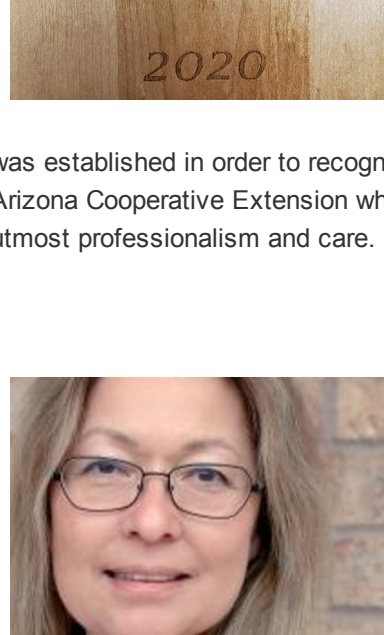


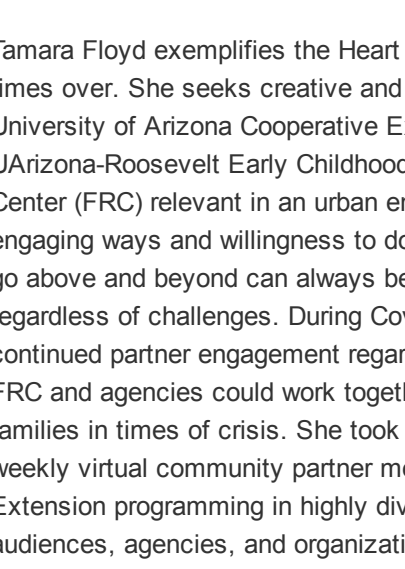
Congratulations to Maricopa County Cooperative Extension Award Winners



During our virtual State Extension Conference, held October 5-9, several staff at our office were recognized for their outstanding work. We had two Extension Conference Poster award-winning teams. Paula Barr Skillicorn, Carol Diemer, and Traci Armstrong Florian won for their poster titled "Community Service Garden: Restore, Replenish, Renew." Another team, consisting of Mary Ahern, Betty Thompson, Liliana Ruiz Fischer, Anne Cimarelli-Stears, and Traci Armstrong Florian, was recognized for their poster titled "Maricopa County Cooperative Extension SNAP-Ed: Supporting School Teachers During COVID-19."

In addition, four MCCE staff were awarded the coveted Heart of Extension Award. The Heart of Extension award was established in order to recognize and reward, in front of their peers, those individuals within Arizona Cooperative Extension who produce at a high level, consistently, and do so with the utmost professionalism and care. Our Award winners this year are:

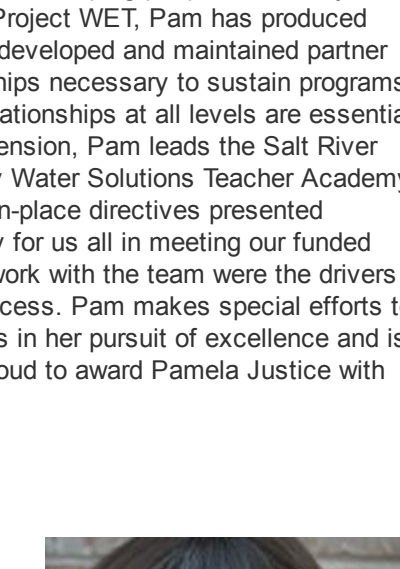
MARY CONNER



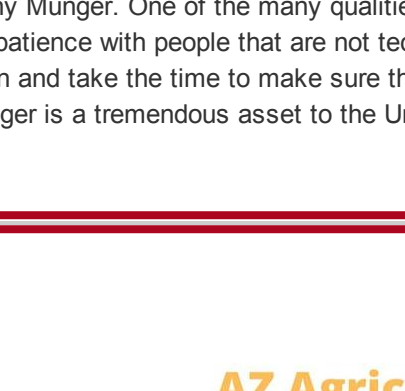
Mary is the Administrative Program Coordinator, Senior at Maricopa County Cooperative Extension, and has been with Extension for over 20 years. She has always held positions in various programs that have required quick adaptability, strong communication skills, and effective judgment. Mary is our connection to the UA Human Resources and is the go-to person in the office for the hiring process. With the new restrictions and requirements, Mary has continued to serve by spearheading the process to get waiver approvals and posting for positions vital to the continued success of many programs. She is the liaison for Covid-19 activities and even arranging for yearly flu shots, all while working from home. Mary's dedication to Maricopa County, to Arizona Cooperative Extension, and to the University of Arizona is unequalled. If anyone deserves to be recognized for having a true Heart of Extension, it is, without a doubt, Mary Conner.

