



National Extension  
Association of Family  
& Consumer Sciences



# Network

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## June 2025 Edition

### Take Care of You First

Greetings, NEAFCS Members and Supporters!



Over the past few months, many of you have been actively involved in the work of our association. The many hours dedicated to securing data, writing impact statements, submitting and judging awards, working on professional development, planning our annual session, reviewing documents, and planning and presenting webinars, as well as celebrating our association, are what makes us relevant. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to strengthening each other and the work we do.

I understand these are challenging times for many of our members. Budget cuts and program eliminations are stressful and sometimes devastating not only for us but for the people we serve. Not being able to plan for future programs or travel makes it even more challenging to look ahead.

How many times have we listened to flight attendants stress the importance of putting on your oxygen mask before trying to help someone else? This holds in our professional lives as well.

With all the demands of our time, knowledge, and energy, it is essential to prioritize **self-care**.

Wishing you a peaceful summer!

*Jennifer Bridge*

NEAFCS President

*Check out your Board's  
recommended books  
about leadership and  
watch for more  
recommendations with  
each newsletter!*



# NATIONAL NEWS & UPDATES

## Read and RESPOND

Jennifer Bridge (KY) | *President*

In each quarterly newsletter there will be a word hidden related to Jennifer's goal of communication. Members will have one week from the release of the newsletter to email Jennifer ([jennifer.bridge@uky.edu](mailto:jennifer.bridge@uky.edu)) the hidden word. Those who email will be entered into a drawing for **FREE REGISTRATION** to the *2025 Annual Session* in Grand Rapids.



## The 2025 National Officer Candidates

Rick Griffiths (NM) | *Immediate Past President & Nominating Committee Chair*

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, we are pleased to present the **2025 National Officer Candidates** for your consideration in the 2025 NEAFCS Elections at Annual Session in Grand Rapids. All of these candidates are highly qualified to serve our Association, and I am confident they will "SPARK!" our Association through their leadership.

The Nominees are:

- President-Elect
  - **Christine Zellers** (NJ)
- Treasurer
  - **Jesse Ketterman** (MD)
- VP for Awards and Recognition
  - **Carla Farrand** (CO)
  - **Diane Reinhold** (IL)
- VP for Public Affairs
  - **Dhruti Patel** (MD)
- Central Region Director
  - **Melissa Rupp** (OH)
- Southern Region Director
  - **Joy West** (AZ)

The Candidates are currently recording videos answering two pre-selected questions from the Nominating Committee. These videos and the candidate's position statements will be posted later this summer to allow members, affiliates and delegates time to consider each individual for National Office.

Candidate videos WILL NOT be shared onsite during the Annual Session. If you are a voting delegate for your Affiliate, it is your responsibility to read through these position statements and watch these videos before arriving in Grand Rapids.

Encourage others to do the same and decide as an affiliate which candidate you support for office.

***Please be on the lookout for an email from the National Office informing you when the candidate's videos and position statements are posted on the website and ready to watch.***

*Thank you for your participation in the 2025 NEAFCS Elections!*

## A Special Thank you to the 2025 Nominating Committee

<b>Central Region</b> Kyleigh Brown (MO) Emily Marrison (OH)	<b>Eastern Region</b> Gwen Crum (WV) Dorothy Nuckols (MD) Sherri Cirignano (NJ) <i>(Alternate)</i>
<b>Western Region</b> Hope Wilson (AZ) Abby Weber (CO) Amy Robertson (ID) <i>(Alternate)</i>	<b>Southern Region</b> Karen Munden (VA) Michelle Wright (TX) Lorrie Coop (TX) <i>(Alternate)</i>

## What New Ideas Would You Like to Share?

Cindy Thompson (IA) | *Secretary*

Thank you for the ongoing feedback on the *NEAFCS Network Newsletter*! We continue to adjust based on what we hear from you – including adding regional photos to this month's edition. What a terrific idea – THANK YOU!



Use the link below or the QR code to continue to keep us posted on what you like about the newsletter and ways it can be improved!

