



Happy New Year! To kick off 2018's Meet-the-Board series, let's get to know Board Member Patrice Powers-Barker, Certified Family Life Educator and Ohio State University Extension Educator. Read on to hear how her strengths in work and family intertwine and build on each other!

**On studies:**

"I don't think I fell into family sciences (studies and work) by accident but the steps to my current position in Family Consumer Sciences meandered. For my Bachelor of Arts, I studied Social Justice at Hiram College. My interdisciplinary major included classes in a variety of departments including Communications, Religion, Education and Sociology. It wasn't until years later, as I was working full-time and raising a family that I landed in Family Life Education at Spring Arbor University for my Master of Arts. It was during that time I learned about the National Council for Family Relations (NCFR) and Certified Family Life Education (CFLE)."

**On career:**

"When I started working for Ohio State University Extension, Lucas County (Toledo, OH), I didn't expect that it would be my place of employment for almost two decades! I currently serve as an Extension Educator in Family and Consumer Sciences. I love this quote by Ruby Green Smith as she described home economics in the 1940s; this is 'where science and art meet life and practice'. I am privileged to serve families in Lucas County and in the state of Ohio. I love that my work is practical, educational, interdisciplinary and rooted in science."

(To learn more about Lucas County Extension, visit <https://lucas.osu.edu/fcs>)

**On family:**

"I am the granddaughter of farmers and immigrants. I am the daughter of educators and community volunteers. I met my husband and two daughters at a community garden. We married seventeen years ago and within the last five years our family has added three boys: a son, a son-in-law and a grandson. I share my family story here because they taught me about families long before I knew there was an academic program for it! Just like every family, we've had our ups and downs. As an adult, a couple personal messages have kept me anchored during the rough times. 'This is family, this is holy' was a very clear message that came to me during a particularly hard time. It reassured me that we were in it together – and that things could be good even as they were challenging and imperfect. Another was a conversation I had with my (step) daughter during her teenage years: 'aren't we lucky? we can define this relationship of family in whatever way we want.' I don't necessarily share those specific quotes when I'm at work, but they summarize my values. My career allows me to educate and encourage others to identify their own struggles and solutions in order to build strong, healthy families."

**On OHCFR:**

"Like my day-to-day work, I hope that what I bring to the OHCFR board is practical, educational, interdisciplinary and rooted in science. I am proud of two infographics that a team created in an effort to help make the Family Life Education (FLE) Framework approachable and easy to access for students as well as professionals. The infographics are designed to complement, not replace the NCFR FLE Framework materials. In a similar way to the team that designed the infographics, the OHCFR board is a collaborative, hard-working group of people who are really enjoyable to work with!"

(Check out Patrice's webinar from last year's Family Life Education Month: [http://u.osu.edu/.../ohio-council-on-family-relations-celebr...](http://u.osu.edu/.../ohio-council-on-family-relations-celebr.../))

**On life outside of work:**

"Is it funny that in this type of work, I continue to think and 'work' on similar topics during my free time? I like to read about families, practice mindfulness, dig in the garden, try new recipes and spend time with my family. We like being outdoors, whether it's camping at state parks or visiting the playgrounds and paths at our local metroparks or state park on the Maumee River and Lake Erie. Here's my shameless plug for Toledo/Lucas County: In my family's free time we have so many awesome opportunities right in our own community that we try to take advantage of (and not take for granted) all the local benefits. If you have never been to Northwest Ohio, consider a day/weekend trip. If you want any recommendations for family activities, send me a message!"