

Exceptional Faculty Recognized by USU Extension

Julene Reese

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Utah State University Extension professionals from around the state gathered this spring for the 2022 Extension Annual Conference held at Thanksgiving Point in Lehi. Awards were given to faculty for outstanding programs and performance.

“USU Extension wouldn’t be what it is today without our exceptional faculty and staff,” said Brian Higginbotham, USU Extension associate vice president. “These awards highlight the dedication and innovation we have throughout Extension.”

Margie Memmott, recently retired director of the Extension Home and Community Department and Extension assistant professor, is recipient of the prestigious E.G. Peterson Extension Award, the highest recognition available to USU Extension faculty members, for providing outstanding service to the state of Utah. Memmott was also recognized for this award at USU’s commencement ceremonies held May 5.

During her 30 plus years with USU Extension, Memmott has worked to make the Home and Community Department more expansive and inclusive and helped Extension faculty better meet the diverse needs of the state’s residents. As a leader and mentor, she has empowered faculty to publish hundreds of fact sheets and journal articles, generated millions of dollars in external funds for research and other causes, and provided

experiences that support children, youth, and adults in reaching their full potential.

Memmott served as board member for the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS). She also served as Western Region Director for NEAFCS and has received numerous awards and honors for her Extension p

Additional USU Extension award recipients include:

* David Schramm, associate professor and family life specialist – Extension Innovator Award. Also known as Dr. Dave, he has shown innovation in his statewide trainings and creative outreach efforts and has given over 500 presentations to multiple audiences, including the United Nations and a TEDx talk in Florida. He has created a YouTube channel with over 200 videos on topics such as parenting, relationships, happiness, and suicide prevention to help students, teachers, schools, and parents.

* Amanda Christensen, Extension professor, county director, and Accredited Financial Counselor – Spirit of Extension Award. Christensen provides personal finance education and 4-H youth development programs. For eight years, she has had TV appearances on KSL Studio 5, and has authored, filmed, and edited 22 personal finance YouTube videos on financial topics. She also contributes award-winning personal finance education radio segments each week on Utah Public Radio.

* Kelly Kopp, Extension professor and water conservation and turfgrass specialist – Extension Career Specialist Award. Kopp has spent more than 20 years with USU Extension and the Plants, Soils, and Climate Department studying drought and the challenges it poses in Utah. She has published 56 fact sheets, two book chapters, and coauthored “Combinations for Conservation: Recommended Plant Groupings for Low-water Landscapes.” She has given numerous interviews about water conservation to newspaper, radio, and television outlets. She has a proven ability to bring diverse groups together on contentious water conservation issues.

* Brent Black, professor and Extension fruit specialist – Extension Faculty Service Award. Black has been dedicated to helping both fruit growers and students during his 16 years at USU. He is a national expert in cherry tree physiology and management and connects growers and specialists and helps farmers learn by seeing and doing. His colleagues describe him as an effective leader, a trusted mentor, a rigorous scholar, and a loyal friend.

* Katie Wagner, Extension associate professor and horticulture specialist – County Faculty of the Year Award. Wagner and her staff provide outreach, diagnostic services, and Extension programming to Salt Lake County residents and the Master Gardener program with 250 active volunteers. Under her direction, the Salt Lake County Master Gardeners grow and distribute fresh produce to food-insecure seniors. Since 2018, 36,036 pounds of produce have been donated, and 6,770 senior citizens served.

* Emy Swadley, program coordinator for USU Extension's Rural Online Initiative program – Staff Service Award. Swadley also serves as activities/events coordinator for the state 4-H program, 4-H Teen Council advisor in Washington County, and Extension virtual assistant. One of her career highlights is helping launch the Rural Online Initiative program and continuing to assist in its expansion across the state.

Visit extension.usu.edu to learn more about USU Extension's faculty and programs.

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