[https://iastate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_cShFyvIKXe7QLki](https://iastate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cShFyvIKXe7QLki)

## Town Hall Meeting

Danielle Jessup | *National Office*

Did you miss all the updates and insights shared at the **NEAFCS Town Hall Meeting** on April 22? Not to fear! The link can be accessed [HERE!](#) Next Town Hall meeting scheduled for July 24, 2025, at 12:00pm Eastern. Watch for details coming soon!



# AWARDS & RECOGNITION

## Top 10 Reasons to Support the NEAFCS Silent Auction

Joy Czmyrid (NM) | NEAFCS Sponsorship & Support Committee Chair

1. **“Motu Viget” or Strength in Activity**, the motto of the city of Grand Rapids
2. **NEAFCS is close to your heart.** Contributing to the silent auction gives a sense of purpose and support the future.
3. **Every donation makes an impact**, whether donating items, bidding, or volunteering.
4. **You make a difference.** NEAFCS recognizes the great work of our colleagues. Your support makes a tangible impact.
5. **Sets an example for others.** Empowered members inspire other members to do the same and be change-makers.
6. **It brings us closer together.** Collectively working together creates a sense of belonging and connection to our colleagues.
7. **Giving is in our nature.** As Educators, service to our community comes naturally. Supporting the mission of NEAFCS is an important cause we care about and feeds our supportive nature.
8. **You feel valued!** Giving back helps you feel pretty good about yourself. Your generosity and thoughtfulness bring kindness to all.
9. **It's exciting!** Will you win that special, one-of-a-kind item?
10. **It's tax-deductible.**
11. **Feel the joy** in how much we raised for this great organization and the investment made in next year's conference.



**Above are examples of Silent Auction items from previous Annual Sessions.**

**Click [HERE](#) for details on how to submit items this year.**



# AWARDS & RECOGNITION



## How Can YOU Become Involved with NEAFCS? Support the Silent Auction!

Joy Czmyrid (NM) | NEAFCS Sponsorship & Support Committee Chair

1. **Donate an item to the auction.** Share your creativity with a handmade craft, create a basket that has cool items that your state/county is famous for, donate a "one size fits all" item, unique jewelry, designer bags, special sweet and treats, the sky's the limit.



2. **Volunteer in Michigan:** It takes many hands to create a successful silent auction. Once we have a schedule, an online sign-up system will be available.



3. **Bid, Bid, Bid!** Come to the auction tables and bring a friend or two! All bidding will be in-person this year and on sheets of paper at the tables So, that means no online platform or virtual bidding.



4. **New this year, participate in the 50/50 Raffle.** Raffle tickets will be available for purchase at the Silent Auction table. Buy one ticket for \$1 or six tickets for \$5.00 (such a deal)! When the Silent Auction closes, the winning raffle ticket will be drawn. The winner will take home half of the money collected! The more tickets purchased, the bigger the pot!



**NEAFCS Member shows how she is "thankful" for the Silent Auction!**



# MEMBER RESOURCES

## Member Resources Management Hub Troy Anderson (MD) | VP Member Resources

The **Member Resources (MR) Committee** plays a pivotal role in enhancing the leadership skills of members through personal and professional development. The four major committees and their respective sub-committees provide members with access to resources and training programs designed to cultivate effective leadership qualities (See **MR Organizational Chart** linked below). By participating in these professional development opportunities, members can learn best practices, innovative strategies, and gain insights into leadership challenges specific to the Extension context.

The committees and sub-committees foster a collaborative environment where members can network, exchange ideas, and gain support from peers and mentors. This teamwork enhances individual and organizational skills. As a result, members are better equipped to lead community programs, influence positive change, and effectively address the needs of the populations they serve. Ultimately, the work of the **MR Committee** is essential in nurturing leaders who can drive meaningful impact within their communities.



So, help me to shine the MR spotlight series for June on the exceptional dedication and leadership of Committee Leaders Laura Stanton and Kelly Bland. Their hard work and commitment this year has significantly contributed to the MR leadership advisory achievements.

Click [HERE](#) for Member Resources Organizational Chart



# MEMBER RESOURCES

## May Membership Month Celebration

Troy Anderson (MD) | *VP Member Resource*

**May Membership Month**, hosted by **Member Resources (MR)**, was a resounding success thanks to the contributions of our exceptional speakers and dedicated organizers.

**Week 1: Work-Life Balance** - We kicked off the month with an insightful session on work-life balance by Leslee Blanch, whose expertise offered invaluable tips for managing personal and professional demands.

