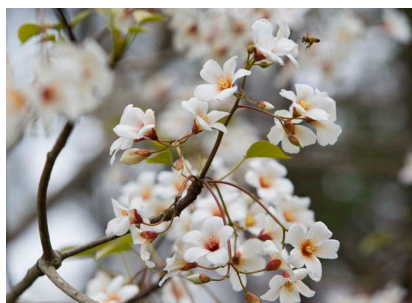


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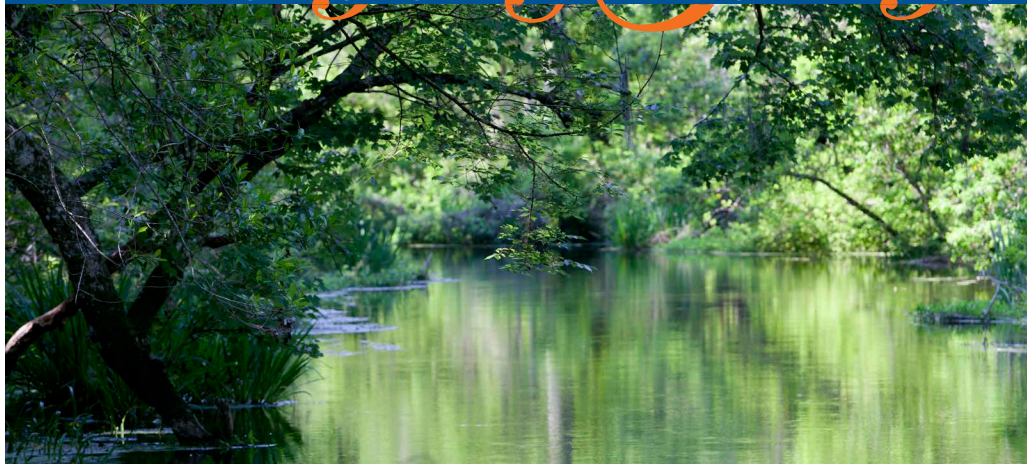
UF/IFAS Extension *Comings and Goings* is a monthly newsletter distributed by the Office of the Dean for Extension via e-mail and on the UF/IFAS Extension web site at <http://extadmin.ifas.ufl.edu>.

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

Please feel free to also forward any questions or comments about this periodical to Valkyrie Aldrari at [valkyriea@ufl.edu](mailto:valkyriea@ufl.edu).

# UF/IFAS Extension *Comings & Goings*

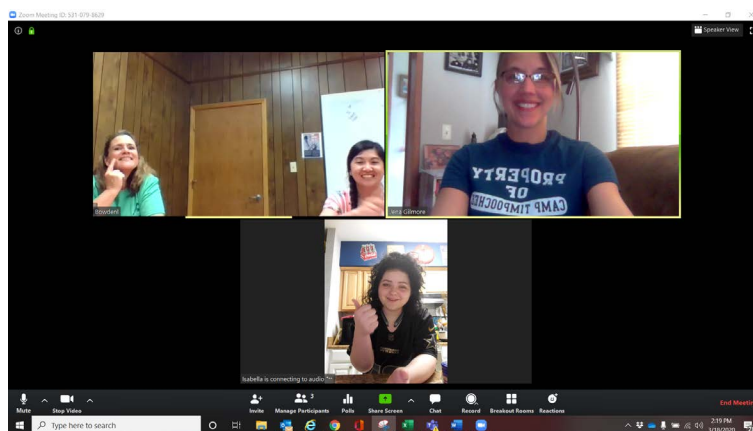
FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN FOR EXTENSION



Please enjoy this special issue of *Comings & Goings* that highlights UF/IFAS Extension's response to the COVID-19 pandemic plus other stories describing the great work of our faculty, volunteers and 4-H youth.

## CAMP COUNSELOR ZOOM INTERVIEWS

Jena Gilmore, 4-H EA I, Walton County



Zoom interview process.

Walton County 4-H Agent Jena Gilmore, Program Assistant Laura Bowden, and Administrative Assistant Cheryl Cosson have been conducting Camp Counselor interviews via Zoom. Jena states, "We've currently interviewed seven of our potential Camp Counselors, about 30% of our county total for our

Camp Timpoochee camp week. I honestly thought the process would be more difficult for them to accept and navigate but they have each passed with flying colors!" Walton County 4-H has utilized Zoom for meetings with adult volunteers and meetings across 4-H District II and the Northwest District involving 4-H activities, but this was the first time using the virtual platform for interviews with teen volunteers. Jena also stated, "This is a perfect opportunity to prepare our teens for the ever changing workforce and different interviewing styles they may face one day in the future." For the past three years Walton County 4-H has chosen this committee style of interviewing where the teen volunteers are asked questions from multiple interviewers, but this year the added virtual aspect has increased the complexity of the interview experience and enhanced the opportunity for the teens to experience personal growth through this requirement.

In this time of great transition for all of our students and families, we hope this experience has provided them with the reassurance that while the world may not be “business as usual” in this moment, we can help develop and grow towards a new “normal” that isn’t as intimidating as it sounded initially. Many of our youth may face a fully virtual classroom

option after April 15th, which can be quite intimidating for parents and youth who are unfamiliar with the usage of different technology. Experience with 4-H in our controlled, inclusive, and safe environment (even if it’s virtually) can be transferable and helpful to our families in this time of stress and transition.

