

People & Places

Extension educator elevated 4-H teen programs

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

Empowering youth was at the core of Donna R. Gillespie's job with the University of Idaho Extension, a career that spanned 23 years. She retired in May.

Long involved in 4-H, she spent the last six years of her career as a regional youth development educator, partnering with 4-H professionals in youth-development programming throughout central Idaho.

On top of that, she oversaw 4-H teen programs statewide, providing leadership in 4-H personal development, leadership, and citizenship and civic education.

"Anything having to do with teen programs statewide, I was involved with," she said.

Gillespie earned a national reputation for award-winning 4-H youth leadership programs that included the 4-H Know Your Government Conference, State Teen Association Convention and 4-H Ambassadors.

Her reorganization of Idaho 4-H teen programs increased youth leadership opportunities significantly, with the number of statewide leadership positions growing from 13 to 49 since 2015.

"We changed how they were facilitated, with youth in leadership roles," she said.

The programs' steering committees are now primarily made up of youth.

"It was pretty much ground-breaking to have youth in the lead in those programs," she said.

The changes won two major awards from the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents — the Beyond Youth Leadership Award in 2018 and the Excellence in Workforce Development Programming Award in 2019.

Gillespie said the things she is most proud of in her career are all tied to the concept of "Leadership Now!" — the initiative that changed the way Idaho 4-H teen programs are developed, facilitated and evaluated.

The University of Idaho com-



Courtesy of Donna Gillespie
Donna R. Gillespie with Angel Melendez, 2019-2020 Idaho 4-H Teen Association vice president from Richfield, Idaho, at the Hispanic Youth Summit at the College of Southern Idaho in Twin Falls.

pletely revamped its 4-H teen programs under Gillespie's leadership so that teens are partners in learning, said Jim Lindstrom, 4-H youth development program director for the university.

They don't have to wait years to become a leader; they practice leadership skills the moment they enroll. It's exciting for teens — they're making decisions, planning and implementing, he said.

"That's so exciting, and Donna's been our leader in that," he said.

She has worked with each of those teen program committees so the kids are in the front, making the decisions. That's a major difference from adults being in charge and leading, he said.

"With Donna's leadership, this has really moved us forward," he said.

He describes Gillespie as a "silent piper" empowering youth to

reach their potential.

"She empowers them to take the leadership responsibility for all of the programs she leads. That's a really special skill," he said.

She's been a great role model in engaging teens and building their leadership skills, he said.

"Her passion is building those leadership skills with teens."

He said he knew her retirement was imminent but he just kept hoping it wouldn't happen.

"I miss her already," he said.

Gillespie said her favorite part of the work was "watching kids develop, watching kids grow and find their voice to serve their community."

The best part was seeing them develop their own leadership skills, she said, adding that it is possible because there are so many 4-H volunteers and a lot of people who care and donate time and money.



Western Innovator

DONNA R. GILLESPIE

Occupation: University of Idaho Extension professor and regional youth development educator, retired.

Positions: Camas County Extension agent, 1978-1981; Minidoka County Extension educator, 2001-2015; regional youth development educator, 2015-2021.

Home: Rupert, Idaho.

Age: 67.

Publications: Numerous papers on 4-H and food preservation.

Affiliations: Epsilon Sigma Phi, western regional vice president, 2014-2015; National Association of Extension 4-H Agents, western regional director, 2011-2013, and 2020 conference co-chair, 2017-2020; Idaho Association of Extension 4-H Agents, president 2006 and 2011.

Honors: National Association of Extension 4-H Agents Specialty Awards for youth leadership, education, video program, workforce development training and service.

Education: Bachelor's degrees in veterinary science and animal industries, 1975, University of Idaho; master's degree in meat science, 1977, University of Idaho.

Family: Husband, Kent; two grown children; one grandchild.

Now that she's retired, she plans to do all the things she formerly didn't have time for — seeing more of her children, gardening, traveling and taking up golf again after a 20-year absence.

Oregon Women for Agriculture honor two at annual meeting

By GEORGE PAVLEN
Capital Press

ALBANY, Ore. — Oregon Women for Agriculture, a volunteer organization of women dedicated to promoting agriculture statewide, has honored two of its members for outstanding service and leadership.



Anne Marie Moss

Dona Coon, of Shedd, Ore., received the Leaven Award for her decades of work with the group. Anne Marie Moss, communications director of the Oregon Farm Bureau, was given the OWA Service to Ag Award for her integral role advocating on behalf of farmers and ranchers.

Both awards were presented Feb. 27 during the OWA annual meeting, which



Oregon Women for Agriculture
Dona Coon, left, with Mary Hood, the Linn-Benton Women for Ag chapter president.

was held virtually.

