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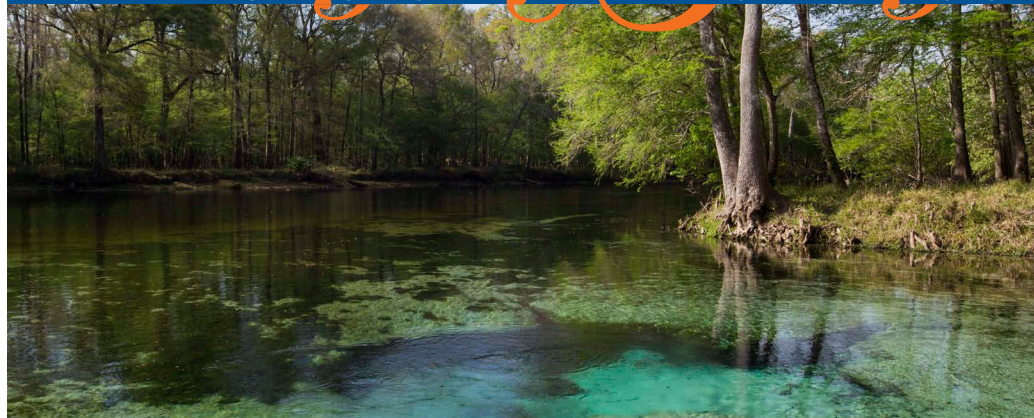
UF/IFAS Extension *Comings and Goings* is a monthly newsletter distributed by the Office of the Dean for Extension via e-mail and on the UF/IFAS Extension web site at <http://extadmin.ifas.ufl.edu>.

If you have any suggestions or would like to submit your own recognition or short article of interest, please send them to Valkyrie Shah.

Please feel free to also forward any questions or comments about this periodical to Valkyrie Shah at valkyrieshah@ufl.edu.

UF/IFAS Extension *Comings & Goings*

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN FOR EXTENSION



COMMUNITY GARDEN THRIVES AND CHANGES LIVES

Whitney Elmore, Hort CED III, Pasco County



Mrs. Toomer and her two oldest children.



Hilltop Landings Community Garden.

The Hilltop Landings Community Garden, revitalized a year ago by UF/IFAS Extension Pasco County, continues to grow strong. Resident volunteers maintain the community food garden under the guidance of program assistant Eden Santiago-Gomez, and since the garden's beginning, one volunteer and her family has shown great desire to garden and learn more. Dedicating endless hours to watering and weeding, resident Monica Toomer has become the most committed volunteer at the community garden. Always asking Santiago-Gomez horticulture questions to learn more, Mrs. Toomer has developed a skilled green thumb. Not only has she learned a tremendous amount about growing her own vegetables, but she also uses the produce from the garden to feed herself and her three kids; "Yes, I use the produce in the garden," she said. "Some days when I don't have any food I go out to the garden and pick it." She now prefers the produce fresh from the garden rather than from the grocery store, saying it has a better taste. Monica's children, Angel, Micha and Elijah, also help her by watering, weeding and pruning. They particularly love to grow carrots and eat cilantro right from the plant. When asked if she consumes more vegetables since starting to garden, she said, "Yes, more than ever!" The Toomer family is a prime example of how community food gardens can provide a location for low-income individuals to learn about and grow their own food to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and decrease monthly grocery bills. For more information on UF/IFAS Pasco County Community Gardens, and how you can join one, visit <http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/pasco/>

PESTICIDE APPLICATOR TRAINING: NOT ALWAYS SEMINARS AND BOOKS

Juanita Popenoe, Fruit Production EA IV, Lake County



Attendees engage in an activity that teaches the importance of calibration.



Attendees spraying blue-dyed water at different wind speeds, heights and droplet sizes.

Lake County had a problem: Right-of-way pesticide applicators were spraying roadsides for weeds and chemical drift had killed ornamental plants in several yards. Homeowners were not happy, and the county was under pressure to do something. They needed to train their workers so they would understand more about the dangers of herbicide application, so they called UF/IFAS Extension in Lake County. But these workers did not want a seminar class—they were used to *doing*, not sitting and listening. A new approach to training was required.

