

FRIDAY MORNING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Fri 4/10 8:00-9:30a	Julia Cook: I Need a LARGE Re-Charge! – Boosting Mental Wellness According to the World Health Organization, the definition of mental wellness is living in a state of well-being in which people: • realize their own abilities • are capable of coping with the stresses of life • can work productively and fruitfully • can make contributions to their community When you work in the kid-building world..this is a tall order to maintain! In this interactive, fun-filled talk, Julia identifies the key ingredients of mental wellness. She also offers effective strategies for building and maintaining well-being. Enjoy listening as we grow STRONGER TOGETHER! You'll laugh, you'll cry..but most importantly you'll leave with tools you can use for a lifetime of health!
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FRIDAY AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS: TEACHER TRACK (North Prairie Room)

Fri 4/10 2:00-2:45p	Julia Cook: “Teach Kids NOT Content!” BRINGING JOY BACK INTO YOUR CLASSROOM - will give you authentic insight into the challenges that come along with teaching today’s kids, and ignite ideas that will help you tackle those challenges more effectively. In order for kids to thoroughly understand something, they must SEE IT, HEAR IT, FEEL IT, DO IT, DEMONSTRATE IT TO SOMEBODY ELSE, and most importantly, RELATE IT TO SOMETHING THEY ALREADY KNOW. This presents a tall order for all educators who are over-loaded with content to deliver, given limited time to do it in, and often have minimal financial resources for innovative teaching materials. Throw in large classroom sizes and the behavior challenges that teachers are currently facing, and what used to be doable and fun, at times can seem impossible and overwhelming. In this presentation, <i>Julia Cook</i> will demonstrate humorous and effective ways to use stories, concrete visuals, strategies, and other tricks of the trade that can make your content more relatable, meaningful, and interesting. Walk away with ideas that you can really use! Students are and always will be more important than the content we are teaching them. Instead of teaching “stuff” to our kids, we need to reframe and start teaching our kids “stuff!”
Fri 4/10 3:00-3:45p	Nicole Graves: AI in the Classroom - Can you spot the AI? Teaching Tricks of the Trade in the era of AI - AI has quickly found itself in the classroom with both students and teachers using it. This session will test teachers' ability to detect the differences between works created by AI and those originally designed while also sharing tips and suggestions for improving efficiency and creativity while maintaining academic rigor and integrity.
Fri 4/10 4:00-4:45p	Jane Hoegh: Plating it like a Pro Discover how to blend culinary creativity with digital storytelling! This interactive session helps FCS educators teach plating techniques, food styling, and social media presentation skills aligned with FCCLA STAR Events and ProStart standards. Participants will gain ready-to-use classroom resources and ideas to help students “plate, post, and promote” their culinary creations while building employability and 21st-century communication skills.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS: PROFESSIONAL TRACK (Central Prairie Room)

Fri 4/10 2:00-2:45p	Dr. Linda Zhang: Playful Math, Positive Mindsets: Designing Play-Based Math Experiences for Young Learners Discover how to make early math learning joyful, meaningful, and developmentally appropriate! Together, we'll explore the what, why, and how of designing hands-on activities using everyday, child-friendly materials that spark children’s joy in learning mathematics. Participants will engage in playful, developmentally appropriate math experiences that nurture a growth mindset in math and foster curiosity and confidence in young learners. You'll leave with practical tools and fresh ideas for integrating math across learning centers.
Fri 4/10 3:00-3:45p	Ashley Nelson: Strengthening Communities Through FCS - Promoting Local Resources for Resilience & Sustainability Highlighting how FCS professionals can utilize and promote local thrift stores and food shelves as valuable community resources to enhance sustainability, financial literacy, and community engagement in the classroom and beyond.
Fri 4/10 4:00-4:45p	Dr. Lorna Saboe-Wounded Head: Integrating the FCS Body of Knowledge in Community Programs FCS is dedicated to enhancing the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. As the outreach arm of the university, Cooperative Extension empowers community organizations by delivering practical knowledge and skill-building opportunities tailored to local needs. This session explores effective strategies for incorporating the Influencing Elements of the FCS Body of Knowledge into programs focused on personal finance, wellness, and nutrition—ensuring meaningful, evidence-based impact across diverse populations.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS: RETIREMENT TRACK (South Prairie Room)

