

Practicing collaboration and innovation to advance the unique interests of urban counties in Texas

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

Extension in the City

January 2025 Quarterly Newsletter

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extension
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD,
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Practicing collaboration and innovation to advance the unique interests of urban counties in Texas



AGRILIFEEXTENSION.TAMU.EDU

OUR WORK MAKES A DIFFERENCE. IN THE LIVES OF TEXANS AND ON THE ECONOMY.

MISSION STATEMENT:

“Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service works daily to make Texas better by providing innovative solutions at the intersection of agriculture, natural resources, youth, and health, thereby improving the well-being of individuals, families, businesses, and communities through education and service.”

VISION STATEMENT:

“Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will be the leader in providing science-based information and solutions in agriculture and health to every Texan.”

SHARED VALUES:

“We value People, Programs, and Partnerships.”

WELCOME TO THE URBAN PROGRAM



ADRIANNA OLIVAREZ

URBAN FARMING COORDINATOR - DALLAS COUNTY

A native of Dallas, and a graduate of Texas Woman's University, Adrianna's interest for urban agriculture began when she became a Texas Master Gardener in 2017. Inspired by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service programs, fellow growers, and various agricultural non-profits throughout the state, she began cultivating her almost 3-acre farm and passion for urban ag. She believes urban agriculture can improve the health of citizens and bring communities together, so she is excited about her role in the urban farming program. Outside of work, and farming, you can find her enjoying a variety of outdoor adventures, crafting, or spending time with her family, friends, and fur babies.

"I have long admired Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and its commitment to Texans, so I am grateful for the opportunity to join the team and contribute."

LAURA LOYA

PROGRAM COORDINATOR - EL PASO COUNTY

A native of Clint, Texas, Lora grew up on her family's 4th generation cotton farm, which instilled in her a deep appreciation for the land and agriculture. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology from New Mexico State University, combining her health interests with a love for the outdoors. Laura is the Program Coordinator supporting the USDA-NRCS Conservation Careers program in El Paso County. Her goal is to inspire young people in El Paso to explore careers in conservation and natural resources, helping to create a sustainable future for their community.

"Growing up on a cotton farm in the Lower Valley of El Paso, Texas instilled in me a deep appreciation for the land. Now, I'm fortunate to be able to guide the next generation of conservationists, helping them connect with their environment and build a brighter future for our region."



JOSEPH "JODY" TAYLOR

FORT BEND COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT - HORTICULTURE

Joseph "Jody" Taylor earned a Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration from University of Louisville and a Bachelor of Arts in Homeland Security from American Military University. He has 33 years of military service where he acquired skills in education, logistics, leadership, and maintenance. He is a veteran, farmer, Master Gardener, beekeeper, and avid community volunteer.

"As Fort Bend County continues to grow, it is imperative that County Extension Agents are adaptable in the urban environment. Agents need not only to know subject matter but also must be able to make meaningful connections; connecting with people, connecting people with each other, and connecting technical information with real-life applications."



VICTOR CONTRERAS

4-H LIVESTOCK COORDINATOR - HARRIS COUNTY

Victor Contreras interned with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service - Harris County as a student of Texas State University during the summer of 2024 while pursuing his Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (B.S.A.G.) Major in Agriculture Business and Management. He now joins us as the new 4-H Livestock Coordinator.

Victor was born and raised in Houston, TX, but his family is from Mexico. The time spent visiting his Grandfather and helping with his land and livestock cultivated his love for animals and agriculture.

"I love working bulls, keeping up with them, and taking them to rodeos!"

JAY CADDEL

TARRANT COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT - HOME HORTICULTURE

Jay is the newest member of the Tarrant County team, joining us on January 13, 2024! He comes to us with several years of industry experience working previously as both a greenhouse and nursery manager. Jay is passionate about native plants, plant propagation, learning new things and working with volunteers. We are excited to have Jay join our team!



KAYLEA PONTHER

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, HORTICULTURE - TARRANT COUNTY

Kaylea started as the administrative assistant for Horticulture in Tarrant County in November 2024 and has hit the ground running. She has been instrumental in getting our largest volunteer group coordinated in the absence of an Agent, and has been a great addition to our team!