**Week 2: Regional Insights** - Our gratitude extends to the National Regional Directors Samantha Kennedy, Barb Wollan, Lisa Fishman, Sheila Gains, and National Secretary Cindy Thompson. Their collaborative session provided diverse insights from various regions, enriching our understanding of member needs.

**Week 3: MR Challenge** - A special thank you to all the challengers who enthusiastically shared our graphics, amplifying our message and engagement throughout the community.

**Week 4: Habit Shift Mindset** - Dhruti Patel inspired us with her talk on the Habit Shift Mindset, encouraging members to embrace change for personal growth.

**Week 5: Boundaries, Balance, and Burnout** - We concluded with Alex Chan's enlightening discussion on boundaries, balance, and burnout, equipping members with strategies to maintain well-being.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to Carrie Sorenson (NEAFCS Maryland Affiliate), Kyleigh Brown and Deon Littles of the Access, Engagement, and Outreach (AEO) Committee for their exceptional coordination efforts, making **May Membership Month** a success.

(Webinars from **May Membership Month** can be accessed on the Webinar Archives page found [HERE](#).)



**NEAFCS Executive Board showing their NEAFCS pride during their Mid-Year Board Meeting in Albuquerque, NM.**



# PUBLIC AFFAIRS

## Combining for Greatness – Public Affairs Committees Combine Committees

Chris Zellers (NJ) | VP of Public Affairs

The Public Affairs committees have been working hard to produce the **Impact Statements** and promotion for our profession. In 2025 the three committees discussed the role each plays in contributing to member support and how to best accommodate members while streamlining committee responsibilities. To do this, the three committees have been condensed into two.

The **Advocacy Committee** will remain and continue to do its great work promoting our profession and **Living Well Month**, please check out the wonderful resources on the [NEAFCS webpage](#) if you haven't already.

The **Education** and **Marketing** committees worked closely together in the past to create and promote the Impact statements, and they will continue to do that as one committee. The new committee, as voted on by members, will be called the **Public Engagement and Impact Committee** and will continue to be responsible for the [Impact Statements](#) and the one-page flyer for NEAFCS Impact.

The Public Affairs Committee will be hosting a table at Annual Session in Grand Rapids Michigan, please stop by and find out how you can contribute your time and talent to this wonderful Committee.



*Chris Zellers, VP of Public Affairs, shares Impact Report resources with members attending JCEP PILD.*



*Members from across the country reconnect at JCEP PILD (New Jersey, New Mexico, and Illinois represented in photo).*



*NEAFCS Members at the JCEP Public Issues Leadership Development Conference this past April.*



2026 JCEP PILD Conference  
will be held April 20-21  
in Bethesda, MD.  
More details can be found [HERE!](#)

# AMBASSADORS

## Get Involved! Join the NEAFCS Annual Session Ambassador Committee

Sara Sprouse (IA) | *Ambassador Committee Immediate Past Chair*

Are you **dependable**, **positive**, and **passionate** about NEAFCS? We want YOU to represent your state, association, and profession as a **2025 NEAFCS Ambassador** at this year's Annual Session in Grand Rapids, MI!

Ambassadors play a key role in creating a welcoming, professional experience for all attendees. Responsibilities may include hosting concurrent or ignite sessions, assisting special guests, supporting the exhibit hall, and helping wherever needed. Ambassadors typically serve at one or two events per day—and always with a smile!



Ready to step up?  
Apply now through the [application portal](#) or access the link on the [NEAFCS website](#) under Professional Development > [Ambassador Program](#)

 **Ambassador Application deadline: July 31, 2025**



 **Required training: September 26, 2025, 1:00–2:30 PM ET**

(If you can't attend live, a recording will be available.)

Ambassador appointments are for the 2025 Annual Session only. Don't miss this chance to shine and serve!



