



I wanted to take a moment and share my gratitude for each of you as we go through these challenging times together. Everyone is doing tremendous work, and I couldn't be more proud of what you're accomplishing.



You are all ESSENTIAL!!!

Here are just a few additional reasons why I am thankful for my Forum family:

- Governor Ron DeSantis spared the T.E.A.C.H. and Help Me Grow programs in his veto pen. His budget reflects appropriations of \$10 million for T.E.A.C.H. and \$1.8 million for Help Me Grow. We are thrilled, considering he vetoed approximately \$1 billion in budget cuts.
- T.E.A.C.H. spent down their \$10M allocation for the program – again, in the middle of a pandemic! Great job.
- Our Early Learning Career Center team in Miami spent down their scholarship allocation within approximately \$2,000 out of a \$1 million budget. Way to go!!! That is awesome work and we sincerely appreciate the incredible folks who worked hard to make this happen. The Miami-Dade early learning workforce is benefitting from your hard work – in spite of COVID-19.
- We moved into a new building in the middle of a pandemic! While there were a few “hiccups” along the way, we are now settling in to our new office. I hope you are as happy with your new office space as I am.
- We are pleased to welcome the Florida Afterschool Network (FAN) and Director, Brian Hickey, to the Children's Forum. The Forum will serve as the administrative home for FAN beginning in October, and Brian will continue to lead efforts to improve and expand high-quality afterschool opportunities that are accessible, affordable, accountable, and inclusive.
- The Forum is the new coordinator of all activities for Children's Week 2021! Next year's Children's Week will include live and virtual events. It is a tremendous undertaking, but we are ready to host the best Children's Week yet. The Forum originated the idea of Children's Day in 1996, which has morphed into a week of activities at the Capitol, including the famous Hanging of the Hands and Children's Day at the Capitol.

Stay safe and enjoy these last few weeks of summer. Remember, gratitude is always the best attitude. We appreciate you!

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Phyllis Kalifeh".

Phyllis Kalifeh, Ed.D.
President and CEO



Forum Focus



Shout Outs!

"I would like to give a SUPER SHOUT OUT to my team, the **ELCC staff**, for the tremendous work they have done during this difficult time. They have really stepped up, taking extra steps to support our community with professional development and supporting each other. I am beyond words, but know for certain that my team is amazing, dedicated, and committed to giving of themselves to elevate the ECE field, its educators, and children in our community. I am humbled and SO VERY PROUD. Thank you ELCC team!" - **Dasiely Cruz**, ELCC Director

"I'd like to give a shout out to the IT team. **Paul Robinson**, Web Developer and Video Production Specialist, for helping us develop the new feature on our HMG website, and **Brian Hughes**, IT Systems Coordinator, for always being so helpful when technology fails me." - **Alexandra Goldberg**



Vacations

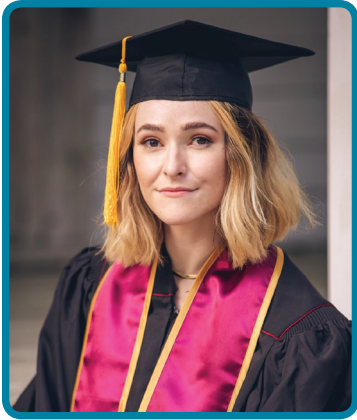
Melissa Clements, Vice President and Chief Research Officer, travelled to Pass Christian, Mississippi to vacation at the beach with her family. She also visited a dear friend who recently moved to Mississippi. They had a wonderful time and look forward to going back soon!

Jenna Jacobsen-Brown, Communications Director, enjoyed the charming town of Seaside, Florida with her family! They had a wonderful time going to the beach, shopping in quaint shops, dining on delicious seafood, and relaxing at their rented beach house.





