

Voices from the Past – Present – Future

Christine Kniep (WI), Past President & Historian

On June 29th, 1933, in Milwaukee, WI, during the annual meeting of the American Home Economics Association, The National Home Demonstration Agents' Association became a reality. Present were twenty-one home demonstration agents from 13 states: Alabama, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Vermont, Virginia and Wyoming.

The 90th Anniversary Committee has asked each of these 13 states to collect stories of their work and membership in NEAFCS from a retired or life member, the affiliate president, and a "new" member – the start of an ongoing narrative history of NEAFCS. Between now and our 100th Anniversary, stories will be collected from all of the affiliates. These stories will be included in our newsletter, posted on our website, and included in our historical records.



It is with great pleasure that I share the second set of stories from the Michigan Affiliate, featuring:

* **Past-Carol Schlitt-Life Member, Retired**

* **Present-Staci Coussens-IEAFCS President 2024**

* **Future-Emily Harmon**

PAST

Carol Schlitt, Employed by University of Illinois Extension 1976-1981; 1991-2010 Member of NEAFCS: 26 years (active) 14 years retired (Life member) Current job title: **Retired but owner of 2 companies.**

My biggest program efforts at the time of my retirement in 2010 was conducting Dining with Diabetes sessions and teaching food sanitation in southern Illinois. I would typically do two to three. 3- part sessions each month in the Dining with Diabetes program. I would also teach a 5-hour Food Sanitation Refresher Course required by the Illinois Department of Public Health for Food Sanitation Managers, usually teaching two to three monthly sessions.

Reason for joining NEAFCS -- I joined NEAFCS (then NAEHE) in 1976 when I got my first job as an assistant Home Economics Advisor in St. Clair County. My boss told me that I needed to join...so I did.

Memory from an NEAFCS event: I will always remember my last day as President of NEAFCS in St. Paul MN when I got hit in the eye with a bungee cord and missed the Annual Business Meeting.

My wish for the association: I wish for NEAFCS to expand their awards and scholarship offerings to their membership and continue to provide innovative professional growth and development opportunities.



PRESENT



My name is Staci Coussens and I have worked for University of Illinois Extension for 12 years. I have been a member of IEAFCS and NEAFCS for 6 of those years. **I am a SNAP-Ed educator** which means my programming is not traditional Extension programming, but I work with community partners to change policies, systems, and environments to make the healthy choice the easy choice for SNAP eligible families.

Biggest Programming Efforts- One project I am working on currently is supporting a federally qualified health center make their food pharmacy program stronger and more data driven while also supporting the pantry that supplies the foods for the program in procuring foods that meet the specific criteria to be in the food pharmacy selection.

Reason for joining NEAFCS-- I joined NEAFCS so I could connect with other FCS professionals. I wanted to find more people like me that I could brainstorm with and just talk to who understands Extension.

My wish for the association is to continue to support FCS professionals in Extension for another 90 years!

FUTURE



Emily Harmon, 5 years with University of Illinois Extension, 1 year with IEAFCS. As a **Family Life Educator**, I provide healthy living/healthy aging programming in my local counties as well as across the state

One of the current program efforts- I am the most excited about is the development of a rural health series that is targeted at traditionally low-income jobs in health care for professional development. Reliable health education in rural communities has been identified as an emerging need. The Illinois Extension FCS team is addressing this need by providing health education to rural healthcare workers in the nursing home/assisted living setting for them to gain valuable information and gain continuing education credits. Our hope is that that this information will improve their overall well-being and encourage them to keep providing healthcare in our rural communities.

Reason for joining NEAFCS-Before I became an FCS Educator (FCS Agent) I worked within various positions in Extension. I saw all the wonderful things NEAFCS/IEAFCS did for its members. The biggest reason I joined was to gain professional development that was completely applicable to my field.

Attending my first national conference with my lovely colleagues and creating strong bonds with them. Also having the sense of, 'this is where I belong and fit in.'

My wish for the association is that it continues to grow and emphasizes the mission and how crucial our work is across the nation