

President's Message: Let's Strategize!

Rick Griffiths (NM), NEAFCS President

Happy New Year! Like many of you I've been spending some time reflecting on the events of 2023 and what lies ahead in 2024. Personally, I feel very optimistic about what lies ahead in 2024. As an Association we have a lot going on this time of year. As many of you know award season is in full swing with many states' deadlines coming up in the next few weeks. **I would highly encourage you to consider submitting the great work that you do for Awards at the state, regional and national level.** Check with your State Awards and Recognition Vice President for your state's due date. **Call for proposals is also open for our 2024 Annual Session in Tucson AZ, the due date for proposal submissions is January 31st.** Additionally, this spring will be collecting proposals for the NEAFCS Endowment, as well as applications to serve on the National Board. I encourage everyone to take advantage of these opportunities to be involved in our association.



Strategic Planning Update

As your president, my number one goal for 2024 is to update the NEAFCS Strategic Plan to provide the Association with a dynamic vision to guide us into the coming years. Our updated strategic plan will serve as a road map for our National Committees and Executive Board to grow our Association and adopt innovative practices that will continue our Association's tradition of excellence. We've already begun laying the groundwork for starting the project early next month.

At the end of last year, the Board reviewed multiple proposals from professional strategic planning organizations that specialize in assisting associations like ours develop comprehensive strategic plans. At the conclusion of the review, **the Board selected Partners Strategic Solutions (aka "PS Squared") to act as a professional facilitator for our strategic planning process.** The project will be led by Rachel Luoma MS, CAE. Rachel has vast experience with both professional association management, and association strategic planning and development.

In the next several weeks we will also be reviewing the 2023 Affiliate end-of-year reports for additional information that will be used to build the strategic plan. Affiliate end-of-year reports are submitted each year by the Affiliate President. The report summarizes each Affiliate's activities and requests additional information on each Affiliate's needs and barriers. **We will also be surveying National Committee Chairs and other key leaders on their needs and barriers to incorporate into the plan. Additionally, we will be utilizing data collected from past NEAFCS surveys and other activities to guide us through the process.**

Throughout the spring, we will finalize data collection and organization. The Board's May 2024 mid-year in-person meeting will be dedicated to reviewing the information and working through a facilitated process to establish an outline of our future strategic plan. At the conclusion of the meeting, our facilitator Rachel Luoma will transition the outline into **a formal plan that will be presented back to the Board for approval in early summer and presented to the membership at the 2024 Annual Session.**

If you have any considerations or feedback, you would like the board to consider during the strategic plan review process, please communicate those to your Affiliate President and to me directly by email at rickgrif@nmsu.edu. Thank you and Happy New Year!

What YOU Need to Know NOW in NEAFCS!

National Office Staff

JCEP 2024 Extension Leadership Conference is February 14-15, 2024. Take a look at these videos from Attendees explaining what JCEP has meant to them! <https://www.jcep.org/elc>

- Now Open: [NEAFCS Endowment Grant](#). Deadline May 15.
- Now Open: [NEAFCS Impact Portal](#). Closes February 1.
- Now Open: [JCEP ELC Scholarship Portal Open](#)
- Now Open - [2024 NEAFCS Awards Application Portal](#). Deadline March 15.
- Now Open - [2024 Annual Session Proposal System](#). Deadline Jan 31.
- Now Open: [JCEP PILD Scholarship Portal Open](#)
- January 16 - 2024-2025 NEAFCS Leadership Experience Application Opens. Closes March 1.

**Be entered to win conference registration
by answering the question:**

**Unscramble the letters to the word hidden in the
newsletter and email your answer to Rick Griffiths.
The first five correct answers will be entered to win!
The letters for the answer are hidden throughout the
newsletter in **orange**.**

**We NEED you! Please consider becoming a peer reviewer
for the Journal of NEAFCS!**



**[Click here](#) or scan the QR code
with your cell phone camera to fill
out an interest form!**

2024 Election: Calling for Nominations and Applications!

Julie Garden-Robinson (ND), Immediate Past President and Nominating Committee Chair

As chair of the National Nominating Committee, I am excited to announce the officer openings to be elected at our 2024 conference in Tucson, AZ. **Applications are due to me by email (Julie.garden-robinson@ndsu.edu) by May 1** for these positions:



