

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2017 Cortez Commercial Fishing Festival: A Future Full of Fish	2
When Time is Money, Extension Can Save on Both	3
Epiphany 4-H Club Raises Fresh Produce for Food Insecure Families.....	3
Public Speaking No Fear for 4-H Tropicana Participants	4
A Tale of Two Interns.....	4
Traditional Recordkeeping Still Valued in County 4-H Program	5
Nutrition + Activity + Sleep = Magic Ingredients to Good Health	5
A Fair Deal: Finding Opportunities in Adversity.....	5
Agricultural Budgets Have Many Uses.....	6
Extension Education Encourages Students to Eat Their Fruits and Vegetables.....	6
Preparing Youth for Green Industry Careers ...	7
Florida TaxWatch Recognizes UF/IFAS VITA Program with Award	7
Northwest District Graduates of 2017 LEAD IFAS Program.....	7
Urban Agriculture Ordinance a First for Florida	8
Climate Choices: A Deliberative Forum	8
Technology Trends, Threats, and Innovations.....	9
Mobile Farm Market: A Vehicle for Change...10	
Florida Master Naturalist Training Provides Professional Development to the Natural Resources Industry	11
Cool-Season Forage Trials.....	11
Pesticide Applicator Training: Protecting People, Property, Food Supply & Environment.....	12
2016 Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant Winners.....	12

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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 valkyries Shah@ufl.edu.

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

IN OKALOOSA COUNTY, BONDS BETWEEN UF/IFAS EXTENSION AND FARM BUREAU GO BACK A LIFETIME

By Jack Payne | jackpayne@ufl.edu | @JackPayneIFAS



Left to right: Molly Huffman, Jennifer Bearden, Keith Free

It's a call that Jennifer Bearden loves to get. It's the "can-you-make-this-happen?" call.

It means a lot to Bearden because it's from Keith Free, president of the Okaloosa County Farm Bureau. As the county's Extension ag agent, having the farming community's leader ask her for a favor is validation of her work.

But it goes a little deeper than that for a daughter of Okaloosa. She's known Free since she was born. He has been a board member since she was a young girl. With this call, he treats her not as his daughter's lifelong friend but as a fellow community leader. It means he trusts her with the story of local agriculture.

Bearden earned that trust over decades. She grew up knowing she wanted a career in agriculture in Okaloosa County. And she helped Free's daughter, Molly Huffman, decide she wanted the same thing.

Huffman had started her accounting and bookkeeping career in real estate. But the Farm Bureau kept asking her for help. At first, it was on piecemeal projects helping the Farm Bureau's longtime county secretary, "Miss Kitty".

When Miss Kitty retired, a number of people asked Huffman to apply for the job.

Only one of them could speak as someone who had been a friend for as long as they both could remember. Jennifer had left home for the University of Florida and kept her promise to herself to return and serve the local agricultural community.

Jennifer's pitch to Molly was that the Farm Bureau is who you are. This is your roots. And Molly Huffman is today the county secretary.

Bearden and Huffman, along with Susan Holley of the Yellow River Soil and Water Conservation District, are the driving forces of the Farm Bureau's women's committee, which organizes three big annual events that bring the community together around agriculture:

- AgVentures, in which 800 kids come to farmers to learn about crops, pests, soil, and more. Sometimes Jennifer works one of the stations herself.
- Ag Literacy Day, which under Molly's and Jennifer's leadership has grown into an event in which farmers go to kids in their classrooms and read farm-themed stories.
- Legislative Farm Tour Day, where Jennifer has educated a congressman, legislative aides, and other policy makers about wildlife damage to agriculture, bees, drones, and other important issues.

To communicate effectively with the public, Jennifer needs to communicate effectively with the Farm Bureau. That's why she's at every county Farm Bureau meeting, every women's committee meeting, every meeting of the Extension advisory board, whose members include Free and other Farm Bureau members.

Jennifer and Molly exemplify how in communities across Florida, UF/IFAS

Extension and the Farm Bureau are such close partners because they're bound up by personal relationships.

We don't expect every Extension agent to be a homegrown local with personal ties to Farm Bureau leadership. However, we do recommend that agents become Farm Bureau members, and we're encouraged to see those who weren't already members joining one of our most valued partner organizations.

Bearden doesn't stop communicating with the Farm Bureau even when she goes out on Friday night. It's a social call, but inevitably the conversation will turn to shop talk when Jennifer and Molly are noshing on chips and salsa at Azteca.

Bearden also sends Molly a regular column for the Okaloosa County Farm Bureau newsletter.

Jack Payne is the University of Florida's senior vice president for agriculture and natural resources and leader of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

Downtown Crestview may very well have the state's smallest parade. It's two tractors and a police escort. So not just anyone gets to drive.

Free drives the lead vehicle. For the second tractor, he wants someone he trusts with the Farm Bureau story, since that person will be telling it on Main Street for all the community to see. So he calls Bearden.

It's that call she loves to get. It's another chance to tell the story of farming, which she does with a firm grip on the microphone, the pen, or in this case, the steering wheel.

So often, the way Bearden tells the story is through the Farm Bureau. Because from her earliest memory, there's never really been a better way to tell it.

2017 CORTEZ COMMERCIAL FISHING FESTIVAL: A FUTURE FULL OF FISH

Angela Collins, Marine Science EA II, Manatee County



Locals get a lesson from a Florida Sea Grant display prior to the kick-off of the Cortez Commercial fishing festival.



Fishing nets stored on the docks of Cortez, Florida, one of the nation's last true working waterfronts.

For one weekend every February, a tough and tiny fishing village on the west coast of Florida welcomes thousands of visitors to share the proud history and culture of one of Florida's last true working waterfronts. This year marked the 35th anniversary of the Cortez Commercial Fishing Festival. Settled by fishermen from North Carolina in the late 1800s, Cortez has never stopped fishing. Its people have withstood hurricanes, wars, recessions and storms of regulations. The village has adapted to shifting sands, but the perseverance and grit of the people have never wavered. Today it remains a true testament to the "real" Florida.

special. However, like so much of Florida, Cortez faces threats associated with increasing human population and ever-encroaching development. But unlike so much of Florida, where similar places have simply been swallowed by the concrete, Cortez has been fighting back. In 2000, a community effort spearheaded by the Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage (F.I.S.H.) purchased almost 100 acres of land adjacent to the village that became designated as the F.I.S.H. Preserve. The F.I.S.H. Preserve includes mangroves, wetlands and upland habitats along the shoreline of Sarasota Bay, and protects a stretch of coastline that is critical to many of the species upon which Cortez depends.

This region has supplied bountiful seafood to humans for thousands of years. Fishing is good here for a reason. Nestled among mangroves on Sarasota Bay, Cortez is positioned between two nationally accredited estuaries, which means that the habitat here is pretty

This year F.I.S.H. was able to negotiate the purchase of a key, strategically located parcel of land in the center of the preserve. This purchase unifies the property and will allow restoration efforts and continued conservation of the land. It is therefore quite fitting that this year's Festival theme was "Fishing for our Future."

The purchase of F.I.S.H. Preserve land – then and now – is funded primarily through proceeds of the Cortez Commercial Fishing Festival. That makes this a party with a purpose! UF/ IFAS Extension and Florida Sea Grant were proud to be part of the action. Local agents conducted "Dock Talks" throughout the two-day festival, allowing visitors a glimpse into the biology of marine fishes, and providing the opportunity to get up close and personal with several of the local seafood species.

The festival is an annual celebration of the Cortez way of life and allows attendees to take a trip back in time and wander the working waterfront that is Cortez. All who visit should be proud to be part of an effort to protect habitat and an important piece of Florida's history.

EPIPHANY 4-H CLUB RAISES FRESH PRODUCE FOR FOOD INSECURE FAMILIES

Cindy Higgins, 4-H EA III, Columbia County

For the past 20 years, Epiphany Catholic School in Columbia County has had a 4-H Club. This year, club members voted to put in a raised garden bed as their middle school community pride project. The first grade students at Epiphany have had a raised garden project for several years, and the 4-H members wanted to expand the garden to bring more fresh vegetables to the Gateway Food Bank. Run by Catholic Charities of Lake City, the food bank serves a five-county region including Columbia County. Epiphany middle school students have been participating in Gateway Food Bank food giveaways for several years, and have seen firsthand the needs of the community.