JORDAN CALLAHAN

NUTRITION EDUCATION ASSOCIATE, EFNEP - TARRANT COUNTY

We are thrilled to welcome Jordan Callahan, our newest EFNEP team member and a recently credentialed Dietetic Technician, Registered! Joining us as a Nutrition Education Associate and our second youth nutrition educator, she completes our team, bringing us back to full strength. Her enthusiasm is already shining through as she eagerly schedules and prepares to teach classes, while also sharing creative ideas to strengthen our team dynamic.



PLANTING SEEDS AND GROWING COMMUNITIES

The Texas Master Gardener program is an educational volunteer program conducted by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. If accepted into the Texas Master Gardener program, volunteers are required to attend over 50 hours in specialized training courses. The program offers instruction in lawn care; ornamental trees and shrubs; insect, disease, and weed management; soils and plant nutrition, vegetable gardening; home fruit production; garden flowers; perennials and annuals; and water conservation. In exchange for training, volunteers are asked to volunteer their time to their county's AgriLife Extension program. The type of service performed by Texas Master Gardeners varies according to community needs and the abilities and interests of the volunteers. Some Texas master Gardeners answer telephone requests for information related to gardening and other staff plant clinics or displays at farmer's markets or community centers. Texas Master Gardeners may speak to local groups and conduct workshops and help establish community garden projects, work with 4-H youth, or assist their agent with news or radio releases related to gardening.

The Texas Master Gardener program's strength lies in its ability to meet the diverse needs of the individual communities it serves. Master Gardeners are members of the local community who take an active interest in their lawns, trees, shrubs, flowers, and gardens.

In Bexar County a total of 34 volunteers completed the Texas Master Gardener program from August 21, 2024, through November 15, 2024. This year marks its 67th training in Bexar County. Volunteers have already begun to contribute their time and expertise to their local communities. If you are interested in becoming a TMG, please contact David Rodriguez at 210-631-0400.



CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES AT RISK

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) of the USDA hosts the Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) funding program to improve the quality and quantity of comprehensive community-based programs for at-risk children, youth, and families supported by the Cooperative Extension System. The CYFAR program mission is to marshal resources of the Land-Grant and Cooperative Extension Systems to develop and deliver educational programs that equip limited resource families and youth who are at-risk for not meeting basic human needs with the skills they need to lead positive, productive, contributing lives.

Congratulations to Bexar and Harris Counties for receiving funding to develop and conduct programs that are science based to enhance the 4-H and Youth Development experience for at-risk military and underrepresented youth and families in Bexar County and underrepresented families in Harris County. The objectives are to create an urban community garden-based program to improve physical and mental health, nutrition, develop leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving skills; that demonstrate and promote sustainable urban gardening practices among youth, families, and community members. The project will equip youth to develop necessary skills to lead positive, productive, and contributing lives.

In Bexar County, a host site planning meeting was held to discuss project objectives, participation expectations, and project timeline. Each Joint Base San Antonio, Lackland AFB, and Randolph AFB are excited to have been chosen to participate and enthusiastic to begin. If you are interested in more information about this project please contact Nelda Speller, County Extension Director at 210-631-0400.



SOCCER FOR SUCCESS BY 4-H



Agent Elias Espinosa conducting the first coach mentors training to be implemented in eight new sites in 2025

We recently held a 4-H Soccer for Success training for Boys and Girls Club employees led by two of our staff members, Elias Espinosa and Cara Kailukaitas. Soccer for Success is an evidence-based soccer skills and nutrition program delivered over 12 weeks. The focus is on leadership and communication skills while learning basic soccer skills and game days. Soccer for Success (SfS) is a direct education intervention designed to improve the fitness levels of participants, improve the nutritional knowledge and behavior of participants (and their families), and improve the youth development outcomes of participants. Soccer for Success helps kids establish healthy habits and develop critical life skills such as leadership and teamwork through trained coach-mentors. Our multifaceted model combines structured physical activity, nutritional education, family engagement resources, and coach-mentoring best practices. The nutrition component meets USDA standards. This training begins an exciting new program to empower youth in various communities in Dallas County through soccer and life skills development.

