

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-Teresa A. Clark-Jones (Terry Jones)-Life Member, Retired**
- * **Present-Courtney Aldrich-MEAFCS President 2024**
- * **Future-Joanna Urban**

PAST

I worked for Michigan State University Extension for 37 years and was a member of NEAFCS/MEAFCS for 29 yrs. I joined as soon as I was eligible. I began my career as a 4-H Program Assistant and retired as Senior Extension Educator.

For the last nine years of my employment my program responsibilities were in housing, financial management, parenting, and social-emotional education. I became a member of NEAFCS/MEAFCS at the encouragement of my mentor as an opportunity for professional and leadership development. But it was also a fantastic way to increase contacts across both my state and country. I had the honor to serve on Michigan's board including as president in 1999-2000.

My favorite memories of NEAFCS/MEAFCS events were presenting with my co-workers. It was always a wonderful way to bond and do awesome work together. **My wish for NEAFCS/MEAFCS is success at encouraging Extension professionals to become a part of this professional organization.**



PRESENT



My name is Courtney Aldrich, and I am the current president of the Michigan affiliate. I have 6.5 years in Extension and 6 years in NEAFCS. I am a program instructor on our Child and Family Development team at Michigan State University Extension.

I provide parent and caregiver programming on topics including child development, guidance, and learning. One of my current program efforts is to create online self-paced versions of our programs to improve accessibility. It was just a "given" that I would join NEAFCS after I began working at Extension. My supervisor had me attend a meeting within my first week and before I knew it I was enrolled!

Over the years I have learned the wonderful connections that can be made through NEAFCS. Being a part of my local affiliate allowed me to make connections beyond my immediate role,

which has been helpful in referring participants and developing working relationships. Nationally, I have been able to connect with others who do similar work to mine in other states. We have been able to share resources and create working partnerships.

I have fond memories of the annual session in Hershey, Pennsylvania. From making my own candy bar to presenting, this annual session was when I began to feel connected to the association's work. (And those chocolate martinis!!) **My wish for the association is that it can grow and develop with the ever-changing work of Extension, providing vital professional support and connections that help all of us serve our communities better.**

FUTURE

Greetings! My name is Joanna Urban. I've been working with Michigan State University Extension for two years. I joined NEAFCS shortly after I began my employment with Extension. As a Community Nutrition Instructor, I facilitate SNAP-Ed direct education for youth and adults, and I provide nutrition and physical activity resources to the community. In addition, I support local partners who are working to promote long-term community health. For example, I just began working with a nearby city council to coordinate a monthly fresh produce mobile food pantry.

I joined NEAFCS because I wanted the ability to network with Extension workers in other states. Also, I was interested in the opportunities to participate in meaningful professional development. Perhaps most of all, I was hoping that joining NEAFCS would help me acclimate to my new role with Extension. Membership has provided me with all this and more. One of the best decisions I made was signing up for the Leadership Experience program. As a new NEAFCS member, I was paired with a mentor with whom I meet monthly. My mentor helps me navigate the expansive NEAFCS website and highlights member opportunities. I truly consider my mentor to be a friend. Leadership Experience participants attend professional development sessions, such as Real Colors, and meet regularly to connect with others in the program. I cannot recommend the Leadership Experience enough to new NEAFCS members! **My wish for NEAFCS is that the organization continues to grow and thrive by actively engaging all members.**