Club members received a \$225 Florida 4-H Community Pride Grant from the Florida 4-H Foundation to build the garden. UF/IFAS Extension Columbia County Master Gardeners donated a raised-bed garden and taught members how to construct the garden box.

Members learned how to plan, plant and care for a garden, as well as harvest and store the fresh produce until it could be transported to the food bank. Members had both a winter and spring garden. During this process, Epiphany 4-H Club members did all the work preparing, planting and caring for the garden. In the winter, members grew kale, radishes and lettuce. When the produce was harvested, 10 families received 2 grocery bags each of fresh kale, 2 heads of lettuce and a bunch of radishes, all from their little garden.

In the spring, members learned about spring vegetables, worked on their Junior Master Gardener Project book and voted to plant tomatoes and cucumbers. They also learned about proper watering during draught season and were able to harvest enough tomatoes and cucumbers for 5 families.

Members indicated that they learned a lot about gardening, specifically about planting space, what vegetables grow best during each season, and

how to properly store their vegetables. All youth indicated that keeping the garden watered was a big challenge. They also were able to attend a food giveaway at the Gateway Food Bank in November to see the challenges people in our community face getting fresh fruits and vegetables. Through this process, 4-H members learned about hard work, and all have started container gardens at home. Members were amazed at the amount of produce that could come from a properly planted and cared-for raised garden bed. Epiphany 4-H Club members will continue this garden next year and current 6th and 7th grade students will assist the new 6th grade students with learning about gardening. Thanks go out to Columbia County Master Gardeners and the Florida 4-H Foundation for all your help with this project!



Jerry Murphy, UF/IFAS Extension Columbia County Master Gardener, instructs members on installing the raised bed garden box.



First graders also learn about garden box construction.



Epiphany 4-H Club members hard at work.



The first harvest of the year. Fresh kale, lettuce and radishes.

WHEN TIME IS MONEY, EXTENSION CAN SAVE ON BOTH

Michelle Atkinson, Environmental Horticulture EA I, Manatee County

Les Green needed to obtain two types of pesticide licensure to be able to offer specialized services to his clientele. Although he used the pesticide study manuals provided by UF/IFAS bookstore, Les was not entirely prepared for the exams, as evidenced by his test scores. In order to attend an out-of-county pesticide exam preparatory workshop, Les would have had to take time off from his job to travel hours away on multiple days, which would cut into his earning capacity. So Les contacted the UF/IFAS Extension Manatee County office to help him prepare for retaking the exams.

The environmental horticulture agent there had developed supplemental resources to assist pesticide license workshop attendees. These resources included sample math problems and detailed PowerPoint handouts with notes on specific pesticide topics. Soon after Les passed his exams, he called the environmental horticulture agent to thank her for the materials provided, stating that these resources saved him two days away from his clients, saving him both time and money.

A TALE OF TWO INTERNS

Ramona Madhosingh-Hector, Community Development & Sustainability EA III, Pinellas County



Trevor at Highpoint working on garden box plantings.

Heather and Trevor were both promising students at the University of Florida when they began seeking internships for the final summer of their undergraduate careers. Heather studied environmental science, a degree housed in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, but had never actually heard of Extension until an older student mentioned the internship program to her. Trevor's first experience with Extension was also in applying to be an intern. The students were partnered with the Urban Sustainability Agent to work on innovative programs (film series) and to reinvigorate existing programs (Green Business Partnership).

During their 8-week internships (Heather's in 2014, Trevor's in 2016) both students were intentionally exposed to multiple facets of programs and operations at UF/IFAS Extension Pinellas County. For Heather, this included assisting at an urban extension conference and meeting extension professionals from across the country. For Trevor, it included tree

and garden box plantings intended to benefit children and families in target areas of the community. Both were also exposed to the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ and Family Nutrition Programs, among other areas. Working outside of the program area in which they were interning gave them a deeper understanding of the organization and fostered relationships with staff and faculty.

Both students gave presentations at the end of their internships, to report on what they had accomplished and what they learned from the process. For Trevor, it was his first job in a professional office setting and he learned about professionalism and became more proficient in applications and software such as MS Publisher, generating high-quality displays which continue to be used. Both interns also credit the program with helping them to hone soft skills, including persistence and networking.

The real outcome of this story, however, is a win-win. Two young



Heather and Ramona in studio for radio show recording.

professionals were introduced to Extension for the first time, given mentorship and guidance on their career development, and would later return to become assets to the UF/IFAS Extension team. After graduation, they both applied and were selected for employment in the same office that they interned with, illustrating the value of internships for career development.

The internship program is a valuable opportunity to introduce students to career possibilities within Extension and attract future employees. The time and effort that went into their professional development pays off within the organization when it can be used to fill a vacancy. These young professionals benefit from the opportunities available in Extension while they are still at a formative phase in their careers. Extension benefits from hiring previous interns because there is less risk than a brand new hire – their skills and work habits are already known before entering into a long-term employment scenario.

PUBLIC SPEAKING NO FEAR FOR 4-H TROPICANA PARTICIPANTS

Diana Smith, 4-H EA IV, Manatee County

Speaking in front of a group is many people's greatest fear. But don't tell that to the 7,100 Manatee County students who just completed the 4-H Tropicana Public Speaking Program. From its humble beginnings in Manatee County at Palmview Elementary School in 1952, and a partnership between 4-H and Tropicana in 1969 to make it a statewide program, the public speaking program continues to be successful. This year, 274 classrooms (32

schools) participated in the program. Students in grades 4-6 selected and researched a topic, developed their speech, and practiced, practiced, practiced! Thirty-five students participated in the county contest, with top winners being awarded plaques and camp scholarships. The top four also presented their winning 2-3 minute speech before a crowd of more than 150 at the Kiwanis Club of Bradenton's weekly luncheon meeting.

NUTRITION + ACTIVITY + SLEEP = MAGIC INGREDIENTS TO GOOD HEALTH

Lori Wiggins, FCS EA III, Taylor County

A Taylor County fourth grader asked her PE coach, “Why am I always tired during class?” She couldn’t understand why, at 10:30 in the morning, she didn’t feel like participating in the physical activities her classmates were enjoying. Her coach responded by asking her two questions, “What time do you go to bed?” and “Do you eat breakfast?” The girl openly shared with her coach that she went to her room at 8:30 pm, but played on her iPad until 10 or 11 pm. As for breakfast, she said she wasn’t hungry at 6:30 am—it was just too early. When the coach told her she needed to go to bed earlier and eat breakfast in the morning, she ignored him and sluggishly walked off to class.

The following week, the coach introduced the UF/IFAS Extension Taylor County Nutrition Education Program to his class. The family and consumer sciences Extension agent began teaching a six-lesson series to the children in which she led them in search of ways to become healthy and fit. Together they explored MyPlate and discovered that it held the secrets to choosing nutritious foods and staying physically active each day. They talked about breakfast being the most important meal of the day and learned that those who eat breakfast typically eat healthier overall and are more likely to enjoy participating in physical activities. Lastly, they discovered that getting a good night’s sleep, together with making smart food choices and being physically active, were the magic ingredients needed to ensure a healthy body.

By the end of the nutrition series, the fourth grader shared with the Extension agent the conversation she’d recently had with her PE teacher. She confessed that at the time she didn’t understand why going to bed early and eating breakfast each morning played such an important role in ensuring she had a productive day at school. Nor did she know that getting eight hours of sleep, eating nutritious foods and being physically active worked together to ensure her body and mind stayed strong and healthy. She said, “Because of the Nutrition class at school, I now eat breakfast, even if it’s something I bring with me from home and eat when I get to school. My mom and I have been packing my breakfast and an afternoon snack at night so we’re not hurried in the morning. That way, I don’t have to get up early or eat when I’m not hungry.” She said that going to sleep by 9 pm and eating breakfast in the morning gave her energy that lasted the entire day. She was now even enjoying PE! Lastly, she shared that her teacher had noticed that her class work had improved. She was proud to say that all around she had become a much better student!