TAMARA FLOYD

Tamara Floyd exemplifies the Heart of Extension many times over. She seeks creative and new ways to make the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension and UArizona-Roosevelt Early Childhood Family Resource Center (FRC) relevant in an urban environment. Her engaging ways and willingness to do whatever it takes and go above and beyond can always be counted on, regardless of challenges. During Covid-19, Tamara continued partner engagement regarding new ways the FRC and agencies could work together to keep serving families in times of crisis. She took leadership for and has been instrumental in hosting bi-weekly virtual community partner meetings, ensuring that programming still moved forward. Extension programming in highly diverse, multicultural environments requires working with many audiences, agencies, and organizations. Tamara always seeks ways for Extension to be inclusive and relevant. Tamara Floyd is highly deserving of the Heart of Extension award.



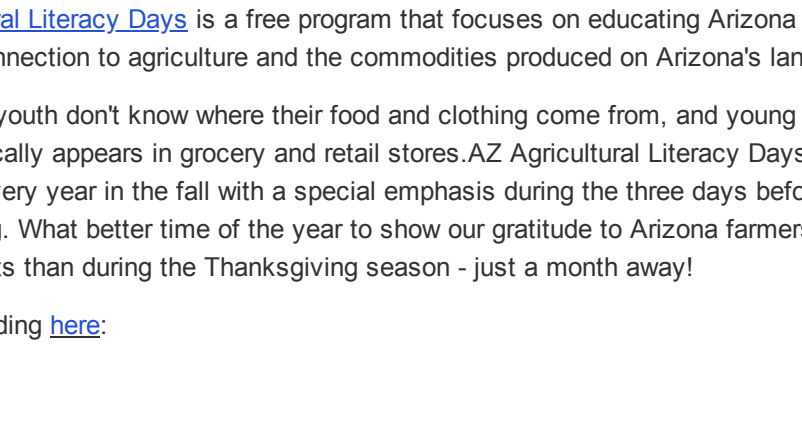
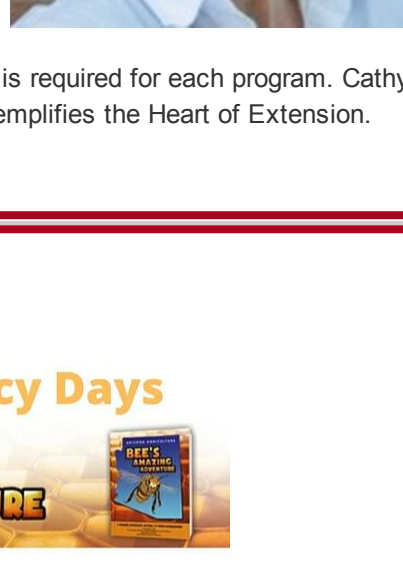
PAMELA JUSTICE



When you think of the Heart of Extension, Pamela Justice immediately comes to mind. Pam, a Program Coordinator, Senior, cares deeply about Extension and is passionate about connecting with and helping people. As a 20-year veteran with Arizona Project WET, Pam has produced high-quality work and developed and maintained partner and sponsor relationships necessary to sustain programs. Understanding that relationships at all levels are essential to the success of Extension, Pam leads the Salt River Project's annual 5-day Water Solutions Teacher Academy. This year the shelter-in-place directives presented considerable adversity for us all in meeting our funded objectives. Pam's perseverance, collegiality, and ability to work with the team were the drivers that made the first online SRP teacher academy a huge success. Pam makes special efforts to recognize excellence in others. She is vocal and courageous in her pursuit of excellence and is an effective communicator. For all these reasons, we are proud to award Pamela Justice with the Heart of Extension.

CATHY MUNGER

Cathy Munger is the IT Manager at the Maricopa County Cooperative Extension. Her work with Maricopa County office staff and faculty has helped the office stay on the leading edge of program technology. Her countless hours of work and dedication have afforded programs in Maricopa County the ability to reach clientele through various avenues. As Covid-19 spread throughout Arizona, other units were purchasing new laptops to take home. Departments within Maricopa County Cooperative Extension Office were already set-up and functional thanks to Cathy Munger. One of the many qualities Cathy Munger has is her patience with people that are not tech-savvy. She will sit down and take the time to make sure that people understand what is required for each program. Cathy Munger is a tremendous asset to the University of Arizona and exemplifies the Heart of Extension.



