

## **Meet the Board**

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

It was 2014 and I was attending my first Annual Session in Lexington, KY when I met President Terri Mayhew in the hallway. She invited me into the Public Affairs Committee meeting and, as they say, the rest is history. Full disclosure, I am a joiner, an extrovert, and a Real Colors® Green/Orange. I thrive on controlled chaos. I like to work “in community”. I felt and continue to feel that members of NEAFCS are “my people”—smart and fun and caring. I have enjoyed my time as an officer of NEAFCS and have grown to appreciate the process and policies of our organization.



I was born and raised in the rural Illinois county where I currently live and work as a Nutrition and Wellness Educator. My journey to FCS is a somewhat circuitous route. I earned a BA in Theology from Loyola University of Chicago and went on to serve as a Jesuit volunteer on the Colville Reservation in north central Washington. I then came home, got married, started a family, and did not work full time until my youngest child entered school. Although I am a 4-H alum I never thought of Extension as a career possibility until I was told there was a job opening that was “perfect for me”. I began as a SNAP Ed community worker and while in that position returned to school for my MS in FCS, opening the door for my current position, which is also a “perfect fit”. I am passionate about helping people learn how to take better care of themselves and therefore live better lives.

I am a firm believer in community service and am currently involved as a director on the following boards: Edgar County Fair, Edgar County Community Foundation, Unit # 4 School Board, and the Paris Community Hospital Board. I am a member of St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Paris. We are the parents of three daughters and three sons in law. We have one granddaughter and another grandchild on the way. Our family are avid gardeners and raise beef cattle and sheep on our Edgar County farm. In my spare time I like to hike, read, and spin/knit with wool.