A FAIR DEAL: FINDING OPPORTUNITIES IN ADVERSITY

Debbie Nistler, 4-H EA III, Bradford County

Every year UF/IFAS Extension Bradford County has an educational booth at the county fair. We usually have a couple of tabletop decorations, a local grower display, and the usual UF/IFAS handouts. In 2016 the Bradford-Union County Fair hired a new manager who was not familiar with Extension, or even exactly what a county fair should look like. We began to see some big changes coming.

In January of 2017 the fair manager told us our Extension booth and 4-H exhibit room would be moved to a

back building away from the normal traffic area. Instead of stressing out, our office jumped at the chance to update our exhibit space. We expanded our horticulture area to include a weed identification display manned by our new livestock natural resources agent. Our family and consumer sciences agent worked with Aaron’s Rental Center in town and borrowed a full kitchen setup to have an interactive display for food safety. Our horticulture agent also stepped up with extra displays and brought in Master Gardeners.

TRADITIONAL RECORDKEEPING STILL VALUED IN COUNTY 4-H PROGRAM

Diana Smith, 4-H EA IV, Manatee County

Traditional recordkeeping is alive and well in the Manatee County 4-H Program. This year, 274 youth submitted 4-H record books for judging in 494 different areas (project, special interest, and officer). Detailed chronicling of the feeding and care of plants and animals, or sharing their citizenship and leadership goals and objectives, were found in the thousands of pages submitted for judging. Hidden deep in the records, you will find the 4-H story itself, which sometimes shares a member’s greatest fears as well as their greatest joys and achievements during the year. This year 64% of the youth enrolled in the 4-H club program submitted record books. More than 325 members, leaders and friends celebrated the completion of another 4-H year by attending the 61st annual county awards program. Awards were presented for outstanding 4-H’er, outstanding conservationist, horseman of the year, and outstanding record book. An array of local sponsors and friends of 4-H also participated in the dinner event, which culminated another successful year of 4-H recordkeeping.

Even though we were well out of our normal track area, word spread quickly that we had moved and that our exhibit was worth the trip. Contacts through our exhibit this year totaled just over 2,100. All faculty and staff took turns manning the booths and marketing our program. From a situation that could have been negative and frustrating, we transformed it into a “lemons into lemonade” moment!

AGRICULTURAL BUDGETS HAVE MANY USES

Kevin Athearn, Agribusiness RSA II, Suwannee Valley Agricultural Extension Center

Agricultural enterprise budgets are an important financial management tool used by farmers. Budgets help farmers gauge the contributions of individual enterprises to farm profitability, helping them make more informed decisions about start-up, pricing, product mix, and production practices. Although farmers are encouraged to create their own budgets, they often look to Extension for budgets that can serve as a reference or framework.

Various other Extension clientele also use university-prepared enterprise budgets. Agricultural lenders require financial projections, which often are based on enterprise budgets. Property appraisers request budgets to help in valuing agricultural land. Insurance companies use enterprise budgets to help set crop insurance policies. Agricultural researchers and policy makers use budgets as a starting point for analyzing the economic implications of changes made by farmers.

In Florida, the Food and Resource Economics Department (FRED) and UF/IFAS Extension have been developing representative enterprise budgets for many different Florida crops. Many of these budgets can be found on the FRED website, <http://fred.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/commodity-production-budgets/>, or EDIS database. Budgets are available for citrus, cattle, vegetables, and tropical fruits. Some budgets are available or in progress for deciduous fruits, nuts and

berries, as well as agronomic crops and greenhouse vegetable production.

Budgets are especially in demand by beginning farmers and by experienced farmers considering alternative enterprises. Recently a new grower in Taylor County was considering establishing a fruit orchard. After attending a workshop and farm visit arranged by an Extension agent and reviewing university budgets, the grower decided to plant 19 acres of cold-hardy citrus. To do so he needed a loan. The lender required financial projections that the grower was able to put together with the help of university-prepared enterprise budgets. An insurance company is now examining budget information to help them develop new crop insurance options for citrus groves in North Florida and South Georgia. UF/IFAS Extension enterprise budgets are assisting growers with start-up and other decisions, are facilitating agricultural lending, and are enhancing the availability of crop insurance options.

Commodity Production Budgets

Tomatoes



Potatoes



Strawberries



Watermelons



EXTENSION EDUCATION ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO EAT THEIR FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Brenda Marty-Jimenez, Health Nutrition & Food Safety EA III, Broward County

The Family Nutrition Program (FNP) in Broward County, a partnership between the county's parks and recreation department and UF/IFAS Extension, recommends that consumers fill half their plates with fruits and vegetables. The recommendation is in keeping with guidelines from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's MyPlate campaign, which aims to help people maintain a healthy weight and reduce the risks for a variety of diseases.

At the local level, the FNP takes this message into public schools, building relationships with teachers, schools, and other community partners so that together they can enhance the quality of life for the citizens of

Broward County. This ongoing initiative emphasizes the reinforcement of positive messaging, as well as providing participants with opportunities and encouragement to try new things.

At Colbert Elementary, for instance, Mrs. G has been working with representatives from FNP to help her students develop a positive outlook on healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables. She recently let her class sample a pineapple-and-black-bean salsa with whole-grain tortilla chips. The feedback has been good. The teacher reports that her students "enjoy making the new healthy snack recipes given to them. They've been able to change their outlooks due to

the engaging lessons, as well as the hands-on activities."

Such experiences also reinforce another concept embraced by the school system: "Go, Slow, Whoa!" foods. "Go" foods are categorized as nutrient-dense and can be eaten almost anytime. "Slow" foods should be eaten only sometimes. Finally, calorie-dense "Whoa!" foods should be approached cautiously, as in "Whoa, should I eat that?" Such foods don't have to be ruled out altogether, but should be eaten only occasionally.

Working together, these partnerships enable students to make small changes in the snack foods they eat—changes that, over time, will have a lasting impact on their overall eating habits.

FLORIDA TAXWATCH RECOGNIZES UF/IFAS VITA PROGRAM WITH AWARD

Heidi Copeland, FCS EA II, Leon County

In early November of 2016, a colleague shared an email with the subject line, “Prudential Productivity Awards: Do you know of someone deserving of recognition?” The colleague wondered if the UF/IFAS Virtual VITA program was deserving of recognition. Why? Because the UF /IFAS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program provides no cost tax return preparation and assistance to tax payers in rural North Florida. The UF/IFAS VITA program also provides a gateway in which to introduce research-based financial education.

The UF/IFAS virtual Skype model is an innovative effort to link remote rural taxpayers with a VITA tax preparation volunteer. This method is the only virtual model serving the underserved in the state of Florida. It has been recognized by the by IRS Commissioner John A. Koskinen during the SPEC VITA TCE 2017 Virtual Partner Recognition Ceremony, where it has been a nominee in three of the five categories being acknowledged for program excellence.

Recently, the 29th annual Prudential Productivity Awards program winners were revealed. Florida TaxWatch bestowed 203 awards upon hard-working state employees and teams from across the state of Florida for their achievement and efforts. UF /IFAS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program was an award winner! In June 2017, team members were invited to a regional luncheon and awards ceremony in Tallahassee. We are honored to be among the thousands of individuals, teams and work units recognized by Florida TaxWatch.

NORTHWEST DISTRICT GRADUATES OF 2017 LEAD IFAS PROGRAM

Melanie Taylor, 4-H/FCS EA III, Gulf County | Heather Kent, 4-H RSA III, Northwest District



Melanie Taylor



Heather Kent

The LEAD IFAS program provides leadership training for IFAS faculty and staff who have assumed or are interested in assuming management and leadership positions. The program was established in 2000 and centers on developing those crucial leadership and team-building skills that participants will need to become effective leaders in their organizations. The course is managed by the UF Department of Agricultural Education and

Communication and consists of three, two-and-a-half-day sessions over a two-year period held at an off-campus training facility in Haines City.

