UF/IFAS Pasco County Cooperative Extension

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2012 Success Stories in Pasco County

2012 MILESTONES:
- Extension Service celebrated 150 years—created by President Lincoln!
- Pasco HCE volunteers started in Pasco 90 years ago!
- Pasco PCS agent completed 25 years of service and programming!
- FNP program has grown and excelled over the past five years in Pasco!

2012 AWARDS:
- Wells Fargo Extension Professional and Enhancement Award—Distinguished Environmental Education in Pasco—Betsy Crisp
- ESP 2012 Continued Excellence Award for Pasco—FCS Outstanding Leadership and Programming—Betsy Crisp
- FEAFCS 2012 Program of Excellence (individual): Simply Florida Foods Event—Betsy Crisp
- FEAFCS 2012 Program of Excellence (team): Creating Work-life Balance—Betsy Crisp (Pasco) and Karen Headlee (Lee County)
- FEAFCS 2012 Outstanding Para-Professional—Brenda Borjas, FNP Program Assistant
FOOD & NUTRITION: “Dishing-out MyPlate Nutrition, OrganWise Guys Style” - The Family Nutrition Program (FNP) continues to reach thousands with valuable nutrition information since it was established in Pasco October 2007 with $300,000 USDA-SNAP grant funds. Pasco FNP end-of-year report (2011-2012) documented 8,633 unduplicated and 584,082 duplicated (attended up to 6 classes) contacts made at eligible/low-income: 38 schools, 6 county parks/recreation sites, 4 county elderly nutrition sites, 1 health clinic and 1 food bank.

This year, the Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) agent and three FNP program assistants (PAs) worked as a team to present “MyPlate, OrganWise Guys Style” assemblies to 3,539 students at 5 elementary schools choosing to take on the Healthier US School Challenge. Students were introduced to the Organ Wise Guys club members, one by one, as Sir Rebrum (the brain) called the club to order with roll call to share the research he had done on MyPlate.gov. Through an interactive slideshow students learned what foods go where on MyPlate. At the end of the lesson, physical activity included chanting the OWG mantra low-fat, high fiber, lots of water, exercise! while moving to the tune of the Macarena. Fun was had by all!

This school-wide assembly kicked-off the new 2012-2013 year with a big bang. A series of six classroom lessons based on the YUM (“Youth Understanding MyPlate”) curriculum, developed by University of Florida/IFAS, with a seventh lesson added on the importance of handwashing. The pre-test survey done in September will be redone as a post-test in May (9 months) to collect valuable impact data that is expected to surpass the six-week summer day camp program results (K-2nd = 17% increase and 3rd-5th = 9% in knowledge gained).

At open house events that followed at those schools, the students excitedly shared with their parents what they had learned about MyPlate. When visiting the FNP display and booth, they had the opportunity to spin the OrganWise “Wheel of Health” to reinforce the importance of daily activity to help balance caloric intake. Families also took the “Got Milk?” challenge where they sampled 1% and fat-free milk and voted on which one they liked best. To the surprise of all, the fat-free won - What a successful start to the school year!

FOOD SAFETY: “Let Them Eat Fruit (instead of cake) for Healthy Celebrations” - Culinary Arts students learn food preparation skills in class but nutrition and food safety are the focus of Extension FNP & FCS Programs.

During a “Healthy Celebrations” presentation for two classes at Marchman Technical Education Center in New Port Richey, students learned that simple substitutions can take a dessert recipe from a caloric nightmare to healthier fare. Fresh fruits were highlighted as the sweet treat of choice proving that low-calorie fruit desserts do not have to be boring. Students participated in a hands-on experience/contest using their imagination, creativity, and a little effort, that fruit desserts could wow their guests with a variety of colors, shapes and textures!
Two teams competed by preparing the same fruit salad, one served in a watermelon bowl: one team created a “beach basket;” the other a “treasure chest.” Both included a low-fat fruit dip, served in a melon bowl. Students successfully applied the new skills learned and were very proud of their accomplishments. As a reward, students enjoyed eating their creations down to the last piece of fruit, demonstrating that they agreed—“Healthy fruits can make tasty and delicious desserts!”

This fun class was properly timed as it followed the announcement that students had completed University of Florida’s intensive 6-hour food safety training course (taught by FCS agent, a National Restaurant Association ServSafe certified instructor and certified proctor) and passed (19 out of 23 students) the two-hour certified food manager/ServSafe exam with average score of 86% (75% required to pass)! These students worked really hard to develop their culinary skills, learn basic nutrition, and become certified (good for five years) that proves their competence in the area of food safety and shows readiness to work in the food service industry!

**HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & WORK-FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS: Mary Harrison Professorship and the FEAFCSCookbook** – Agent worked closely with members of the Florida Association for Home and Community Education (FAHCE) organization in an effort to finally fully fund the scholarship started in 2004. (FCS agent serves as advisor and trainer to this dedicated group of FCS volunteers who have been active in Pasco since 1922!) The balance was determined to be approx. $20,000 short to reach that goal so FAHCE generously offered to make that donation to honor UF/IFAS state advisor. The downturn in the economy led to the discovery that yet another $7,000 was needed so, FEAFC agents across the state stepped-up their efforts to raise the difference. In a contest to increase sales of their Simply Florida cookbook, 24 agents sold over 350 total cookbooks from October to December 2011 (1st-place: 99 by Pasco agent; 2nd-place 42 by Seminole; 3rd-place 32 by Orange; with an average of 15 books sold/agent). Those additional funds were raised just in time to present the check to state advisor/department chair, Dr. Nayda Torres at her retirement party on April 19th. This scholarship was awarded to Pasco FCS agent in 2006 and $1,000 funds were used to provide professional development classes **“Wellness Four-Part Series: Nutrition, Stress, Time, Financial”** to Pasco County employees. Now, funds will be available to support FCS agents for their county programs across the state for years to come!

Pasco HCEs/FCS Advisory members and Commissioner Pat Mulieri, EdD, sponsored the BOCC Resolution recognizing **“March 2012 - Extension Living Well Month.”** This celebrated Extension Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS) programming to improve the lives of local citizens = 5 years of FNP, 25 years FCS agent programming, 90 years of FAHCEs, and the accomplishment of fully funding the Mary Harrison Professorship with donations and cookbook sales! Each Commissioner received a personal copy of the Simply Florida cookbook from HCE Pasco members in appreciation for their years of support – especially ACA, Dan Johnson, who had already purchased several over the past years!

**“Looking for Balance in Tough Times”** – Employees (57) looking for better ways to deal with the lack of balance in their lives signed-up for a 2 ½ hour Extension classes (7) provided at three locations across the county in cooperation with Pasco County Personnel. Participants learned to identify stressors, communication skills, time management techniques, and the importance of building a support network. Survey at the end of class showed 79% ready to adopt the skills and make changes to their
Six months later, 71% reported improved communication with family and 75% with co-workers; 79% reduced stress and 83% improved their time management; and 92% reported making at least one positive change to improve their life balance. Participants also requested additional help on time management so another series of classes “Time Management: On-the-Job” were arranged to meet those needs and even more took part in that series (7 classes/78 participants with 78% knowledge gained and 72% behavior change) and has been requested to repeat again in 2013 along with a new series on “Making the Most of MyPlate!”

FCS Agent has been working with Pasco County Personnel Department since 1995 to offer numerous courses on a wide variety of topics for the professional development of their employees. “Cultural Diversity and Harassment” is a mandatory course and was offered by an outside agency until 2010 when a team of three County employees (Extension, Libraries, and Elderly Nutrition) teamed-up to offer these classes monthly at three different locations. In 2012, FCS agent also taught additional classes for constitutional offices and developed another class for childcare workers at a state-wide training “Diversity through the Eyes of Children.” A total of 14 classes/241 attendees/234 surveys completed: 92% satisfaction, 90% knowledge gained; 91% behavior change; 97% presenter knowledgeable; 87% time spent worthwhile. These classes will be offered to County employees again in 2013.

4-H & OTHER YOUTH – ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: “Coastal Cleanup 2012” – FCS agent has coordinated this event annually in Central Pasco since 1990 and has consistently had the highest number of volunteers at any one site across Pasco! This year on Saturday, September 15, 2012, there were 14 dumpsters strategically placed across the county. Land O’ Lakes was just one drop-off site where 34 teams and 454 volunteers pre-registered (33.4% or the 1,361 total volunteers county-wide) to participate to clean designated lakes, creeks, roads, ditches, and drainage retention areas in central part of the county. After several hours of hot, sweaty work, volunteers returned to the SunTrust Bank where they filled the dumpster with 1.27 tons (out of 14.58 collected county-wide) and enjoyed an old fashioned “block party” sponsored by local businesses to reward volunteers for their hard work.

“A Day at the Beach” – All that fun comes with some risks, too. FCS agent and 8 volunteers offered the opportunity for youth to learn about what an excursion to the beach has to offer (including a variety of shells and lighthouses) without leaving the Extension office. With color-changing beads to show exposure as well as sun-sensitive paper for art projects, 17 youth learned that the sun is a powerful source of energy. The importance of using sunscreen and what to look for on the label were included with visors for extra protection. Many of these beachgoers returned the next day to sew a beach towel that folds into a drawstring bag until needed. They left that week with sunscreen, anti-bacterial wipes, and an insulated tote bag to keep their food and snacks cool and safe on their next family outing!

For more information, contact: Betsy Crisp, MS, LD – 813-929-2725, Ext. 2456