

## REPORT TO THE PEOPLE

Serving the citizens of Sullivan County with educational programs in Agriculture, Horticulture, Family and Consumer Sciences, Community Resource Development, and 4-H Youth Development as an outreach branch of the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, providing research-based solutions and information to the citizens of Tennessee.



## STAFF

### AGENTS

- Chris Ramsey, Interim Director
- Melody Rose, Agriculture & Horticulture
- Megan Shelton, Family & Consumer Sciences
- Arizona Bowers, 4-H Youth

### PROGRAM ASSISTANTS

- Susan Lachmann

### ADMIN

- Melissa Hauk

### SULLIVAN COUNTY HAS A NEW STAFF!

Sullivan County has been in a period of transition for almost a year, but we are so pleased to announce we are now fully staffed in all areas of agriculture, horticulture, family and consumer sciences, and 4-H.

We look forward to serving the citizens in Sullivan County in various programs, educational events, field days, livestock shows, demonstrations, and much more in 2026 and beyond. Feel free to reach out to any of our staff for additional information and refer to our website for updates, as well as social media outlets!

Be sure to connect via our website or Facebook! We are updating our website with class/event offerings and information on a regular basis, so check back often...

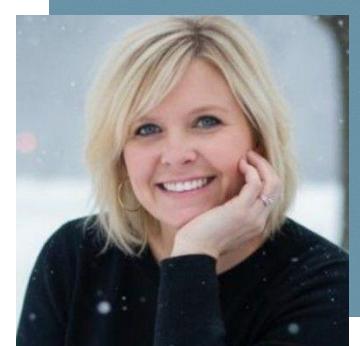


## AGRICULTURE

Melody Rose is the new ANR Agent in Sullivan County. She has over 20 years of experience in Extension, having started her career in Washington County in 1999. She also worked in Greene County for over 15 years before settling here in Sullivan County. Melody also has experience in both ag research and the ag industry via her opportunities working with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Philip Morris International.

Melody is looking forward to offering educational opportunities in livestock and forage production, especially for options regarding the Tennessee Ag Enhancement Program in Master Beef and Master Forage. She also plans to continue various program efforts in commercial pesticide certification, private applicator training, crops and vegetables, burley tobacco, and forestry enterprises. Be sure to sign up for Melody's listserv to stay current on future offerings!

Sign-up here: <https://tiny.utk.edu/SullivanAg>



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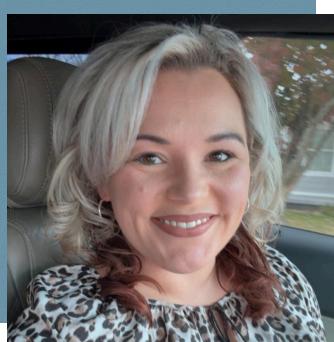
## HORTICULTURE

Melody is also responsible for consumer horticulture programming in Sullivan County. She manages the Northeast TN Master Gardener Association, which has members from both Sullivan and four surrounding counties. NETMGA is actively involved with various educational demonstrations and events throughout the year to serve as the outreach arm for consumer horticulture in Sullivan County. 2026 Tennessee Extension Master Gardener training is conducted January-April.

Melody is also excited about offering programming in beekeeping, pollinator plots, Smart Yards, homesteading, home fruits and vegetables, lawns, landscapes, home orchards, herbs, and companion plants.

Melody also serves on the statewide University of Tennessee horticulture team (UTHort), which provides various educational events, programs, and field days each year for the consumer horticulture audience, including home garden variety trials.

## FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES



Megan Shelton, our new Family and Consumer Sciences Agent, was born and raised in neighboring Washington County, Tennessee, where she still resides with her husband, Matt, and three children- Mason, Marshall, and Mandy.

Megan graduated from ETSU with both her BS and MA in Early Childhood Development. After teaching 13 years in public schools, she decided it was time for a change of pace, so she joined Extension in June of 2025. Since joining Extension, Megan has diligently worked to acquire necessary training and certifications to offer various types of requested programming to the people of Sullivan County, Kingsport, Bristol, and other neighboring areas. She has also made connections with various local agencies and organizations to assist in serving the population, with her most notable achievement being a recent appointment to the Sullivan County Health Council.