The LEAD IFAS program highlights Leadership Fundamentals, Leading and Managing Change, Decision Making and Problem Solving, “HR 101” – HR Policy, Personal Resilience, Practical Strategic Training, Developing Effective Teams, and Leadership Insights from UF/IFAS unit heads and industry leaders. Since 2000, More than 200 individuals have successfully completed the program. This year, Heather Kent and Melanie Taylor were nominated by their DED, Peter Vergot, and then selected by the UF/IFAS Executive Team. Heather and Melanie both enjoyed LEAD IFAS, and are excited to use the new skills they learned in their everyday jobs.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR GREEN INDUSTRY CAREERS

Martha Glenn, Commercial Horticulture EA I, Manatee County

Florida’s green industry demands employees with experience and/or knowledge of the industry. In order to make young, inexperienced workers more valuable to employers, a program titled Greenscaping and Growing It Green has been created. Two agents have partnered with the Manatee County School District to offer this program. Three audiences (ages 16-18) are targeted: FFA students, career prep high school students attending technical schools, and at-risk youth. Participants learn scouting techniques, pest identification, and principles of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), as well as cultural practices such as appropriate fertilizer application, tree and ornamental installation and maintenance, invasive plant management, sustainable turf management, biological controls, record keeping and nursery management. Educational methods include hands-on demonstrations, discussions, educational games, and presentations. Post surveys reported 91% (19/21) showed knowledge gained in basic horticultural theories. Surveys also recorded 82% (17/21) of the attendees acknowledged that they changed their perception of agriculture employment and were considering it as a career. In the followup survey, 86% (18/21) of the attendees stated that they had changed maintenance practices to align with the best management practices taught during the workshop. This workshop serves as an important step to providing youth with an understanding of the green industry and teaching them best management practices, making attendees more valuable employees for the green industry workforce and an asset to the community at large.

URBAN AGRICULTURE ORDINANCE A FIRST FOR FLORIDA

Whitney Elmore, Residential Horticulture/Community Resource Development EA III, Pasco County

The Pasco County Board of County Commissioners has unanimously passed the first Urban Agriculture Ordinance in the state of Florida. The ordinance permits the establishment of community gardens, market gardens, and community farms throughout Pasco, which will provide access to healthy, locally grown foods in low-income, food insecure areas of the county and those parcels plagued by blight. Appointed by the Pasco BOCC as an Ex-Officio Member of the Pasco Food Advisory Policy Council, the UF/IFAS Extension Pasco County director and urban horticulture agent assisted in the development of a Community Food System Assessment and guided development of the ordinance. While some municipalities across the state have similar ordinances, Pasco appears to be the first county government to allow

the use of publically owned land for community gardens. With the passage of the ordinance, the UF/IFAS Extension Pasco Community Garden Program is expanding to include a community farm in partnership with the City of Dade City, the Moore-Michens Education and Vocational Center non-profit, the Pasco School District and numerous private individuals from the agricultural community. The UF/IFAS Moore-Michens Community Farm will offer gardening workshops, a food pantry with fresh fruits and veggies grown on the farm, money management seminars, chronic disease prevention courses, 4-H club activities, plots for locals to use for gardening, and entrepreneurial opportunities to those wanting to grow their own food and potentially open a cottage business.

CLIMATE CHOICES: A DELIBERATIVE FORUM

Holly Abeels, Florida Sea Grant EA II, Brevard County



Libby leads the reflective discussion at the end of the forum.

A climate change conversation with the Brevard County community was delivered in May 2017. This discussion and program is based on an effective model developed by the Kettering Foundation for community deliberation in their National Issues Forum (NIF) program (<https://www.nifi.org>). Participants were asked to come in with an open mind and be prepared to provide feedback. The forums themselves provide an opportunity to discuss issues, particularly the reasons people prefer various solutions, which is an important step in finding common ground.

The climate change conversation was conducted and facilitated by Libby Carnahan, Florida Sea Grant Extension Agent at UF/IFAS Extension Pinellas County; Lara Milligan, Natural Resources Extension Agent at UF/IFAS Extension Pinellas County; Ramona Madhosingh-Hector, Urban



Rebecca leads the option 2 discussion with participants while Libby takes notes.

Sustainability Extension Agent at UF/IFAS Extension Pinellas County; Holly Abeels, Florida Sea Grant Extension Agent at UF/IFAS Extension Brevard County; and Rebecca Zarger, Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of South Florida. A grant was acquired through Florida Sea Grant to assess climate change perceptions in local Florida communities and to hold these conversations across the state. Brevard County is just one of the communities where this conversation is occurring.

There were 18 participants at the program, with most participants residing in Brevard County and two from Volusia and Indian River counties. Rebecca started the discussion by asking the group how climate change is going to affect them personally. Participants were concerned about the rate of change occurring and the possibility of losing Brevard County

the way it is today. Population and development have both increased in this area, which increase pressure to local resources. Since the county was affected by Hurricane Matthew in 2016, many people expressed their concern about future flooding and hurricanes. Sea level rise will cause many areas, especially Brevard's barrier islands, to be underwater in the future. This will not only effect the community that is flooded and underwater, but other areas of the county as well. There could be decreases in property values, "climate refuges" needing to find other places to live, increases in costs to live in the county, and decrease in quality of life. Many participants expressed their concern for the future of the next generation and the cost and economic impact of climate change. There was concern about natural and environmental resources such as the Indian River Lagoon and decreases in water quality, impact on cultural resources and archeological sites, and concerns about various species such as birds and sea turtles.

Libby gave a brief presentation about the impacts of climate change and sea level rise and the current projections. This gave the participants an overall background about the science of climate change and a baseline for the discussion. This was followed by the core of the program, which discussed various climate change options.

The NIF provides three options for addressing climate change, based on the views and concerns of people from across the country. Participants were given the “issues placemat” to read the explanation for the options, followed by 20 minutes to openly discuss each option.

The three options discussed were to (1) sharply reduce carbon emissions, (2) prepare and protect our communities, and (3) accelerate innovation. Lara, Ramona and Rebecca each led the discussion for an option. Notes were

taken to capture the participants’ responses to the examples and tradeoffs and to document the flow of the discussion. At the end of the forum participants were asked to reflect on the discussion and to volunteer (1) something you learned, (2) something that concerns you, and (3) something you’re optimistic about. Many people expressed that they enjoyed the enthusiasm from everyone in the group and they were glad they weren’t alone in caring about and wanting to do something about climate change in Brevard County.

A few results from post-surveys indicated the following:

- 62.5% (10 out of 16) are extremely concerned and 31.25% (5 out of 16) are concerned about climate change affecting the Space Coast/ Brevard County region.
- 56.25% (9 out of 16) strongly agreed and 6.25% (1 out of 16) agreed with the statement, “I am willing to take actions to help solve problems caused by climate change.”

TECHNOLOGY TRENDS, THREATS, AND INNOVATIONS

*Laura Tiu, Sea Grant EA II, Okaloosa County | Pam Allen, Community Resource Development/FCS EA IV, Okaloosa County
Jennifer Bearden, Agriculture EA II, Okaloosa County | Jill Breslawski, FCS EA I, Okaloosa County*

Sometimes it pays to step out of your comfort zone and attend a conference designed to stretch your skill set. University of Florida county Extension agents attended the 2017 National Extension Technology Conference (NETC) in Savannah, Georgia June 12-15. As promised, the city of majestic mossy oaks played host to a conference loaded with innovative technology tools and information. As more county-based faculty explore ways to enhance their programming using emerging and established technologies, it is imperative to learn from others who have paved the way. Increasing technology use leads to enhanced distribution of information to and engagement of clientele. Information was shared on Zoom Rooms, drones and the Internet of Things.

Several UF/IFAS Extension programs showcased their technology prowess, with Leon County faculty sharing their experience in developing and delivering an In-service Training (IST) designed to train other agents to plan and create videos using simple equipment and editing programs. Jennifer Bearden of Okaloosa County highlighted her partnership with a local drone operator to analyze local fields for pest damage and interpreting the data so the farmer can make management decisions. Okaloosa County faculty shared their experience developing and sharing a series of six hurricane preparedness videos on YouTube, enabling easy access as we enter the 2017 hurricane season. Finally, Susan Haddock of

Hillsborough County shared her experience using FileMaker Pro to manage client contacts and program functions.