## LIBERTY COUNTY 4-H TEACHES EMBRYOLOGY ON FACEBOOK

Marie Arick, FCS CED I,  
Liberty County



Cathia Schmarje, Liberty County administrative assistant, reading the day's embryology lesson.

The Liberty County Florida 4-H Facebook page has promoted the Embryology in the Classroom project virtually. Following the daily curriculum, videos are posted daily to address the stages of progress, introduction of terminology related to embryology, and asking questions such as what level of humidity should be maintained in the incubators and what is a yolk sack?

## FED CATTLE SHOW

Caroline Chappell, 4-H EA I, Jackson County

This year our 2020 Jackson County Cattlemen's Association Fed Cattle Show and Sale Awards Ceremony is virtual! Our show chairman Mr. Martin Basford and Jackson County 4-H Agent Mrs. Caroline Chappell present awards for the carcass contest, record book contest, and lots more!

[https://youtu.be/\\_u92J3O75ag](https://youtu.be/_u92J3O75ag)

## VIRTUAL PROGRAM FOR HOLMES & WALTON COUNTIES

Niki Crawson, 4-H EA II, Walton County



Hosted by Holmes County 4-H @ <https://www.facebook.com/ufifasholmes4h/>

Holmes & Walton County 4-H have partnered together to launch a new virtual program, 4-H Life Skills Masters, in the wake of the COVID-19 situation. 4-H Life Skills Masters is a virtual program in which teens, volunteers, agents, and community special guests share their knowledge and skills via pre-recorded sessions which are then shared on the Holmes and Walton County 4-H Facebook pages. Sessions are coordinated on specific days, i.e. Make It Mondays, Tasty Tuesdays, Water Wednesdays, Tackle It Thursdays and Fitness Fridays. Plans are in place for recordings through April 30th.

Utilizing Facebook as the platform for delivery allows for both counties to reach present 4-H 'desert' areas within their communities which hinge upon the lack of internet or even broadband width to sustain virtual live stream meetings. Both agents agreed this method was the most inclusive and best recruitment effort of non-4-H members and families as well during this time of COVID-19 chaos. Providing these videos on a familiar and sharable space will hopefully increase participation in 4-H in both counties upon reopening our doors so we can all continue To Make the Best Better!

# DEALING WITH STRESS UNDER COVID-19

Heidi Radunovich, Associate Professor and Program Director, Family, Youth and Community Sciences

During these difficult times we are all under a lot of stress and it is important for us to pay attention to our mental health and well-being. Below you will find helpful information related health and wellness for yourself and others. Dr. Heidi Radunovich has shared a recording to her informational presentation Managing Stress During a Pandemic.

Video link: (<https://tinyurl.com/yx4uuvcz>)

## Mental Health Presentation Resources

### Counseling:

Employee Assistance Program – UF and county Good to have local resources:

<https://samhsa.gov/find-treatment>

Many local providers meeting online

Online therapy websites, a little dicey, but you can explore if needed (often insurance won't cover)

### Medication:

For basic depression/anxiety meds can talk to your primary care. Be careful of herbal supplements, not regulated.

Self-help apps out there:

<https://www.psych.com/25-best-mental-health-apps>

<https://www.stress.org/mental-health-apps>

<https://wa-health.kaiserpermanente.org/best-meditation-apps/>

Also, Spotify has a ton of meditation/relaxation/relaxing music.

### Crisis information:

#### Hotline information

Disaster distress hotline: 1-800-985-5990 Suicide prevention hotline: 1-800-273-8255

SAMHSA substance use/mental health hotline: 1-800-662-4357 Services for Spanish speaking and deaf/hard of hearing also available

SAMHSA publications on mental health and pandemic, including children:

### English:

[https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Talking-With-Children-Tips-for-Caregivers-Parents-and-Teachers-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/PEP20-01-01-006?referrer=from\\_search\\_result](https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Talking-With-Children-Tips-for-Caregivers-Parents-and-Teachers-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/PEP20-01-01-006?referrer=from_search_result)

<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Coping-with-Stress-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/sma14-4885>

<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/How-To-Cope-With-Sheltering-in-Place/SMA14-4893>

### Spanish:

[https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Talking-With-Children-Tips-for-Caregivers-Parents-and-Teachers-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks-Spanish-/SMA14-4886SPANISH?referrer=from\\_search\\_result](https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Talking-With-Children-Tips-for-Caregivers-Parents-and-Teachers-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks-Spanish-/SMA14-4886SPANISH?referrer=from_search_result)

<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/coping-stress-during-infectious-disease-outbreaks-spanish>

<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Taking-Care-of-Your-Behavioral-Health-Tips-for-Social-Distancing-Quarantine-and-Isolation-During-an-Infectious-Disease-Outbreak-Spanish-Version-/SMA14-4894SPANISH>

Here are some great resources from UF Health:

[https://wellness.med.ufl.edu/2020/03/18/resources-to-promote-well-being-during-covid-19-outbreak/?fbclid=IwAR2fT\\_ZWebjE7tAEaqjOTZyPS7yzbstKfpmZw3IUAYprp1KuTj79\\_yktLEO](https://wellness.med.ufl.edu/2020/03/18/resources-to-promote-well-being-during-covid-19-outbreak/?fbclid=IwAR2fT_ZWebjE7tAEaqjOTZyPS7yzbstKfpmZw3IUAYprp1KuTj79_yktLEO)

My presentation on stress and pandemic:

<https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/bf0a42f96e874778bf47a8517125f1591d>

### Children and grieving:

National Child Traumatic Stress Network - focuses on some of the behaviors that are engaged in and how to help, focused on parents/caregivers: <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/helping-teens-traumatic-grief-tips-caregivers>

National Center for Grieving Children and Families: gives principles on helping teens with grief, but also has links to other resources: <https://www.dougy.org/grief-resources/how-to-help-a-grieving-teen/>

Nemours - has info for parents, teachers, and teens themselves; very succinct: <https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/someone-died.html>

This is a website that doesn't seem to come from an official source (so normally I'd stay away), BUT it is super thorough and I really like what they cover; also has links to other information imbedded; also available as a podcast: <https://whatsyourgrief.com/helping-a-teenager-deal-with-grief-2/>



## 4-H INSPIRES YOUTH TO GIVE GENEROUSLY

Jena Gilmore, 4-H EA I, Walton County



Macie, a Walton County 4-H camper, stitches surgical masks in her home workspace.

Every year in Walton County during spring break, a local group of women collaborate with the Walton County 4-H Agent to deliver a special interest day camp for youth in the area. This day camp, Stitch Perfect, was developed by the Chautauqua Quilters Guild and Jena Gilmore, the Walton County 4-H Agent. Stitch Perfect teaches campers everything from hand stitching, sewing tools and equipment to advanced sewing techniques!

Walton County 4-H has been extremely fortunate that this three-day day camp comes with only a small cost due to the Chautauqua Quilters Guild donating all materials, machines, and

project from 10 to 20 campers by dividing the youth into beginner and advanced classes.

Four years ago, Macie, a 4-H day camper, attended Stitch Perfect and fell in love with the art of sewing and quilting. The following year, she had to choose between Stitch Perfect and her family's planned trip to Walt Disney World, Macie was distraught! While she still enjoyed her time at the Magic Kingdom, she has been eager to get back to Stitch Perfect in following years to gain skills in cross stitching, weaving, and advancing her sewing skills.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and shortages of preventative

volunteer power, while 4-H provides no-sew projects, environmental topics, STEM, and alternative sewing activities (crochet, weaving, etc). Due to the collaboration efforts and strong partnership with the Guild, Stitch Perfect is annually one of the programs in highest demand. To serve more youth, 4-H expanded the reach of this

equipment, Macie felt inspired to take action by utilizing the sewing skills she had learned years ago at 4-H Stitch Perfect with the Chautauqua Quilters Guild! She created her own workspace in her bedroom, determined her pattern, secured her supplies and tools and went to work creating surgical masks to share with her community. Macie's inspiration was sparked after her mother, a postal worker, expressed the need for supplies such as hand sanitizer, gloves and face masks for postal workers. After all, they are on the front lines dealing with COVID-19 as they directly handle thousands of pieces of mail.

Macie chose to give so generously of her time in supplying not only a local post office, but she's also sending some face masks to nurses as well. These types of long-term impacts on our youth are exactly what 4-H strives to accomplish in programming efforts. These results hinge on the positive caring adult/youth partnerships that are fostered within programming and collaboration with organizations such as the women of the Chautauqua Quilters Guild. Take time during your practice of social distancing to invest in giving back, putting your 20-seconds-washed-and-gloved hands to larger service with your local 4-H program, youth, and volunteers!

## EXTENSION STAFF FINDS NOVEL WAYS TO HELP CLIENTS COPE WITH COVID-19

Ed Jennings, Livestock CED IV, Levy County

Kristen Brault Admin. Asst., Jennifer Munden Recept., Ariane Horton Office Mngr., Barbara Edmonds Hort Prog. Asst.

Staff from UF/IFAS Extension Levy County put their heads together to come up with a way to serve the public while still maintaining safe distances due to COVID-19. The staff still wanted to make soil sampling supplies available to the public without their having to come in the building. The staff put a variety of soil sample kits together and placed them in zippered plastic bags. Using supplies gathered from around the office (zip ties and milk crates) the staff put together a soil sample kit box that was placed outside the front door to their building. A sign on the box included the office phone number, email, and QR code information so that the public can still

contact us with any questions that can be answered by phone or email. In the kit is the form for the soil test, instructions on where to send the sample, contact information for agents and the master gardener coordinator, and a few sample bags. With many citizens having more at-home time due to COVID-19, gardening interest is on the uptick. One of the chief benefits to home gardening is helping people cope with stress in many ways, from the satisfaction of growing their own food to the therapeutic value of working together as a family on a common project outdoors.