When she is not working, Megan and her family are very involved in their church, Embreeville Church of Christ. She also enjoys traveling, reading, cross-stitching, hand embroidery, and cooking.

### Upcoming Programming

Health Education for Diabetes- new cohorts will begin in late March! This program is an excellent resource for anyone who has a diagnosis of Diabetes Type 1 or 2. It has no other requirements aside from a diagnosis, and it is completely free.

Diabetes Prevention Program- This nationally-recognized, research-based program is for anyone with a pre-diabetes diagnosis who has an interest in keeping themselves from becoming a diabetic. The program is completely free, and will take one year to complete. The program is planned to start in March, pending completion of Megan's training.

Parenting Apart: Effective Co-Parenting- This research-based, educational program fulfills the TN State Requirement for divorcing individuals in regards to a parent education program. It provides information and education to help parents better understand the basics of child development in regards to emotions, while also teaching parents how to work together for the good of everyone in the situation, despite being separated. The cost for this program is \$55.

Other upcoming programming, pending scheduling and training- Dining with Diabetes, Preparing Your Child for Kindergarten, Food Preservation classes, Sewing classes, Everybody Gets Older (EGO)- a program about healthy living for seniors, Chair Yoga, and more! Check the website and Facebook for updates!

## TENNESSEE CONSUMER EDUCATION PROGRAM (TNCEP)

Susan Lachmann happily names northeast Tennessee as her homeland after spending her first couple of years in the outskirts of Philadelphia. With professional career work in the fields of education and behavioral health, she now serves as our UTIA Extension office as a nutrition educator for TNCEP.

Susan earned her Bachelor of Education Degree at the University of Kentucky and her Master of Education Degree from East Tennessee State University; her teaching experience encompasses human development in a wide range of ages and interests. She has taught in both formal and informal settings, including universities, public schools, on television, around campfires and in community settings.



After work hours, Susan enjoys cooking, camping, singing and creating artworks.

TNCEP is a federally funded nutrition program that has touched the lives of many Sullivan County residents since its implementation here. Unfortunately, due to federal shut-down late last year (2025), Susan was on furlough for several weeks. Upon her return, numerous programs have been scheduled, including youth programs for elementary age AND teenagers continues in January.

Susan can be seen on live segments via Daytime Tri Cities each second Thursday of the month. These segments promote nutrient dense foods, wise use of food budget and food storage as well as promote our UTIA Extension programming. Find a segment here: <https://www.wjhl.com/daytime-tri-cities/warm-and-inviting-soups-spice-blends/>

Upcoming classes are scheduled for several senior centers (Lynn View, Kiwanis Towers) and student cooking club sessions January - May. Susan has also scheduled for early summer cooking camps at Kingsport YMCA and Boys Club Girls Club. Additionally, Blountville Library is hosting two intro sessions for Drums Alive.

Lastly, this very important nutrition education program concludes June 30, again due to lack of federally funded appropriations, but in the interim, Sullivan County TNCEP is supporting other TNCEP programs by sharing surplus materials. As a total Extension program, we will miss this effective program.

## 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Arizona Bowers is a proud South Carolina native and a graduate of Clemson University, where she earned her degree in Environmental and Natural Resource Management with a minor in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology. During her time at Clemson, she gained valuable experience through roles with the South Carolina 4-H Pinckney Leadership Program, Friends of Coastal South Carolina, and Hunt Hill Nature Center.

Her passion for the outdoors and leadership development began long before college. As a dedicated member of South Carolina 4-H, she earned a national public speaking title, represented her state at 4-H National Congress, and received the prestigious Presidential Tray Award.

Arizona joined Sullivan County Extension in June and has already learned a lot—especially about the region's natural resources, community involvement, and strong 4-H spirit. She has enjoyed getting to know families, partners, and volunteers and is excited to continue growing the program.