Coon serves as vice president of the OWA Linn-Benton county chapter, and as a

county director on the organization's state board. She joined OWA in 1983, and for 38 years has been deeply

involved in running state conventions, the annual auction and Oregon State Fair booth.

In addition to OWA, Coon is a key supporter of Oregon Ag in the Classroom. She kept the program alive in the 1990s after the Agri-Business Council of Oregon pulled its support, moving materials for Oregon AITC from the council's offices in Portland to her home.

Today, Oregon AITC reaches more than 200,000 students and 270 teachers in all 36 counties, providing agricultural education and hands-on activities.

The Leaven Award is given each year to a member of OWA who "acts as leaven and multiplies her effectiveness for the good of the organization, just as leaven does to bread.

"Dona's many talents and devotion for all aspects of agriculture make her a very worthy recipient of the Leaven award," the

group announced.

The OWA Service to Ag Award goes each year to someone who extensively shares the message of agriculture with others — essentially Moss' job description for the state Farm Bureau.

As communications director, Moss is a spokesperson for agriculture every day. She is a messenger for the Farm Bureau and the farmers it represents, whether conducting outreach to students, consumers or state lawmakers in Salem.

Moss is also a graduate of the Resource Education and Agricultural Leadership program, known as REAL Oregon, a leadership training course for the agriculture and natural resources sectors.

Helle Ruddenklau, OWA past president, said Moss is "talented in her work, and with her positive and upbeat personality is a joyful yet forceful advocate on behalf of Oregon agriculture."

Salad days ahead for this small farm

By ALIYA HALL
For the Capital Press

GRESHAM, Ore. — As outdoor enthusiasts, Quinn Richards and Theus Weiskopf were often disappointed in the lack of variety and freshness that came with backpacking food.

"It's like space food," Richards said. "It's pre-packaged and people drink beer and you're like, 'What is this culture?'"

The absence of high-quality food and feeling a desire to "deeply root themselves to a place" led Richards and Weiskopf to stop traveling

and pursue their interest in growing food.

The couple started Farm Punk Salads in 2019 on a half-acre plot at Headwaters Incubator Farm in Gresham, Ore.

The farm focuses on salad greens and culinary herbs, which they sell at farmers markets and through their weekly Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) home deliveries. They also make a dressing, which is sold at select retailers, including New Seasons Markets.

"It seems to me that agriculture and farming is where

a lot of people end up when looking for different ways to connect with the land," Weiskopf said.

Richards said she knew getting into the Portland farming scene was competitive, so they approached their business model with a niche in mind.

"We thought if we got specific and do salad, we can create a decent margin off that," she said. "I also made my own dressing and felt disappointed with the dressings that were available, so it felt like we could make a value-added product and sell it like a kit."



Aliya Hall/For the Capital Press

Theus Weiskopf and Quinn Richards of Farm Punk Salads said the outdoors and delicious vegetables got them involved with farming. Richards said being a Farm Punk is about "honoring who you are."

CALENDAR

Submit upcoming ag-related events on www.capitalpress.com or by email to newsroom@capitalpress.com.

THURSDAY-SATURDAY JUNE 24-26
United Fresh Convention and Expo (in person and online): Los Angeles Convention Center. Whether online or in person, United Fresh is your partner connecting the global fresh produce industry.

Sponsored by the United Fresh Produce Association and the Fresh Produce and Floral Council. Website: <https://www.unitedfresh.org/unit-ed-fresh-convention-expo-2021/#>

MONDAY-TUESDAY JUNE 28-29
Idaho Cattle Association Summer Round-Up: Stagecoach Inn, Salmon, Idaho. The conference will include updates from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Idaho Beef Council, Idaho Department of Agriculture and Idaho Departments

of Lands, as well as market updates. An optional rafting trip is planned for June 27. Website: www.idahocattle.org

WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY JUNE 30-JULY 1
Western Governors' Association 2021 Annual Meeting (virtual): The event will feature governors in roundtable discussions on topics such as energy response, public lands challenges, shared

stewardship, infrastructure and workforce. Website: www.westgov.org

WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY JUNE 30-JULY 4
St. Paul Rodeo: 7:30 p.m. nightly, with a 1:30 p.m. matinee Sunday at the St. Paul, Ore., rodeo grounds. Tickets are \$16 to \$26, not including a convenience fee, and can be purchased online at StPaulRodeo.com. For more information,

visit the rodeo's website or call 800-237-5920. Covid guidelines will be in place during the rodeo. Tickets purchased earlier in the year will be honored.

TUESDAY-THURSDAY AUG. 10-12
2021 Cattle Industry Convention & Trade Show: Gaylord Opryland Resort, Nashville, Tenn. The convention will include educational seminars, exhibits and networking. Website: <http://convention.ncba.org>



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