

**NEAFCS Network
December 2020**

President's Message:

Dianne Gertson (TX), President



Please click the image above to view this month's President's Message

The first 5 people to [email me](#) with the location of the icon will be entered into a drawing for a free registration to the 2021 NEAFCS annual conference.

Awards and Recognition Highlights

Julie Garden-Robinson (ND), Vice President of Awards and Recognition

Please check out the updated "Awards Manual" and "Awards at a Glance." Both documents have an attractive new format! I thank Will Ferguson at the National Office for his excellent design work. I also appreciate the leaders and members of the Awards and Recognition subcommittees for their work in preparing action plans. As we proceed with implementing our plans in the coming months, please consider whether you can help by volunteering to be a judge. I will have an online sign-up form for judges in early 2021.



This month, I would like you to consider whether you might qualify for the 2021 Continued Excellence Award (CE). You must have previously received the Distinguished Service Award to qualify for the CE Award. This award is selected by your state and does not go on to regional or national judging.

The number of awards given per Affiliate is determined by the number of paid active members as of December 31, 2020:

1-50 members - 1 nominee

51-100 members - 2 nominees

101-150 members - 3 nominees
151-200 members - 4 nominees
201- plus members – 5 nominees

The specific qualifications for the CE Award are the following:

1. Minimum of 12 years NEAFCS membership, including the current year.
2. Applicant must have attended at least three (3) NEAFCS Annual Sessions. (*Yes, the 2020 virtual conference “counts” as an annual session.*)
3. Evidence of superior accomplishments, including evidence of impact.
4. Involvement in a professional improvement program including any or all of the following:
 - a) Participation in informal (non-credit) professional development in the past three years;
 - b) Formal study toward an advanced degree (current or completed);
 - c) Demonstration of personal commitment to professional development through participation in professional associations and contributions to the state Extension Service and Affiliate association.

Please remember that to qualify for any awards or fellowships, membership dues must be postmarked to the National Office by December 31, 2020. We cannot make exceptions to this rule.

Happy Holidays! Please let me know any questions you have at Julie.garden-robinson@ndsu.edu or (701) 231-7187.

National Nominating Committee

Chelsey Byers (IL), National Nominating Committee Member

The nominating committee is starting to identify candidates for the positions that will be voted on at *Annual Session* next November in Grand Rapids, Michigan. We are currently seeking candidates for the following positions:

- President-Elect
- Treasurer
- VP for Public Affairs
- VP for Awards and Recognition
- Central Regional Director
- Southern Regional Director



Check out the [Bylaws](#) to learn more about the various duties and requirements to be eligible for respective positions.

Nominating committee members will be contacting potential candidates for these positions. If you receive a call, we realize this is a significant commitment, but don't automatically think that you can't handle the responsibility or the challenge! Serving as a national officer is a distinctive opportunity that can result in many personal and professional benefits.

Board positions will help develop or enhance your current leadership, time management, organization, and strategic thinking skills, all of which can further improve your current Extension position. There will also be tremendous opportunities to interact with NEAFCS members from all around the United States resulting in new collaborations and friendships.

If you are interested in learning more about one of the open positions, make sure you are on the nominating committee's radar and reach out to one of the committee members:

Eastern Region: [Karen Ensle](#) (Rutgers), [Mandel Smith](#) (Penn State), [Lynn James](#) (Penn State)

Central Region: [Chelsey Byers](#) (University of Illinois), [Rita Ussatis](#) (North Dakota State University), [Jessica Trussell](#) (University of Missouri)

Southern Region: [Brittany Martin](#) (Texas A&M Agrilife), [Karen Munden](#) (Virginia), [Ines Beltran](#) (University of Georgia), Chair - [Roxie Price](#) (University of Georgia)

Western Region: [Kayla Wells](#) (Washington State University), [Ashley Dixon](#) (University of Arizona), [Sheila Gains](#) (Colorado State University)

We look forward to hearing from you!

