dale put together a first-class course with no wasted time and much practical information, which I have been able to take back to my commercial and residential horticulture clientele. As a result of the Short Course, I've helped several landscapers become more effective and efficient in designing their fertility regimes, pre-emergent herbicide regimes, and insect management pesticide rotations. Maybe most important of all, through experience gained in Dr. Harmon's turfgrass plant pathology lab, I have become much more confident in examining samples under the microscope in my office, enabling me to more accurately diagnose problems.

SAVANNA BARRY

Coastal Ecosystems RSA

With assistance from the 2017 Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant, I was able to attend the **Coastal and Estuarine Research Federations (CERF) conference** in Providence, Rhode Island. This international conference was attended by over 1,500 coastal research, extension, industry, and NGO professionals from more than 20 countries. The CERF meeting is one of the longest running meetings for coastal science. At this meeting, I gave an oral Ignite presentation about seagrass resilience to shading changes with different seagrass phenotypes (see: <https://youtu.be/Y9pw6Q6Zkrk>) that was attended by approximately 120 people. I also visited with colleagues from other institutions, made new contacts, attended a multitude of talks and sessions relevant to my Extension work, and increased the visibility of UF/IFAS Extension through my attendance. I have repeatedly found the CERF conference to be a useful and important meeting to attend, because of the caliber of research that is presented, but also because of the cross section of attendees and focus on applied work. I am grateful for the support from UF/IFAS Extension administration to attend this meeting and plan to attend again in 2019 when the meeting will be held in Mobile, Alabama.

MAXINE HUNTER

Residential Horticulture EA I, Marion County

In August 2017, I began the process of studying to obtain a license as an **International Society of Arboriculture-Certified Arborist**. It was a self-paced study option, which included a text book, audio cd's and a review course. It covered a variety of topics, not only in arboriculture, but also in risk management. Since my program area is in horticulture, a lot of the training was review; however, the information on risk management was new and interesting. I learned things such as proper way to tie knots, as well as several pruning techniques that I was not previously familiar with. After reviewing all required materials, I was able to pass the ISA-Certified Arborist exam! The exam was intimidating, and I still have a lot to learn about the specifics of knot-tying and climbing, but I plan to use this certification to guide homeowners in the right direction when they have high-risk trees in their yards.

I will be using this training to provide advanced training to Master Gardener volunteers, as well as to partner with other agents to provide in-depth regional trainings. This has been a valuable opportunity to add an in-depth and specialty subject area to my horticulture programs. This will also be a valuable tool when teaching storm and fire preparedness to residents, especially as hurricane season is upon us once again.

LISA HAMILTON

FCS EA I, Volusia County

Teaching first-time homebuyer workshops for three years has made me aware of the urgent need for basic financial education and financial coaching in my county. My 2017 Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant funded travel to the **Neighborworks America Training Institute** in Washington, D.C. in December, 2017. I completed classes to re-certify as a pre-purchase homebuyer educator and develop new skills as a financial coach. Financial coaching emphasizes collaboration with adult learners to help them set and achieve financial goals. Coaching makes use of the wide variety of tools available to manage finances (manual, mobile, social media) and the different skills that people bring to the task. The training inspired me to encourage my class participants to define their own success and use the tools that work for them. In addition, in 2018, I implemented a new individual financial coaching program to help homeless families move toward stability.

LARA MILLIGAN

Natural Resources EA I, Pinellas County

Funding to attend the **Emerging Contaminants in Aquatic Environments Conference** was provided through the 2017 Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant.

“We didn’t inherit this land from our ancestors, we are borrowing it from future generations.” This was part of the welcoming message from Yu-Feng Lin, Associate Director of Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant. His words were a perfect reminder as we were about to embark on a series of presentations from researchers around the world on the impacts of emerging contaminants on our aquatic environment. PhDs from Australia, the UK and China, among many others opened my eyes to a world of contaminants I did not know about before this conference. PFAS, PFOA, PFOS, fluoroquinolones, carbamazepine and galaxolide were just some of the new terms I was exposed to over the course of a day and a half.

