



National Extension
Association of Family
& Consumer Sciences



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March 2025 Edition

From the President

Greetings, NEAFCS Members and Supporters!



It was exhilarating to see so many of you at the recent JCEP Extension Leadership Conference! Regional Directors Samantha Kennedy and Barb Wollan did an excellent job with the NEAFCS portion of the conference and Julie Garden-Robinson served as the conference chair. The conference was outstanding, featuring various concurrent presentations by several of our members and keynote speakers addressing timely topics. Make plans to attend next year!

One of the conference speakers, former Governor Nathan Deal, opened his session with Bob Dylan's classic song, "The Times, They Are a-Changin'." This phrase seems particularly relevant in our current environment, as we face budget cuts, delays in research, and job losses. Our organizations are being affected, and so is our association. We are implementing changes to adapt to the times. My first national committee was the Diversity Committee. This past month, we officially changed the committee's name to the Access, Engagement, and Outreach Committee. Policies will also be updated to more accurately reflect the current work and scope of this important committee, with more information to come.

Many of our national officers are deeply involved in several major projects, making this a busy time for our association. Thank you for your contributions to Impact Statements, for showcasing Living Well Month, for submitting awards applications, and for meeting with committees to outline our association's growth. Our organization is dependent on member participation. You keep NEAFCS strong and relevant!

Jennifer Bridge



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) the hidden word. Those who email will be entered into a drawing for **FREE REGISTRATION** to the *2025 Annual Session* in Grand Rapids.



Exciting Leadership Opportunities with NEAFCS: Apply to be a National Board Officer!

Abby Weber (CO) | *National Nominating Committee*

Are you passionate about advancing family and consumer sciences? Are you ready to take your leadership journey to the next level? NEAFCS offers an exciting opportunity to apply for a National Board position and help shape the future of the NEAFCS.

Each position comes with its own unique benefits and responsibilities:

- **President-Elect:** As President-Elect, you'll work closely with the board to plan future initiatives and gain the experience needed to lead the entire organization.
- **Treasurer:** Manage NEAFCS finances, ensuring fiscal health and strategically allocating resources.
- **Vice President of Public Affairs:** This role allows you to drive public issues, communicate national impacts, and enhancing the visibility of NEAFCS.
- **Vice President of Awards and Recognition:** Shape the future of the Association's Awards programs and celebrating members accomplishments.
- **Southern and Central Region Directors:** These positions advocate for members in your region while influencing national decisions.

Serving on the NEAFCS board allows you opportunities for growth both personally and

professionally, make an impact, and collaborate with passionate and innovative colleagues. while making a difference at a national level!

For more information about each position and to **access the application**, visit the [National Office Candidate Resource web page](#). If you have any questions, please contact the Nominating Committee Chair at rickgrif@nmsu.edu.



2024/2025 NEAFCS National Officers

Town Hall Meeting

Jennifer Bridge (KY) | *President*

Be sure to mark your calendar for *April 22, 2:00 PM Eastern Time* for the **NEAFCS Town Hall Meeting** where members of the board will provide updates on our work and allow you the opportunity to interact and ask questions.

Click [here](#) to learn more!

We Heard You!

Cindy Thompson (IA) | *Secretary*

Thank you for the feedback on the December issue of the *NEAFCS Network Newsletter*!

- *I love the faces and the different sections*
- *It's very clear and easy to read. It makes differentiating the sections simple and clear.*
- *I also liked ... the website links available throughout the newsletter.*

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



AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Awards: Serving as a Judge

Natalie Snowden (IL) | NEAFCS Awards
Training Committee Chair Elect

The NEAFCS Awards program needs you! Volunteer to judge for the 2025 awards season. Judges are needed at the National level, and depending on your affiliate, you may also have the opportunity to serve at the State level. Judges play a critical role in the awards process!

Benefits of being an award judge:

- Supports award writers with valuable feedback
- Builds your leadership and time management skills
- Gives you valuable insights for writing future awards

Whether you are a seasoned award applicant or thinking about applying for the first time, serving as a judge gives you perspective on what award-winning applications look like.

Being able to see different formats, evaluation types, and styles of award packets can help you build a future award-winning submission. When you judge an award category, you can see and be inspired by submissions of innovative programming from all over the country.

Block time off
NOW to
review awards
in early April!

Please consider answering the call to serve as a State and/or National judge in 2025. Not only will NEAFCS, your state affiliate, and the awards applicants be thankful to you, but you will also be glad you served to help your peers and your career as well as gain inspiration and insight.