I thank all the current officers for their excellent work (and continue to do) while I was president. I hope that many of you take the opportunity to run for an office on the national board. I can attest that being an officer is a fulfilling leadership experience as you get to know and work with Extension professionals from across the U.S. and carry out our NEAFCS mission. **If now is not the right time, consider adding running for an officer within your state or on the national level to your "bucket list."** **Want to learn more?**

* The qualifications and duties for the various officers can be found on our website. To retrieve that information, log in to the NEAFCS.org website with your username and password, then go to the Member Center and then, the *Document Library*. Scroll to the *Policies & Procedures Manual* that lists the expectations and qualifications of the positions.

* To learn about how much time, on average, spent in an office, please navigate to the Forms & Templates area, scroll down, and click on the [Board Time Commitment Document by Position](#).

* To run for national office, go to the Leadership (*National Officer & Committees*) area and click on [Candidate Application for National Office](#).

You can nominate a colleague or yourself. We will be brainstorming potential candidates and we welcome your input. I want to thank our National Nominating Committee for the work they are doing in bringing forth a slate of officer candidates. We are happy to answer any questions. You may want to visit with current or past officers to learn more, too. **Thanks to each of you for being members of NEAFCS and thinking about considering running for office.**

APPLY TODAY!

POSITIONS OPEN ON THE NEAFCS EXECUTIVE BOARD

- ★ **President-Elect**
- ★ **Vice President for Member Resources**
- Vice President for Professional Development**
- Eastern Region Director**
- Western Region Director**

TODAY A READER TOMORROW A LEADER



Nominating Committee

 Jaqueline Amor-Zitzelberger (PA)	 Gwen Crum (WV)	 Cindy Jenkins (UT)
 Ines L. Beltran (GA)	 Beverly Doll (WI)	 Kate Shumaker (OH)
 Rhea Bentley (SC)	 Julie Garden-Robinson (ND)	 Hope Wilson (AZ)

Inspiration from your NEAFCS President-Elect



Jennifer Bridge (KY)

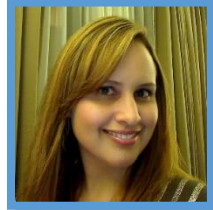
“A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus.”

-MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Introducing the 2024 NEAFCS Annual Session Arizona Affiliate Subcommittees 🇺🇸 🌟

Debbie Curley (AZ) and Rosie Stewart (AZ), Annual Session Affiliate Liaisons

The Arizona Affiliate is looking forward to hosting the 2024 NEAFCS Annual Session in Tucson, AZ from September 16-19, 2024 at the JW Marriott Tucson Starr Pass Resort & Spa. The Affiliate Liaisons and Subcommittees are working diligently to bring you an unforgettable, engaging, and fun Annual Session. We have great things in store and more information will be shared in the coming months.



Introducing the team that is assisting the National Annual Session Planning Committee.

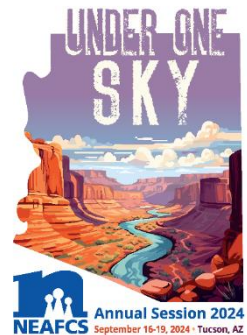
Affiliate Liaisons: Debbie Curley and Rosie Stewart

Subcommittee Chairs:

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Invitation/Marketing/Promotion: Hope Wilson |  Leadership Event: Michele Walsh |
|  Fundraising: Patty Merk |  Hospitality: Ashley Dixon-Kleiber |
|  Educational Offerings: Kate Speirs |  Marketplace: Jenn Parlin and Glenda Garcia |
|  Opening Ceremony: Rosie Stewart |  Tours: Evelyn Whitmer |
|  Welcome Event: Debbie Curley |  Reporting: Margine Bawden |
|  In-depth Sessions: Dan McDonald |  Decorating: Rhegan Derfus |
|  Audio Visual: Noel Wilkinson | |

The Arizona Affiliate looks forward to welcoming members from across the country to "America's Biggest Small Town." Discover more about Tucson's history and culture by visiting Visit Tucson at

<https://www.visittucson.org/things-to-do/history-and-culture/>.