During the session, Elias and Cara shared valuable insights on integrating soccer as a tool for positive youth development, focusing on teamwork, leadership, and healthy living.

The training equips the Boys and Girls Club team with the resources and knowledge needed to implement this program effectively, helping to create a lasting impact on the children they serve.

We are excited about this partnership's potential and look forward to seeing its positive influence on the lives of young people across our communities. This collaboration is just the beginning, and we're eager to continue working together to make a difference!



Agent Elias Espinosa implementing the 4-H Soccer for Success program at the Boys and Girls Club



"EMPOWERING URBAN VOICES: YOUNG'S ROLE AND JOURNEY IN EPSILON SIGMA PHI'S AFFINITY GROUP"

As Vice President for Recruitment for the Texas Alpha Zeta State Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Phi from 2020-2021, Prairie View A&M Extension's Family and Community Health Agent, Marvin Young, spearheaded initiatives that significantly increased membership engagement and diversity. His efforts led to an increase in new member recruitment, enhancing the chapter's outreach and influence. During this time, Young also received Epsilon Sigma Phi's, "Mid-Career Service Award" and the "Texas A&M AgriLife Superior Service Award."

From 2021 to 2023, he co-led the "Urban & Culturally Diverse Audience Affinity Group," facilitating programs and discussions promoting inclusivity and cultural awareness. This role allowed Young to bridge gaps and foster a more inclusive environment within the organization, impacting over 300 members.

In his advisory role for the same group from 2023 to 2024, he provided strategic guidance and mentorship, ensuring the continuity and growth of our initiatives. Young's long-standing membership since 2009 has been marked by a commitment to advancing the mission of Epsilon Sigma Phi, contributing to a legacy of excellence and service in Extension.



Agent Marvin Young and a representation of the Epsilon Sigma Phi affinity group

"RESTORING PRAIRIE REMNANTS: A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT IN DALLAS COUNTY CEMETERIES"

In late 2023, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Dallas County Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) agent partnered with the Constellation of Living Memorials (CLM), a project of the Friends of the Warren Ferris Cemetery 501.c.3, led by Julie Fineman, to provide citizen scientist education. The project focuses on restoring prairie remnants in neglected cemeteries across Dallas County.

This long-term educational initiative offers technical assistance and research-based knowledge from the Texas A&M System to CLM, educating citizen scientists, including North Texas Master Naturalist (NTMN) volunteers.

Matthew Orwat, the Dallas County ANR agent, serves as an advisor to the NTMN. The partnership aims to expand greenspaces, improve climate resilience, reduce heat island effects, restore pollinator populations, address food insecurity, and increase community engagement through enhanced access to local culture and history.

In 2024 and 2025, NTMN selected CLM for a new class project, initiating a two-year prairie restoration plan at the historic Oakland Cemetery (3900 Oakland Cir, Dallas, TX). Master Naturalist trainees began by identifying invasive plant species for removal and selecting native plants to preserve and introduce.

Under Orwat's guidance, protocols have been created by the Constellation of Living Memorials Scientific Board of Advisors, to aid in the collection of data for flora and fauna at the Oakland Cemetery site. Matthew instructed students on how to collect and analyze this data and put the protocols into practice by participating in hands on plant identification and collection activities.



Matthew Orwat and Xiomara Diaz with the partners of Constellation of Living Memorials (CLM) Nonprofit, including director Julie Fineman and board member Retired Texas State Rep. Harryette Ehrhardt

The Oakland Cemetery was also chosen as the 2024 Big Chapter Project for NTMN, culminating in October 2024 with hundreds of volunteers participating in invasive species removal and native habitat preservation. CLM cemetery restoration sites have hosted several Dallas County 4-H club activities, including those by the newly formed Ecology Club.

The long-term goal is to continue urban natural resource training through invasive species removal and habitat restoration at prairie remnant sites throughout Dallas County's neglected cemeteries, creating living educational laboratories for urban natural resource education.



Presenting the Prairie Restoration and Citizen Scientist education partnership between Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Dallas County and CLM at the Native Plant Society of Texas meeting.