I learned about the incredible persistence of PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), which are a large group of man-made chemicals used in the production of a number of products from food packaging to electronics, and household products to flame retardants. PFAS are ubiquitous in the environment and are accumulating because of their inability to break down. Similarly, many researchers shared findings of a variety of personal care products and pharmaceuticals (referred to as PPCPs) in aquatic environments.

Peaks of anti-histamine drugs were seen during allergy season and anti-depressants during the winter holidays. Pharmaceuticals (for both people and livestock) tend to be hydrophilic by design, which also makes removal complicated and allows for bioaccumulation and biomagnification.

An interesting concept was revealed about the idea of “regrettable replacements” or “regrettable substitutions”. This is the notion that once we discover a certain chemical is bad, companies are quick to develop a new and different

chemical that ends up being just as bad if not worse. This was the case with PFAS and the move to a new chemical called GenX, among others. Yes, it was somewhat of a depressing conference.

Some researchers were studying surface water, some were studying ground water and one was looking at the interface of the two. The area where groundwater interacts with surface water is called the hyporheic zone. This researcher was looking at how legacy compounds from one can mix with emerging contaminants of the other and what new products are produced as a result. The impacts of warming waters and how that might impact the level of toxicity of some of these chemicals were also explored.

The distribution of emerging contaminants are being found throughout the world’s waters and not only at the surface, but throughout the water column. This was also the case for a study looking at microplastics. New research is also showing microplastics throughout karst topography in groundwater and well samples.

Jill Bartolotta with Ohio State Sea Grant shared information on the economic impacts of debris removal on beaches as it relates to tourism. She also highlighted that in an effort to reduce one-use plastics, people have enough reusable bags, they just need reminders to bring/use them.

Jody Shoemaker from the EPA shared the incredibly complex system and process of the development of standardized methods for testing chemicals of emerging concerns. Here it became clear that while this process is important, it takes years (three, according to Jody), and meanwhile new chemicals are being developed and entering our environment. There is a delay. A dilemma. Once we have research to indicate a chemical is of cause for concern, we then have to come up with standard criteria to test for it, set standards if deemed necessary, develop regulations, then ensure all water quality testing labs have access to the advanced technology required to test for these chemicals. And needless to say, this whole process takes A LONG TIME. I would say this is where the precautionary principal comes into play.

So in the mindset of Yu-Feng Lin’s opening message, we are borrowing water from future generations, but we are returning it in a much worse state than when we received it. This is something we can work to address in Extension, not only in Florida, but throughout the U.S. and the world. I plan to incorporate this information into my Florida Waters Stewardship Program and to continue to blog about these important emerging contaminants as they relate to water quality and impacts to marine life and human health.

BRITTANY SCHARF

Florida Sea Grant EA II, Hernando County



Brittany demonstrating a capsizing drill.
Photo Credit: Happy Paddler.

As a Florida Sea Grant agent for UF/IFAS Extension Hernando County, many of my program activities occur in or around the water. Hernando County relies heavily on its coastal natural resources for economic viability, and many visitors and residents

engage in nature-based activities throughout the year. One of my first tasks as an agent was to work with multiple county departments to design a coastal kayaking trail to help relieve boating pressure from the Weeki Wachee River and encourage paddlers to be good stewards of their environment. Hernando County also hopes to create additional kayaking trails in the future and local groups have requested my assistance with teaching about the marine ecosystems along these trails.

In addition to being a marine extension agent, I am also a lead instructor for the Florida Master Naturalist Program (FMNP) Coastal Systems module. This course requires field trips to introduce students to the concepts covered in the teaching videos and classroom presentations. My most popular field trip for this course is a kayaking activity through mangrove systems. Unfortunately, this activity requires students to make a two-hour trip south to have a certified partner organization safely lead the tour.