Eastern Region Updates

Jesse Ketterman (MD), Eastern Region Director

As with most states, December was busy in the Eastern Region with winter meetings and elections of new officers. New officers bring new ideas with many indicating a goal of increasing membership in 2024. As Eastern Region Director, I am also serving on the planning committee for ELC 2024 in Tampa, FL. I look forward to seeing any members attending the conference. It is also worth noting the highlight for the region in 2023, hosting the Annual Session. It is hard to believe but we are in the early stages of looking for a host for the 2027 Annual Session.



CALL TO HOST ANNUAL SESSION 2027

If you are **in the Eastern Region and interested in learning more, please reach out to me at jketterm@umd.edu. We need you and appreciate your commitment to showcase the Eastern region!**

Extension Professionals Can Help Make MyPlate A Household Name

Dr. Caree Cotwright, Director of Nutrition Security and Health Equity, USDA

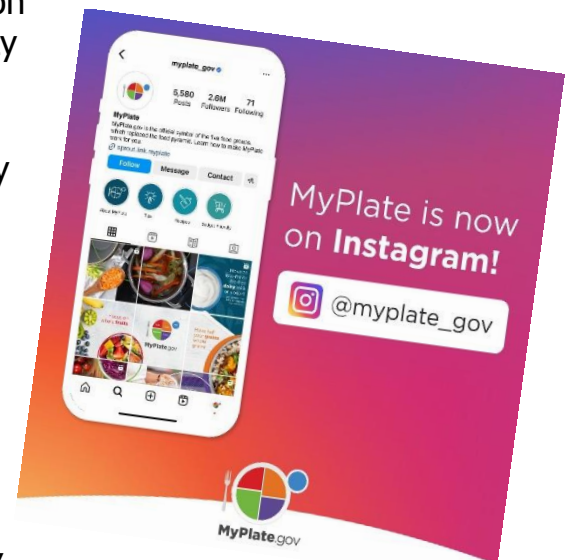
Streaming entertainment services. Social media. Smartphones and smart homes. Society today is more diverse and dynamic than ever, and not surprisingly, many elements of our daily lives—even the foods we eat—are customizable for our personal preferences, budgets, and dietary needs. MyPlate offers customizable resources and tools to fit your lifestyle and preferences without sacrificing traditions and favorite family recipes.

It's the simple way to make healthy eating choices at every stage of life, from infancy to older adulthood. The MyPlate symbol colorfully represents the concept of healthy eating patterns as a memorable snapshot that even children can understand.



[MyPlate.gov](https://www.myplate.gov) has a variety of free resources and online tools for extension professionals to help people learn to eat better, one bite at a time.

- The [MyPlate Plan](#) is personalized based on your age, sex, height, weight, and activity level.
- The [Shop Simple tool](#) offers tips for shopping every aisle at your local grocery store for cost savings, plus new ways of preparing budget-friendly foods.
- The [Start Simple mobile app](#) lets you set daily food goals and track your real-time progress.
- [MyPlate Quiz](#) offers personalized resources based on your quiz results.
- [MyPlate on Alexa](#) gives you healthy eating tips on your Amazon Alexa device, smartphone, or tablet using the app.
- There's also [MyPlate Kitchen](#), with more than 1,000 healthy recipes.



Follow MyPlate on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#), and share your MyPlate wins by posting to social media and tagging us using #whatsonmyplate.

Check Out the First Hot Topic Exploring AI and Opportunities in Family and Consumer Sciences

Marcia Parcell (IN), VP Professional Development

Do you need to gain an understanding of artificial intelligence? Are you using AI already that you take for granted? Do you know that AI started in the 1950s? Brock Turner and Mandy Gary, Health and Human Science Educators from Purdue Extension, presented the first hot topic on AI. They did a great job of building your understanding of AI as well as sharing AI programs or applications that they use to save time in their roles as HHS educators or as parents.



For instance, Mandy talks about using ChatGPT to do meal planning, while she is driving. She has taught it about food allergies of her family. The application gathers recipes and a grocery list in about 3 minutes. How long does your meal planning take? I know I found this amazing!

Another way ChatGPT helps Mandy is to be creative. She uses creativity for marketing programs, social media posts, and the Extension Homemaker Newsletter. She also mentioned using it to help set her goals and objectives for the year. With these applications, Mandy again discussed saving time at these tasks.