Fri 4/10 2:00-2:45p	Ida Marie Snorteland: A,B,C & D of Medicare Overview of Medicare, what is Part A, Part B, Part C, and Part D. Are you turning 65? What do you need to do before you turn 65? What do you need to continue to do?
Fri 4/10 3:00-3:45p	Teresa Nennig: Get Moving!! Get moving? Why? How? Where do I start? How can I build on what I know? This breakout will answer those questions and more. Learn some simple, low impact ways to stretch, improve balance, build strength, and improve posture. Come away with resources you can use when you return home. Expect to laugh, have fun and have the opportunity to practice some of the suggested movements. Learn why moving is so essential as we age. Aging is a mixed bag of emotional and physical ups and downs, but finding ways to keep moving is a win on all levels. See how to incorporate more movement into our daily lives.
Fri 4/10 4:00-4:45p	Holly VanHeel, IA Extension: Brain Health Healthy habits support healthy brains! There’s not much we can do about having birthdays, but there are strategies we can embrace to prevent cognitive decline such as physical activity, diet recommendations for eating well, the importance of social connections, and activities to exercise the body and brain. What we eat affects our brains. Keeping our minds strong gives us the chance to live longer and stay independent.

SATURDAY MORNING SPEAKERS

Shawna Wilson: [The Capstone Experience: From Awareness to Action - Cultivating Leaders and Creating Change](#)

MAFCS 2026 Teacher of the Year & AAFCS 2026 National Teacher of the Year.

Dr. Carol Erwin: [Managing Allergies in Classrooms and Foods Labs](#)

With allergies on the rise, what procedures do you have in place for dealing with food allergies? Information will be shared about common and best practices in the FCS classroom and food labs.

Sheree Moser: [Midwest Partnership Grant & Outreach](#)

The Midwest Partnership Grant & Outreach is designed to create opportunities to support new FCS professionals all over the country. Groups started meeting this past August and will be creating these opportunities. This presentation will involve sharing out the results so far and asking for additional input and ideas from the participants. The goal is to have these professionals be actively involved in the SWOT process to add ideas to those already gathered and acted on, so the ideas can be expanded & enhanced. Hopefully this will result in more states implementing this type of support for their newer professionals as well.

Sat 4/11
8:00-9:30a

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY



Julia Cook

Julia is a former school teacher and guidance counselor who has become a national award-winning children's author, parenting expert, and inspirational speaker. While serving as a counselor, Julia often used books to teach individual students and whole classes how to cope with thoughts and feelings. When she had trouble finding the books she wanted, she began writing her own. Over the last 20 years, she has produced 120+ published titles and sold over 3 million books which are available in nine languages. Some of Julia's books address general topics like making friends, being a team player, assuming responsibility, etc.

But mostly, she takes top research on difficult issues facing children and youth today in writing books that address peer pressure, bullying, social media, cell phone safety, gaming addiction, depression, anxiety, divorce, and much more. Julia has presented in thousands of schools across the country and abroad. She regularly speaks to educators, counselors and parents at conferences focused on supporting children and youth in learning how to navigate life in terms of character development and managing social-emotional health. Julia's newest book, to be released in May 2026, is entitled "Teach Kids, Not Content: How to Connect with Students and Love Teaching Again".



Dr. Nicole Graves

Dr. Graves is Associate Professor of FCS Education at South Dakota State University. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for SD FCCLA and SDAFCS and is the Associate Editor of the Journal of FCS Education. She is the advisor for the SDSU student organization AAFCS/FCCLA. Her co-presenters include junior FCSE teacher candidate and student organization president Claire Siverhus; senior FCSE teacher candidate and student organization vice president Dakotah Carlson-Kappenman, and senior teacher candidate and student organization Public Relations manager Kaitlin Kuhnert.



Jane Hoegh

Jane is an Assistant Teaching Professor at Iowa State University, preparing future FCS educators. Her years in the secondary classroom shaped her passion for teaching university students through hands-on learning, effective lab management, and meaningful assessment that drives instruction. Jane's goal is to develop confident leaders and strong advocates for FCS!



Dr. Linda Zhang

Dr. Zhang is an assistant professor at Wayne State College in Nebraska. She has more than ten years of experience teaching early childhood education courses in both face-to-face and online settings. Dr. Zhang earned her Doctor of Education in Early Childhood Education from the University. Drawing on diverse perspectives and effective practices, Dr. Zhang is dedicated to enhancing student learning and believes that all students can thrive when learning connects to their cultural backgrounds and everyday experiences. In her free time, she enjoys reading and traveling.