ALEXIS HORNE: ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

We are thrilled to congratulate Alexis Horne, our Community Economic and Development Agent, on being awarded Rookie of the Year! Alexis has quickly made a remarkable impact with her innovative ideas and dedication to strengthening our community. Her hard work and passion for CED has set a high standard, and we couldn't be more proud of her accomplishments.

Keep shining, Alexis!



"ADVANCING GENERATIONS: SUPPORTING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AND CULTIVATING YOUTH FINANCIAL LITERACY FOR A THRIVING ECONOMIC FUTURE"

Prairie View A&M University Extension in El Paso County, conducted monthly meetings in partnership with Her Texas at local women-owned businesses. These gatherings provided women entrepreneurs with critical support services and technical assistance, including funding options, business planning, marketing strategies, and financial literacy. Additionally, participants received information about the Get HUB Certified workshops and were encouraged to apply for HUB certification and attend the "Business in Development Academy" scheduled for February 2025.

Youth programming is crucial as it shapes the next generation of business owners and prepares young minds to be financially savvy adults, fostering a thriving and successful community. In collaboration with Junior Achievement of El Paso, a total of 270 students from Reyes and Cielo Vista Elementary, and Andres and Austin high school received lessons on financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and workforce readiness. The diverse curriculum provided students with the mindset and skills necessary for entrepreneurial success and emphasized the importance of community involvement. High school students delved into the complexities of stock market investment, gaining insights into long-term strategies and the risks and rewards of trading. These initiatives reflect El Paso County's dedication to building a robust economic future by empowering its youth with the tools for financial and entrepreneurial success.

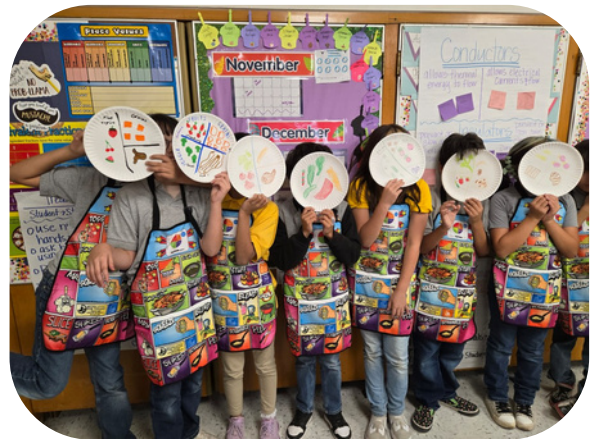


SHIFTING THE PERSPECTIVE OF VEGETABLES WITH THE YOUTH

Better Living for Texans focuses on helping people make healthy meals, improve their physical fitness, grow their own foods, and adopt better food safety habits within their youth programming. Elementary-aged youth programming includes gardening and other fun activities to reinforce healthy lifestyle choices, increasing fruit and vegetable intake, and daily physical activity.

During the first quarter of the Fiscal Year, Better Living for Texans agent Ashley Cisneros conducted a Learn, Grow, Eat, Go (LGEG) program at Crockett Elementary School in central El Paso County. Many students were not only successful at having their classroom container garden but also enjoyed learning about healthy foods. The program furthered their knowledge of plants and the responsibility of caring for the garden. It also encouraged the students to try new vegetables they did not like or had.

After the Thanksgiving break, many students shared with Ashley that they had vegetables, such as green beans and broccoli, for the first time and liked how their parents prepared them. Overall, the post-survey data reflected that the LGEG program not only made the students feel better about their knowledge of science and math but also made them want to come to school each day they knew Ms. Ashley would be there.