On the flip side of these benefits, Brock and Mandy cautioned about ethical considerations and hallucinations, incorrect or nonsense information, that may result from AI. Some additional cautions were about protecting your personal information and monitoring bias that AI might generate. Be sure to view the archived webinar to develop professionally on AI.

Missed the webinar? Visit neafcs.org, click the professional development tab, click webinar archives, login, and click "HOT TOPICS: Exploring AI: Opportunities in Family & Consumer Sciences."

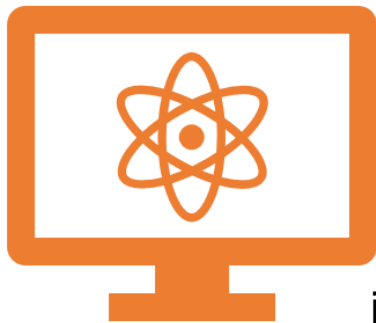
Unlock Career Growth Through NEAFCS Webinars and Forums

Michelle Wright (TX), Appointed VP Member Resources

In today's fast-paced professional landscape, leveraging every available resource is crucial. When you join NEAFCS, we embrace doing some of the heavy lifting to ensure that professional development is always at your fingertips.



This month's article explores the significance of embracing member benefits, with a special emphasis on our NEAFCS webinars and forums. **We would like to encourage every member to participate in the multitude of webinars and forums offered through NEAFCS.**



These invaluable opportunities span across a variety of NEAFCS committees from awards to member resources. When that notification comes across your email from NEAFCS, dive in! These two member benefits serve as goldmines for knowledge and networking. Most importantly, **they provide a convenient and flexible platform for continuous learning.** By actively participating in these virtual sessions, as a member, you will enhance your skill set and gain a competitive edge in the world of Family and Consumer Sciences. So, take full advantage of these priceless member benefits.

YOUR proactive approach will contribute to organizational success by fostering a culture of continuous improvement in Family and Consumer Sciences.

Read about our 2023 National Award Winners Monthly!

Learn more about the award winners and get inspired at <https://neafcs.memberclicks.net/2023-award-winners> .

Don't forget to apply this year!

Tooele Opioid Response Network: A Community Fighting/Overcoming Utah's Rural Opioid Epidemic

Maren Voss & Team
Utah State University Extension

Extension-led Tooele Opioid Response Network combats opioid overdose in high-need areas. As an inclusive community consortium, TORN raises awareness, provides education, and connects communities with prevention, treatment, and recovery resources.

TORN has grown from just five founding members to 20 active members, represented by diverse sectors of the community from a variety of classifications, including clinical, emergency, law enforcement, social services, public health, higher education, community schools, and recovery organizations



1st Place National Winner: Community Partnership Award



Building Youth Financial Literacy through the Money As You Grow Program

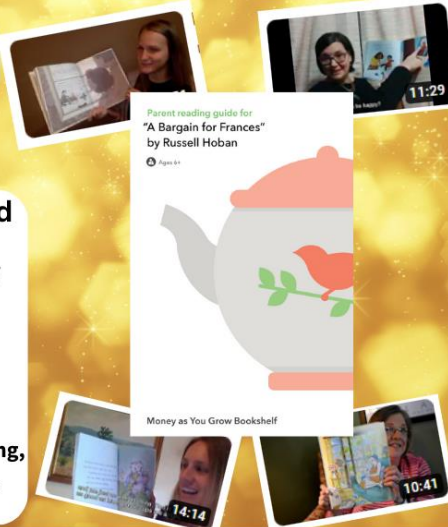
Katie Gellings & Team
University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension

Children learn key money concepts through books and book guides, written by UW Madison Extension Educators. Using fun activities and discussion, family financial knowledge and skills are enhanced.

The program focuses on three learning areas:



Each of the areas encompasses a variety of key concepts, including earning, saving, spending, prioritizing, goal setting, follow-through, flexibility, decision making, and staying true to yourself.



