

Anna Prizzia

FOOD SECURITY PIONEER

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Anna Prizzia, Director of Field and Fork Program and Campus Food Systems Coordinator, is a pioneer of a sustainable food system at the University of Florida. Prizzia's passion for food is what started it all. "Early on in my career my interest was providing better access to food security and community of food than the flipside of solving food insecurity," said Prizzia.

Food security is when people have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food. However, many people find themselves food insecure, not knowing where their next meal is coming from. Seeing the issues between our local food system in Gainesville, with a food secure west side and very food insecure east side, and the University of Florida being her alma mater, Prizzia became passionate about institutional change here locally in Gainesville.

The change started when Prizzia assumed the role as director of the Office of Sustainability and oversaw many projects and programs at UF that promoted sustainable practices on campus. However, her passion for food still burned so Prizzia began working with the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences as the coordinator of the statewide Farm to School program that promotes fresh,

local, healthy food in the national school lunch program.

During her time with IFAS, Prizzia volunteered with the previous student gardens on campus, the area was once a vibrant student garden but was not easily maintained over time and UF felt there could be a better way to use the space. Prizzia studied and discussed food insecurity on campus with UF administration and IFAS Vice President, Dr. Jack Payne.



From there, Prizzia led the creation of the Field and Fork Farm and Gardens, allowing the space to be maintained for student food production, and linked it with her work in helping food security by providing produce to the Alan and Cathy Hitchcock Field and Fork Pantry.

Field and Fork not only provides food for those in need but also

teaches students about food security, sustainable agriculture and food systems. "We really want to get students hands in the dirt, literally," says Prizzia. Students of any major have the opportunity to take classes that collaborate with the Field and Fork Program, get involved with affiliate clubs and participate in professional internships.

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Food insecurity is an issue is local and global. However, programs like Field and Fork and leaders like Prizzia show that there are solutions to this problem. "We can all work together to solve food insecurity within our community, that is what the program is really about. It's about educating future leaders and working with our current leaders to find those solutions" said Prizzia.



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