## LEARNING IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

Megan Mann, Livestock CED II, Lake County

To say that we are living in unprecedented times is certainly an understatement. Across UF/IFAS Extension, I have been impressed and encouraged by how quickly my colleagues have responded to meet the needs of our community and transition delivery methods. We are an adaptable, creative, and innovative bunch to be sure!

In Lake County I am especially proud of how quickly our 4-H team jumped into action to provide a "Virtual 4-H Day Camp" opportunity for our youth. 4-H agent Dallas Meringolo, 4-H administrative assistant Stephanie Klein and I identified short activities that would be entertaining and educational for youth, with an emphasis on activities that could be easily done at home. We posted videos to our UF/IFAS Lake County Extension and 4-H Facebook pages daily at 1pm and asked viewers to "sign in" by liking the video. Topics that have been addressed in the first week included proper handwashing, DIY slime and play-doh, healthy snacks, and basic dog training.

Of course, 4-H is not the only program area in Lake County that rapidly responded to the changes brought on by the COVID-19 epidemic. Agents worked quickly to transition to online program delivery methods by setting up classes on zoom and providing narrated versions of existing presentations free of charge to our community. They designed infographics, put out timely information, and maintained communication with their clients.

One of the most important missions of UF/IFAS Extension is to provide timely, accurate, unbiased, and research-based information to the public. Never in recent history has this mission been more critical. As science communicators and trusted members of the community, UF/IFAS Extension faculty members are in the unique position to meet the needs of an anxious public who have come to rely on them as credible experts. I am proud to be an Extension agent, and prouder still to count myself as one member of a team of agents doing excellent work in the face of a pandemic.

Keep your hands clean, your chin up, and your coughs covered. We got this!



# LAKE COUNTY 4-H



PRESENTS

## A VIRTUAL 4-H DAY CAMP

All sessions will be posted to the Lake County 4-H Facebook Page by 1pm daily

### WEDNESDAY 3/18: HAND WASHING DOS AND DON'TS

Mrs. Dallas and Mrs. Stephanie will use the magic of backlight to demonstrate what works well, and what doesn't work at all, when it comes to hand washing.

### THURSDAY 3/19: DIY PLAY-DOH & SLIME

Learn how to make play-doh and slime using ingredients from your kitchen.

### FRIDAY 3/20: DOG TRAINING 101

Mrs. Meg and her famous dog Annabelle will demonstrate how to teach your old dog new tricks.



### MONDAY 3/23: CHICK WATCH 2020

Mrs. Dallas has a clutch of eggs incubating at her house! Learn about how baby chicks develop and witness the miracle of hatching live on your computer screen.

### TUESDAY 3/24: PAINT YOUR-SELFIE

Mrs. Meg will walk you through how to paint realistic faces. If you can draw a circle you can draw a face, no previous artistic experience required!



### WEDNESDAY 3/25: HEALTHY SNACKS

Learn how to whip up delicious and easy to make snacks in your own kitchen.

### THURSDAY 3/26: CRAFTAPALOOZA

Mrs. Dallas will demonstrate how to make a number of crafts from material you likely have on hand. Get ready to get creative!

### FRIDAY 3/27: GROW IT YOURSELF

Learn how to start a vegetable garden in your backyard or patio. Take a virtual tour of the vegetable garden at Discovery Gardens and explore the plants and animals that call our garden home.



### Other Resources to Help You Make the Most of Your Time at Home

Floridastudents.org - Free educational tutorials aligned to Florida standards

Khan Academy [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org)

Virtual Tour of the National Museum of History  
<https://naturalhistory.si.edu/visit/virtual-tour>

Smithsonian National Zoo live cams  
<https://nationalzoo.si.edu/webcams>

Central Florida Zoo Facebook Live weekdays at 2pm



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## PROVIDING GUIDANCE ON POLLING PLACE SAFETY

Samantha Kennedy, FCS EA II and Rachel Pienta, 4-H EA II, Wakulla County

The Wakulla Supervisor of Elections (SOE) reached out to the UF/IFAS Extension Wakulla County during the weekend before the primary election, looking for guidance on ways to make the voting process and the precinct itself safer for voters. Due to the COVID-19 situation, they were worried about decreased voter turnout and wanted to reassure voters that proper precautions were being taken to ensure their safety. Family and Consumer Sciences agent Samantha Kennedy and 4-H Agent Rachel Pienta worked together to create "COVID Suggestions," which included 10 tips

for creating a clean and sanitized space for voting. These included enforcing the CDC's social distancing recommendations of keeping people at least 6 feet apart, providing hand sanitizer to voters before and after handling ballots, frequent sanitizing of polling stations, intake areas and ballot machines, reducing person-to-person contact and discouraging voters from congregating in groups in and around the precinct. After providing these suggestions, the SOE's office turned them into an official list of coronavirus procedures that were then disseminated to the public via

their social media pages prior to voting day as a way to advertise the safety measures being taken. As a result of these measures, voters positively commented on social media about the precautions the SOE was taking at their precincts and encouraged others to not be afraid to vote.

Subsequently, UF/IFAS Wakulla County Extension has provided the same type of guidance to both the Wakulla County Public Library and the Wakulla Clerk of Court as they work to ensure the safety of their staff and clientele during this crisis.