Extension agents
Juanita Popenoe and

Lloyd Singleton quickly organized a hands-on workshop to teach the workers about herbicide safety. They learned how to safely mix herbicides by mixing dye with water. They were shown how worn-out gloves would allow pesticides to come in contact with their skin using powder that glows under a black light. They competed against each other in backpack spray applications that demonstrated how to calibrate sprayers and understand the different amounts that will be applied when people are walking at different paces or with different spray pressures. Finally, using a fan and blue-dyed spray solution, they learned about the effects of wind on spray applications at varying droplet sizes and pressures.

The supervisors were so pleased with the training and the reports from the workers that they required everyone in the group to take the training—four separate sessions totaling 36 attendees. Private industry training for this group would have been very expensive, as much as \$150 per person. This program helped to show the county the importance and benefits of Extension and helped 36 workers become safer in their workplace.

Demand is increasing for specialized training. The pesticide applicator newsletter that we send out to advertise classes includes this statement at the bottom: “Pesticide applicator training is not always seminars and books. Contact Juanita if you have a group of 15 or more who need specialized training.” We have received requests from companies to provide custom training. This may be an excellent way to enhance revenue, increase worker safety, and provide the type of learning style that many of our pesticide applicators prefer.

BONDS THAT TIE US

Becky Rucki, 4-H EA II, Madison County



The beauty of 4-H is watching youth bloom into adults who complete the cycle and become the next generation of volunteers.

It is well known that many 4-H volunteers were members of the program as youth, so when a Madison County 4-H alumna walked in to volunteer with the Teen Leadership program it was no surprise to me. In her volunteer interview she shared how she had found a home in 4-H and wanted to help other youth discover their place just as she had—in a safe, supportive environment with caring adults. After graduating out of the 4-H program, she became 4-H camp staff and applied her new-found confidence and bolstered sense of adventure to travel abroad. She pointed back to her experience in her Teen Leadership Club and summer camp counseling appointments as her springboard into self-discovery. But her most heart-warming and unexpected comment was that she never realized that she was truly enjoying her 4-H experience to the fullest or even knew the full value of having a supportive, caring adult mentor until I became her agent. As 4-H agents, these personal testaments are what drive us to keep pushing through the long nights, weekends and time away from our family, because we know that if we reach even one youth, we’ve accomplished more than many do in a lifetime. And we get to do this more than once! Now I enjoy the assistance of an alumna-turned-volunteer who is highly trained and whose story will serve as a major recruitment tool for other volunteers and members. Taking time to build relationships while teaching life skills to our youth members is what will provide us with the next generation of volunteers...not to mention generational enrollment as they begin to have families of their own. Bonding with our youth bridges the gap between leadership training and application as an adult, whether within 4-H or the community at large.

EXTENSION HELPS CLAY COUNTY RECOVER FROM HURRICANE IRMA

Luke Harlow, Ag Nat Res EA I, Clay County



Photo taken 02.08.18 – 6 weeks after initial seeding



Photo taken 04.09.18 – Two days after Clay County Fair ended

The path of destruction caused by last year's Hurricane Irma impacted many Florida homeowners, businesses, farmers, ranchers and county operations. Many did not anticipate the ripple effect Irma would have on county operations, including the problem of how to process and dispose

of all the downed trees, branches and plant material left behind by the hurricane. The Clay County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) designated 5 separate locations to temporarily store green waste and tree debris removed from properties. One location was in a 12-acre bahiagrass parking lot on the Clay County Fairgrounds. Due to the large volume of debris, it took the county public works department 3 months to clear the area. By that time the bahiagrass in the lot suffered a 90% loss due to lack of sunlight, compaction and mechanical damage from machinery.

Given that the next county fair was only 3 months away, the Fair Association wanted the fastest way to return the field back to the way it looked before and were looking at bahiagrass sod to meet that goal. When the Clay County EOC turned to Extension for recommendations on how to re-establish the field with bahiagrass sod, I did not recommend resodding, given that it was outside the typical growing season for bahiagrass. Instead I proposed a temporary solution of establishing a cool-season forage in the field, which would provide some green cover for the parking lot through the fair in March. The county and fair association agreed, and after soil