In response to this issue, I used the funds from the Professional Development Mini-Grant awarded by UF/IFAS Extension to become a **Level 1 and Level 2 Coastal Kayaking Instructor certified through the American Canoe Association**. During this training course led by Happy Paddler, we practiced proper kayak paddling techniques and learned the best ways to instruct others on executing the different strokes. We conducted rescues and capsizing drills in the chilly February waters. We trained in different ways to safely lead groups of all sizes on the water and about what difficulties might arise during these kayaking adventures. Most importantly, we learned to quickly assess the skill level of group participants and how to pick out paddlers who might need assistance along the way.

Since completing the certification, I have been working with a local Boy Scout troop with developing activities that will incorporate kayaking so they can earn their Environmental Science, Fishing, Kayaking, Sustainability, and Oceanography merit badges. Some of these merit badges are required for the scouts to advance to an Eagle Scout, the highest rank attainable in their program. The scouts have also expressed interest in developing an Eagle project that would promote good stewardship along future kayaking trails. This new certification will also allow me to lead kayaking activities during my next Coastal Systems FMNP course and assist other local groups in teaching about the marine ecosystems along Hernando's coastal paddling trails.

JILL BRESLAWSKI

FCS EA I, Okaloosa and Walton Counties

Financial education is a much-needed and often-requested area of programming for Family and Consumer Science agents. Because of these needs and my role as the coordinator of Okaloosa Saves, I thought becoming certified as an **Accredited Financial Counselor** through the AFCPE would prove to be a significant step in proving validity in my experience and knowledge of financial education. The 2017 Professional Development Mini-Grant provided some necessary funding for this endeavor. Although I have been in the field of Family and Consumer Science for over 10 years, this would be my first professional certification in the field. After months of following an independent study using suggested texts and study guides, I was able to travel to San Diego, California to take the certification exam. I know it sounds like I was able to complete my certification in the matter of just a few months, but an additional requirement of certification is to provide 1,000 hours of financial "coaching" to clients over a three-year period. In addition to completing the first steps of certification, I was able to attend an all-day, pre-exam review session and the AFCPE Symposium. The symposium was filled with quality and engaging presentations and sessions, which I was able to relate directly to residents in my own counties, including members of the military, students, and people trying to build a personal savings. As a result of my studies, and attending the 2017 symposium and review session, I feel that I am better able to meet the needs of my clients while educating them on making positive financial decisions, the benefits of saving, and becoming members of the Okaloosa Saves program. I am still working on providing 1,000 hours of financial education and have until 2020 to complete the certification process.

M. JENNISON KIPP SEARCY

Resource Economist & Sustainable Floridians Statewide Coordinator

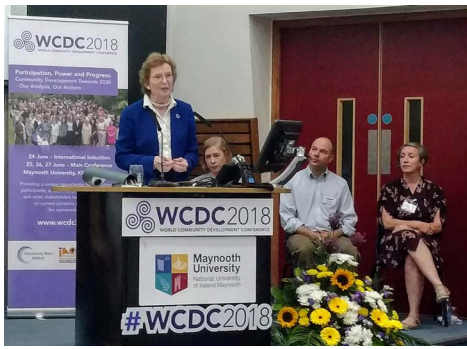
HOLLY ABEELS

Florida Sea Grant EA I, Brevard County

ALICIA BETANCOURT

FCS CED, Monroe County

A team of five county and state Extension faculty (Ramona Madhosingh-Hector, Pinellas County; Holly Abeels and Linda Seals, Brevard County; Alicia Bradigan-Betancourt, Monroe County; and Jennison Kipp Searcy, Program for Resource Efficient Communities) attended and presented at the **World Community Development Conference (WCDC)**, held 24-28 June 2018 at Maynooth University in Ireland. Over 400 participants from six continents and dozens of countries attended, and 11 land grant universities were represented. The conference theme was *Participation, Power, and Progress: Community development towards 2030 – Our Analysis, Our Actions*, and the opening plenary featured a keynote address from Ireland's first female president, who founded the Mary