## VICTORY 2020 GARDEN COMMUNITY

Erin Harlow, Residential/  
Commercial Horticulture EA III,  
Columbia County

This program is part of our Victory 2020 Garden Community hosted by Columbia and Marion Counties. The online Vegetable Gardening Design Workshop will be hosted on Zoom. This is what I used on my facebook extension page: "Join us for a fun and informative class on designing your vegetable garden. We will talk about site selection, design choices, considerations, and much more."



### Victory2020 Garden Community

Join the Conversation

Gardeners have the opportunity to connect and learn from each other through various opportunities. Topics include real-time troubleshooting, plant health, pests and diseases, and more!

- Access to private facebook group, Victory Gardeners
- Access to virtual online course about growing your own food
- Personalized learning for adults, youth, and families
- Access to Garden Book Club
- Social media garden challenges
- 4-H project book for youth
- Learn from horticulture agents and other gardeners
- Receive a laminated poster for your garden
- Participants will receive seeds to start their Victory Garden while supplies last

For horticulture-related questions contact Erin Harlow, [eeceek@ufl.edu](mailto:eeceek@ufl.edu) or Maxine Hunter, [maxine32566@ufl.edu](mailto:maxine32566@ufl.edu)

For 4-H youth questions contact Chandler Mulvaney, [chandlermulvaney@ufl.edu](mailto:chandlermulvaney@ufl.edu) or Emma Cannon, [emmamacannon@ufl.edu](mailto:emmamacannon@ufl.edu)



Join us at <https://bit.ly/V2020G>

## COOL-SEASON FORAGE VIRTUAL TOUR

Doug Mayo, Livestock/Forage CED IV, Jackson County

On Friday, March 13 the University of Florida cancelled or postponed all in-person training activities to slow the spread of COVID-19. One of the events this affected was the Twilight Cool-Season Forage Tour that had been scheduled for March 17th, at the North Florida Research and Education Center (NFREC) near Marianna, Florida. Since we had already had that afternoon blocked off on our schedule, I met Dr. Ann Blount, UF/IFAS Forage Breeder at the plots and recorded a video tour and posted it to the Panhandle Ag Extension Team's YouTube channel.

The virtual tour has reached 350 views since it was posted. We would not have gotten that many people to come out to the plots for the live tour at the Station!

<http://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/phag/2020/03/27/virtual-cool-season-forage-tour-with-ann-blount/>

## EXTENSION PORCH



To serve the needs of clients while safely practicing social distancing, livestock Extension agent Mark Mauldin developed the porch of UF/IFAS Extension Washington County for soil bags and forms and plant samples.



Rhyme can often be an innovative way to help people remember important information. Brenda Jimenez, a Family and Community Sciences agent for UF/IFAS Extension Broward County, uses poetry to present this information about preventing the spread of COVID-19.

## COVID-19: A Pandemic Like You've Never Seen

Author: Brenda Marty Jimenez, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension agent IV, UF/IFAS Extension Broward County

### What Happened?

It is currently flu and respiratory disease season.

We must always take precautions and follow recommendations for good reason.

Consumers and families are dealing with a lot during this unparalleled year. The CDC has circulated best practices for all to hear.

What is this COVID-19?

It is a pandemic unlike anything we've ever seen.

In Wuhan, China, it was first detected. A global pandemic was not what we expected.

These are unique times that we hope will be under control soon. No person or place is immune.

How is it contagious and how does it spread?

It spreads from person-to-person contact, which we all have read.

It spreads between people who are in close contact, we know.

The new habit of *social distancing* is beginning to grow.

Symptoms can include fever, cough, or shortness of breath.

So we must practice handwashing and respiratory etiquette in great depth!

Some may have classic symptoms which include a fever.

For a vaccine to come, we are anxious and eager.

Water, hand sanitizer, toilet paper, and more have all flown off shelves at our local grocery store.

Hoarding, price gouging, and fraud have been reported on TV.

Protect your resources with care, as well as you and me.

### What Can I Do?

Do your part to help fight the coronavirus spread and "flatten-the-curve" making happy the epidemiologists and the public they serve.

The flatter the curve, the slower the spread.

This gives doctors more time and resources to treat the people who lie sick in bed.

So whether you are in counties such as Broward, Dade, or Palm Beach, plan to clean and disinfect all high-touch surfaces, especially those within reach.

Follow guidance from your local health authority.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, just like the majority.

Use soap and water to carefully wash each finger and hand.

Unfortunately, this is the place many germs land.

Practice good respiratory etiquette by covering your cough and sneeze.

Cover your mouth with a tissue or sleeve!

Then throw the tissue into the trash before leaving.

A path to good health you are achieving.

Avoid contact with sick people now. Why? To stop the spread of infection, we must vow.

Stay home when you are sick. Don't infect others—to this rule we must stick.

Keep everyone safe and experiencing wellness.

Call before visiting your doctor—this disease is infectious.

Let the elderly go first in grocery store lines, keeping their hardships in mind. Do onto others as you would like them to do onto you and **be kind**.

Support and reach out to family and friends far and near.

Take the time to spread kindness, compassion, and cheer.

### Carry On

Young and old will remember 2020 as a time of handwashing, sanitizing, and cleaning aplenty!