View Past National Awards submissions [here](#).

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE SIGN-UP FORM FOR NATIONAL AWARDS JUDGING](#)



Donna Jung, VP of Awards, at 2024 Awards Banquet



MEMBER RESOURCES

Member Resources Management Hub

Troy Anderson (MD) | *VP Member Resources*

NEAFCS Member Resources (MR) harnesses the power of its various committees and leaders to foster effective problem-solving and leadership. The inclusion of varied perspectives within MR Committees enhances discussions, leading to more comprehensive decision-making. This structure enables specialization, allowing members to focus on areas like programming, marketing, publication, and leadership, resulting in more informed operations and elevated expertise.

MR Committees thrive on collaboration, building a strong community and shared responsibility, which leads to more effective problem-solving and improved outcomes. MR Committee leaders play a pivotal role, guiding these groups to align with the NEAFCS strategic plan. Their leadership ensures streamlined operations, creating a system that is responsive and accountable. This collaboration empowers the organization to navigate change, address challenges, and seize opportunities, fostering a culture of innovation and efficiency.

The MR spotlight series for March highlights the exceptional dedication and leadership of Committee leaders Carrie Elsen and Rebecca Ackah. Their significant contributions and commitment have been vital to the achievements of their respective MR committees, particularly through their roles on the MR Leadership Advisory. Through their efforts, the organization experiences sustained success, improved efficiency, and growth. Join us in June as we shine the spotlight on more amazing MR leaders!

Annual Session Scholarship Opportunity from Access, Engagement and Outreach Committee

Kyleigh Brown (MO) | *Access, Engagement and Outreach Committee Chair-Elect*

The Access, Engagement, and Outreach (AEO) Committee will be once again offering up to four \$250 scholarships towards Annual Session for those who are *selected* to present a concurrent session on a topic that aligns with the mission and goals of the AEO Committee. These topics include but are not limited to increasing access to Extension programming, efforts to enhance a sense of belonging in Extension programming or programming created to meet the needs of new or historically underserved audiences.

This scholarship may only cover NEAFCS annual session fees. This scholarship is for current NEAFCS members only. One scholarship per concurrent session will be awarded; presenters are responsible for appropriate distribution of funding among their presentation team. Due to the changing socio-political climate the application is currently being reviewed by the committee.

The application will open after proposal acceptance letters are disseminated.



Want to learn more about Member Resources?

Use the Member Resources tab on the [NEAFCS Homepage](#).



MEMBER RESOURCES

2025 Leadership Experience

Troy Anderson (MD) | *VP Member Resource*

The **NEAFCS Leadership Experience** is a pivotal program aimed at nurturing leadership skills among its members, particularly in the field of Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS). This essential academy empowers Extension professionals by equipping them with tools and knowledge to excel in their careers and make a positive impact on their communities.

A key feature of the program is its focus on professional development. Participants engage in workshops and training sessions designed to enhance leadership, communication, and strategic thinking skills. This growth is crucial for members aspiring to take on significant roles within their organizations or lead impactful community projects.

The academy also serves as an excellent networking platform, allowing members to connect with peers, mentors, and industry leaders. These connections foster collaborations and provide

support throughout their careers. Mentorship is a cornerstone of the program, pairing participants (mentees) with experienced leaders (mentors) who offer guidance, insights, and support. This helps members navigate challenges, set career goals, and develop strategies for success.

Overall, the **NEAFCS Leadership Experience** is vital in developing leaders and strengthening their ability to drive meaningful change. By focusing on professional development, networking, and mentorship, the academy plays a crucial role in shaping the future of its members and the communities they serve. For more information about the application process, programming or evaluation please contact MR Sub-Committee Leaders:

Christi Demitz (MI): demitzch@msu.edu

Kristin Miller (MO): millerkris@missouri.edu

Dhruti Patel (MD): dhurutip@umd.edu

Check out the **NEAFCS Leadership Experience Hub** [webpage!](#)

SPARK YOUR LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE JOURNEY!