EXPANDING NUTRITION EDUCATION ACROSS EL PASO COUNTY

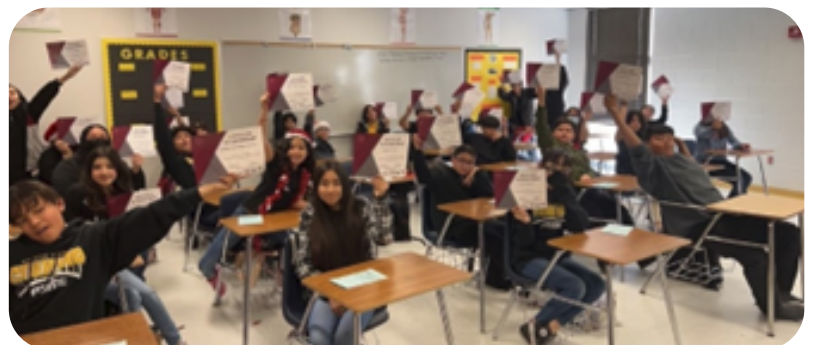
Youth Nutrition Education Associates Cynthia Mata and Cynthia Fournier, with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), are making a lasting impact in the El Paso community. From October through December, they delivered essential nutrition education to students from kindergarten through 12th grade in partnership with eight schools across Socorro ISD, El Paso ISD, and Ysleta ISD.

EFNEP's mission is to empower families and youth with limited resources by teaching practical skills in nutrition, food safety, and healthy living. Through dynamic collaborations with school districts and community organizations across El Paso County, EFNEP is reaching students where they are-- in classrooms, after-school programs, and summer programs.

The program incorporates a series of fun and educational lessons tailored to meet the developmental needs of youth. Through hands-on activities and interactive discussions, students learn to build balanced plates, limit sugar, fat, and sodium intake, and practice food safety. Lessons also emphasize the importance of physical activity and adopting healthy behaviors for lifelong wellness.

These partnerships are more than just a series of lessons; it is an opportunity to instill lifelong habits in the next generation. "By engaging youth in interactive and practical activities, we are teaching them skills they can carry forward into their families and communities," says Cynthia Mata.

Thanks to the dedication of educators and the ongoing support from local schools and organizations, EFNEP continues to make a meaningful difference, one plate at a time. Together, they are shaping healthier futures for the youth of El Paso County.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



Students from the PEAK Academy were thrilled to hold baby chicks during their school tour to the AG'tivity Barn

AG'tivity Barn

The AG'tivity Barn has been promoting agriculture awareness **for more than 20 years**. In conjunction with the Fort Bend County Fair and with support from Fort Bend County Farm Bureau, Fort Bend County Extension hosted the annual event Sep 27 - Oct 6, 2024. AG'tivity Barn is a **hands-on, interactive way to bring agriculture to life**. With six learning stations during school tours, and various agriculture themes on nights and weekends, fairgoers are exposed to a variety of topics. In 2024, an estimated **63,000 fairgoers** were exposed to the public interface of the AG'tivity Barn during open Fair hours. During **organized school tours, 1,214 participated** (1,119 students, 95 adults) from 10 Fort Bend County Schools. Friday was reserved for special tours for participants in the Exceptional Rodeo when about 150 people came through to see and touch the exhibits.

Pecan Harvest Festival

The annual Pecan Harvest Festival is a partnership between the City of Richmond and the Richmond Rotary Club, held the Saturday before Thanksgiving (Nov 23). Extension is involved in pre-planning and providing **educational activities for adults and youth**. The festival drew an estimated 4,500 visitors. At the Festival, Agents and Volunteers (Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists, provided pecan education and activities in the Kids Zone. In Pecan Education participants identified pecan varieties, practiced shelling pecans with different tools, tasted raw pecans, and sampled a pecan recipe. Agents offered Q&A about pest management and grafting. In the Kids Zone, activities including roping cow dummies, shooting nerf rifles, and fishing for "backyard bass." The 4-H Ambassadors hosted a "buck for a buck" archery fundraiser.



County Extension Agent -Horticulture, Jody Taylor, demonstrates how to shell pecans during the Pecan Harvest Festival in Richmond

FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

The **Fort Bend Master Gardener Association's Vegetable Team** actively serves the community in a variety of ways, not the least of which is their food drive and fresh produce **contributions to the Mamie George Community Center and Trini's Market Food Pantry.** Led by Jean Trevino, the group harvests produce from the teaching gardens at the Extension office to donate to non-profit organizations. On Nov 20 they **delivered 44 lbs. of fresh produce.** Customers at the market can shop for their choice of fresh food items. The group also **donated 456 lbs. of non-perishable food.**



The FBCMGA Vegetable Team
and their harvest

Stan Kitzman, House Representative, Texas District 83, attended our total staff office conference on Oct 18 to **share his vision of Texas' future** and to hear about what matters to us. Kitzman is a great friend and supporter of Extension work. He will serve his second term as representative beginning in 2025.



