

Kathy Riggs Receives USU Extension's Top Award

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Kathy Riggs, Utah State University Extension professor in Iron County, was recently named the recipient of Extension's top honor, the E.G. Peterson Extension Award. Established in 1986, the award recognizes the USU Extension faculty member who, in keeping with the mission and goals of the university, has provided outstanding service to the state of Utah. She was recognized at Extension's annual conference in March and will also be honored at the USU commencement ceremonies May 5.

Riggs began her Extension career in Juab County over 38 years ago and has worked in Iron County for the last 27 years, where she has provided leadership and support for the 4-H and family and consumer sciences programs. She has obtained grant funding to support after-school programs and has developed many partnerships that promote positive youth development, specifically serving those in high-needs demographics.

"I am humbled and honored to receive this award," Riggs said. "I have loved my years working for an organization that I believe in so strongly. I have seen it literally change people's lives, and that has been extremely rewarding."

Riggs has held leadership positions in state and national professional associations, most recently as a member of the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences board. She also recently completed a term on the National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development board of trustees as Western Region director. She is a member of the faculty and staff hiring, retention and success working group, which is part of USU President Noelle Cockett's Diversity and Inclusion Task Force.

Riggs was a member of the state team that introduced formal 4-H youth mentoring to USU Extension with the creation of the Youth and Families with Promise program, which received funding within the first few years of operation. The funding provided grants and curricula to nearly all counties in Utah as well as 27 states throughout the nation serving at-risk youth and their families. The program received National 4-H Council's endorsement as a Program of Distinction.

"Kathy has a history of motivating and being inclusive of both new and experienced faculty," said Brian Higginbotham, USU Extension associate vice president. "Many Extension employees have benefited from her support and mentoring throughout their careers. Kathy is appreciated, respected and admired, and she truly exemplifies the 4-H motto to 'Make the Best Better.' She has served Extension, her community and Utah extremely well for more than 38 years."

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