The University of Florida not only shined during the presentations, but took home awards and prizes for their storytelling and game-playing abilities. Jill Breslawski (Okaloosa/Walton) and Valkyrie Shah (Dean’s office) placed in the top five of the conference app game, scoring a new tablet and advanced technology training. Jennifer Bearden and John Wells got lucky in the random drawings, winning a Zoom Room and access point. Finally, Laura Tiu and John Wells were honored for their storytelling proficiency during the conference social.

The Distinguished Speaker for the conference, Vernice “FlyGirl” Armour, America’s First African American Female Combat Pilot, challenged attendees to “make gutsy moves and create breakthrough results.” Conferences like NETC encourage those who may be a little technology shy to reach out and make those gutsy moves. Attendees came back with some new ideas and a pocketfull of tools to accomplish those goals. Next year’s meeting Host for NETC 2018 is Virginia Tech. “An Opportunity to Reconnect” will be June 18-22, 2018 in Blacksburg, Virginia and everyone is encouraged to submit an abstract, attend and learn to make their own “breakthrough results.”



Jill Breslawski, Jennifer Bearden, Valkyrie Shah and John Wells were big winners at the NETC 2017 Conference in Savannah, GA. Photo by Laura Tiu



Enjoying States Night Out in Savannah, GA during the National Extension Technology Conference. Photo by Pam Allen



Florida Agents enjoying an evening cruise on the Georgia Queen. Photo by Jennifer Bearden



Okaloosa County Extension agents present information on their Hurricane Preparedness video series. Photo by Pam Allen

MOBILE FARM MARKET: A VEHICLE FOR CHANGE

David Dinkins, Community Resource Development/Food Systems EA IV, UF Program for Resource Efficient Communities



Fresh Wagon Mobile Farm Market at UF Health Medical Plaza

Chronic diseases and conditions such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, Type 2 diabetes, obesity and arthritis are responsible for 7 of 10 deaths each year. Additionally, according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, treating people with chronic diseases accounts for most of our nation's health care costs.

The CDC works through four domains to prevent chronic diseases and their risk factors:

1. Epidemiology and surveillance — Systems that are used to track chronic diseases and their risk factors.
2. Environmental approaches — Changes in policies and physical surroundings to make the healthy choice the easy choice.
3. Health care system interventions — Improvements in care that allow doctors to diagnose chronic diseases earlier and to manage them better.
4. Community programs linked to clinical services — Programs that help patients prevent and manage their chronic diseases, with guidance from their doctor.

Can a mobile farmer's market travel through these domains and serve as a vehicle of change? We have a few answers, but there are many more to find as we travel this magical vegetable tour.

In an ongoing partnership with UF/IFAS' Program for Resource Efficient Communities, the non-profit Common Thread Alliance, UF HealthStreet and the Florida Survey Research Center (FSRC) at UF, the Fresh Wagon Mobile Farm Market Employee Wellness Pilot Program was launched in early 2017. This was an outgrowth of the Common Thread Alliance Food Oasis Project, which provides access to fresh fruits and vegetables to residents living in food deserts.

Between February and June of this year, the Fresh Wagon Mobile Farm Market conducted stops once a week for four hours near the UF Health Medical Plaza in Gainesville.

During these 17 community engagement events, there were a total of 1,902 customer transactions, averaging 112 customers for each event. Each customer purchased

approximately 10 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables. One hundred sixty-six employees/customers completed surveys administered by FSRC providing self-reported information on demographics and health conditions.

Customers increased their awareness and knowledge of local produce and farms. Produce was sourced from 10 local farms providing more than 30 diverse, sustainably grown fruits and vegetables. Examples of some of the favorite "new" introductions included romanesco, purple sweet potatoes, sunlite potatoes, golden beets, and numerous Asian vegetables. Customers were also provided nutrition information, recipes, and gardening tips. Community health workers with UF HealthStreet were available at each event to assess customer/employee health concerns and provide referrals for social services if requested.

The Fresh Wagon Mobile Farm Market can be a vehicle for change by:

- Providing access to fresh, healthy, locally grown produce.
- Providing nutrition, culinary, gardening, health, and social services information.
- Providing "attention getting" platform to collect Extension and research data.
- Providing opportunities to develop valuable partnerships and trust building relationships.

The Fresh Wagon Mobile Farm Market will expand and advance the employee wellness program to multiple locations this fall. For more information or to schedule a time to see the market in action, please contact David Dinkins at dinkins@ufl.edu.

COOL-SEASON FORAGE TRIALS

Mark Warren, Agriculture EA II, Flagler and Putnam County



Producers evaluating cool season wildlife food plots on muck soils near Grandin, FL.

With growing interest in managed hunting tracts and increased emphasis on sustainable livestock production, hunters, land owners, and livestock producers have a common and ongoing interest in cool-season forage options. Across Florida and even smaller geographic regions like the TCAA (Tri-County Agricultural Area) of northeast Florida, there is a significant amount of diversity in soil types, climates, and management systems. This diversity justifies the need for localized demonstration projects like the TCAA Cool-Season Forage Demo to provide producers opportunities to see new ideas being used under conditions similar to their own.

In northwest Putnam County there is a region of highly organic muck soils. In addition to unique soils, there is also a unique temperature variance across this area that often brings freezing events weeks earlier than what is experienced in eastern portions of the county, where temperatures are moderated by the St. Johns River.

In southwest Flagler County, where temperatures are moderated by large inland water bodies to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east, producers are faced with a different set of parameters. Heavier, loamy soils that are often

saturated for extended periods can be common in the fall and early winter.

With less than fifty miles separating these two locations, there are years where growing conditions are similar, but more often they are dramatically different, and likewise the crops that work are very different as well.

During the winter of 2016-17, with the help of the Hastings Agricultural Extension Center, four cool-season forage demonstration sites were established—one livestock set and one wildlife set each in Flagler and Putnam counties. Each site included more than 20 forage selections ranging from cereal crops and ryegrass to clovers and cruciferous selections.

In addition to disseminating information on crop progress via social media, two organized events as well as 8-10 informal events were also held where producers observed and received information on crop progress. During the two formal events, producers were provided specific establishment and cultural information concerning the demonstrations. Producers were also provided evaluation sheets and were asked to describe the various selections based on observable differences such as stand density, texture, stage of maturity, estimated biomass, and disease pressure. They were also asked to provide some ranking of the various selections by category. The data was summarized and made available following the program.

In addition to the crop evaluation activity, producers were also asked to evaluate the effectiveness and importance of this program. Of the 26 individuals who completed this portion of the survey, 7 indicated that their primary interest was in wildlife food plots with the remaining 19 indicating livestock as their primary interest. Nineteen (73%) indicated that information gained from the demonstrations would affect their future decisions, and all of the responding participants indicated that they valued the program.

FLORIDA MASTER NATURALIST TRAINING PROVIDES PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES INDUSTRY

Lisa Hickey, Urban Landscaping/Water Conservation EA I, Manatee County

Imagine working at a job managing landscapes where your knowledge and skills require you to monitor, interpret, and balance healthy natural landscapes or ecosystems. Unless a natural areas manager is fully educated in natural area habitat management, managing and monitoring ecosystems can be quite challenging. The Florida Master Naturalist Training Program (FMNP) is a tool designed to teach visitors and residents, regardless of their current employment status, about Florida's natural landscapes and relationships between ecosystems and plants and animals that live in them. The training program uses in-class presentation, hands-on props, and field trips so trainees understand the relationship of flora and fauna to their habitats. Last year, UF/IFAS Extension Manatee County trained 41 residents in

freshwater and upland ecosystems characteristics. At the completion of training, certification was granted to those completing the core requirements. Although fifteen of the total attendees took the training for their own personal interest, the remaining 26 trainees benefitted by acquiring job knowledge and skills or enhancing their current job. Eleven trainees were docents working in natural areas; nine worked with ecotourism businesses, were science teachers or environmental educators; and eleven were county, state or federal rangers taking the training for professional development. Two trainees used the training and secured natural areas jobs. The FMNP requires 40 hours for each training module or ecosystem. It's low cost and conveniently located for residents in five counties.