Graduations



Denise Bishop, Vice President and Chief Outreach, Innovation, and Training Officer, and her husband Carl celebrated the May 2020 graduations of their daughters, Margot and Bridget Mooney. Margot completed her Bachelor's of Social Work degree graduating Magna Cum Laude from Florida State University, and Bridget graduated with honors from Lincoln High School in Tallahassee. Denise and Carl are incredibly proud of the girls' hard work over the last four years as well as the grace with which they handled their respective virtual graduation ceremonies.

Brooke McElhenney, daughter of **Melissa Clements**, Vice President and Chief Research Officer, participated in a "drive-by" graduation ceremony from fifth grade at Killlearn Lakes Elementary School in Tallahassee. She received keys to her house as a graduation gift and looks forward to starting sixth grade at Deerlake Middle School. Best wishes, Brooke!



Adrian E. Ana, son of **Dasiely Cruz**, ELCC Director, graduated high school from Florida Virtual School on June 18, 2020. Dasiely is very proud of him and can't wait to see what he's got up his sleeve for the next phase. Congratulations, Adrian!

Tim Jackson, son of **Tomica King-Jackson**, T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Counselor, graduated with honors from North Florida Christian on May 17 in Tallahassee! He also plays first base for the Tallahassee Panthers, a local baseball travel team. Way to go, Tim!



RECIPE

RECIPE

Submitted by:
Brian Hughes,
IT Systems
Coordinator

Spicy Fried Potatoes

Serves 6

Ingredients:

Note: All of the amounts are rough; you can adjust as needed. I usually start with a stick of butter and add if needed.

- 1 1/4 cup unsalted butter
- 5 medium Idaho potatoes
- 1 medium size red onion diced
- 1 Tbsp Cayenne pepper
- 2 Tsp salt
- 2 Tsp pepper

Directions:

Cut the potatoes in half. Then cut each half in half. Next, cut across the potatoes so that you get triangle shaped wedges.

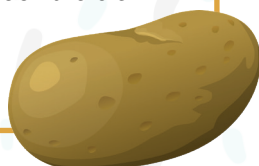
Dice your red onion.

Melt 1 1/2 cup of butter in a frying pan on medium/high. Once the butter is melted, add your potatoes. Add salt, pepper, and Cayenne to the potatoes and stir.

Occasionally stir mixture as it cooks; you want to make sure that all of the potatoes are completely coated in the butter. Cook until the potatoes start to get soft. Once they start to get soft, add half of your onions. Cook until the onions and potatoes are soft.

Note: If you do not like spicy food, then you can replace the cayenne with other spices. I also like to use garlic and Parmesan cheese.

Tip: It can also help to cook the dish in two batches.



Submitted by:
Jenna Brown,
Communications
Director

Spectacularly Simple Spaghetti

Serves 4

Ingredients:

- One 28 oz can of peeled tomatoes
- Half of one onion, peeled
- 5 Tbsp butter
- A pinch or two of salt
- One box of spaghetti noodles

Directions:

Combine tomatoes, onion, butter, and salt in a saucepan. Crush the tomatoes (I use a potato masher). You can separate the onion by layers, but do not dice. Bring mixture to a simmer, then turn the stove down to low. Set the timer for 45 minutes. Stir and continue crushing tomatoes every few minutes. Remove the sauce from the burner after 45 minutes and cook noodles according to package directions. Remove the onions before serving, but you can save them and eat separately if desired. Serve over cooked noodles.

Note: I was very skeptical of this recipe since it didn't include herbs or spices. It's really good, however, and the butter makes the sauce velvety. This recipe is perfect for kids who are picky eaters. Enjoy!





RECIPE

Chicken Lettuce Wraps

Submitted by:
Lisa Roberts,
Assessment and
Coaching Services
Project Manager

Serves 4

Ingredients:

- 1 head of lettuce - Bibb, Romaine, or Iceberg
- 1/2 cup chicken broth
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp white or brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp cornstarch
- 2 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 lbs. ground chicken (or turkey)
- 1 small bell pepper (any color), finely diced
- 1 large carrot, finely diced
- 2 large garlic cloves*
- 1 Tbsp minced fresh ginger 1/4 cup finely sliced scallions (green onions)
- Sriracha or hot sauce (optional)

Prep the lettuce: Separate the head of lettuce into individual leaves. Rinse and dry. Refrigerate the lettuce leaves until ready to assemble and serve, between layers of clean, dry kitchen towels or paper towels in an airtight container to wick away excess moisture.