Mark your calendar for the leadership journey
(required professional development sessions for the Mentors and Mentees)

Date	Time	Session
May 2	9-11:30am PST	Mentor Training
May 9	9-11:30am PST	Meet & Greet
June 13	9-11:30am PST	Leading Yourself
August 8	9-11:30am PST	Leading Yourself
Oct. 10	9-11:30am PST	Leading Others
Dec. 12	9-11:30am PST	Leading in Extension
Feb. 13	9-11:30am PST	Leading in NEAFCS
March 13	9-11:30am PST	Celebration Wrap Up

NEAFCS LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Top 5 Reasons You Should Attend the 2025 Annual Session

Kris Juelfs (IL) | 2025 Annual Session Marketing Committee

The **2025 Annual Session** is shaping up to be a fantastic event. Still unsure if you will make the trip? Here are the **Top 5 Reasons** you should attend this year's annual conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan:

#1 NETWORKING



SPARK new and existing relationships with like-minded individuals and collaborate with members nationwide! We are often so busy making an impact in our local community, we do not have time to connect with others.

#2 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Gain insight and skills by listening to expert speakers and colleagues.



#3 INSPIRATION



Being surrounded by and learning from colleagues can rekindle your enthusiasm and **SPARK** innovative ideas.

#4 LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

SPARK your interest and dedication to NEAFCS by volunteering to take on leadership roles.



#5 Explore Grand Rapids, MI

Discover new sights, try local cuisine, and visit landmarks.



Have we **SPARKED** your interest?

Mark your calendar for **October 20-23**, and be on the lookout for details on registration, pre-session workshops, in-depth sessions, lodging, and travel information available on the [2025 Annual Session Website!](#)

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Raising kids, Eating right, Spending smart



Living Well Month: A Guide to Promoting Wellness

Tracey Saxton (GA) | *Public Affairs Advocacy Committee Chair*

March is **Living Well Month**, and the Public Affairs Advocacy Committee has updated materials and the campaign calendar to help promote this important initiative. **Living Well Month**, led by NEAFCS, is a public awareness campaign that highlights the valuable services provided by Cooperative Extension Family and Consumer Science (FCS) professionals nationwide. Promoting **Living**



Well Month in your community raises awareness, empowers healthier lifestyles, and strengthens local connections. Engage with local organizations, share resources on social media, and host wellness events to spotlight the **impact** of FCS programs, inspiring positive change, and better health for all.

Find a helpful guide to use the materials on the NEAFCS website.

<https://neafcs.memberclicks.net/living-well-month-campaign>

Personalize Your Campaign:

- Use provided materials or get creative (e.g., Kentucky Affiliate's flip-style calendar).
- Add the Living Well logo and slogan: "Raising Kids, Eating Right, Spending Smart, Living Well" to your email signature.
- Share the Living Well Month calendar on social media.
- Keep It Simple: Use easy and manageable methods.
- Share Your Activities: Post your March events on the NEAFCS social media page to inspire and collaborate with others.

Public Issues Leadership Development Conference (PILD) April 6-9, 2025

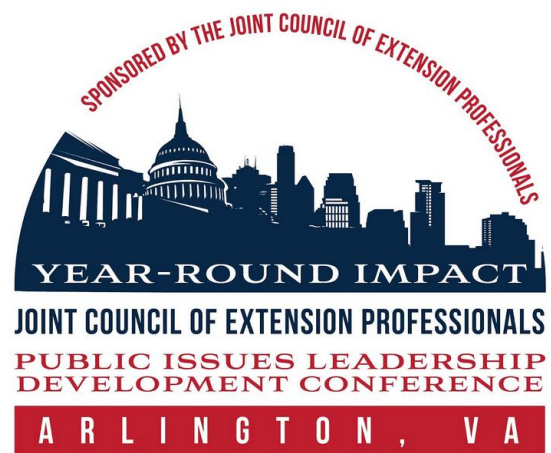
Chris Zellers (NJ) | *VP Public Affairs*

On April 6th-9th members of Extension Associations, including ANREP, ESP, NACAA, NACDEP, NAE4-HYDP, NAEPSDP and NEAFCS, will meet in Washinton DC for the annual PILD conference.

That's a lot of alphabet soup! PILD which stands for Public Issues Leadership Development Conference is sponsored by the Joint Council of Extension Professionals or JCEP. JCEP's mission is to elevate Extension's national reputation as an organization of excellence and synergistically leverage the strengths of member associations to foster leadership, collaboration, professional development, scholarly activity, strategic partnerships and advocate for the profession.

Still confused? Well, as a member of NEAFCS you are automatically a JCEP member because our organization participates. JCEP sponsors the PILD conference, and it is a wonderful compilation of Extension personnel sharing thoughts and ideas with opportunity to network. More importantly it's an chance to learn and visit stakeholders on Capitol Hill. This year the conference will be held at the Hyatt Crystal City in Arlington, VA, which is close to transportation in and around the DC area.