1st Place National Winner: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AWARD IN MEMORY OF DEAN DON FELKER



Balancing Life Weekly Webinar Series Provides Tools and Resources to Effectively and Successfully Navigate Professional and Personal Spaces

**Crystal Tyler-Mackey & Team
Virginia Cooperative Extension**

Balancing Life weekly webinars offers a rapid response to help adults, families, service providers and other professionals address pressing and timely concerns relevant to FCS. Topics have included but not limited to:

- ▶ Strengthening Family Relationships During Tough Times
- ▶ Family Finances
- ▶ Secondary Trauma
- ▶ Healthy Living
- ▶ Stretching Food Dollars



**1st Place National Winner: Communication Award
Television/Video**



No Fowl: Turkey Prices May Be Up, But There are Alternatives

**Andrea Nikolai
University of Florida/IFAS Extension**



This article was written to help give people nutritious and delicious options that they could serve as the main dish instead of turkey for Thanksgiving.



**1st Place National Winner: Communication Award
Written Media**



Timely Topics and Great Opportunities for National Education and Service

Lauren Weatherford (WV), Professional Development Webinar Committee Member

We hope you will consider joining us on the Professional Development: Webinar Committee. This committee provides innovative, relevant professional development opportunities via online webinars for NEAFCS members. We solicit webinar session proposals, review proposals using NEAFCS online submission systems, select presentations for online presentation and market upcoming webinars. This is a terrific opportunity to provide national service with a real educational impact. The Committee Sign up form can be found on the NEAFCS website under Member Resources – [Join a Committee!](#)



Upcoming webinars include **“Reviewing Proposals: What You Need to Know” Jan. 31st, 2024, 2:00 pm ET.** This session informs potential annual session educational proposal reviewers everything they need to know. Registration for this webinar is free, but you must pre-register [HERE](#).

Other upcoming webinars can be found under Professional Development – [Webinars](#) on the NEAFCS website under and include,

- **“Canning with a Twist: 5 Approaches to Food Preservation Classes” Feb 27, 2024, 2:00 pm ET**
- **“1890 Institutions” Feb. 29th, 2024, 3:00 pm ET**

The first *Hot Topic* webinar “Exploring AI: Opportunities in Family & Consumer Science” was held in December. This can be found under Professional Development on the NEAFCS website under [Webinar Archives](#). These are designed to address emerging current issues in a timely fashion. We are currently reviewing other Hot Topics to be scheduled in 2024.

We welcome submissions for new webinar proposals. This is a terrific way to teach at the national level with no travel required. To submit a proposal on the NEAFCS website, go to Professional Development – [Submit a Webinar Proposal](#).

Helpful Resources for Applying for Awards

Tristin Bolton (AK), Awards & Recognition-Training Committee Member

As we look forward to the upcoming year, it is important that we reflect on the work we completed. I hope while you are reflecting, you smile as you remember the valuable work you have done.

I am a firm believer in not reinventing the wheel and using your work in more than one way. Many, if not all, have had to complete a program review for the year. What were you most proud of? Let that be the start of your award application.

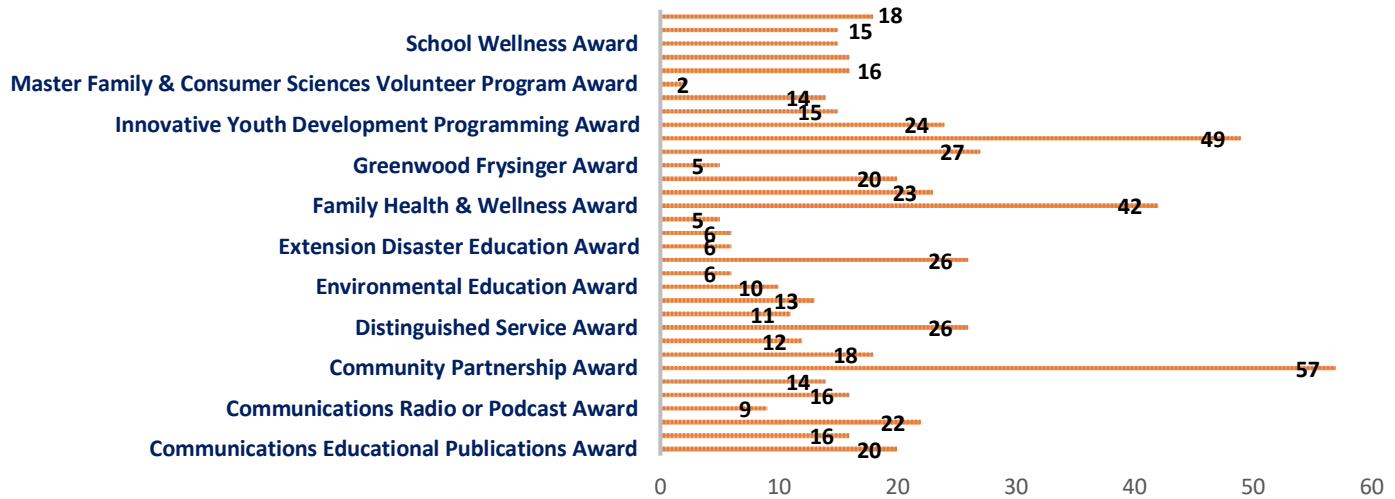
Make sure you look at the [Awards at a Glance](#) document located on the NEAFCS website. As you read each description, consider if you have completed work that supports that award, even within the last three years? If the answer is yes, write it down and create a working list of possible awards applications.