A Look at Illiteracy and Diversity

Jane Henderson (VA), Diversity Sub-Committee

Webster's Dictionary defines diversity as "the condition of having or being composed of differing elements: the inclusion of different types of people..." Each of us has had diverse life experiences that have shaped our thoughts, actions, and biases. Do we hold ourselves accountable for developing curricula to represent our commitment to literacy diversity in education?



What does illiteracy look like in programs? Have you ever experienced low survey returns or non-responsive participants? I cannot say for sure, but from my experiences as a high school teacher and literacy tutor, there are similarities between these behaviors and poor literacy skills. Sometimes our printed materials do not match the reading levels of our clients. Illiteracy reports from 2016 show 36 million adults in the United States cannot read, write, or perform basic math beyond a third-grade level. These low literacy levels are also linked to high health care costs and contribute to low literacy levels of children which may lead to higher dropout rates. Aren't these the issues that we address?

As Extension professionals, it is our duty to address issues, find solutions, and respond. We all have the ability to change our point of view and look at the needs of people we serve. Collaborate with health professionals and community groups to discuss social and cultural differences, low literacy, and poverty to create an awareness of how these factors affect how people learn. Review the literature and share these adaptive teaching methods and technology with your partners. When we program, we impact the quality of life for individuals, families and communities.

Professional Development Update: Proposals, Webinars, Opportunities and more!

Patricia Brinkman, (OH) Vice President of Professional Development

Submit your proposal now for the 2021 Annual Session next November in Grand Rapids, MI. The system opened on December 1 and is ready for your proposal. Program subcommittee co-chairs Chris Kendle and Karla Belzer hosted a webinar on how to fill out a proposal for the 2021 Annual Session earlier this month. This was recorded and is now available to watch. Please check it out if you have any questions on how to put your



proposal in the system. Be sure to have someone review your proposal before you submit and follow the tips to help you submit a great proposal.

The webinar subcommittee met in November to work on evaluations for webinars. We have updated the current evaluation for a webinar. We also worked on a webinar technology evaluation which will be sent out to members a few times a year so we can improve on how we are marketing webinars and meeting your needs.

Have you seen an informative webinar that would be helpful for NEAFCS members? Please let us know if you know of one or know someone. We are always looking for interesting webinars.

IMPACT STATEMENTS!

Mary Liz Wright (IL), Vice President of Public Affairs

It's that time of year—falalala—deck the halls---no not *that* time of year--- it's time to think about Impact Statements. Actually, the timing of this request is perfect—many of us are completing our year end reports and calculating our own personal impacts—please share your data with your Affiliate VP of Public Affairs so that they can submit the affiliate data to me. The submission window is open. Please go to the website <https://www.neafcs.org/public-affairs-activities-programs> for samples of previous years and forms to complete this year.



Confused about what to submit? Find more info on the same page as the submission form or go to the archived webinars, misc. or here: <https://vimeo.com/486516163/f86956c44f>

Remember, we have a new category this year, COVID response.

I am looking forward to learning about all the great ways you helped make people's lives better in 2020!

State Affiliate Awards Submission Deadlines

Diane Reinhold, (IL) Awards Training Subcommittee, Member

Deadlines. Some people love them, while others view them as merely necessary to help keep things running smoothly. Whatever your perspective, it is essential to understand the different types of deadlines you may be dealing with when applying for awards.

Your state affiliate may likely have a different deadline compared to the national association's deadline. Often, state affiliates utilize their local awards committee members. These committees review the state award applications and determine which applications will win at the state level. They also provide feedback for award applicants on strengthening their award application before it moves on to the national platform. If the awards application doesn't qualify at the state level, these committees offer encouragement and suggestions for future applications.



Depending upon the number of members within each state affiliation, this process may be formal or informal. And the deadline may be weeks in advance of the national application deadline to allow ample time for the committees to review the applications, provide feedback, and for applicants to make any necessary edits before they are submitted nationally.

Please begin the award application process early and take extra time to review and become familiar with your state affiliate award process. These steps will not only help ensure your application will meet the criteria for submission deadlines, but it will also help in planning your timeline.