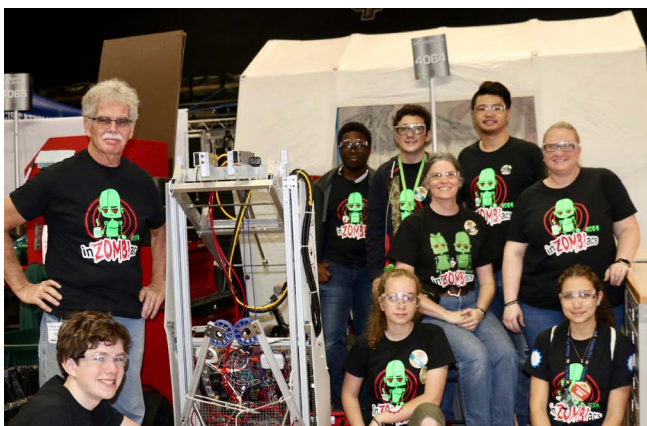
testing confirmed that the soil pH was acceptable for a cool-season forage, ryegrass was broadcast seeded in mid-December. The field was fertilized once after the ryegrass germinated and started growing and it was watered twice by water truck during dry times.

By the start of the fair in March, the ryegrass had established into a healthy stand of grass, preventing the parking areas from becoming a muddy mess for fair attendees in the event of rain. On my recommendation, the 12-acre area will be reseeded with bahiagrass after the fair by a local commercial producer, who offered to use his no-till drill at no cost, and TifQuik bahiagrass seed was purchased at a reduced rate. This provided an economic savings of \$1,184 in seed, machine and labor cost. Additionally, by following my recommendations the county only incurred a seed and fertilizer cost of \$700, as opposed to the \$110,352 it would have cost to use sod—a savings of \$109,652.

Through research-based recommendations on pasture grass selection and establishment, UF/IFAS Extension was able to provide timely assistance to both the county government and the fair association and provide an economic savings of \$110,836.

INZOMBIACS: INCREASING STEM SKILLS THROUGH 4-H

Margaret Carden, 4-H EA I, Marion County



This year's InZombiacs FRC team included four youth, two college mentors and several of adult volunteers.

Marion County 4-H offers a diverse array of programming. Many youth participate in traditional Agriscience projects, such as judging teams, hippology and gardening. The new robotics program focuses on STEM skills, bringing 4-H to a broader audience. Starting in 2017 under the leadership of Ashley Stewart, the robotics team partnered with Vanguard High School and established a school-based 4-H club.

This year South Oaks 4-H, a community-based club, took the InZombiacs under their wing. The InZombiacs are a competitive robotics team, comprised of 11 senior 4-H members. They participate in the traditional 4-H club through monthly meetings, but during the 8-week competition season, these youth will spend over 200 hours working on their robot to get it ready to compete at the FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) in Orlando. This year's robot can pick up and release cubes onto scales ranging from 9 inches to 6 feet high, climb a tower that is 7 feet tall and function in autonomous mode. Last year, the InZombiacs took



Team members and mentors work to make quick repairs to this year's robot in between matches at the Orlando competition.



Veteran team members Alex (left) and Ashley (right) set up the team's remote docking station prior to a match.

partnership will result in employable young adults entering into the job force. The team currently operates on a shoe-string budget, working with volunteers from Lockheed Martin, engineering students from UF and local industry experts. The team is resourceful, often using recycled materials to create their existing robot. Program assistant Erin Webber keeps the team going by providing

home fourth place overall out of 63 teams. This season the team once again finished in the top half of the competition.

Established FRC teams often spend \$10,000 or more on their robot. The InZombiacs are partnering with Extreme Brake Integration to assist them with resources moving forward. CEO Kevin Reed states that he has a difficult time finding employees with the engineering skills necessary in his business. He sees the value in the science-based technical skills these youth are learning and believes the

transportation, tracking down parts and serving as a liaison between the Marion County 4-H office and local business supporters. She has been successful in finding grant money to assist with the robotics program, currently receiving over \$11,000.

We are very excited to see the robotics program grow! It is truly rewarding to see these youth immersed in 4-H and also mastering life skills such as teamwork, a sense of belonging and contributing to a group effort.

4-H CLUB IS D.E.V.O.T.E.D.

S. Derby Sale, 4-H EA I, Suwannee County



D.E.V.O.T.E.D. 4-H Club leader and president meeting Dr. Nick Place at 4-H Day at the Capitol 2018 in Tallahassee.



D.E.V.O.T.E.D. 4-H Club members learning to play the drums during one of their monthly meetings.

When the 4-H Club leader learned that her Suwannee County club was on inactive status, she was shocked and disappointed. When she started D.E.V.O.T.E.D. (Determined, Enthusiastic, Visionary, Optimistic, Together, Effective, Difference) in 2013, her ultimate goal was to create an avenue for black youth in Suwannee County to get involved in all the opportunities that 4-H has to offer. The club had done plenty in the previous year to have her 4-H Club be active. But just when the new 4-H year was

about to begin, she was frustrated to learn otherwise.