Once you have a list of awards that you have material to support you can begin the process of writing the application and exploring the [Awards Manual/Guidelines](#).

Another approach is to look at the number of awards submitted during previous years. I have included the most recent data.

NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS



As you can see, there are a few standout categories, and a few that have very few applications submitted. Does your working list of possible awards include the smaller categories? If not, could you fit a program into one of those categories?

A defining characteristic of many educators is the ability to adapt. I challenge each of you to write one award application for the program work you are most proud of, and one award application for a smaller award category.

My Endowment Funds: Support NEAFCS!

Karen Ensle (NJ), Endowment Committee Member

NEAFCS endowment funds are investment funds established for the purpose of supporting our professional organization. Typically funded through your donations, they are normally structured in a way that ensures the fund's initial capital remains intact. Having the endowment fund allows NEAFCS organizational stability, shows our FCS colleagues that we have credibility and stability within the Extension system. NEAFCS is here for the long haul and these funds will help to sustain the life of our beloved organization, through good and unstable times.



10 Reasons I Donate to the NEAFCS Foundation.

1. Endowments are forever funds. Causes that I care about including healthy families, good nutrition, smart financial planning, parenting, obesity prevention and healthy housing are supported through educational projects with adults and youth across our counties, states and the U.S.
2. NEAFCS resources continue to grow over time and will only be used to benefit our members through scholarships and programs that will have impact. The principal of our endowed fund will never be used, and thus will continue to grow over time.
3. We are invested for the long-term with additional funds being placed in the endowed account to earn higher rates of return because they are long-term funds. The result is more money available for scholarships now and in the future.
4. Our NEAFCS endowment fund cements a lasting relationship between myself and the FCS Extension community, now and in the future.
5. NEAFCS is ensuring my vision and wishes are supporting worthwhile and impactful programs that are meeting community needs.
6. Whether I am an active professional or retired, I can still play a role in endowment decisions.
7. It can be a family affair making contributions on a monthly basis. Easy peasy! Older and younger generations can work together to make ongoing recommendations for the use and purpose of our fund. Inter-generational giving is a powerful force in our local and surrounding communities. It sets an important example of caring and support for others.
8. Investing my personal funds increases the Endowment's credibility in the eyes of new donors and community partners.
9. The NEAFCS endowment guarantees the ongoing support of our grant programs. This fund is critical for planning and budgeting our NEAFCS general operations and especially the management of grants.
10. Establishing an endowed fund is a good investment and serves as a positive force in our future. NEAFCS is a resource and role model for nonprofits. We provide capacity building and visibility for our NEAFCS members. This is made possible by the generous support of our endowed donors. Join the endowment committee and pledge \$90 for your future. I have!

Using the Word "Guys"

Cindy Thompson (IA), Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Member

It's a new calendar year! The start of a new year brings with it an opportunity for reflection on the past and ways we can do better moving forward. The use of the word "guys" is an opportunity for reflection, and we can certainly do better with how we use the word.



Some may argue the word "guy" is gender neutral, as in "Alright guys, let's look at the first handout" when speaking to a gender-mixed audience. The Merriam-Webster dictionary even [defines guy](#) as "man, fellow" and the plural use of guy as "the members of a group regardless of sex." And yet, would we consider saying "Alright, gals, let's look at the first handout" for a gender-mixed audience? Would that feel inclusive?