Contact your state affiliate Vice President for Awards and Recognition and begin your award application today!

Meet the Board

Kate Shumaker (OH), Secretary

Hello to my NEAFCS extended family! One of the things I love about NEAFCS is the connections we create. Yes, we can be professional and call it networking, but it is really creating a connection with another person. Someone you can email or call to ask a question, share a resource, and maybe become lifelong friends.

My Extension career began because I created a connection with a preceptor I had during my dietetic internship. That internship led to my first job as an FCS Program Assistant and then into an FCS Educator position over 22 years ago. Since 2000 I have served as the FCS Educator in Holmes County, Ohio, the heart of Amish country. My favorite programs to teach are cooking classes, food preservation and food safety.



With all that focus on food, I can easily spend an hour or two browsing in a grocery store because there are so many different and interesting products available. Some just make you want to ask, "Who thought of this?" That said, I am also very anti-onion and can't handle spicy foods.

I look forward to this new adventure as your NEAFCS Secretary. Please let me know what you would like to see in the NEAFCS Network newsletter. My goal is to make this something useful that you want to read. REach out to me with comments or suggestions at shumaker.68@osu.edu or 330-600-6039.

Wishing you and your families a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season.

Planning for Grand Rapids in 2021!

Courtney Aldrich (MI), Annual Session Planning Committee Co-liaison

Hello from Michigan, NEAFCS friends and colleagues! My name is Courtney Aldrich and I serve as a Michigan Regional Co-chair and a Co-liasion for the NEAFCS Annual Session planning committee. We are getting excited about the possibilities for hosting the conference on November 2-5, 2021 in Grand Rapids!

As we begin to finalize the plans and bring the conference to reality, one of our first tasks is to select a keynote speaker for the opening session. We are absolutely delighted to introduce to you our keynote speaker for 2021, Dionardo E. Pizaña. Dionardo is the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Specialist for MSU Extension. He has over 25 years of experience developing, teaching, and facilitating diversity



education programs through Michigan State University Extension, Adrian College, and Siena Heights University. He is a nationally recognized multicultural consultant, speaker and trainer. Dionardo's work as an activist and educator is grounded in his conviction that deep and lasting institutional change requires an equally strong commitment to "working on oneself" while nurturing authentic relationships across difference. He believes that authenticity is far more than mere friendship or working affiliation. It is based on trust, honesty, risk-taking, mutual responsibility, humility, and acceptance that tension in relationships is a necessary component that leads to growth. As a lifelong learner around issues related to social justice and change, Dionardo has participated in foundational learning opportunities such as cultural bridges, VISIONS training, Opening Doors and The People's Institute. His ongoing commitment to issues of social justice continues a legacy of community and social justice work inspired by his parents and grandparents. He is also a guest instructor for the MSU National Charrette Institute training programs.

While I took the information above directly from Dionardo's bio, I want to add a personal statement to affirm Dionardo's passion for diversity, equity, and inclusion work, as well as his accessible and gentle manner that immediately puts at ease those in his presence. He makes a challenging topic and challenging conversations feel safe. We are so fortunate to have Dionardo guide our work at MSU Extension, and are excited to have him share some of his skills and expertise with you. This is the right time for this keynote speaker and this topic. We hope you share in our excitement!

Embracing and Celebrating All Families

Laura Stanton (OH), Diversity Subcommittee

If you were asked to picture a family, what would you see? Many of us might picture a nuclear family that consists of two, married, heterosexual, adults with at least one child. However, this type of family accounts for approximately 20% of American families.

The other 80% of families have different structures, including (but not limited to) grandparents raising grandchildren, families with cohabitating adults, adoptive families, multi-generational families, couples without children, LGBTQ+ families, and blended or stepfamilies. The reality is that families come in all shapes and sizes, and they can include multiple cultures, religions, skin colors, ages, languages, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identities, and abilities.



