



# Visions Newsletter

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## PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Dear TnAFCS member:

I am honored and excited to assume the role of President for the 2025-2026 year. I want to express my gratitude for your trust and support as we navigate this journey together. Our focus this year is to *Build Back FCS!* We appreciate your decision to be a member and look forward to providing you with opportunities that will help you in the FCS profession. We want to position TnAFCS as a pivotal resource and influential player in improving the lives of Tennesseans.



TnAFCS, a state affiliate of AAFCS, is dedicated to supporting professionals who help individuals develop knowledge and skills to lead better lives, build strong families, and contribute to community development. This newsletter will introduce you to the current board members. get a glimpse of the 2024 TnAFCS state conference, our participation in 2025 FCS Legislative Day on the Hill, and the 2025 AAFCS Annual Conference. We are eager to build on our past successes and excited to focus on the following initiatives:

**Membership Growth & Engagement** – Tennessee Affiliate membership is at an all-time low. Together let us grow our membership. I encourage each of you to ask another FCS professional to join. One can join by going to [aafcs.org](http://aafcs.org). Joining AAFCS will automatically give you membership in the Tennessee affiliate (TnAFCS). Newly graduated professionals? Please take advantage of the one-year free membership opportunity. If you are connected with a University, be sure to have your students take advantage of this year’s AAFCS free student membership opportunity.

As members you will have access to the *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, an online journal with current research and topical papers that keep FCS professionals current in the profession. You also will receive discounted registration fees for TnAFCS and AAFCS conferences which provide you opportunities to network with other FCS

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## Save the Dates

### TnAFCS State Conference—

June 5, 2026, Carsen Newman University (Jefferson City, TN)

### AAFCS Annual Conference—

June 18-21, 2026, Louisville, Kentucky

## COMING SOON

We will be updating our web site: <https://connect.aafcs.org/tennessee/home>

2025-2026 TnAFCS Board Members



Melinda Swafford  
President



Melissa Wood  
President Elect



Hannah Upole  
Secretary



Amber Roth  
Treasurer



Lesley Williams  
VP, Program of  
Work



Sue Byrd  
VP, Relations



Samantha Hutson  
Member-at-Large



Katherine Whatley Vincent  
Member-at-Large



Natilie Roberts  
Counselor

President's Message Continued from Page 1:

**Professional Development Opportunities** – The 2026 TnAFCS conference is set for June 5, 2026, at Carson Newman University in Jefferson City, TN. Registration and call for proposals will be forthcoming by email and on the TnAFCS website. Our board members are planning a conference with engaging workshops and presentations. AAFCS national conference will be in Louisville, Kentucky, June 18-21, 2026. Both conferences will address challenges and latest trends, featuring innovative speakers and industry experts who will inspire and equip us with essential tools for success.

**Expansion of Post Secondary Partnerships** – TnAFCS will be strategically working to expand partnerships with community colleges and universities for dual credit and dual enrollment opportunities. This effort will enhance our reach, increase our student population in post-secondary programs, and amplify our impact within the educational system of Tennessee. As we deepen existing post-secondary partnerships and seek new collaborations, we will provide unique benefits individuals and families across the State of Tennessee.

TnAFCS' strength lies in its members, and your active participation is crucial. Our growth as a profession is dependent upon others understanding who we are and what we do. I encourage each of you to get involved. Please reach out to me with your ideas, questions, or concerns at [melindaswafford5@gmail.com](mailto:melindaswafford5@gmail.com) or email [tnafcs@gmail.com](mailto:tnafcs@gmail.com)

Best regards,

Melinda

**Reflections: AAFCS Annual Conference June 2025**

The 2025 AAFCS Annual Conference held in Kansas City, Missouri, June 25-27, 2025, included several new events, excellent educational sessions, and many of our fellow members being honored for their achievements. These events included: a LEAD FCS Education Conference, a general session explaining the updated FCS Body of Knowledge, a “Fun in the Expo and States Night” where communities and affiliates provided information and games to facilitate interaction of the participants at the conference with prizes, and more.

During the final evening of the conference, a Celebration Dinner honored the 50 year members and the Tennessee Affiliate’s own Liz Self-Mullens receiving the AAFCS DSA Award!!!



Liz Self-Mullens, (left) AAFCS DSA Award Winner and Barbara Stewart, AAFCS President, Board of Directors



Tennessee Delegation at AAFCS Conference: (l to r) Russ Mullens, Liz Self-Mullens, Sue Byrd, Amber Roth, Melissa Wood, (not pictured—Veronica Oates)



(Left) Veronica Oates collecting a door prize during Friday Celebration; Below: Sue Byrd (2nd from left) among those at Celebration Reception



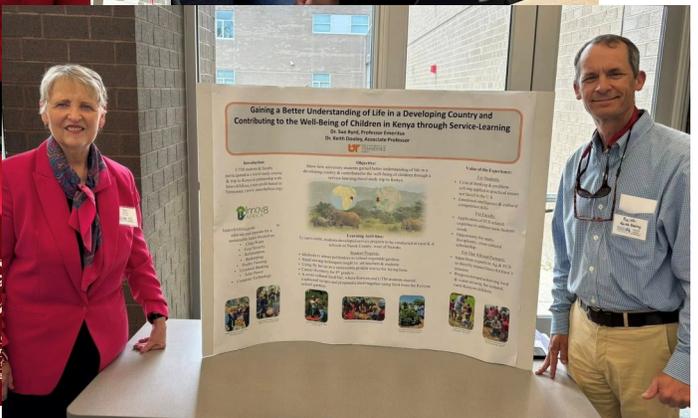
Fun at the Expo: Incoming Board President, Cara Simmons, at Diversity and Inclusion Community Table (leading a Jeopardy game) Right: 2025-26 Board of Directors



## Highlights of TnAFCS Conference (Monterey, Tennessee) 2024



Congratulations to our Award Winners for 2024! (left to right) Dr. Samantha Hutson—Leader Award; Madison Gibbs—Student Award; Taylor Key—New Achiever Award; Dr. Liz Mullens—Distinguished Service Award; Linda Halsell—Teacher of the Year Award



## Tennessee Association of Family and Consumer Sciences

### 2025 FCCLA and TnAFCS Meet the Legislators at Day-on-the-Hill

A group of enthusiastic FCCLA students, FCCLA advisors, and TnAFCS board members recently visited Capitol Hill to advocate for Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) education. They met with lawmakers to share how FCS empowers students with essential life skills — from financial literacy to nutrition and career readiness. Their voices highlighted the importance of continued support for these programs, ensuring future generations are equipped to lead successful, balanced lives. The students left inspired, knowing they made a meaningful impact in promoting FCS education.