The *Extension Professionals Creed* begins with "I believe in people...", which means being inclusive of all people is at our core. Words matter, but change is hard, so what other words can we use besides "guys"?

- "Alright, *everyone*, let's look at the first handout."
- "*Folks*, welcome to our program this evening."
- "It's been a while since I've seen a group of participants as motivated as *you all*."
- "*Friends*, it sounds like you are having some terrific conversation. For the sake of time, we need to move on to the next topic."

Are you still undecided about whether or not to use the word "guys" for a mixed-gender group? Consider some words you wouldn't use today to describe a person or group of people. Most of those words were probably at one time acceptable. When we know more, we can do more. Can you find ways to use more inclusive language this year?

Association Advisors

Chris Kniep (WI), Historian

The history of NEAFCS includes a group of Family and Consumer Sciences professionals that served in an advisory role for the organization. In fact, Miss Grace Frysinger, Washington D.C. Home Economist of the central states worked with Miss Clara Brain, home advisor in McLean County Illinois to organize the first meetings of our association. During the first fifty years members of the Advisory Council included representatives from USDA, Regional program administrators and State Program Leaders. You'll recognize some of the names from our awards program: Florence Hall, Don Felker and Grace Frysinger.



In 1967, President Maxine Reeves introduced the first male Advisory Council Member – Dr. William M. Smith, Jr. He was assistant director for Family Youth and Community Development, Cooperative Extension Service, Pennsylvania State University. As President Reeves shared, "Dr. Smith is well aware of the problem, activities and accomplishments of Extension home economist and has appeared on NEAFCS programs."



Dr. William M. Smith, Jr.

Association Advisors continued into the 1990's, attending board meetings, sharing perspectives and representing USDA and Program Leader colleagues from across the Country. While I haven't found when/why the Advisory Committee ended, since the 2000's, state FCS program leadership has held face-to-face meetings during the NEAFCS Annual Session, lending their support for our organization by attending our Annual Session.

Healthy for Life® Community Nutrition Grant Opportunity

Heather Gavras, MPH, RDN, American Heart Association

The American Heart Association and Aramark launched [Healthy for Life®](#), an innovative health impact initiative, in 2015. The commitment: work together to leverage our combined reach and resources to help millions lead healthier lives. Through our collaboration, we developed a community nutrition program that empowers people to make healthy food, nutrition and lifestyle choices.

As a critical partner providing nutrition education in under-resourced communities, we would like to offer Cooperative Extension agencies a unique grant opportunity. The primary goal is to further support the provision of quality nutrition education. It may also facilitate relationships with healthcare and public health organizations, which has been noted as important in the 2021 [Cooperative Extension Framework for Health Equity and Well-being](#).

Application is now open for the Healthy for Life community nutrition grant for Cooperative Extension agencies. **Together we will award a maximum of six grants with the value of \$2,500 and two grants with a value of \$7,500 to support the implementation of Healthy for Life community nutrition program.**

Application deadline: February 28, 2024, 11:59 PST. Award recipients will be announced mid-March 2024. To learn more about the criteria and key deliverables, see the application introduction. For additional questions about the grant opportunity, contact healthyforlife@heart.org.

[Apply now](#)



**American
Heart
Association®**

Meet a New Board Member!

GET TO KNOW THE NEAFCS EXECUTIVE BOARD

Hometown: Little Falls, MN



Thus far, what is your top career highlight?

With the rollout of the Affordable Care Act, I taught “Smart Choice: Health Insurance” (national program developed by Maryland and Delaware) over 30 times in my 9 counties in the fall-winter of 2013-14. It was exciting to truly be where we always want Extension to be – on the cutting edge, with the information people needed as the health insurance environment changed.

What advice would you give your younger self as a new educator?

Dream bigger

Why are you a member of NEAFCS?

I joined NEAFCS because: a) I was invited; and b) my parents taught me to support the organizations that support my profession. I had the good fortune to be able to attend the national meeting my very first year, and from then on I was hooked, because national meetings held so many exciting learning opportunities.

It has only been in the second half of my career that I have learned to also value the connections and relationships that arise from involvement in NEAFCS.



BARB WOLLAN
Central Region Director

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION & OUTREACH

Your work in Extension in one word:
Rewarding

