



North Carolina Extension & Community Association E-News

Volume 16 Issue 4

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2025 - 2026 Leadership Team

President Dorothy Wagstaff, Person County
President-elect Louise Faison, Wayne County
Past President Wanda Denning, Wake County

Vice Presidents

North Central Ann Wagoner, Forsyth County
Virginia Lopez, Liaison Agent

Northeast Janie Green, Wake County
Keitra Johnson, Liaison Agent

South Central Audrey Hunt, Gaston County
Jonette Mungo, Liaison Agent

Southeast Regenia Bell, Carteret County
Stephanie Stevenson, Liaison Agent

West Kelly Dale, Rutherford County
Sheri Ledford, Liaison Agent

Appointed Parliamentarian
Wanda Denning, Wake County

Appointed Treasurer
Dana Croston, Gaston County

Association advisor
Peggie Garner

Cultural Arts Co-chairs
Cezanne Vielkanowitz
Pam Bryson
Louise Faison

Notes From Your President



Greetings,

I hope everyone is still enjoying their summer vacation and staying healthy. Remember, staying healthy will enable us to be active so that we can better serve our club, community, country and world. Also, if we stay healthy, we can improve ourselves so that we can lead happy, healthy lives while learning ways to help improve the lives of those around us.

I recently attended the NVON Conference at the Wisconsin Hotel and Conference Center in Lake Delton (Wisconsin Dells), Wisconsin. This was the 27th Annual NVON Conference which was held July 14 –16, 2026. Two other ECA members from North Carolina attended, Louise Oliver, Person County and Carol Carter, Wake County. We had speakers who talked about all the Wisconsin Lighthouses, also a presenter talked about the life of Frank Lloyd Wright (an architect and designer), and we had a ‘Cranberry 101” class (all you want to know about them). My favorite was the “Wisconsin Dells Army Duck Tour’. If ever in Wisconsin be sure to take this tour. There were some very good craft workshops also. We had a great conference. I learned what other states are doing and how they are serving their communities with projects that teach and serve others.

The NVON Mission – Member organizations working together to promote communication, education and volunteerism for all people.

As a reminder our State Conference will be October 26th-28th at the Hickory Conference Center in Hickory, NC. Rooms are blocked off at the Hampton Inn and Hilton Garden Inn for \$169.00 per night. You will need to book your room by September 26, 2026. The Hampton Inn is the closest motel to the conference center. Hope to see you there. The Registration Form is attached to the email with this newsletter!

Our Project in Common is Mental Health Awareness (Break the Stigma, Ignite Hope).

Continue to support your Liaison Agent as you both work together to improve the lives of those in your communities. When you do, the history and purpose of ECA will live on through YOU.

Dorothy

Northeast District

Counties: Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Edgecombe, Franklin, Gates, Halifax, Hertford, Hyde, Martin, Nash, Northampton, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrrell, Wake, Warren, Washington.

Pitt County

Pitt County ECA enjoyed a great event and raised some money too!

Wake County

The Cary ECA Club donated 7 personal care bags, and cases toilet paper to the Wake County 4H club during their drive for personal care items in partnership with the Dream Center.

Carol Carter went to the 2026 NVON Conference in Wisconsin. The conference was great, and going forward our clubs will focus on Mental Illness, and Childcare. Childcare is the number 1 problem with the lack of workers in the workforce, having the resources as parents for moms to be able to go to work.

The Bee program has finished, and the NVON group did a great job of getting donation for the project. Thankfully there were a great number of bee hives sent to deserving countries through the Heifer Program.

There were great programs for our break-out sessions. I enjoyed learning how to repurpose plastic bags to make outdoor rugs, or you can make a 40x60 mat for the homeless folk. This is a crochet project. The items are made from plastic bags, so they are water resistant. I also enjoyed the Quilt Makers program, and a Chain Art project.

The conference was great, we had great speakers, and the program did include a breakfast for us on Wednesday and Thursday morning.

Southeast District

Counties: Bladen, Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus, Craven, Duplin, Greene, Johnston, Jones, Lenoir, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pender, Robeson, Sampson, Wayne & Wilson.

Wayne County

A true labor of love.  