PESTICIDE APPLICATOR TRAINING: PROTECTING PEOPLE, PROPERTY, FOOD SUPPLY & ENVIRONMENT

Mace Bauer, Agriculture/Commercial Horticulture EA III, Columbia County



Mace Bauer (right) leads participants in a hands on sprayer calibration activity.

Proper pesticide use is critical to the agriculture industry in the Suwannee Valley. With an estimated 600 farms in Suwannee, Columbia and Madison Counties, pesticide education and training is in great demand by the 277 licensed restricted-use pesticide (RUP) applicators in the area.

Pesticide training provides instruction on proper pesticide use and handling to individuals who want to obtain or retain certification to apply restricted-use pesticides. A team of Extension agents including Mace Bauer, Columbia County; Dan Fenneman, Madison County; and Elena Rogers, Suwannee County started a training program for pesticide applicators in 2009. The

agents developed an educational program to enhance pesticide stewardship and safety for those seeking certification to apply RUPs and to provide continuing education units for RUP license holders that focus on pesticide stewardship, minimizing pesticide exposure and improved safety for applicators and their families, and minimizing environmental impacts from agro-chemicals.

The agents work together to provide workshops, field days and magazine articles that increase knowledge of pesticide use, prepare individuals to pass exams, and deliver continuing education units (CEUs). Classes include lectures, use of multimedia presentations, case studies, videos, and hands-on experiential learning. A total of 324 individuals have attended the 25 classes offered since 2009.

The passing rate for the 128 individuals taking exams at the conclusion of training is ninety-two percent. The benefit of training and licensing can be estimated in terms of increased wages and career earnings. For example, the average hourly wage in Florida in 2009 for pesticide handlers, sprayers and applicators, and pest control workers was \$14.91, which was substantially higher than for other agricultural

workers (\$10.57). Assuming an average of 2,000 hours worked yearly, the average wage differential would represent about \$6,400 greater annual income for the licensed pesticide applicators, compared to the regular agricultural workers.

An estimated 195 individuals received seven CEUs at each training. CEU providers, including UF/IFAS Extension and private industry, offer education at a cost of about \$20 per CEU. This educational program has provided 1,365 CEUs in the education programs. This reflects a value over \$27,000 to program participants.

Certification and training programs protect people, property, the food supply, and the environment from both pests and pesticide exposure by ensuring the competence of pesticide applicators. Innovative programs developed by Extension agents in Columbia, Madison, and Suwannee counties have prepared pesticide applicators for certification, and provided continuing education for recertification. This Extension program offers a significant economic, environmental, and community return to program participants and area residents.

2016 Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant Winners

SOOHYOUN AHN – FOOD SAFETY TRAINING COURSE

I am running the Food Entrepreneurship Extension program, and under the program, I hold an annual workshop for beginning and early-stage food entrepreneurship in Florida. While interacting with workshop attendees, I have realized there is a need for food safety education for this audience. Using the Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant, in July 2016 I attended a 3-day course of food safety and HACCP trainings for small processors organized by National Sanitation Foundation International. This was a great opportunity for me – I have been an instructor of various food safety trainings for many years but by being on the other

side of table as a participant, I could see what would work and what might not work (as well as updating my knowledge and getting my certificate, of course!). The training location was in Sacramento, CA, so I took some time to visit several farmers markets and was able to directly observe their local food movements. Based on the newly obtained knowledge from this experience, I recently added a new food safety training component to my Food Entrepreneurship Workshop and am creating a food safety checklist for small processors and farmers market vendors. It was a great experience, which resulted in improvement of my own extension program.

2016 Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant Winners

TERESA BADUREK – NATIONAL EXTENSION CONFERENCE ON VOLUNTEERISM

My 2016 Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant funded travel to the National Extension Conference on Volunteerism in Asheville, NC from April 10-13, 2017. As a Master Gardener volunteer coordinator, recruiting, training, utilizing, and retaining volunteers is a large part of my job. This conference gave me the opportunity to learn the latest innovative tools for working with volunteers, and network with others who work with extension volunteers from all over the country. The skills and ideas learned at the conference will

help increase volunteer retention and satisfaction. I met with other Master Gardener coordinators and shared challenges and success stories and we learned about volunteer inclusion and reaching more diverse audiences. Perhaps most importantly, I gained the tools and confidence to move forward with a new style of teaching the Master Gardener training, which will allow more flexibility for faculty and trainees while increasing time for hands-on learning.

JULIE DILLARD – ARTICULATE TRAINING FOR E-LEARNING



Beginning this summer, 4-H agents will have the option of offering Level 1 Shooting Sports Instructor Certification in an online setting. According to the National 4-H Council's Volunteer Engagement and Activation Resource, our greatest potential 4-H volunteers are already volunteering 12 hours

a month- not to mention that they're working full-time jobs, have their own children and are just as busy as we are! To make trainings more accessible to volunteers, my Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant consisted of creating narrated, interactive e-learning modules that will fulfill the first part of the Level 1 Shooting Sport Instructor Certification traditionally done in a classroom setting. The e-learning modules will allow volunteers to access the trainings through florida4honline.com, where they can progress through them at their own pace and receive immediate feedback on knowledge gained. Volunteers will continue to meet face-to-face to fulfill part two of the training in a field practicum setting and reinforce the skills they learned during the first part of the training. Many thanks to Dr. Jerry Culen, Mike Harrington, Heather Kent and Tycee Prevatt for their assistance on this project.

JENNIFER GILLETT-KAUFMAN – FOOD SYSTEMS IN SOUTHERN ITALY

In 2016 I was awarded a UF/IFAS Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant. (\$2,500 awarded). This grant helped fund my trip to southern Italy as part of the UF/IFAS Food Systems in Southern Italy Extension Workshop in October of 2016. What I learned during the trip has been added to the following two EDIS fact sheets and a new article that was co-written based on the experience. In 2014 I authored two Extension publications with collaborators (one English- <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in1046> , one Spanish- <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in1052> : Gillett-Kaufman et al. Pests and fungal organisms identified on olives (*Olea europaea*) in Florida); these fact sheets underwent a major revision in 2016 based on what I learned in Italy. Two new Extension documents were developed after the workshop. These documents would not have been developed without the collaboration formed during the workshop. While exploring parts of Italy with Olive Quick Decline, it became apparent that olive growers in Florida should know about Olive Quick Decline and its insect vectors. Another workshop participant, Dr. Whitney Elmore (CED Pasco County), and I developed an outline for an EDIS document based on what we were seeing in Italy. When we returned home Dr. Elmore spearheaded the completion and publication

of *Xylella fastidiosa* and Olive Quick Decline: Symptoms and Identification of an Insect Vected Pathogen (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in1165> by Elmore and Gillett-Kaufman). This EDIS fact sheet was approved and went online in February 2017. Reviewers of the article commented that the content would make a very good educational poster that could be used at FDACS plant inspection stations. With this prompting I worked with Dr. Elmore to outline a new poster based on common olive pests in Florida and Olive Quick Decline. This poster was finalized in March and is available online at the IFAS Bookstore (Olive Pests of Concern for Florida: <http://ifasbooks.ifas.ufl.edu/p-1373-olive-pests-of-concern-for-florida.aspx> by Gillett-Kaufman and Elmore). At the 2017 UF/IFAS Extension Symposium we offered a free poster for every county Extension office. A total of 31 posters were distributed (primarily for counties with climates that could potentially support olive trees). Posters have also been made available to FDACS for posting at their plant inspection stations. An acknowledgement to the Deans for providing the UF/IFAS Extension Professional Development Mini-Grants was included in all four documents.