Given the enormous diversity of American families, we need ask if our programming supports and embraces all families? To be more inclusive and affirming:

- Acknowledge and respect that there are multiple ways of being a family.
- Model acceptance of family differences. Avoid using phrases like "traditional family" or "normal family" that convey value and judgement.
- Examine your educational materials (forms, teaching examples, photos, etc.) and make sure they reflect family diversity.
- Use language that includes everyone. Rather than saying "mom" and "dad", use broader terms like "parent" or "guardian".
- Create opportunities to talk about and celebrate family differences and strengths.
- Recognize your own assumptions and biases, and if necessary, educate yourself.

As Extension educators, our job is to empower individuals, families, and communities. One of the best ways we can do this is to embrace and celebrate all families.

Become a Proposal Reviewer!

Shannon Carter, (OH) Program Development Committee

Become a reviewer?! But I've never even been a presenter!

Exactly . . . you can become a reviewer even if you have not been a presenter for NEAFCS. The Professional Development committee will provide you with all you need to know. There is a scoring rubric and even a brief training video and instructions.



When you review other proposals, you are not only providing service to your national organization, you also are learning what makes a good proposal. Just by reading through others' submitted proposals, you gain a better understanding of what it takes to write a successful proposal. This could increase your chance of getting your next proposal accepted.

We would like to have 2 reviewers from every state, to have enough reviewers to assign five to each proposal, and make sure reviewers look at proposals that are not from their own state. This ensures a blind peer review, which holds our process to the highest professional standard. You can also provide feedback on the proposals, to help the submitter learn how to improve their next submission.

How long does it take? Usually about 10-15 minutes per proposal and it's all done online, usually the first 2 weeks of March. Please consider contributing to your national organization in this way!

Calling All Members! Get in the Spotlight!

Kate Shumaker (OH), Secretary

Have you noticed the Member Spotlight videos in past issues of the NEAFCS Network? You could be the next one featured! Tell us what NEAFCS means to you!

If you are willing to complete a short video, please sign up on this [Sign Up Genius link](#) which provides opportunities from now until October 2021. Once someone signs up, they will be emailed details about recording and submitting their video. The date listed is the date the member videos are due.



Your short (1 minute or less) video should reflect on one of the following questions/statements:

- 1) What has NEAFCS done for your career?
- 2) My favorite benefit of my NEAFCS membership is...
- 3) This is what NEAFCS means to me...
- 4) How have you used resources/information from NEAFCS webinars or Annual Conference?

If you have questions, contact me at shumaker.68@osu.edu or 330-600-6039.

A Personal Story

Laura Stanton (OH) and Donna Donald (IA), NEAFCS Members

Laura Stanton reached out to us here at the National Office with this story to share just after our first ever Virtual Annual Session was held:

I have a pretty incredible story that I wanted to share. It's a bit long but I hope you will take the time to read it.

This week, I have been consumed by a national conference for NEAFCS (National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences). We should have been in Snowbird, Utah but instead, the conference was held virtually.

Yesterday, I had a virtual poster session that required me to keep a Zoom meeting room open so people could "pop in" to ask questions about my presentation, *Living a Life Elevated: The Benefit of Silence Across the Lifespan*.

I had several people pop in and out. However, I had a wonderful chat with an Extension Specialist from Iowa State University. She told me she was drawn to the topic and was interesting in learning about my experience with silence and my background. She asked great questions and I enjoyed talking with her.

Later that day, I was preparing for my Ignite presentation on the same topic. I was thinking about my first NEAFCS Conference, decades ago, during my first stint with OSU Extension (1998-2002). I had won the New Professional Award that year and knew I had kept a newspaper clipping from that event. That clip would tell me what year I had attended the conference.

Amazingly, I found my old Extension file with the newspaper clipping I was looking for. The date of the article was December 10, 2001. In the picture, I am receiving the award from Donna Donald. And guess what? Donna was the woman I had been chatting with earlier in the day about the importance of silence.

I instantly got chills. I have to believe that it was not a coincidence that the two of us reconnected. I immediately scanned the newspaper clip and sent Donna an email with our picture together. We have already had two great email exchanges.

So, in case you need a reminder: It's a small world and people show up at profound and significant times..... if you are paying attention.

