

Diving into diversity - broadening youth outreach through 4-H environmental education extension programming

Through team collaboration extension colleagues designed and delivered innovative programs reaching new audiences. Programs included summer camp, partnership programs, STEM special interest club and school enrichment opportunities. This presentation will highlight the programs and audiences we worked with striving to make longer term impact in our community and reaching out to underserved audiences. Exploring your Environment, a five day long experiential adventure for middle school youth that includes outdoor field investigations, service-learning and explorations of local natural areas and parks engaged seven additional youth through scholarships. Outdoor Investigator started as an online program during the pandemic and in 2021 was tweaked to go back outdoors for scientific inquiry with partners serving underserved communities and schools. Each experience was theme-based and focused on ecosystem interactions in the backyard or in neighborhood waters. We continued a similar program partnering with Easter Seals academy working with high school youth with intellectual disabilities. The STEM special interest club is a partnership with the local housing authority youth and black middle school youth living in housing engaged in monthly lessons engaging them in the environment and scientific investigations. LIFE program (Learning in Florida's Environments) successfully educates students on the importance of local ecosystems, conservation, management challenges, and science-based careers working with title I schools. During the pandemic engaging videos were created while in-person visits were put on pause. Take a brief look into the these program and approaches to learn how you could broaden your reach to underserved youth.

Sarah Davis

Sarah Davis, MS is the 4-H Youth Development Faculty at University of Florida IFAS Extension of Sarasota County. As the 4-H Extension Agent, she coordinates 4-H youth and volunteer education and programs for Sarasota County. Prior to this she served as Instructor II, campus naturalist and coordinator of the University Colloquium: A Sustainable Future at Florida Gulf Coast University. She taught University Colloquium, Environmental Science, Environmental Education and Interpretation courses at FGCU. Her research interests include environmental education, the importance of connecting children with nature and natural and cultural resource interpretation. She is a certified interpretive guide and trainer and teaches UF Florida Master Naturalist classes. She serves on the board for the League of Environmental Educators of Florida and serves as the Florida representative to the Southeast Environmental Education Alliance.

Abbey Tyrna

Dr. Abbey Tyrna is the Water Resources Agent for UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County. Since coming back to Florida in 2016, Abbey has been working on water quality and conservation issues; everything from Florida Microplastics Awareness Project and Florida Waters Stewardship Program to stormwater pond management and drinking local tap water.

Katherine Clements

Dr. Katherine Clements is the Ecology and Natural Resources Educator for UF/IFAS Extension and Sustainability Sarasota County. The Ecology and Natural Resources Education Program fosters connections with and conservation of our ecosystems, through education about the area's diverse natural resources for youth and adults. Dr. Katherine coordinates LIFE (Learning in Florida's Environments), a multi-agency, award-winning elementary environmental education program. She is a Florida Master Naturalist Program lead instructor and Vice President of its advisory panel. Dr. Katherine serves the Sarasota community by providing educational programs and assistance with

creating backyard wildlife habitats, minimizing human-wildlife conflicts, and promoting the balance of our natural area ecosystems. Dr. Katherine Clements received a BS in environmental studies from SUNY Buffalo, and a doctorate degree in naturopathic medicine from Bastyr University. Dr. Katherine is passionate about making a difference in our world through educating about our natural environment. She believes the health of the environment is intricately linked with our own health and well-being.

Randy Penn

The waste reduction agent is responsible for designing, coordinating a research-based education program that focuses on solid waste. In addition to implementing a comprehensive waste reduction program, the waste reduction program agent coordinates the Sarasota County Green Business Partnership. Through classes, volunteer engagement and other strategies, the waste reduction agent teaches residents about recycling and waste reduction, and is familiar with county, state and university initiatives, priorities and regulations.

Additional presenters

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