Throughout the year, the ladies of Town & Country ECA dedicated their time, talents, and hearts through community service sewing sessions, creating 85 beautifully handmade dresses for children in need. Along with their sewing efforts, they also collected 142 pairs of underwear and 20 pairs of shorts.

These gifts of love will be donated to Stoney Creek Church to support their upcoming mission trip to Belize.

Duplin County

The Stanford Duplin ECA 2026 Annual Achievement Award Day was a tremendous success and provided just the inspiration needed to continue promoting its mission of strengthening families in our communities and abroad.

The theme for the event was ***Celebrating the Joy of ECA.***

Member Joyce Wade served as the presider for the program and greetings were delivered by FCS Agent Rachel Ezzell. Several distinguished guests attended, including Duplin County Commissioner Jesse Dowe, Cultural Arts judge Marilyn Hroza and 2025 Scholarship Recipient Georgia Summer. In addition, each club invited a guest to share the celebration.

The program was held in the Ed Emory Auditorium which was beautifully decorated by club member Deborah Holloway. Her efforts created a warm and inviting atmosphere for the event.

Our guest speaker, Betty Dewitt, a well-known and respected member of the community, delivered an inspiring presentation entitled, Pathway of Joy. Her message encouraged attendees to embrace joy in both service and everyday life.

Each club member was recognized for their contributions thus making the organization one of the outstanding clubs in the district. The Outstanding Fundraiser of the Year Award was presented to Ruby Farrior. Ruby Brinson shared a reflection on the club's achievements throughout the year. The honor of 2025 Club Woman of the Year was awarded to President Betty Caraway.

The event was organized under the leadership of Committee Chair, Debra Ann Carr whose direction helped make the day a success. Following the program attendees enjoyed a delicious catered lunch. The event concluded with reciting the Club Collect. Attendees left with a local peach at their dismissal.

Dalton Dockery, District Extension director, attended our fashionable leadership meeting to inform us that all Extension program and activities must operate in manner that is consistent with the First Amendment.

North Central District

Counties: Alamance, Alleghany, Ashe, Caswell, Chatham, Davidson, Davie, Durham, Forsyth, Granville, Guilford, Orange, Person, Randolph, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry, Vance, Wilkes, Yadkin.

Surry County

Surry County ECA has focused on learning about and helping our community the past couple of months.

Beulah ECA Club- Enjoyed a program by the Diabetes Educator with the Surry County Health and Nutrition Center, at their June meeting. Information was shared which benefited those attending and info they could share with family and friends about the diabetes programs/resources available in Surry County. Visuals helped emphasize the importance of doing the little things like watching portion sizes and checking your feet. Several of the members participate in the monthly Diabetes and You classes held at the Extension office. In July, the members had a social worker from the Services for the Blind share information about resources available to those with limited vision. There are no income guidelines for the program, and a social worker will work with individuals to determine which services they are eligible to receive. Those attending were able to try out a variety of different kinds of magnifiers, large button phones, and a voice activated clock. Members donated money to the program's audio book service. Participants in the program can receive a free player and audio books which are mailed from Library Services in Raleigh.

Pilot Mountain Achievers ECA Club - The Pilot Mountain Achievers ECA club have been enjoying their new meeting location at the new Pilot Mountain Senior Center. The Senior Center moved locations this spring and is now located at the Presbyterian Church on Main Street in Pilot Mountain. For their June meeting, members celebrated June Dairy Month with an ice cream social at Pilot Mountain Coffee and Ice Cream Shop. It is fun to be a tourist in your own town and enjoy local businesses and eateries. July found the Pilot Mountain members at the Legacy Pregnancy Center in Mount Airy. Members toured the space and volunteered to package diapers which are available to participating parents. Parents earn "cash" by attending classes they can spend on baby clothes, diapers, toys, books, strollers, etc. at the center's baby boutique. Members worked up an appetite from their volunteering so finished the morning by going to lunch and welcoming a new member to their club.

Siloam ECA Club - The Siloam ECA Club put together a new patriotic display case in the lobby of the Extension Office celebrating America's 250th anniversary. Their June meeting was a demonstration and tasting of Hot Cross Buns by club member Carole Simpson. Carole has taught a variety of yeast bread classes, passing along this art to those in her community. July the 4th found the Siloam Club members at their community 4th of July celebration. Club members sold baked goods, "Down Home in Siloam" t-shirts and note cards and raffled off their handmade patriotic quilt. Proceeds are being used to have a new Siloam sign made and installed in the community. Old-fashioned games were enjoyed by young and not so young during the event.