2016 Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant Winners

ANGELA HINKLE – NEAFCS 2016 ANNUAL MEETING PRESENTER FOR “SMART SHOPPING FOR FAMILIES” AND “THE PEANUT BUTTER CHALLENGE TAKES A BITE OUT OF HUNGER”

Presenting posters for two distinct, impactful programs at the NEAFCS 2016 National Conference offered me the opportunity to interact with a wide range of people, cultures, and disciplines. It afforded me the liberty to communicate orally and in writing in a variety of contexts. It was exciting to share how these programs can be reliably adapted by other extension agents. The preparation, sharing and feedback enhanced my abilities to gather, organize and display evidence, data and information. I hope to continue to share these amazing programs at the 2017 EPAF session (in abstract and one-on-one formats), and I have already shared them with our Northwest District Program Implementation

Team members and members of the EFENEP team at our annual conference. This experience helped me to increase my grant-writing skills, which paid off for the smart shopping program – I received another program grant for 2018. This will allow me to continue expanding and improving a program that helps participants build healthier lives for their families. I had impactful information to share with previous and new potential donors to the Peanut Butter Challenge, and am now working with IFAS Communications on ways to expand that program's reach. Finally, I had fun sharing these awesome programs and networking with other agents across the country.

SHELLY KRUEGER – RESTORE AMERICA'S ESTUARIES CONFERENCE

Thanks to the Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant, I was able to enhance my programming efforts by presenting at Restore America's Estuaries, the largest national conference on coastal restoration, science and management practices, in New Orleans, Louisiana. I am the outreach and education lead for the Florida Keys Shallow-Water Sponge Community Restoration program, a multi-agency effort with the goal to scale-up sponge restoration efforts by inviting volunteers to work side by side with scientists to restore 15,000 sponges to Florida Bay. This opportunity allowed me to highlight the UF/IFAS partnership with Florida Sea Grant, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Old Dominion University, The Nature Conservancy, Bonefish and Tarpon Trust and the Florida Keys Environmental Fund.

Sponges are the dominant filter feeders in the Florida Keys, and their ecological significance is analogous to the eastern oyster in Florida estuaries. Furthermore, sponges provide essential habitat for spiny lobster and bonefish – two major

economic drivers in Monroe County. The conference inspired me to consider the economic and ecological impacts of sponge restoration, which, like oyster reef restoration, extends far greater than the physical footprint. Considering that an average basketball-sized sponge can filter 425 gallons of water per hour, our program goal to return 15,000 sponges to Florida Bay can reinstate water filtration capacity by 153 million gallons every 24 hours! That's not to mention the indirect contributions sponges make to the local economy as nurseries for juvenile spiny lobster, where the commercial fishery generates \$50-\$70 million annually. Recreational values for spiny lobster and bonefish are also considerable in terms of revenue from landings and tourism. When sponges are absent in the nearshore waters, juvenile spiny lobster and bonefish literally have fewer places to hide from predators. Sponge restoration efforts can be enhanced by trained volunteers and through public outreach to convey the ecological and economical value sponges provide to the Florida Keys.

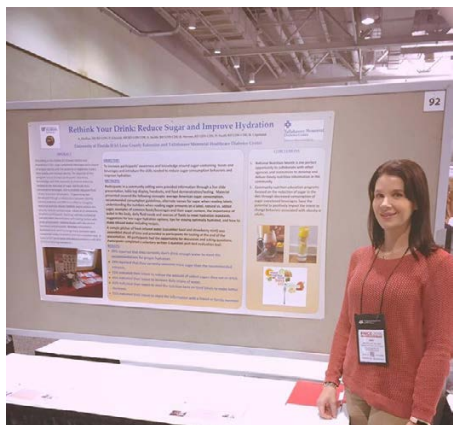
MAIA MCGUIRE – AMERICAN WATER RESOURCE ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

In November 2016, I used a 2016 Professional Development Mini-Grant to attend the American Water Resources Association (AWRA) conference in Orlando. Together with Abbey Tyrna (UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County), we co-chaired a special session on microplastics. With two other speakers (Sarah Zack, IL/IN Sea Grant, and Dr. David Hastings, Eckerd College) we gave presentations about microplastics and served as a panel to answer questions from the 25 conference participants who attended the session. In addition to presenting and co-chairing the microplastics session, I helped judge student presentations, attended several sessions focused on the health of the Indian River Lagoon, and was

able to network with other aquatic resource professionals. The AWRA conference provided a venue to share UF/IFAS Extension outreach and education efforts related to microplastics, as well as to learn about new technologies and research related to aquatic ecosystem health in Florida. Since participating in the AWRA conference, I have been invited to give a presentation about microplastics at the 2017 International Association of Great Lakes Research conference, and have collaborated on a grant proposal with another AWRA conference attendee.

2016 Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant Winners

AMY MULLINS – ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS FOOD & NUTRITION CONFERENCE



The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo (FNCE) is a conference to support and showcase the work of Registered Dietitians and nutrition professionals nationwide. FNCE 2016 was held in the

beautiful host city of Boston, MA at the Boston Convention Center in mid-October, and featured more than 130 research and educational lectures, debates, panel discussions and culinary demonstrations from nationally and internationally recognized nutrition experts.

I was excited that my own community nutrition program work was chosen and recognized during the poster session.

I presented an abstract for a National Nutrition Month Program titled Rethink Your Drink: Reduce Sugar and Improve Hydration, which was my first national poster presentation. Given the opportunity to showcase my work and share it with other nutrition professionals was a very rewarding experience, one that I will always remember.

I attended numerous educational sessions and learned so much that I was able to bring back and apply to my county extension programming. Some of my favorite presentations focused on important topics such as dietary saturated fat consumption, dyslipidemia and cardiovascular disease, physical performance and nutrition implications, food science and culinary nutrition strategies, and dietary correlation to cancer therapy. As a result of attending FNCE, I was able to earn 16 CEUs to apply towards my Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist (RD/N) credential.

I am honored and blessed to have received such a valuable contribution to my professional development and look forward to sharing my knowledge and experiences with both clientele and colleagues.

ELVER PARDO – DIVERSITY IN ORGANIZATIONS, COMMUNITIES, AND NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

In July 2016, I attended and contributed to the Diversity in Organizations, Communities, and Nations International Conference in Granada, Spain, thanks to the support of an Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant. The Diversity in Organizations, Communities, and Nations Knowledge Community was created by Common Ground Publishing, an organization that is committed to building new kinds of knowledge communities. They are innovative in their media, and forward-thinking in their messages. This organization creates spaces for people to meet, share ideas, and have dialogues on subjects such as sustainability, diversity, learning the future of humanities, and the nature of interdisciplinarity – these are some of the global conversations and cross institutional intellectual collaborations that were shared in the annual conference. The conference brought together a shared interest in human differences and diversity, and their varied manifestations in organizations, communities, and nations.

The conference was built upon four key features – internationalism, interdisciplinarity, inclusiveness and interaction. Delegates to the conference came from all parts of the globe and represented a broad range of disciplines and perspectives. These experts based their discussions on four main themes. Identity and Belonging, dealt with topics such as racism, sexism, equality and sexual orientation. The second theme was Education and Learning in a World of Differences, which included topics such as learner differences by

geographic locale, inclusive educations, educational policies, educators serving diverse audiences and global education. The third theme, Organizational Diversity, included private and public organizations, workplace environments, impact of government policies, legislative and regulatory compliance and markets in diversity. The fourth and final theme was Community Diversity and Governance and included consequences of global human movements, immigrants and refugees, human and civil rights, and politics of community leadership.

After a three days of sharing, discussing, interacting and contributing to the global knowledge of diversity and inclusion, it was not strange to conclude that every single community, city and country around the globe is facing the same or similar barriers to reach and serve the extended range of diverse people who want to live in peace and be respected as they are and as they adapt to new environments around the world. It is our responsibility with organizations such as the Cooperative Extension system to serve everybody with respect to their differences and to be more inclusive in our programming. I highly recommend the Diversity in Organizations, Communities and Nations Annual Conference to anyone who would like to enter the diversity and inclusion conversation for Extension programming. This year's conference took place in Toronto, Canada, in July. The 2018 the conference will be at the University of Texas in Austin, TX.

2016 Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant Winners

CINDY SANDERS – INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



In November 2016 I attended the International Leadership Conference in Atlanta, GA. This conference is attended by leaders from all over the world, and was

recommended to me by Dr. Hannah Carter. I received the 2016 Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant to attend the conference. The first day I attended the Inclusive Leadership Aviation Tour, which was amazing. This tour was hosted by Delta Airlines. We were able to tour the Delta Airlines headquarters and hear leadership philosophy from Dave Holtz, Sr. Vice President of Delta Airlines, and William Minner from the Department of Homeland Security.