Representative Stan Kitzman
was our honored guest.



Volunteer Veena Pena
shares her passion and
wisdom.

Valued 4-H adult leader, **Veena Pena**, attended our total staff conference on Sep 20 where she shared about her passion for volunteering and helping people. She provided sage advice for how we can better serve our communities and live the 4-H motto "to make the best better."



The Early Learn, Grow, Eat and Go encourages kids to try new foods, This cutie was a fan of the kiwi.

Better Living for Texans Agent, Celeste Feast, engaged local community members in her advisory committee to help strengthen her programs. A group of 12 met on Sep 12 to plan and provide support. During the 1st quarter of FY 25 Celeste conducted **35 educational sessions with 463 participants.** A highlight was working with the Excel Adventists Academy with the **"Early Learn, Grow, Eat and Go"** lessons. Students enjoyed tasting fresh fruit and veggies.

Dig Deeper into Soil Health Workshop

Stephanie Gray, CEA Horticulture grew industry and community partnerships while hosting the Dig Deeper into Soil Health Workshop on October 29th, 2024 at Houston Community College Southeast Campus. This program addressed the importance of educating urban land managers on soil health by providing quality educational sessions to industry professionals and the public. This program was a collaboration between the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Harris County Horticulture Unit, the Disaster Assessment and Recovery Unit, the Galveston Bay Estuary Council, The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the Harris County Soil and Water Conservation District, and Houston Community College.



Photo on the left shows Dr Herod, President of HCC SE Campus giving a welcome and congratulating the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service team on a successful event. Top photo shows Stephanie Gray standing near a hands-on watershed runoff demonstration sponsored by USDA and NRCS. The bottom photo shows all 60 participants.



Peaceful Garden

Only 1 in 10 Americans consumes the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables per day. To encourage people to increase their daily intake of fruits and vegetables, we teach Growing & Nourishing Healthier Communities (GNHC), a 6 week series that provides information on the basics of growing your own vegetables at home.

For session #3 of GNHC, BLT agent, Jasmine Carey, taught a planting session at the Veteran Affairs Medical Center's Peaceful Garden. The Peaceful Garden is open to Veterans, employees and visitors. It is maintained by Houston VA's Facilities Services, Volunteer Services, VA Whole Health Committee, and Social Work Services. The motto for the garden is "lettuce grow", which serves as a reminder that everything evolves, from people to plants. Just as the plants rely on and grow from each other's nutrients, so do the people who visit it.

Participants were able to plant kale, mustard green, herbs, or root vegetable seeds in a container. The root vegetable seeds were donated from the Harris County Master Gardeners. Master Gardeners, Leon and Chevvy, assisted with this session.



Tech Fest Live at UH Technology Bridge



This Fall 4-H program assistants, Savannah Payne and JoceLynn Lewis, attended the 2024 Tech Fest Live hosted at the University of Houston Tech Bridge. During this event thousands of students from surrounding areas attended to learn about technological opportunities and to explore careers in science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM).

Savannah and JoceLynn brought Sphero BOLT Coding Robots. Students attending Tech Fest were challenged to code their BOLT Coding Robot to travel to the different planets using exact measurements of distance and speed. 4-H youth have the opportunity to explore many career industries by participating in various project areas. STEM has proven to be a very popular project area in Harris County and the 4-H Team looks forward to working with these amazing students each year.

Boots & Bling Senior Event



FCH Agent Dr. Sonja Davis worked with the Harris FCS Program Area Committee to plan and implement the 5th Annual Seniors Event on Friday, November 22nd. The theme was “Boots and Bling”, and the seniors arrived dressed in their best western attire. Approximately 125 seniors from Harris and Waller County attended educational sessions on artificial intelligence, scams that target seniors, initiating difficult conversations with family members, and Medicare updates. Highlights of the event included a comedian, line dancing, chair yoga, mindful breathing, and arts and crafts.

