

# Report of Accomplishments for 2009

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**25% of  
Extension  
FCS  
Program**

## Program Title – “Creating Happy, Healthy & Safe Homes”

**Focus Area** – Sustainable Housing and Environment *(includes 5% 4-H)*

**A. Program Situation:** Shelter is one of the three essentials for mankind. Floridians spend from one-third to almost one-half of their disposable income for housing. It is an important health concern, as well as a financial consideration. One's residence also impacts the social and emotional well-being of its occupants.

Florida faces several different housing challenges; including the availability of affordable, quality housing for low and limited income families, housing for the elderly and physically challenged, structurally sound housing to withstand hurricane force winds, and housing that provides good indoor air quality in a warm and humid climate. Also, Floridians must consider the removal and disposal of lead house paint from old structures, and the challenge of ensuring that professional builders have the knowledge needed to build houses that address energy, environmental and structural needs. Florida's rapid growth in population places additional stress on its housing situation.

Pasco County's population is projected to reach 499,600 by 2010, making it the 6<sup>th</sup> fastest growing county in FL and 50<sup>th</sup> in the nation! The construction of so many new homes (as much as five percent/year - prior to economic downturn in 2007) places even greater demands on our natural resources. With increasing fuel costs, going GREEN is finally taking on! Pasco County's total area is made up of 868 miles (745 square miles of land and 123 miles of water (14.18%). With Pasco's 24% elderly population (compared to 18% state), there is a need for home modifications so that elders can remain in their own homes. Living in Florida increases need for disaster preparedness (2004 was a particularly bad year). Along with heavy rains/moisture comes increased risk of mold/mildew; steps must be taken to prevent/remove the mildew and maintain healthy homes.

**Target audience(s):** Pasco County residents (youth/adults/elders, home owners/renters) and government

## B. Educational Methods and Activities

Environmental education has been a priority of Pasco Extension FCS for 22 years. Over the years recycling, energy, and water conservation efforts have developed a strong partnership with Pasco County Utilities (grant-funded since 1989), District School Board of Pasco County and a large dedicated group of volunteers. Through 37 classes/rainbarrel workshops (with FY&N program assistant), displays, and 16 special/annual events (GREEN Expo, County Fair, Earth Day, Coastal Cleanup, etc.) almost 3,000 were enlightened with ways they could help protect the environment. Support Materials: PowerPoint presentations (1 + 1 interactive); Displays (11); Bulletins (5); Articles (17); Press Releases (4) and Reports (12).

### Summary of group teaching events for Program.

Instructor	Number of Events	Number of Participants
Self	53	2,894
Program Assistants	0	0
FCS Volunteers	33	977

### Summary of clientele reached for this program:

Program Title: Sustainable Housing & Environment	
Number of Educational Materials Developed	74
Number of Clientele Contacts	
field consultations	0
office consultations	61
telephone consultations	276
group teaching participants	2,894
e-mail consultations	294
Web site visits	1,534

### **C. Objectives (underlined) and Outcomes/Impacts:**

All participants surveyed in this focus area will rate knowledge gained, usefulness, and quality of presentation at 70% or higher. In addition...

1) At least 500 (18%) District School Board (9,000 employees) teachers and community groups (Boy/Girl Scouts, 4-H leaders, MGs and HCE volunteers) Creation Station (reuse center) will take advantage of this learning opportunity, reuse/recycle 10,000 pounds of throwaways a year, and save money! Reached 645 teachers (28% increase) this year and kept 18,084 pounds (52% increase) out of Pasco's landfill. This has been an 18-year partnership with school board. FCS agent, with help of Home and Community Education (HCE) volunteers assist teachers with ideas to use these materials with their students. This saves time and money for teachers. Students get to use their imagination to create projects from throwaways and in doing so, gain self-esteem and self-confidence.