Ajay Bramdeo, African Union Ambassador to the European Union, was a keynote speaker at the conference. Over the past 21 years, he has served in South Africa's Department of International Relations, working to bring African solutions to the challenges of inclusive economic development and the creation of the democratic governance. His leadership inspiration and stories were amazing to hear.

Another wonderful opportunity of this conference was to visit the Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta. The welcome

reception was held at the center, and the entire center was closed to the public and open only to our conference participants.

Several of the workshops I attended during the conference included:

- *Sustainability: Leading Locally for Global Impact* – This session explored small communities making a difference. This research was conducted by Unity College in Maine.
- *Minding the Gaps to Support More Positive Leadership Outcomes* – Researchers from the Center for Creative Leadership and ATLAS Leadership Training presented skill gaps of leaders.
- *Strategies for Creating a Diverse and Effective Network* – Dr. Donna Mason, Center for Organizational Leadership, University of Cincinnati, presented the Leader Diagnostic Tool to help quantify and evaluate the diversity, depth and openness of their current networks.
- *Truly Living Well* – This tour visited the urban Atlanta gardens and served a local dinner. Truly Living Well, a 501C3 nonprofit organization, demonstrates urban agriculture as a sustainable and economic solution to helping people.

During this conference, I was able to meet people involved in leadership from all over the world. I was also able to bring leadership innovations and ideas back to my work as an Extension Director. One of the greatest highlights of the conference was actually meeting Peter Northouse, a researcher and author on leadership, which I had referenced in my dissertation. I look forward to participating in this conference again, and perhaps present an abstract.

LYNDA SPENCE – AGING IN AMERICA CONFERENCE

Funds from the Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant were used to attend and present at the Southern Gerontological Society and will also be used to attend and present at the upcoming annual conference for the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences educators. In addition to networking with gerontology professionals at SGS, I attended sessions on topics including aging and

driving; aging and volunteerism; and aging and challenges facing LGBT minorities. Because approximately 10,000 baby boomers will turn 65 every day for at least the next 10 years, a focus on aging programs becomes even more relevant. Based on knowledge gained at these conferences, I will develop materials to share with my FCS colleagues.

KALAN TAYLOR – NAE4-HA CONFERENCE

First, I would like to thank Dr. Nick Place for funding the 2016 Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant and supporting his faculty. With the support of this mini-grant I was able to attend the 2016 NAE4-HA National Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. This was my first national conference as a 4-H agent. During this conference I presented a program session on the Sumter County 4-H Agriculture Awareness summer day camp – “Fresh From Sumter County”. I was

also invited to present my abstract in the form of a poster. As a newer agent, this opportunity not only allowed for a presentation in my ROA/POW, but also allowed me the chance to network with agents from across the country, gain knowledge about various programs other states are offering, and allowed me to grow as a professional. I also got to visit the beautiful state of Louisiana and enjoy their incredible cuisine!

2016 Extension Professional Development Mini-Grant Winners

SCOTT TAYLOR – AFCEP ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

By attending the 2016 AFCPE Conference and successfully passing the AFC Certification Exam, I enhanced my financial education skills to be able to:

- Educate clients in sound financial principles.
- Assist clients in the process of overcoming their financial indebtedness.
- Help clients identify and modify ineffective money management behaviors.
- Guide clients in developing successful strategies for achieving their financial goals.

- Support clients as they work through their financial challenges and opportunities.
- Help clients develop new perspectives on the dynamics of money in relation to family, friends and individual self-esteem.

I have been using these skills in the Florida Master Money Program in Hernando and Pasco counties to help residents improve their personal financial literacy.

PATRICK TROY – AMERICAN SOCIETY OF AGRONOMY MEETING

Attending the American Society of Agronomy Tri-Societies Phoenix, AZ conference last November was the first professional meeting of my career. Wow! With over 4,000 participants and a program agenda of more than 300 concurrent workshops (86 pages), I was amazed at the extent and depth of agronomists working on similar subjects. Presenting a poster about corn tissue sampling from a 3-farm demonstration in small Suwannee County connected me with similar projects nationwide looking to improve nutrient management and farmer profitability. Attending a tour of one of the most technologically advanced research sites, I learned how complicated data and variability of weather can be converted into small farm management actions and efficiencies.

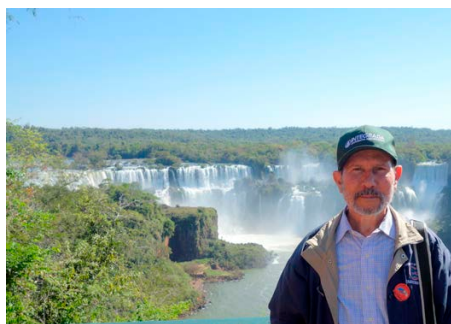
As a result of this opportunity, I felt a deeper connection to my choice of career. I found motivation to delve deeper into the topic of nitrogen cycling and crop uptake, but also linked journal citations with actual faces. One “famous” Ohio State soil scientist volunteered to run Solvita samples for me free after asking about my current grants! In Extension, we are encouraged to be the translators for science, but it’s rare to

get cheers and jeers when speaking just about the numbers. A few of the sessions were actual working groups, talking about how to collaborate on research and share results for the common good. I was impressed.

Returning to Florida, I used some of those connections to prepare content for an Ag Technology Field Day this spring. With greater understanding of the tools and utility, I organized five speakers from the precision ag industry and academia to focus on how we can bring them to local farmers. More than 90 folks attended this inaugural event. Additionally, I reworked protocols for continuing our on-farm corn demonstrations to reflect the complexity that weather, cell phone apps, and soil moisture sensors play in better field management. The next step will be to collect more data and show how such adjustments and tools affect yield.

Hopefully many of the relationships and connections will benefit me in the art of Extension. Having met the science people behind the graphs (in journal publications), I can now put a face to a name and feel more confident in reaching out for my own programming. A special thanks to Dr. Obreza for making this possible!

MONGI ZEKRI – INTERNATIONAL CITRUS CONGRESS



I attended and participated at the International Citrus Congress in Brazil. Overall, the congress was very well organized. This international conference made it easy for me to

meet face-to-face with new experts and old colleagues in my specialty. It allowed us to interact with each other and share experiences. Very useful topics were discussed. I learned new information and I made three presentations, which were well received. When I came back to Florida, I shared some of the information gained with citrus growers, production managers, and Master Gardeners.

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!

ARRIVALS

Sol Forrest Looker, Flagler, EA I, Residential Horticulture

Rhoda (De) Broughton, Suwannee, EA II, Agriculture

Kimido Griffin, Suwannee, EA II, FCS

Stewart (Derby) Sale, Suwannee, EA I, 4-H

Shari Bresin, Pasco, EA I, FCS

Jessica Ryals, Collier, EA II, Sustainable Agriculture/
Food Systems

Melinda Souers, Orange, EA II, 4-H

Shree Ghosh, Polk, EA I, 4-H

NEW POSITIONS

We would like to congratulate the following faculty member on their new position:

Chris Prevatt, Agriculture SSA II, Ona REC

Pam Allen, CRD/FCS CED IV, Okaloosa County

Jeffrey Gellerman, Community Resource Development
CED III, Pinellas County

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

DEPARTURES

Mary Campbell, Pinellas,
CED IV, CD&S

Misty Smith, Okaloosa, EA I, 4-H

Erin Elsberry, Polk, RSA II,
School Gardens

Katharine McWhorter,
Highlands, EA I, 4-H

Mark Warren, Flagler/Putnam, EA
II, Livestock/Crops M/C

John Pipoly, Broward, Prg Cty EA II

Stacey Struhar, Pasco, EA I, FCS

Britton Wilson, Martin,

Stefanie Prevatt, Leon, EA I, 4-H

Liliana Kolluri, Nassau, EA I,
Ag/Nat Res

RETIREMENTS

Jacquelyn Gibson, Miami-Dade,
EA IV, FCS

Jed Dillard, Jefferson, EA I, Ag

Brenda Williams, Alachua,
EA IV, FCS