Person County

Thanks to our ECA members and Extension Master Food Volunteers (EMFV) for helping serve as judges for the 4-H North Central District Activity Day event held in Caswell County. This is the annual district public speaking presentation contest for youth ages 8-18. Our judges helped judge the following categories: Food & Nutrition, Peanut Foods, Dairy Foods, and Fruits & Vegetable Use.

Person County ECA members enjoyed the Elder Abuse Awareness and Prevention Conference held today in Warren County. There were panel speakers talking about mental health, aging, fraud and scams, self-neglect and tips for protecting your Medicare. Participants had the chance to visit vendors booths, win door prizes, enjoy entertainment and dancing, as well receive a t-shirt, lunch and other goodies.

South Central District

Counties: Alexander, Anson, Cabarrus, Catawba, Cumberland, Gaston, Harnett, Hoke, Iredell, Lee, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Moore, Richmond, Rowan, Scotland, Stanly, Union.

Gaston County

Creative Needlers recently held a “Granny Square Day”. The day was spent making granny squares and then putting them together. There were several blankets made from the squares. These blankets will be given to Least of These Carolinas for foster children.

In May, we sponsored a BBQ luncheon for the Gastonia Commissioners and staff. The ECA uses this event to show the Commissioners what ECA is all about. We enjoyed meeting Commissioners Tom Keigher and Scott Shehan, Assistant County Manager Justin Amos and Deputy County Attorney Melissa Huffman. It was a great opportunity to show them what we do.

The Martha Goebel Group collected school in July for Lingerfelt Elementary School.

42 quilts were donated to the Least of These Carolinas. There was a variety of sizes and themes to appeal to young children all the way up to young adults.

In July, the Martha Goebel Club hosted a birthday party for the seniors at The Senior Center. They enjoyed cake, ice cream, and chips. Afterward we all danced and had a fun time.

Harnett County

Harnett County ECA members have been very busy the first 6 months of 2026. As an ECA County Council president, the visual impacts made by ECA members in areas of leadership, education, volunteerism and community service might go unnoticed if not brought to their attention. I'm tired and exhausted and we need new and younger members are statements often made in our county council meetings. The list below might not answer why we are not attracting younger members, but it might explain why we may be tired and exhausted... individually and collectively WE ARE BUSY!

Leadership Development:

County Council Meetings

District Leadership Team Meetings

ECA Leadership Summit

South Central ECA District Day

NVON Project in Common: Creating A Healthier Life (University of New Hampshire)

Faith-based Officers and Teachers
Faith-based Association meetings and conferences

Education:

Charlotte Hawkins-Brown Museum Educational Tour and Outing
Guardian Angels Alzheimer Fundraiser
Cultural Arts Contest
Cape Fear Regional Theater Arts
Technology trainings and classes

Volunteer:

Girls Are Great Young Chefs Session for ages 9-11
Quarterly outings with youth and senior citizens
Faith-based auxiliary events, activities, workshops, special youth and adult programs
Facilitates special interest group meetings and partner with other organizations and associations

Community Service:

Local Food Pantry (food distribution) Made Cancer bags and pillows for Rex Hospital Women's Cancer Center
Made new arrival kits for Boys and Girls Home of NC, Lake Waccamaw
Donated gently used suitcases to Boys and Girls Home of NC, Lake Waccamaw
Donated \$600 to the "Make A Child Smile Program"
Visited and Gave gift baskets to Senior Citizens ages 80 and older
Local Senior Citizens Center partnership to provide cold weather items for the unhoused and homeless
Supports Harnett County Health Department with sharing health awareness materials and information.

CONGRATULATIONS: Ambassador ECA Club gained 7 new members; Progressive ECA Club member and President of the Shawtown Alumni Association, Patrica Walker-Smith who received a "Trailblazer Award" for community impacts; and Rainbow ECA Club President, Wendy Butcher for her strength in keeping the club strong amid adversity.