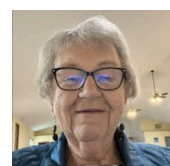
Ashley Nelson

Ashley is a 2010 (BSc) and 2011 (M. Ed.) graduate from the University of Minnesota. She taught FCS at Milaca High School from 2011 to 2017. She worked for National FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America) in Washington DC from 2017 to 2021. She is now the FCS teacher at East Central Schools and lives in Askov, MN, with her husband and two children.



Dr. Lorna Saboe-Wounded Head

Dr. Lorna Saboe-Wounded Head is a Family Resource Management Field Specialist with SDSU Extension and an expert in financial literacy, inclusive education, and family well-being. With over 25 years of experience in teaching, research, and outreach, she has authored numerous peer-reviewed publications and Extension resources. Her work centers on empowering diverse communities through culturally responsive financial education and advancing the Family and Consumer Sciences Body of Knowledge.



Ida Marie Snorteland

Ida Marie graduated from the University of South Dakota with a degree in Home Economics, with teaching certification. She was employed by the Cooperative Extension Service, SDSU for 37 years, working as a Home Economics Agent to retiring as an Extension Educator, FCS. She worked or lived in 13 counties in South Dakota. Ida Marie ended her professional Extension career in Spearfish, SD. While she was still working with Extension, the SHIINE (Senior Health Information and Insurance Education) program came to SD. She helped people sign up for and learn about Medicare. She is still doing that as a volunteer. It is the most rewarding thing she has ever done. She is a member of AAFCS and NEAFCS; married with one daughter who lives in Minneapolis.

**Teresa Nennig**

Terese is a fun-loving retired FCS teacher with way too many hobbies. Her career teaching high school FCS brought much joy, many memories, and much recognition for her work. Of course, there were also many late nights and frustrations as well. Now she teaches (more like plays) water aerobics at the local indoor pool. She loves to travel and camp with her husband. She has visited all 50 states and has ridden in Ragbrai many times. Sewing is her addiction, but she also enjoys gardening, bicycling, hiking, crafting, and sometimes cooking. Her hobbies, husband, faith and 4 children, plus 10 grandchildren, continue to give her purpose in life.

**Holly VanHeel**

Holly is a registered dietitian with 30+ years of experience spanning foodservice management, consulting and education. She holds a degree in dietetics and a master's degree in healthcare administration. She now provides health, food safety and nutrition education for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach in a 9-county region, connecting her experience in food and nutrition with her passion for educating Iowans.

**Shawna Wilson**

Shawna is a Certified Family and Consumer Sciences educator with 19 years of experience designing authentic, student-centered learning experiences that prepare learners for college, career, and community impact. She currently teaches at Shakopee High School, where she leads courses in Exploring Education and Multicultural Education designing authentic learning experiences that integrate college credit, field-based practice, and community partnerships. Shawna is an FCCLA adviser and serves as the Grow Your Own Grant Coordinator, overseeing a \$750,000 Minnesota Department of Education grant focused on expanding and diversifying the teacher pipeline. A former instructional coach and AVID site coordinator, she is widely recognized for sustainable

& innovative program development, collaborative leadership, and elevating education as a vital career pathway. Shawna holds a master's degree in Family Education and has received multiple honors.

**Sheree Moser**

A native Nebraskan with three degrees from this University. Earned the Professor of Practice status in 2011 after teaching for two years as an adjunct. Prior to teaching here, taught middle and high school for 19 years and served as curriculum assistant for FCS at the district level for eight years. Hired in 2009 to take over the FCS education program and preparation of future teachers. Professional interests include extensive participation in professional organizations, especially the AAFCS and the FCS Teachers of Nebraska (FCSTN, the FCS section of the Association of Career and Technical Education). Community outreach is also incorporated into activities for students to participate during their experiences within the FCS education program. Some of these activities include teaching a nutritious cooking class after school hours, participating in the Lincoln Public Schools and Nebraska

Restaurant Association's Culinary Competitions, volunteering for FCCLA judging and state leadership events, and AAFCS Student Affiliate activities.

**Dr. Carol Erwin**

Dr. Erwin was a classroom FCS teacher for 12 years before moving on to teaching Foods & Nutrition and FCS Education at Wayne State College in Nebraska for the past 14 years. In her professional life she has a passion for providing professional development and lifelong learning resources for FCS teachers and mentoring her program's graduates as beginning FCS teachers. In her personal life she has 4 children, lives in a small rural town, loves to make and share food, and enjoys exercising and being involved in the community.