For more information visit: <https://www.jcep.org/pild> I hope to see you there!



AMBASSADORS

AMBASSADOR COMMITTEE NEWS

Get Involved! Join the NEAFCS Annual Session Ambassador Committee

Lisa Peterson (IL) | *Ambassador Committee Member*

Looking for a way to get more involved with NEAFCS at the national level? Join the Ambassadors' Committee and play a key role in marketing, training, and selecting our Annual Session Ambassadors!

Why Join?

- Gain insider knowledge on the ambassador program
- Build your resume with national committee experience
- Enhance your CV for promotions
- Network with fellow NEAFCS members

You can serve on the committee AND apply to be an ambassador!



Meetings: First Monday of the month at 11 AM ET / 10 AM CT.

Get Involved: Email Michael Elonge, melonge@umd.edu, or Cindy Thompson, cpthom08@iastate.edu, for the meeting link!

Whether you're passionate about marketing, selection, or training, there's a role for you! [Sign up today](#), and a subcommittee chair will be in touch. Let's make this year's ambassador program the best one yet!



ANNUAL SESSION AMBASSADORS

NEAFCS Ambassador: The Most Recognized Service by Associate Deans and Deans of Extension

Michael Elonge (MD) | *Ambassador Committee Chair*

Do you know that being an Ambassador provides the most recognized service at NEAFCS and your University FCS?

Who would not want to be Ms. or Mr. Ambassador representing your University at the NEAFCS Annual Session? What is holding you back from becoming an NEAFCS Ambassador?

Become an NEAFCS Ambassador Committee, and take advantage of some of the many services:

- Ensuring guests and attendees have a positive experience at the NEAFCS Annual Session.
- Volunteer to host concurrent sessions
- Assist with special guests and attendees
- Provide support in the exhibit hall and judge Showcase of Excellence posters
- Support the NEAFCS annual session wherever needed
- An Ambassador badge at the NEAFCS annual session (powerful, everybody who sees you, knows you)
- A letter authorized by NEAFCS sent to your Associate Dean and Dean, recognizing your service as NEAFCS Ambassador

We hope that you will join us! Watch for additional information and application materials coming soon!



2024 Annual Session Ambassadors

ENDOWMENT

The Endowment Fund

Theresa Mayhew (NY) | *Endowment Chair*

NEAFCS's Endowment Fund has a principal balance in excess of \$300,000 that is to be kept permanently in the fund. Interest income is what can be used to advance the association's mission through grants, scholarships or other projects recommended by the majority of the Endowment Committee and approved by the majority of the Board. Your contribution to the Endowment Fund helps keep it financially positioned so it can keep fueling the profession and the ongoing needs of you – our members! Help us strengthen our Endowment and keep NEAFCS viable, resilient and strong for decades to come. Your endowment gift today can leave a lasting legacy! Learn more about the endowment fund and how to apply for grants and annual session scholarships (the application deadline is May 15) at <https://www.neafcs.org/endowment-for-the-future>

Endowment Committee Members

Endowment committee members were asked to respond to one of the following questions:

- Why do you serve on the committee?
- Why should members consider giving.



I serve on the Endowment Fund committee because I believe we should do all we can to promote, advance and sustain our members and profession for years to come.
Theresa Mayhew (NY)

Serving on the Endowment Committee is one way I give back to the NEAFCS organization for the professional benefits I received over 33 years. **Mary Blackburn (CA)**



Serving on the Endowment Committee gives me the opportunity to remain engaged with NEAFCS, which is near and dear to my heart, by fueling the mission of our Association in awarding grants and scholarships to our deserving members. **Dianne Gertson Drennan (TX)**

Getting to know people at National Conferences gave me the opportunity to serve on the endowment committee. I am glad we made those connections and I was asked to join them. We just need to reach out to others so they can learn what great opportunities there are to get grants and scholarships through the committee and get other donors for the endowment.

Melinda Daily (KS)



I contribute to the Endowment because it is a way to give-back to the organization and help to sustain funding for member grants and assistance to attend annual meetings. It gives the NEAFCS organization planned security for future FCS educators and future generations.
Karen Ensle (NJ)

As a donor to the endowment fund, you contribute to a sustainable source of funding that supports programs, grants, and scholarships.