Due to a car accident back in 2014, the club leader is not able to drive herself around, which created a significant barrier to her success. Recognizing the frustration, passion and challenges faced by the club leader, the Suwannee County 4-H agent decided to work with her to keep D.E.V.O.T.E.D. active. It began with a trip out of the office to meet with the club leader, to understand her motivation to lead an active 4-H

Club, and to have her understand what expectations existed to maintain active status. After the in-person visit, multiple phone calls and visits helped create reliable communication and a strong relationship. As the club leader felt more comfortable with the 4-H agent, she invited him to speak at a local public forum. The goal of this event was to allow Suwannee County youth to speak their minds and have the community listen. Through the 4-H agent's participation, the club leader felt supported in her endeavors to have an active 4-H club.

With a strong and supportive relationship in place, the club leader started to hold regular meetings, where she trained members on how to run an active club so that they could effectively bring in more members. These youth started to feel a strong sense of belonging; they opted to perform in the county-level talent competition and travelled to 4-H Day at the Capitol in Tallahassee. There they were able to meet other 4-H members from across the state, and

it made them feel a part of something much larger than just their own club or county. They were even able to meet Dr. Nick Place, which they described as a “wow” moment for them. The club president explained that she felt shy and nervous going into the event, but by the end she felt comfortable being able to express herself and letting policy makers know how she felt. She definitely plans to go again and wants more Suwannee youth to go with her. Highlights from their experiences at Day at the Capitol appeared on the

Suwannee County 4-H Facebook page and a local newspaper—another “wow” moment that made it clear to the D.E.V.O.T.E.D. 4-H Club that their success was important to Suwannee County 4-H and Florida 4-H as a whole.

Through the 4-H agent’s efforts to build relationships and set clear expectations, the club leader felt a sense of purpose and belonging. She then brought in 4-H members and provided similar experiences that made them feel a part of something

bigger than themselves. Due to these experiences, in a short six months, this club leader went from having an inactive 4-H Club to participating in multiple events and increasing membership by 58%. This significant increase enhances the overall reach and impact that Suwannee County 4-H has within its community. It also specifically reinforces the club leader’s and Affirmative Action’s missions of having the black community represented within 4-H and UF/IFAS Extension.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN

We received a note from former State 4-H Program Leader Marilyn Norman! Here’s what she said...

Hope all is well with you. Just a quick note to let you know that my husband and I moved to Dubuque, Iowa last month to be closer to Steve’s family. We got to thinking about what we would do in a medical or other emergency and there were no family members close. It was probably better for us to get relocated sooner than later, so we took the plunge. It means that I will not get back very often. Here is my new address

Marilyn Norman (retired)
2481 Spruce Wood Drive
Asbury, Iowa 52002
normanm941@aol.com

I really miss Florida, but I miss Extension people the most. It is still the people that make the organization great. We had a beautiful snow storm yesterday and probably will have another tomorrow. But, there are really four seasons here. I’m in the middle of boxes, but have already connected with several Extension co-workers in the local county office. I’m looking forward to getting involved as a volunteer.

Take care,
Marilyn

NEW HIRES

Ivonne Black, Admin Supp Asst III, District Director’s Office
Jeri Shell, Admin Spec II, Extension Administration/Office of the Dean
Alison Grooms, FCS EA I, Hillsborough County
Jose Zayas, 4-H EA II, Hardee County
Lorna Bravo, Urban Hort CED II, Broward County
Lee Hayes Byron, CRD CED II, Sarasota County

NEW POSITIONS

Lloyd Singleton, from Ag Res Hort EA II Sumter County to CED II Lake County
LuAnn Duncan, from FCS EA II Orange County to FCS/Food Sys EA III Sumter County

DEPARTURES

Mace Bauer, Ag/Com Hort EA III, Columbia County
Mike Davis, Ag EA II, Baker County
Jeremy Smith, 4-H EA I, Miami-Dade County
Justin Walker, Ag Nat Res EA I, Bradford County
Alexandra Draper, 4-H EA I, Broward County

RETIREMENTS

Mary Sowerby, Livestock RSA IV, District II
Pamela Phillippe, 4-H EA II, Charlotte County