Cook the meat: Whisk the broth, soy sauce, sugar, and cornstarch together in a small bowl and set aside. Heat 1 Tablespoon oil in a large skillet or sauté pan over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add half the ground meat in handfuls, distributing it in a single layer in the pan. Cook without stirring until the meat starts to brown, then stir and start breaking up the meat into smaller pieces. When the meat is no longer pink, transfer it to a bowl. Add the remaining oil and meat to the pan and cook in the same manner.

Finish the filling: Return all the meat to the pan and add the bell pepper, carrot, garlic and ginger. Cook for 5 minutes until the vegetables start to soften. Whisk in the reserved broth and cook for a few more minutes to thicken the broth into a sauce. Remove from the heat and stir in the scallions. Spoon the meat filling into the lettuce leaves and drizzle with Sriracha or hot sauce, if desired.

Note: *I use minced garlic instead of garlic cloves and got good results. I have fiddled with the amount of brown sugar and soy sauce I add to get the right taste.*





Forum Happenings



Welcome Newbies!



Yolanda Tervil
Help Me Grow Florida® Program
and Outreach Specialist

Enjoys reading and tries to read at least one book a month



Colleen Groot
Fiscal Specialist

Likes to make beautiful glass art pieces which have been featured in her Etsy shop and at a local gallery



Jessica Feliciano
Front Desk Assistant

Loves to read, kayak, and explore Tallahassee's hiking trails

Happy Birthday

June

- Julia Edwards, INCENTIVE\$**.....June 07
- Cathy Hall, Fiscal**.....June 11
- Alexandra Goldberg, HMG**.....June 21

July

- Cheslee Williamson, T.E.A.C.H**.....July 03
- Brian Hughes, IT**.....July 07
- Heather Wilson, T.E.A.C.H**.....July 08
- Kiki Peters, INCENTIVE\$**.....July 09
- Liz Randall, HMG**.....July 13
- Kerri Cloud, Fiscal**.....July 17
- Alexis Shoemaker, INCENTIVE\$**.....July 17
- Melissa Castro, T.E.A.C.H**.....July 27
- Lori Stegmeyer, T.E.A.C.H**.....July 31

August

- Martha Grant, T.E.A.C.H**.....Aug 02
- Tomica King-Jackson, T.E.A.C.H**.....Aug 05
- Jenna Brown, Outreach**.....Aug 06
- Phyllis Kalifeh, CEO/Admin**.....Aug 25

Happy Anniversary

June

- Lisa Adams, T.E.A.C.H**.....21 years
- Phyllis Kalifeh, CEO/Admin**.....20 years
- Laura Richardson, Outreach**.....4 years
- Anita Bushnyakova, Fiscal**.....4 years
- Tami Fletcher, T.E.A.C.H**.....1 year

July

- Lori Stegmeyer, T.E.A.C.H**.....22 years
- Tamela Young, Admin**.....20 years
- Bill Kirchhoff, IT**.....17 years
- Courtney Lee, Registry**.....7 years
- Martha Grant, T.E.A.C.H**.....6 years
- Aymara Aguiar, ELCC**.....5 years

August

- Kate Nielsen-Nuñez, Fiscal**.....18 years
- Chelsea Lister, T.E.A.C.H**.....16 years
- Kiki Peters, INCENTIVE\$**.....16 years
- Jessica Long, T.E.A.C.H**.....14 years
- Flor Brito, ELCC**.....12 years
- Laura Cain, Registry**.....12 years
- Felicia Bonner, CCES**.....9 years
- Lolita Hawkins, T.E.A.C.H**.....2 years
- Julia Edwards, INCENTIVE\$**.....2 years