2) At least 50 youth in public/private or home schooled (preschool through middle school age) will learn about recycling by creating art out of thruways and entering annual FCS/4-H Trash-to-Treasure Contest. This contest was developed by FCS agent with 4-H leader in 1990. The 4-H PA who assisted with this program retired and the position was not refilled. This program has consistently grown over the years and was too much for one person to handle so this contest was not held in 2009. A 4-H/other youth summer quilting day camp was arranged to take its place. FCS agent with the help of 8 volunteers held a 5-day summer youth day camp to teach basic sewing skills/quilting and complete a 9-patch quilt top/wall hanging. Nutrition/activity breaks/mini-lessons were taught during lunch breaks. Agent raised \$800 to purchase 7 new sewing machines (replacing extremely old models) and the majority of supplies were donated. Youth (10, ages 9-13) learned the history of quilts, variety of designs, recycling fabrics and about the tradition of passing quilts down thru families. The old sewing machines are being repaired and "adopted"/passed on to participants in the SewNew club instead of ending up at resource recovery (12 members/ club formed at the end of last year and meets 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays to teach sewing, quilting, and recycled arts by January 2010 the number of members rose to 34 = 183%).

3) Residents (85,000) will collectively learn ways to conserve thru media and special events and reduce their personal water usage (GPD/per capita usage) by 5% as documented by Pasco County Utilities records. There were 91,572 connections in 2007. Between October 1, 2006 and September 30, 2007 – Daily water use per day by counties: Pinellas 64.7; Hillsborough 52.6; Pasco only 26.5! Average water use in each household Pinellas 225, Hillsborough 262; Pasco only 213 gallons! So, compared to our neighbors, we are doing quite well! There has been a reduction in Pasco's *adjusted* per capita usage this past calendar year of 2008 (2009 not available until April 2010) as reported by Pasco County Utilities Department at 115.9 gpcd. However, the *unadjusted* amount shows a slight increase (126.6 in 2008 from 124 gpcd in 2007) so educational efforts are needed even more. According to the County's 2008 Team Report: "Despite ongoing draught and dwindling supply, demand in Pasco has steadily decreased. Water restrictions and Conservation education programs appear to be effective in reducing overall demand." Due to recent downturn in the economy it is a "teachable moment" as consumers look for more ways to cut costs. A total of 28 media contacts (displays and newspaper articles) were made, reaching 1,294,015 local residents!

#### **Success Stories (2):**

**Coastal Cleanup – A BIG Success!** – This year, 1,400 volunteers were enlisted county-wide to collect trash (16.1 tons this year, .1 more than last year) from the coast, rivers, lakes, and roadways. FCS agent promotes the event county-wide as well as coordinates the volunteers at one of 28 sites (up from only 13 last year) that consistently has the largest number of volunteers (429 = 30.5% of total and showing a 5% increase in participation over last year). The generosity of local merchants in sponsorship and cash donations is approx. \$5,000/year and has remained about the same since the beginning of this event organized by FCS agent in Central Pasco 20 years ago.). Total volunteer support \$43,436 shows enhanced civic engagement/community involvement. Not only do 75-80% of participants return each year, they bring additional family, friends and neighbors!

**Extension GREEN Expo: Solutions for YOUR Life** – Extension staff coordinated and invited local businesses to join in to put on our first annual GREEN Expo in Dade City. FCS agent with the help of 8 volunteers set up a 10' x 30' area in part of Higgins Hall with 6 exhibits promoting less-toxic alternatives for cleaning; reusable shopping bags; waste-free lunches; energy conservation and recycling. In the middle of the exhibit area was a hands-on presentation with interactive technology (clickers) for participants to test their knowledge and learn solutions for protecting their environment. Of the 64 participants, on pre-test 64% correctly identified the 3 Rs of Recycling (post test = 89%); 31% pre-test identified the toilet as using the most water in the hours (post test = 97%); only 28% correctly identified that 50% of household water was used inside the home but on pre-test the 92% had learned that fact! A total of 876 attended and several emails followed praising the event and looking forward to next year!