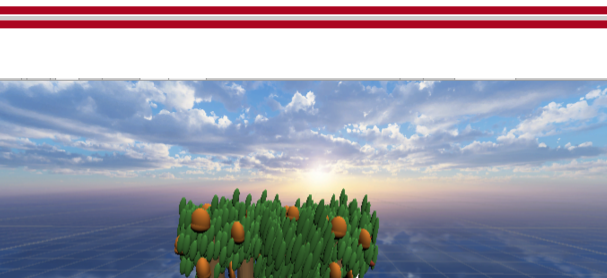
We are excited to kick-off the 2020 Arizona Agricultural Literacy Days!

This year we are offering exciting AG-Boxes and supplemental activities to accommodate our new teaching environments.

[AZ Agricultural Literacy Days](#) is a free program that focuses on educating Arizona students about our connection to agriculture and the commodities produced on Arizona's lands.

Many of our youth don't know where their food and clothing come from, and young children often think it magically appears in grocery and retail stores. AZ Agricultural Literacy Days are scheduled every year in the fall with a special emphasis during the three days before Thanksgiving. What better time of the year to show our gratitude to Arizona farmers and agriculturalists than during the Thanksgiving season - just a month away!

Continue reading [here](#).



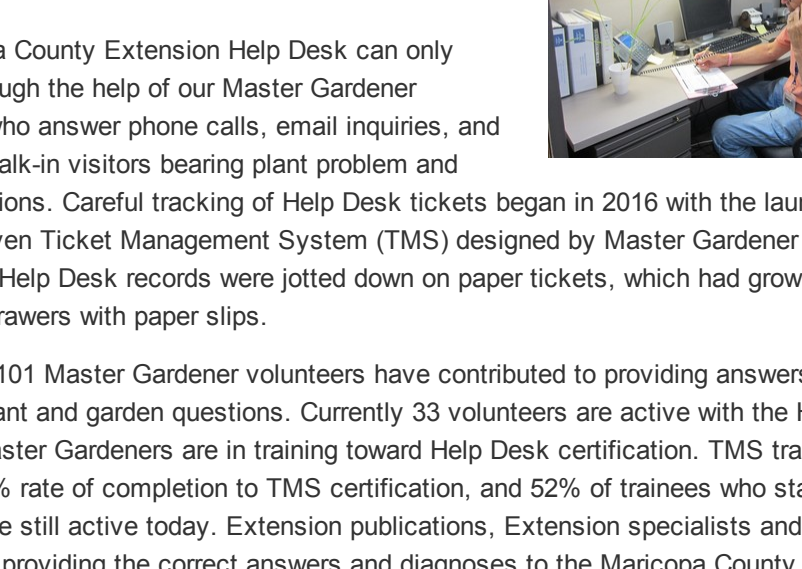
Inspire Change!

The field of environmental education is changing to create a more sustainable future in our communities and the Arizona Project WET team is among those leading the way! In last week's North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) conference, APW highlighted our work. Originally scheduled in Tucson, the conference moved to an online platform with thousands of educators attending from 50 countries. Our sessions (with links to recordings) provided a sampling of the work that APW does in Maricopa County and across the State.

In [Building Community Resilience Through STEAM Education and Actions](#), teachers and students highlight the actions they are taking to mitigate our climate threats in Tucson through the NOAA-sponsored [Recharge the Rain](#) project in partnership with Watershed Management Group.

Environmental educators have always helped students make sense of phenomena in the natural world using engagement, wonder and discovery. The [Collaborative Approaches to Integrating NGSS into Formal and Nonformal Education](#) presentation delineated the unprecedented opportunity that EE providers have to drive science learning as prescribed by the new Arizona Science Standards, by collaborating with teachers.

Continue reading [here](#).



Floating farm camp - ar

By Emilio Martinez

Do you know how to make a virtual farm? Have you used Vuforia and Unity to make something cool? Well, in the 4-H Floating Farm Camp on Zoom in August and September, you would find out how to do all these cool things and more.

AR stands for "Augmented Reality". Augmented Reality covers a wide variety of things and is something we see in use almost every day. You might use picture filters on your phone camera that does things like make a puppy face show up somewhere or you'll see animated shows and movies that are made with AR. We are making a floating farm because in Tinkercad and Unity, (AR platforms with shapes and things) you are making things on a virtual floating plane.

One of the fun things about this camp is the fact that you can make any kind of farm you want! Some of the farms made include mangoes and peaches, cucumbers and corn, pigs, cows, and even a pizza farm!