Get enough sleep and eat three well-balanced meals.

Stay calm and informed as our whole world heals.

Check out more facts at the UF/IFAS Extension, which has a website with resources which are too many to mention!

Follow research-based advice that is scientifically bound.

To keep you and your family healthy and sound.

Note the guidelines set by the Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—Wash your hands, cover your cough, and get tested, which will help ease much of our tension.

Please don't panic and stay calm, above all.

So when you see COVID-19, will you remember.

The coronavirus outbreak and the community in which you were a member?

#### For More Information

**UF/IFAS Extension Broward County website**

<http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/broward/family-and-consumer-sciences/>

**UF/IFAS Extension Broward County blogs**

<http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/browardco/>

**UF/IFAS Extension, Solutions for Your Life**

<http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/>

**USDA Choose MyPlate**

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

**Centers for Disease Control—Coronavirus**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

**Florida Department of Health in Broward County**

<http://broward.floridahealth.gov/>

**Federal Trade Commission Consumer Information on Coronavirus Scams**

<https://www.ftc.gov/>

**Handwashing**

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/hand/handwashing.html>

## OTHER STORIES

### FINANCIAL MENTORING FOR FAMILIES TRANSITIONING OUT OF HOMELESSNESS

*Lisa Leslie, Financial Management EA IV, Hillsborough County*

Individuals working their way out of homelessness are challenged because many landlords will not rent to those with blemished credit histories. A first step for these individuals is to analyze their credit reports. UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County provides one-on-one financial mentoring to clients in the Metropolitan Ministries' transitional housing program. The agent teaches clients how to pull their credit reports, rebuild their credit and establish financial stability. This effort

started in 2013 and is ongoing. In 2019, 61 people participated in a financial mentoring session. Participants learned how to acquire and analyze their free credit report, prioritize debt repayment and improve their credit history. Financial counseling as part of Metropolitan Ministries' transitional housing program helps individuals and families to be more self-sufficient and self-reliant, while it reduces dependence on tax-funded services.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: A WISE INVESTMENT

*Diane Converse, FCS EA III, Hillsborough County*

Early childhood development programs, particularly those for at-risk children, are an investment in human capital. These programs improve child and family outcomes and ensure school readiness. Out-of-home childcare, if done well, can enrich children's early learning experiences. It can be a therapeutic component of services to at-risk children, providing a safe, consistent base for protection, prevention, and treatment. However, quality childcare requires professional development for caregivers and teachers. Nearly 40,000 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in Hillsborough County are in out-of-home care provided by 439 licensed childcare centers and 700 home care providers. UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County conducted five professional childcare provider trainings at weekend workshops from January through March. Eighty-four care providers attended the trainings, where they accomplished following:

- increased their knowledge of the social-emotional development of young children;
- developed new strategies to reduce classroom behavior problems;
- adopted best management practices for teaching young children and getting them school-ready.

This program is recognized by Tampa Home Child Care Providers Association and Hillsborough Association for the Education of Young Children. The return on investment to the public of quality early childhood programs exceeds the return on most projects currently funded as economic development. The findings of the Committee for Economic Development cite a solid return on investment of from \$4 to \$7 for every \$1 spent on quality early childhood education.

### THE 'DAIRY DREAM TEAM' DOES IT AGAIN!

*Marie Arick, FCS CED I, Liberty County*



*The Dairy Dream Team (l to r: Marie Arick, Jill Breslawski, Chris DeCubellis, and Colleen Larson) at the National 4-H Youth AgriScience Summit.*

UF IFAS Agents Marie Arick, Jill Breslawski, Colleen Larson and Chris DeCubellis (dubbed by Chris the 'Dairy Dream Team') took the multidiscipline *Exploring Dairy Science, Say Cheese!* workshop back to the National 4-H Youth AgriScience Summit held at the National 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, MD. The workshop included introductions to 4-H Dairy Science opportunities, agricultural careers in Dairy Science and finally Family and Consumer Sciences with an introduction to Food Safety, Food Science and the making of Mozzarella cheese. All 42 participants from 11 states successfully made mozzarella cheese and thoroughly enjoyed testing their product.



## NASSAU COUNTY YOUTH ASSIST PEOPLE IN NEED

Ted Karsch, 4-H EA I, Nassau County

High school students in Nassau County do not have access to a leadership training curriculum inside of the public-school system. Students in the school system have limited interactions with positive adult role models in leadership roles within the community.

Thirty Nassau County youth are participating in a year-long program called Youth Leadership Nassau (YLN). The course meets for one day a month for the duration of the year. The volunteer instructors are political, business and community leaders throughout the county.

The capstone project for YLN participants is a service-learning project called the Community Pride Project. Students ages 16 to 17 work on their project in groups of five, each with a volunteer adult mentor. Community Pride Projects have a dual purpose: to demonstrate the leadership and communication skills of the students, and to assist the community. Groups write a grant proposal for up to \$1,500 through UF/IFAS Extension and Florida 4-H to fund their projects.

