

Dallas Meringolo- Mentor of the Year Nominee

Bio:

Dallas Meringolo is the Lake County 4-H Agent. She holds a Master of Science in Agricultural Education and Communication from the University of Florida and a bachelor's degree from the University of Central Florida. She brings a rich educational background to her role as the 4-H Agent and is passionate about empowering volunteers and fostering the development of life skills in youth.

Narrative:

1. Dallas became my mentor in 2022. She came to my county to meet with me and communicated through video chat, email, and text over the last three years. She was critical in helping me better understand my job and the mission of UF/IFAS Extension. She walked me through her program and ROA/POW to provide more understanding of the work I would need to do with my volunteers and youth. After analyzing my county and program, she guided me in creating goals that would become the focus of my programs. Along the way, she has continued to support me by helping me brainstorm ideas for programs and day camps and providing learning opportunities through meetings where she teaches me through her expertise. Dallas's mentorship has been instrumental in shaping my understanding, guiding my growth, and laying the foundation for my impactful work with my volunteers and youth today.
2. Dallas and I meet monthly via video chat or in person to discuss my current and upcoming programs, successes, challenges, and goals. She is a great listener and always offers constructive insights and practical guidance. When I seek her assistance through email or text, she consistently responds with clear, concise communication. Through her years of service, she has created and seen numerous strong programs and provides me with insights to help me build my county program. She has taken the lead on multiple group presentations, allowing us to present successful programs and educate others, giving them the opportunity to implement those programs in their counties.
Some of Dallas' most successful programs include the Hope Forest Garden, her volunteer program, and her school enrichment program. Through the Hope Forest Program, Dallas works with youth who have committed a misdemeanor or felony and have a developmental disability. She also has a strong volunteer program with over 80 annual volunteers that supports 36 community clubs and six in-school clubs, reaching over 1,700 youth members. Her school enrichment programs reached over 6,500 youth this year.
3. Dallas has been a member of FAE4-HA for seven years, attending annual meetings. She also served as the District Director for 4-H District VIII. She served the last six years as a member of the awards committee and a reviewer.

Awards Committee,

January 23, 2025

I am honored to recommend Dallas Meringolo for the Mentor of the Year Award. Dallas has been an exceptional mentor to me as a 4-H Agent, and her guidance has been instrumental in my professional growth and success over the past three years.

Dallas's communication skills are exemplary, consistently providing clear and constructive feedback. She fosters an open, collaborative environment that encourages growth and learning. Her willingness to work with me and help me better understand my position at the beginning of my career was crucial in developing goals for the priority work groups and initiatives for my county program after initial analysis, ensuring my success as a 4-H Agent. We have since collaborated to create innovative program ideas and opportunities for the youth and volunteers in our county 4-H programs.

Dallas's unwavering support and positive attitude have left an indelible mark on my development in Extension. Her dedication to mentoring is unparalleled, going above and beyond to ensure my success. This commitment makes her a truly deserving candidate for the Mentor of the Year Award. I am deeply grateful for her mentorship and wholeheartedly endorse her for this recognition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Heather Pogue".

Heather Pogue

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DATE: January 23, 2025
TO: FAE4-HA Award Selection Committee
FROM: Geralyn Sachs, UF/IFAS Extension Central District 4-H Regional Specialized Agent IV
RE: Mrs. Dallas Meringolo, Extension Agent II letter of support for 4-H Mentor of the Year

Dear Selection Committee,

It is with great respect and appreciation that I write this letter of support for the nomination of Mrs. Dallas Meringolo to be recognized as the Florida 4-H Mentor of the Year. As the Central District 4-H Regional Specialized Agent, I have had the pleasure of working with Dallas on several projects over the past five years. During this time, I have found her to be innovative with programming and resourceful in seeking financial and engagement support. She has a strong and well-rounded county 4-H program and believes in the mission of 4-H. The passion and energy that Dallas brings to her county is impressive. These reasons are just a few to mention as to why I encouraged Dallas to serve as a mentor for Ms. Heather Pogue.

When Heather began her career with UF/IFAS Extension in 2022 as the Putnam County 4-H Extension Agent, I was instrumental in pairing Dallas as Heather's mentor. From the "get go" Dallas connected with Heather, not only via virtual meetings, but in person as well. On numerous occasions, Heather has shared with me how beneficial her meetings with Dallas have been. In addition to Dallas's mentoring on managing a county 4-H program and volunteer development, she has modeled the importance of building relationships among colleagues, community partners, and stakeholders.

Dallas is not only a blessing to her county 4-H program, but to everyone she formally or informally mentors. I feel Dallas is most deserving of the Florida 4-H Mentor of the Year award.

Sincerely,

Geralyn Sachs

UF/IFAS Extension Central District 4-H Regional Specialized Agent IV

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