In Tinkercad, you can make lots of different 3-D models to use for your farm. In Unity, we can use imported Tinkercad models to make the farm. We can also bring in sky textures and other things from the Unity asset store to help us make our farms. Finally, Vuforia is basically what makes the farms and other pictures appear in the Unity camera by pressing the play button.

The end result of the camp was three things:

1. A picture of everyone's farms on the website for the class.
2. Everyone with a QR code to hold up to the camera which will make the farm appear on top of it.
3. Everyone knowing a ton of stuff about AR.

There were 4-H teachers from all over the state joining in on Zoom to help teach the class. It was a very organized, very interesting class. I definitely want to do it next year because it was so much fun, and I recommend you guys try it with me!

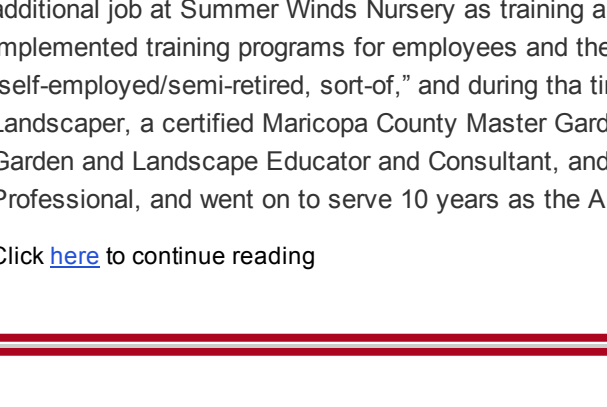
The Plant Help Desk for Maricopa County Extension reaches a major milestone logging our 10,000th plant help request ticket!

The Maricopa County Extension Help Desk can only succeed through the help of our Master Gardener volunteers, who answer phone calls, email inquiries, and occasional walk-in visitors bearing plant problem and garden questions. Careful tracking of Help Desk tickets began in 2016 with the launch of a database-driven Ticket Management System (TMS) designed by Master Gardener Tom Homyan. Prior to this, Help Desk records were jotted down on paper tickets, which had grown to fill two file cabinet drawers with paper slips.



Since 2016, 101 Master Gardener volunteers have contributed to providing answers to all manner of plant and garden questions. Currently 33 volunteers are active with the Help Desk and four more Master Gardeners are in training toward Help Desk certification. TMS training has yielded a 72% rate of completion to TMS certification, and 52% of trainees who started with the Help Desk are still active today. Extension publications, Extension specialists and agents have also aided in providing the correct answers and diagnoses to the Maricopa County gardening public. Managing the Help Desk, with various information sources and expert referrals from Extension offices, the Maricopa Agricultural Center, and researchers on the UArizona campus amounts to a complicated affair. Master Gardeners serve in multiple support roles ensuring Help Desk functioning: Leaderships, On-Boarding (Interviewers, Trainers, Research Mentors), Learning Labs, and TMS Technical Support.

Click [here](#) to continue reading



MCCE SNAP-Ed Community Service Garden: Restore, Replenish, Renew

By Paula Skillicorn, MS and Traci Armstrong Florian, MS, RDN

Men and women who have been in trouble with the law have a new way to heal and help their communities through an AZ Health Zone/University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Maricopa County SNAP-Ed program called Community Service Gardens. The project, in partnership with TigerMountain Foundation (TMF) and the Maricopa County Adult Probation Office in South Phoenix. It provides community service hours to people on probation who learn to garden, raise produce, and provide fruits and vegetables for free, or at affordable prices, to residents of food deserts in South Phoenix.

Residents of South Phoenix food deserts experience food insecurity, high crime, and one of the highest recidivism rates in the nation. On any given day, approximately 15,000 men and women in Maricopa County must do community service, a large number of whom are from South Phoenix. Most of these offenders are still eligible for SNAP agricultural benefits, so this program is even more personal to them and their families.

Continue reading [here](#).

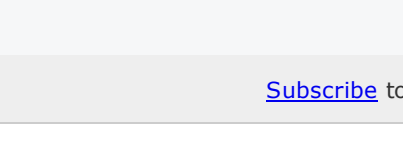
Biz Kid\$ 4-H Support Phoenix Children's Hospital

Every year the Tempe based, 4-H Entrepreneurship Project Club – Biz Kid\$, select a charity to sponsor through fundraising and imposing a charity tax on their business activities. Club members pay 10% of their earnings to the club to be collected for charity. This year they selected Phoenix Children's Hospital (PCH). Biz Kid\$ are a club of 21 members in ages ranging from 8-17 years old who develop their individual businesses to earn and learn what it takes to run a business. Their businesses vary from pet, home and babysitting, candle making, sewing, dog grooming, crafting, baking and many more creative ideas. The club members have run a hot dog stand, a yard sale and hosted a holiday boutique to earn money and raise charity funds.