Their needs assessment demonstrated that poverty was prevalent in western Nassau County. They decided to partner

with a local non-profit, Barnabas, which provides food and medical assistance to those in need. Barnabas recently purchased a building in Callahan to serve western Nassau County. Group members initiated a plan to help beautify the new building by purchasing and planting landscape supplies at the building's entrance. They completed and submitted a grant proposal. The grant was approved and funded for \$500. The group purchased landscape supplies and planted the bushes and flowers in front of the building.

Members of Assisting People in Need reported both improved leadership and communication skills as a result of participating in the project. One individual stated that he felt more confident when discussing opposing points of view with his peers. Participants learned how to plan, write and submit a grant application. One individual stated that she considered using the experience of working in the group as a subject for a college admissions essay. Participants reported improved leadership skills within a small group setting. They also reported being inspired by the community service leadership demonstrated by their volunteer adult group mentor.

## ARBOR DAY TREE GIVEAWAY

Terra Freeman, Urban/Commercial Hort EA II, St. Johns County



MGVs giving away trees and information at a local library for the St. Johns County Arbor Day Tree Giveaway.

Florida celebrates Arbor Day on the third Friday of January, an ideal time to plant in our humid subtropical climate. To honor this event, as well as to replace part of our urban tree canopy lost to the two most recent hurricanes, the St. Johns County

Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV) program holds an annual Arbor Day Tree Giveaway event in which we disseminate over 1,000 bare root native tree seedlings to county residents. Bareroot seedlings are young trees that are not in soil or in a pot— their roots are bare.

We prepare for the tree giveaway the day before with an annual “tree sleeving” event in which approximately 20 MGV’s will gather, in assembly-line fashion, to place each plant in a labeled, plastic newspaper sleeve (which the volunteers collect year-round for this occasion). The sleeving process takes a few hours, so I use this time to educate the volunteers about proper tree planting methods and characteristics of each tree species. The goal is to equip them with the information they will need to assist tree recipients in selecting plants that are best suited for their landscape, following the FFL principle of

“right plant, right place.” Additionally, I prepare fact sheets to give away with each seedling to educate recipients about their new plant.

Since 2017, we have disseminated over 4,500 native tree species to over 600 SJC residents. Of 424 tree recipients surveyed, 81 responded and reported that 217 (82 percent) of the 265 trees they received were still alive nine months later. Thirty-one percent of 59 respondents reported the tree giveaway enabled them to replace trees that were lost to a hurricane or major storm and 47 percent believe these trees have added economic value to their property; 45 percent reported the trees increased wildlife habitat and added environmental benefits, such as improved runoff filtration or decreased erosion, to their property.

Humans derive many benefits from urban forests. These benefits are referred to as ecosystem services. Urban forests improve human health, environmental quality, and even local economies by increasing property values and aesthetics in communities. Urban forests also help control stormwater, reduce air pollution and energy costs, and offset carbon dioxide emissions (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fr347>). Additionally, healthy, mature trees add an average of 10% to a property's value (USDA Forest Service: <https://www.arborday.org/trees/benefits.cfm>). The median home value in St. Johns County is \$316,700 (<https://www.zillow.com/saint-johns-county-fl/home-values/>). Trees acquired at the Arbor Day Tree Giveaway are improving property values by a minimum of \$2,565,270 for county residents ( $\$316,700 \times 81 \text{ properties with trees} = \$25,652,700 \times .10 = \$2,565,270$ ), while increasing their salability.

## THE ANASTASIA BRAZILIAN PEPPER INVASIVE PROJECT

Terra Freeman, Urban/Commercial Hort EA II, St. Johns County  
and Norie Flowers, Florida Master Gardener volunteer, St. Johns County



Team of MGVs, led by Norie Flowers (seated, fourth from left) removing Brazilian pepper from Anastasia Island Park Preserve.

In January 2019, St. Johns County (SJC) Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV) program began assisting Anastasia Park Preserve with eradicating its massive Brazilian pepper population. Anastasia Preserve is home to some of North Florida's most important

aquatic life, especially turtles. Because of the prolific spread of the invasive Brazilian pepper, over 150 acres of this fragile ecosystem are at risk. As a result of their training, MGVS understand that the Brazilian pepper is one of the most aggressive and widespread of the invasive non-indigenous exotic pest plants in Florida. More than 700,000 acres in Florida are infested with this invasive, which produces a dense canopy that crowds out native plants and invades aquatic as well as terrestrial habitats, greatly reducing the quality of native biotic communities. Brazilian pepper costs

the government and private landowners a significant amount of time, money and manpower to control. Because of the invasive nature of Brazilian pepper, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection has classified it as a Class I Prohibited Aquatic Plant under section 62C-52.011 and the sale and or movement of this species is prohibited.

Our goal is to contain and eventually manage the Brazilian pepper invasive problem on the Preserve. The work is difficult – sawing, clipping, hauling and spraying huge Brazilian Pepper trees, as well as pulling out smaller pepper plants. Sixty-five Master Gardener volunteers were signed in from January to May for a total of 195 hours. Eight acres of Brazilian pepper were destroyed by May of 2019.