***Photo opportunities are a place where Ambassadors shine! An Ambassador took this group photo during the in-depth session to the BioDome at the 2024 Annual Session.***



***Ambassadors and Board Members get first pick of volunteer opportunities at Annual Session. Barb Wollan (IA – Central Region Director) and Danielle Day (IA – Ambassador) work the registration desk, a popular volunteer spot!***



# ENDOWMENT

## The Endowment Fund

Jayne McBurney (NC) | *Endowment Committee Member*

**35,000**

**5,250**

**350,000**

You might think that the numbers do not add up, but they do...to **magnificent member benefits through NEAFCS!**

Since 2021, the **NEAFCS Endowment** has awarded over **\$35,000** in grant to members to support projects and initiatives. If you have never applied for a grant, this is a great opportunity to get your feet wet and receive funds that can elevate your work, provide a match to other funds, and increase impacts in your work.

*“By using the logo of NEAFCS we were able then to also add AARP and another organization. Looks better when you have several sources of funding as shows interests of others.”*

Endowment GRANT RECIPIENT

Last year, the Endowment provided **\$5,250** to support first-time attendees at our Annual Meeting in Tucson, Arizona. They learned about the amazing programs offered across the nation and networked with colleagues to learn best practices and tips for program effectiveness.

*“Being surrounded by hundreds of FCS agents was an experience I will never forget.”*

Endowment SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

*“I even met my new best friend”*

Endowment SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

And that last number? To provide this support, the Endowment needs to keep a balance of **\$350,000**. **Consider the value you have received from NEAFCS. Have you leveraged resources from other organizations for success? Have you had goosebumps while being in a room of hundreds of NEAFCS members? Have you met a new friend?**

Please [support the Endowment](#) with a one-time or ongoing donation!

## Unlocking Potential: Innovative Strategies for Professional Growth

Brittney Schori (IN) | *Endowment Grant Recipient*



**Unlocking Potential: Innovative Strategies for Professional Growth** was a professional development event designed to empower Purdue University Extension professionals, both current and retired, in the area of Health and Human Sciences. Organized by the Indiana National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (INEAFCS), this event celebrated 90 years of NEAFCS while highlighting the rich history of the Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) profession.

*This project received funding from the NEAFCS Endowment Fund through the Endowment Grant process.*

Held on November 6, 2024, at the Johnson County Purdue Extension office, the event brought together participants to explore the profession's history and inspire future growth. NEAFCS Historian Christine Kniep provided insights into the organization's legacy, while book discussions and networking fostered reflection and deeper connections.

Post-event data indicated significant impact: 98% of attendees said they learned information they would share with others, and 79% reported gaining knowledge to improve their lives. Before the event, 58% of attendees were unfamiliar with NEAFCS history; afterward, 69% indicated they had gained a greater understanding. Attendees shared that the event offered new perspectives on the HHS role, strengthened appreciation for the profession, and provided inspiration for future programming. **By reflecting on the past and connecting with peers and retirees, participants felt empowered to reach new heights in their careers.**

*“By contributing to the Endowment, we get to help our friends and colleagues succeed by providing them with extra resources through grants and scholarships.”*

Endowment DONOR

# HISTORIAN

## Voices from the Past, Present, & Future: PHASE 2

Christine Kniep (WI) | *National Historian*



Our association history is rich – filled with adventures, commitment and “making a difference”. As we make our way to our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2034, I need your help in **Phase Two** of capturing our work, growing our documented history.



Last year the thirteen affiliates that formed our organization were asked to submit stories from 3 members – **a life member**, a **current member** and a **new member**.

These stories were featured in the newsletter and are now posted on the [website](#). **Phase Two** of this work is collecting stories from the remaining 37 affiliates.



Working as an affiliate, ***please compile stories from 3 members***, capturing their work and involvement in NEAFCS using the following guidelines:

Share in 250 words or less:

- *Name, years of Extension employment, years of NEAFCS membership*
  - *If retired, please respond with accurate information of when you ended employment*
  - *Reason for joining NEAFCS*
  - *Memory from an NEAFCS event (state, regional, or national)*
  - *A wish for the association*
- Also include a picture of the member submitting the story. Submit the three stories and pictures to me at: [ctkniep@new.rr.com](mailto:ctkniep@new.rr.com).*

## Capturing Affiliate History

Christine Kniep (WI) | *National Historian*

While you're thinking history, my second challenge for each affiliate is to dedicate some time in the next couple of years to update your affiliate's history. During the 50<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary years, affiliates were asked to submit their affiliates' history. You'll find these posted on our [website](#). By 2034, your help is needed in capturing the last 25-50 years of your affiliate. Tap into colleagues who are retired, retiring or clearing out offices to see what historical treasures are out there. By 2034, I hope every affiliate will have a submission for the website – celebrating our history and our many accomplishments across the country.