Arizona brings with her a strong commitment to conservation, education, and youth leadership—and she is eager to carry those values forward in all she does.

### Future Events & Opportunities

Sullivan County 4-H has a busy and exciting year ahead! We currently have active Homeschool, Honor Club, Horse, and Livestock clubs offering youth hands-on learning and leadership opportunities throughout the year. We'll also be hosting several classic 4-H competitions including Public Speaking, Poster Art, and Clover Bowl—great chances for members to sharpen their skills and represent our county!

Looking ahead to summer, we are thrilled for 4-H Junior Camp! Camp sign-ups are officially open, and we can't wait to see our members make memories, try new things, and connect with campers from across the region.

### Stay Connected With Sullivan County 4-H

If you'd like to be more involved, there are several ways to stay in the loop! Sullivan County 4-H shares updates on the Sullivan County Extension Facebook Page, communicates through our BAND group chat, and sends out a monthly newsletter.

To join our BAND group, visit: <https://band.us/n/acaabep5Y9Q7o>

To sign up for our newsletter, email: [abower27@utk.edu](mailto:abower27@utk.edu)

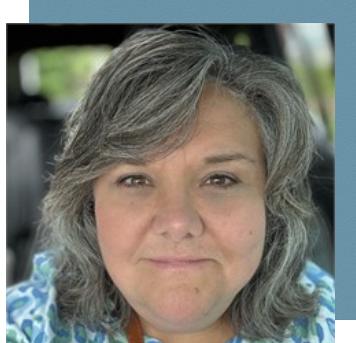
We'd love to have you follow along and get involved!



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### ADMIN

Melissa is a native to Sullivan County with over 25 years of customer service and administrative experience. She has an immense passion and desire to provide exceptional customer service to the clientele of Sullivan County.



She is married to Doug, and they are both active members of the Sullivan County Cattlemen's Association, with Doug actively serving on the Board of Directors. They have one daughter, Caitlin, a son-in-law T.J., and a son, Tyler. Doug and Melissa reside and co-operate a generational family farm. Their dream is to continue the legacy of the family farm that Doug's family started in the 1800s, which was deeded as a land-grant after the Revolutionary War. They attend Reedy Creek Presbyterian Church, where Melissa is Treasurer.

In addition, Melissa has a creative eye, always ready to assist both Extension and her family/friends with decorating, catering, and/or developing unique ideas for showcasing and promoting Extension programs and the culture of Sullivan County.

Feel free to reach out to Melissa with any questions regarding Extension here in Sullivan County!

January 13 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.	<u>Parenting Apart: Effective Co-Parenting</u>	Extension Office
January 26-27	4-H Public Speaking Contest	Extension Office
January 27- April 28	<u>TN Extension Master Gardener Intern Training</u>	Extension Office
February 2	NETN Master Gardener Annual Award Banquet & Educational Program	Ron Ramsey Ag Center
February 9 6:30-7:30 p.m.	<u>Beef Meeting</u> with Dr. J.D. Green (UK) via zoom watch party	Extension Office
February 10 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.	<u>Let's Taco Bout Love Languages</u>	Extension Office
February 13 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.	<u>Parenting Apart: Effective Co-Parenting</u>	Extension Office
February 13-15	<u>Kirk Stierwalt Fitting Clinic</u>	Ron Ramsey Ag Center
March 6 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.	<u>Right Tree, Right Place</u>	Ron Ramsey Ag Center
March 9 6:30-7:30 p.m.	<u>Beef Meeting</u>	Extension Office
March 13 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.	<u>Parenting Apart: Effective Co-Parenting</u>	Extension Office
March 20-21	<u>TN Tree Pick-Up</u>	Ron Ramsey Ag Center
March 23 4:00-7:30 p.m.	<u>Apple Grafting Class</u>	Ron Ramsey Ag Center
March 27	<u>Wildflower Walk</u>	Norris Dam
March 30-31	4H Clover Bowl	Ron Ramsey Ag Center

## Real. Life. Solutions.

Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development.  
 University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating.  
 UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

*Created by Melody Rose*