As a direct result of the sustained effort of the SJC MGV program, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation (FWC) awarded a grant to Anastasia State Park to hire additional help to assist in managing the immense Brazilian pepper invasion. Through their work at Anastasia State Park, SJC MGVS have made a significant contribution to community awareness of the threat posed by Brazilian pepper. As a direct result of working on this project, SJC MGVS realize and appreciate the impact they have made and their contribution to environmental sustainability.

## NASSAU COUNTY'S "TACKY" FUNDRAISER

Kelsey Irvine, 4-H EA I, Nassau County



Nassau County 4-H Horse program holds a tack-cleaning fundraiser.

The 4-H Horse program is one avenue for youth to gain valuable life skills through a fun but challenging activity. Working with horses helps to teach many skills, including responsibility, communication and teamwork; however, it can be an expensive project.

Nassau County 4-H riding members have grown in numbers and ambitions in the last three years. For the 2019-2020 year there are 19 registered riders and more than 15 regular

Hippology members. Participation has more than doubled from its previous years! Our riders are actively seeking avenues to grow their horsemanship skills and requesting more clinics and shows. However, adding in more events in turn adds financial pressure on families. We agreed as a group to host a tack-cleaning fundraiser to support all the project members in their efforts to learn.

A local feed store volunteered to host the members for the fundraiser. Youth and club leaders worked together restoring a variety of neglected tack, including a civil war saddle! Cleanings were a suggested donation of \$10 per saddle and \$5 for halters, bridles, and breast collars. Items were organized using a ticket-and-tag system, which made for an efficient system for patrons. During the fundraiser, we distributed general 4-H program information and even promoted upcoming UF/IFAS Extension programs for other agents. The feed store was incredibly receptive to our members fostering an improved relationship and opening doors for future support.

Members raised \$418 in three hours for the 2020 riding year and had a lot of fun while doing so. Youth were able to practice their practical skills of cleaning tack but also learned public speaking, financial management, attention to detail and record keeping. It was decided to host this fundraiser on an annual basis.

## 4-H SHARE THE FUN STORYTELLING TEACHES LIFE SKILLS

Karen Henry, 4-H EA II, Seminole County



The Seminole County 4-H Performing Arts SPIN Club works on acting out a story.

A six-year-old Seminole County 4-Her takes the stage at the 4-H Share the Fun Talent and Variety show and says: "This is a story about when I needed a snack. It's called... The Marshmallow Thief! I snuck downstairs to get some marshmallows." Next to him, his five year-old co-performer makes the sound of older stairs: "Creak, creak, creak." In other acts, eleven-year-old Anna mesmerized the audience talking about her royal painting and eight-year-old Tatiana recounted the excitement of her baby brother being born. So, what do marshmallow thieves, royal paintings, and baby brothers have in common? All of these were storytelling themes used to teach young people communication.

UF/IFAS Extension Seminole County 4-H, in partnership with the University of Central Florida Department of Theatre, created a 4-H Performing Arts SPIN (special interest) Club. A SPIN club is a group of five or more youth who meet on a flexible schedule to explore a topic of interest; in this

case, performing arts. Two graduate students in *Methods of Teaching Drama* served as volunteers for the 4club. The group focused on storytelling as a medium to teach theatrical skills such as projection, movement, confidence and stage presence. Thirteen youth, ages five to 18, engaged in the 4-H Performing Arts SPIN Club. Throughout the experience, young people learned the importance of explaining the meaning of their stories, engagement with the audience and clear communication, especially when speaking.

During the SPIN Club sessions, 4-H volunteers worked with youth to develop public speaking skills, showmanship and stage appearance, centering on the 4-H Share the Fun rubric. Eighty percent of the youth in the SPIN club participated in the 4-H Share the Fun Talent and Variety Show. Many of these youth performed their stories on stage. The program was evaluated using a mixed-method approach, including observation data using the 4-H Share the Fun Rubric, 4-H project stories, and 4-H volunteer and parent observation. Forty-six percent of youth (n=13) demonstrated increased communication skills and stage presence, as evidenced by scores based on the Share the Fun rubric. One youth commented in her 4-H project story, "I was scared, but now I am not." Another 4-H member who participated in this SPIN club is a member of a large family and, being one of the youngest, is often not "heard" on the same level as their older siblings. While shy at the beginning of the sessions; at the end this child was performing in the 4-H Share the Fun Talent show and receiving rave reviews.

## COMINGS AND GOINGS

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

### NEW HIRES

Julie Ann McMillian, 4-H EA I, Gulf County

Terri Keith, FCS EA I, Jackson County

Lori Johnson, FCS EA I, Lake County

Christian Christensen, Director and RSA II, Hastings Agricultural Extension Center

### TRANSFERS

Jessica Altum Cooper, from Gilchrist 4-H EA I to CED I

Tyler Pittman, from Marion County to Agriculture/Horticulture EA II, Gilchrist County

Yilin Zhuang, from Marion County to Water Resources RSA I, Central District

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

### DEPARTURES

Gabriela Murza, FCS EA II, Osceola County

Julianne Shoup Dinkel, FCS EA I, Jefferson County

David Nistler, Agriculture/Horticulture EA II, NE District

Jane Cant, Agriculture/Small Farms EA I, Duval County

### RETIRED

Dennis Mudge, Agriculture and Natural Resources EA III, Volusia County