# HISTORY





# CENTRAL REGION

## Illinois

Submitted by Lisa Peterson



Older adults are at a higher risk of falls, but Tai Chi has been shown to be one of the most effective ways to prevent them. It also helps relieve arthritis symptoms by improving strength, flexibility, and balance. Part of the Illinois Family and Consumer Sciences Team has been teaching Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention, a series of one-hour classes ideal for anyone looking to stay active, reduce pain, and move with confidence. One participant noted, *“Living alone, falling is a big concern. The emphasis on weight shifting was incredibly helpful.”*

## Missouri

Submitted by Kyleigh Brown



In April the Missouri Affiliate had a great time connecting with each other during our Health and Human Sciences Conference at the Lake of the Ozarks. Many MEAFCS members were presenters and award winners! We also raised over \$600.00 in our first ever “Tiger Flock” fundraiser!



## Iowa

Submitted by Iowa Affiliate

The Iowa Affiliate hosted a virtual Derby Party the day before the Kentucky Derby. Members were encouraged to wear their fanciest (or wildest) hats and indulge in (work-appropriate) derby beverages and treats. During the party, the Iowa historian found a picture of the Iowa Affiliate at the 1987 National Meeting in Louisville, KY.



Join us for a virtual social event for our  
**MEAFCS Iowa Affiliate**  
Derby inspired hats (homemade or purchased) are highly encouraged  
Consider making one of the southern Derby inspired recipes enclosed with this invitation. Recipes provided by our VP of Public Issues, Malisa Rader  
Activities include:  
Introductions with derby inspired hats  
Social time with mint julep mocktail, lemonade, tea, lace cookies  
Derby trivia  
In addition to the virtual social, we encourage everyone to consider mailing a “May Day Basket” card of encouragement to another affiliate member to arrive around May 1<sup>st</sup>. If you are in need of address confirmation please reach out to myself or Shannon Hoffman for assistance.





# SOUTHERN REGION



**Alabama:** High energy and engagement at an affiliate meeting.



**Arkansas:**  
Group photo from FCS Professional Development.

**Florida:** Affiliate members receive recognition for outstanding work.



**Louisiana:** Cardio Drumming!



**North Carolina:**  
Food demo at Carolina Community Garden



**Mississippi:** Desoto County canning class



**Oklahoma:** Affiliate Meeting

**Oklahoma & Texas:** District 3 TEAFCS Professional Development



**Virginia:**  
Meal Distribution



# The “BACK PAGE”

## Asynchronous Professional Development

Cindy Thompson (IA) | *Secretary*

Are you looking for new, fresh, and innovative ideas, but are concerned about your professional development dollars? **NEAFCS can help!** Take a peek at the many FREE archived webinars across categories like:

- Aging
- Cooking & Food
- Finance
- Health
- Leadership
- Technology



You can also find webinars on writing awards, conference proposals and even the history of NEAFCS! Explore past webinar offerings on the [Webinars Archives webpage](#).

## In Memory

Submitted by Members

### Kathy Jump (KY)

Deceased March 28, 2024

[Obituary](#)

### Anita Rohde (ND)

May 2, 1947 – December 30, 2024

[Obituary](#)

### Lucy Forbes (KY)

January 2, 1935 — January 19, 2025

[Obituary](#)

### Dr. Judith Breland (MS)

June 29, 1941 - March 2, 2025

[Obituary](#)

### Phyllis Simmons (KY)

August 7, 1944 — May 17, 2025

[Obituary](#)

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**The June 2025 Edition of NEAFCS Network Newsletter is brought to you by Cindy Thompson, National Secretary, with support from the National Office.**

## Mark Your Calendars!

### JUNE

**Annual Session | Early Bird Registration OPEN**  
**6/10/25 | WEBINAR: Wellness Wheel Assessment**

### JULY

**7/24/25 | Town Hall Meeting**  
**7/31/25 | Ambassador Application DEADLINE**

### AUGUST

**8/31/25 | Delegate Assignments Due**