World Community Development Conference Opening Plenary Panel



World Community Development Conference: Keynote Speaker Mary Robinson



World Community Development Conference, from left to right: Alicia Bradigan-Betancourt; Ramona Madhosingh-Hector, Holly Abeels, Linda Seals, Jennison Kipp Searcy, Mike Spranger, Libby Carnahan

Robinson Foundation for Climate Justice. Our presentation on the Sustainable FloridiansSM Program was part of a concurrent session titled Empowering Local Leaders and Addressing Poverty and Planning Issues, which also included a talk by Dr. Mike Spranger on the CIVIC (Cocoa Involves Citizens in Our Community) program. We attended this and other conference sessions on Climate Justice and Sustainable Development, Framing Community Development for Today's World, Community Development Education, Ethics and Values, and Rural Community Development. A session on International Standards for Community Development Practice will be especially helpful as we continue to develop both Sustainable Floridians and CIVIC as transdisciplinary, community capacity-building Extension Programs.

WCDC 2018 provided many professional networking opportunities, exposure to a rich diversity of community development initiatives, and a beautiful introduction to Irish culture through music and the arts. It was valuable for enhancing our personal professional development and Extension competencies, immersing us in a practitioners' world and through a global lens for in-depth discussions about the most critical community development programming needs and target audiences. These priorities were formally articulated during the closing plenary through adoption of the Maynooth Declaration, which affirms community development as *"a process where people concerned with human rights, economic, social and environmental justice act collectively to change societal circumstances."* Our team will leverage this experience to enhance the effectiveness of not only Sustainable Floridians and CIVIC, but also other state, regional, and systems-oriented natural resource education and community development programs. We are so grateful for the support provided by the Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant that provided us the opportunity to attend and present at this important and timely world conference.

Holly Abeels: I attended sessions on Climate Justice and Sustainable Development, Community Development Education, Empowering Local Leaders, and Addressing Poverty and Planning Issues. It was great hearing so many different perspectives on and successes of community development from across the world. It was interesting to hear about similarities in community development work being done but also other types of community development projects that I hadn't heard about before. There was even a session about international standards for community development practice, which I think can be used for guiding and supporting community development work anywhere, especially in Extension. I hope to use the knowledge I learned when creating CIVIC programs and when helping others to do CIVIC programming. I appreciate the opportunity given by the Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant to be able to attend and present at this conference.

Alicia Bettancourt: I had the opportunity to share the success of our Sustainable Floridians program with participants from all around the world and from every continent. We shared common dilemmas, including growth challenges, communicating the most current science, and encouraging opportunities for residents to engage and live more sustainably. I also attended sessions on Climate Justice and Sustainable Development, Community Development Education, Empowering Local Leaders, and Addressing Poverty and Planning Issues. On reflection, this conference expanded my ability to understand how global issues can support local initiatives. This has inspired me to work to address international exchange and cooperation on behalf of the UF/IFAS Extension. Thank you for the opportunity.

COMINGS & GOINGS

We would like to welcome the following new 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 new faculty are truly the best of the best!

NEW HIRES

Taylor Clem, Environmental Horticulture EA II, Alachua County

Kristina McIntyre, FFL EA I, Seminole County

Natalie Parkell, 4-H EA I, Martin County

Pauline Daniel, 4-H EA I, Okeechobee County

Karen Rice-David, 4-H EA I, Broward County

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

DEPARTURES

Becky Rucki, 4-H EA II, Madison County

Melinda Morgan-Stowell, Community Development EA I, Brevard County

Amy Hedstrom, 4-H EA I, Flagler County

Garima Kakkar, Fruit Crops EA II, Indian River and St. Lucie Counties

Patrick Troy, Crops RSA II, District II

Bryan Dailey, CRD Program EA II, Charlotte County

RETIREMENT

Robert Kluson, Natural Resources/Small Farms EA III, Sarasota County