Mary Evans (WY)



By contributing to the Endowment, we get to help our friends and colleagues succeed by providing them with extra resources through grants and scholarships. **Rick Griffiths (NM)**

To encourage NEAFCS Members to give back to our professional association, I joined the Endowment Committee. The Endowment supports our members through program support grants and scholarships. We can give back, even in a small way, to support this member benefit! **Jayne McBurney (NC)**



In Memoriam

Dr. Barbara Ann Woods | 9/29/1953 – 1/19/2025

The committee would like to acknowledge the contributions of Barbara Woods who joined the committee following Annual Session 2023. She was a fierce believer in family and consumer sciences and how the power of philanthropy could simultaneously support our members and our profession. We will miss her passion, her energy, her smile and her spirit.

HISTORIAN

90th Anniversary Celebration

Christine Kniep (WI) | *National Historian*

The work of the 90th Anniversary Celebration Committee culminated at the Annual Session in Tucson with the presentation of the **NEAFCS Creed Video Contest** winner, **Exhibit Hall Activities**, **photo opportunities** and an **incredibly special dessert** at the Awards Banquet Closing Ceremony.



Affiliates Submitting 90th Anniversary Activity Sheets

Arkansas	Maryland
Illinois	Michigan
Indiana	New York
Kansas	Oklahoma
Kentucky	Virginia

Members of the 90th Anniversary Committee are continuing to search for “missing pieces” of our Association history – **do you have pictures, publications, or memorabilia to add to the Historical files?** PLEASE share what you have before recycling! Contact Chris Kniep at ctkniep@new.rr.com.

Video Creed Submissions

1st Place: Maryland
2nd Place: Ohio
3rd Place: Texas
Honorable Mention:
Indiana & Wyoming
Additional entries
Arkansas
Iowa
Kentucky
Michigan
New Mexico

Special thanks to the ten affiliates who submitted video presentations of the **NEAFCS Creed**! The variety and creativity were very impressive. A link to the winning video from Maryland is found on the NEAFCS [homepage](#) and the link below. All ten videos have also been posted to the Historical Archives page of the website, under [NEAFCS 90th Anniversary](#).



Again, our thanks for making our **90th Anniversary Celebration** a success!

With the change in the newsletter, the **Voices from the Past Present and Future** stories from the thirteen affiliates that formed our association are being posted on the website instead

of being included in the newsletter. Look for new collections of stories from **Alabama, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont, and Virginia** under

[Voices from the Past, Present, and Future webpage](#), along with those already published in the newsletter.



Celebrating 90 Years in 2024

The “BACK PAGE”

Embrace Productive Rest

Dianne Christensen (NM) | *President Elect*



Over the past year, I have often heard, “You need to rest!” While I agreed, I began to ask myself - *what does rest, for me, look like? How can I revive, restore, and renew when I take breaks? How can I operate in top productivity without*

suffering exhaustion and burnout? I have begun to embrace habits that support productive rest.

Considering how we are wired as humans, a person may experience about 90 minutes of heightened focus and productivity, followed by a brief period of lower energy or decreased cognitive function.

Cognitive fatigue affects abilities such as memory, concentration, and problem-solving. Taking regular 15-30 minute breaks every 90-120 minutes is key to recovery. Research indicates there are six primary ways to seek recovery.

- Relaxation (meditation, breathing, nature)
- Low effort activities (music, TV, reading)
- Social Recovery (spending time with life giving people)
- Physical Activity
- Creative pursuits
- Fun! (humor and laughter)



Another tip, if you work with your mind, rest with your hands. Or if you are working with your hands, rest with a book or other mindful activity. I am very task driven and do not break until the task is finished. I am learning to be more time oriented, taking productive breaks regardless of the task being done. Lastly, eliminate hurry from your life by being more realistic with your time and building in margin. Time management is energy management.

For more information on the benefits of rest, reach out to Dianne at dianneec@nmsu.edu.

FACEBOOK

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LINKEDIN

INSTAGRAM

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

Mark Your Calendars!

MARCH

3/15/25 | NEAFCS Award Portal CLOSES

APRIL

4/1/2025 | Last day to submit Journal of NEAFCS manuscripts

4/6 – 4/9/2025 | JCEP PILD – Arlington, VA

4/22/2025 | NEAFCS Town Hall Meeting

MAY

5/1/2025 | Committee Action Plan & Budget Requests DUE

5/1/2025 | DEADLINE for National Executive Board Applications

5/15/2025 | DEADLINE for Endowment Grants & Annual Session First Timer Scholarship Applications