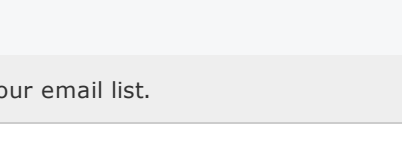
This year the club Charity Chairman, Keeley Tague (13), worked very hard to organize fund raising events and collect donations for PHC. She, with many club members, was disappointed that they were not able to present the donation check in person due to Covid Social Distancing. Instead, the club sent a letter with the enclosed check for \$600 to PCH asking PHC put it to best use in supporting sick children and their families during a very difficult time.

In the 6 years of the club's existence, Biz Kid\$ have raised over \$3,500 to support charities such as pet shelters, children's disabilities, therapy dog training, single mother's assistance, and a food kitchen. The club members felt that it was very timely that this year's charitable donation went to a medical cause in the light of the Corona Virus Disease that can affect young and old alike.

The Buena Vista Mavericks Biz Kids\$ 4-H Project
Led by Katy Holditch, a 4-H Club Leader of 15 Years.



Keely Tague selling at a fundraiser



Biz Kid\$ selling at a yard sale

In Memoriam James Vincent Oravetz, Sr. U of A Maricopa County Master Gardener September 24, 1941 - August 13, 2020

by Marianna Hancin

As Maria Hancin, we don't know much about Jim's early life. We do know he graduated from Mark Kepler High School in Alhambra, California. He told a colleague that he was a California Highway patrolman before coming to Arizona, and he took up gardening to take his mind off the horrible incidents observed as a patrolman. Knowing how soft-hearted Jim was, that is easy to comprehend. One story we often heard from Jim was that he moved to Arizona with hundreds of cactus plants, and shortly thereafter an unusual overnight freeze killed most of his prized collection. Regardless of this tragedy, California's loss was Arizona's gain.

Jim worked at Green World, then Gardeners' World Nursery for 18 years from (1986-2004), where he made his way up from salesperson to nursery manager. From 1994-2004, he had an additional job at Summer Winds Nursery as training and safety department head, where he implemented training programs for employees and the public. In 2005, he became "self-employed/semi-retired, sort-of," and during that time he became: a Certified Desert Landscaper, a certified Maricopa County Master Gardener, a Master Watershed Steward, a Garden and Landscape Educator and Consultant, and an Advanced Arizona Certified Nursery Professional, and went on to serve 10 years as the ACNP Certification Committee chair.

Click [here](#) to continue reading

Directors Cut

By Ed Martin

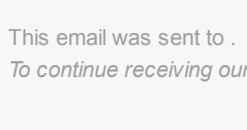
As the temperature slowly begins to lower, and I do mean slowly, we are approaching the end of 2020. Since March, the changes that have occurred are unlike any we've seen in such a short time period. Our Master Gardener classes have gone online, with participants coming to the office in small groups to work on our landscape and earn their required volunteer hours. Their work is well appreciated by us all at the office. The 10th Annual Central Arizona Farmer Field Day will be virtual this year. Dr. Ayman Mostafa has done an excellent job of keeping our growers up-to-date with the latest research. Our 4-H team continues to reach out virtually to our 4-H youth and families, and our nutrition education team continues to deliver programs to youth across the valley. The Family Resource Center has been closed, but that hasn't stopped our team from providing online programming and participating in some "social distanced" programs at the Martin Luther King, Jr. School. The Turf, Agricultural Stem Education, Smartscape, and Pesticide Education Safety programs have all adapted online formats to ensure that our office continues to meet our community's needs.

As we continue to review the data, we are hopeful to move through the Phased Operational Plan and get back to a more "normal" operation. However, one thing that has been made clear is that clientele want us to keep the online option. The reduction in travel time and the ability to attend a meeting from one's own house or business place have actually increased many programs' participation.

Rest assured that we will go back to our hands-on education programs once we are able to conduct in-person programming. However, we will look for ways to allow those who cannot or prefer not to drive to the office to still participate remotely. Finally, I want to thank all of our staff, volunteers, and families who have supported Maricopa County Cooperative Extension over the years and through this pandemic. I genuinely appreciate everyone's efforts and patience as we continue to deliver Extension programs to communities and residents in Maricopa County and throughout Arizona.

Stay Safe and Be Well – Ed Martin

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