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FACAA Educational Foundation Scholarship Report on the National Extension Conference on Volunteerism

As coordinator for a Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV) program with over 130 volunteers, I found the National Extension Conference on Volunteerism, in Billings, Montana, to be extremely valuable. It afforded me the opportunity to present a poster at a national conference, network with agents from other states, and learn tools to improve my programs and volunteer leadership. The poster I presented was titled *From Garden Gripes to Grateful Gardeners*, and it detailed the program I developed to improve my leadership of both the MGV program and the demonstration gardens at our extension office. Through this experience, I networked with several extension agents from both Florida and other states. It is interesting to learn how others have navigated situations similar to ones I experience as a Master Gardener program coordinator, as well as to share my own experiences that could enrich others programming.

The conference program tracks I focused on were primarily related to volunteer management and conflict resolution. One program in particular, *Conflict Quandary*, was most valuable. I intend to replicate the program at an upcoming MGV luncheon. It detailed differing communication styles and how to best communicate with each style when managing conflict. The MGV program I coordinate has numerous teams that work on a variety of projects together. Conflict is inevitable when dealing with teamwork, which is why I believe my volunteers would appreciate and benefit from this program.

This conference provided an invaluable experience for me as an extension agent who will be going up for permanent status next year. It enabled me to present at a national conference, network among colleagues and learn tools to improve my programming. Thank you for awarding me the FACAA Educational Foundation Scholarship.