With heartfelt sympathy, we mourn the passing of Mrs. Mary Carolyn (Johnson) Stroud, age 82 of Cameron, NC who transitioned to eternal rest on Sunday, May 17, 2026. Mrs. Stroud was an active member of Harnett County's Rainbow ECA Club for 46 years. She will be missed.

West District

Counties: Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Cherokee Reservation, Clay, Cleveland, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Yancey.

Cherokee County

Sewing Lesson in progress! Tamra Lee Corley-Dunn explains to Cari how to use her sewing machine.

Cleveland County

Susan Fulton, the library program assistant of the Spangler Branch Library in Lawndale came to our July meeting to teach us about the Olla (pronounced Oy-ya) irrigation. Olla is an ancient, self-watering terra cotta pot with a history in arid regions of China, North Africa and the Middle East. This 4,000-year-old system of plant irrigation utilized buried unglazed clay vessels to conserve water and target water directly to a plant's root. We enjoyed her demonstration.

Dates to Remember

- August 1 Tar Heel Homemakers eNews due
- August 5 Deadline for Leadership Applications to Peggie
- September 2 Leadership Team Virtual Meeting
- October 1 Tar Heel Homemakers eNews due
- October 7 Leadership Team Virtual Meeting
- October 26-28 NCECA State Conference, Hickory
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From Your eNews Editor

I love reading about all the **great things** your counties and clubs are doing, and I enjoy sharing your successes with members across the state!

One request that would make producing the newsletter much easier: **Please submit your articles in Microsoft Word whenever possible.** Word documents allow me to easily copy and paste your articles directly into the newsletter, saving a tremendous amount of time.

When articles are submitted as PDFs, I must first convert them to Word. Unfortunately, the conversion often requires me to reformat or even retype portions of the article. While I know many of you have mentioned that photos look better in a PDF than in a Word document, converting the PDF actually reduces the image quality even further.

Submitting your article in Word—with photos attached separately as high-resolution JPEG or PNG files whenever possible—helps preserve the quality of your images and allows me to showcase your county's accomplishments in the best possible way.

Thank you for helping make the newsletter the best it can be. I truly appreciate all you do and look forward to continuing to share your wonderful stories!

ADDRESS UPDATE ANNOUNCEMENT -- If you mail packages or any mail to Boys & Girls Homes, please mark this message. Starting on July 20, the US Postal Service will not be delivering packages to our physical address without our P.O. Box 127 attached.

Here are our correct addresses:

MAILING AND RETURN ADDRESS:

Boys & Girls Homes

Name or Dept.

PO Box 127

Lake Waccamaw, NC 28450

SHIPPING ADDRESS WHEN PHYSICAL ADDRESS IS REQUIRED

Boys & Girls Homes

Name or Dept.

400 Flemington Dr.

PO Box 127

Lake Waccamaw, NC 28450

PHYSICAL LOCATION/GPS ADDRESS:

Boys & Girls Homes of North Carolina

400 Flemington Drive

Lake Waccamaw, NC 28450

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The 2026 NCECA State Conference
October 26-28, 2026
Hickory Convention Center, Hickory, NC
Registration -\$140 before 9-25-26

Monday, October 26

9:00 – 6:00

Registration
Cultural Arts Check in

3:00 – 5:00

Welcome Reception
Welcome – Audrey Hunt, VP- South Central District

6:00

Leadership Team

Dinner on Your Own

Tuesday, October 27

9:00 - 10:00

Opening Session
Presentation of Colors
Pledge of Allegiance
Greetings
Speaker
Announcements

10:30 – 11:45

Workshops

12:00

Lunch
Invocation
Awards – Longevity & CVU
Announcements

1:30 – 2:45

Workshops

3:00

Business Meeting

1:30-5:30

Cultural Arts Viewing

6:30

Banquet – Dorothy Wagstaff, NCECA President, Presiding
Invocation
Greetings

Awards of Excellence
Leadership Awards – Peggie Garner, NCECA Advisor
Installation of 2027-29 Officers

Remembrance

Pick UP Cultural Arts Items after Banquet

Wednesday, October 28

9:00 – 10:15

Workshops

10:30-12:00

Closing Brunch

Invocation

AHS Update

Challenge – Peggie Garner

Adjournment with Collect