This event was funded by the Prairie View A&M University Office of Continued Education, Harris FCH Program Area Committee, WellCare, the Area Agency on Aging and Harris County Precinct 1 Transportation Department. Special thanks to Better Living for Texans Agents Jasmine Carey and Sara Ellis along with Harris County FCH Agent Gabrielle Kanu, and Waller County FCH Agent Clara Cofield for assistance during the program.

2024 VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Each year the Tarrant County AgriLife Extension team hosts an interpretation luncheon and volunteer awards reception to close out the year and celebrate AgriLife's big wins. The 2024 event was held on Thursday, December 12, 2024, at the Tarrant County Plaza building.

The following award recipients were recognized by the Tarrant County team.

The Friend of Extension Award recognizes an individual or organization for outstanding service to the people of Tarrant County for their exceptional support and personal involvement in Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

FWISD After-School Program

From left to right: Carlos Walker, Telecia Toston, Courtney Davis, County Extension Director, Maru Castaneda, Fredrick White, Felecia Myers, Tamara Gulley, Nakia Cole, and Jordan Peldyak, CEP-4-H & YD Extension Agent



Craig Holland



From left to right: Courtney Davis, County Extension Director, Craig Holland, award recipient, and Jacklyn Jones-Doyle, ANR County Extension Agent

The John South Spirit of Extension Award recognizes a program area committee member for exemplary service in the design and delivery of educational programs which enhance the quality of life for the people of Tarrant County.

Pierre Gant

From left: Courtney Davis, County Extension Director, Pierre Gant, award recipient, and Sanci Hall, Better Living for Texans (BLT) Extension Agent



Not pictured:

**Theresa Posani
&
Karen Scott**



The Darlene Myatt Friend of Children Award recognizes an individual or organization for dedicating time, talents and treasure to teaching children with dynamic enthusiasm and loving leadership.

Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

From left: Courtney Davis, County Extension Director, Monica Padilla, with Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD, award recipient, and Kate Marshall, 4-H & YD County Extension Agent



The Director's Award recognizes an individual or organization for providing exemplary support for Extension educational programs and volunteers.

Tarrant County Support Services

From left to right: Courtney Davis, County Extension Director, Robert Carter, Assistant Director, Support Services, accepting award on behalf of Eric Raven and County Support Services, Ruth Zavala, Receptionist, and Mary Oviedo, Office Manager



Casey Oliver

From left to right: Casey Oliver, Texas A&M University, award recipient, and Courtney Davis County Extension Director



HYDROPONICS/AQUAPONICS FARM TOURS

Travis County Extension hosted a Hydro/Aquaponics 101 series which included an Organic 101 webinar presented by Texas A&M Organic Specialist: Bob Whitney, a local farm tour of an USDA Certified Organic Hydroponics farm: Lone Star Lettuce Growers owned and operated by Kyle Massey, and a local Aquaponics farm tour: Aquaflora on Evelyn. This series educated over 31 members of the Travis County community who are looking for ways to farm in urban areas or take back the knowledge to current school teachers.



AGRICULTURE TAX EXEMPTION PROGRAM



As new and small acreage land owners start to multiply across Travis County, our extension office recognizes the need for tax exemption education programs. Travis County has very diverse land owners ranging from; individuals who want to produce hay, raise livestock, use their land for bird watching or wildlife, start beekeeping, grow vegetables, or individuals who inherited land or just bought their first small acreage plot. December 2024, Travis County Extension Office hosted an Agriculture Tax Exemption program presented by speakers from the Travis County Appraisal District. This program aided 17 land owners in gaining knowledge and better understanding the rules and guidelines pertaining to agriculture tax exemption for Travis County

LIVESTOCK CLINICS

CATTLE CLINIC

Travis County and Williamson County partnered together to host a hands-on educational cattle clinic with a showmanship contest at the conclusion. This clinic gave 4-H exhibitors and families knowledge on daily care, fitting, animal husbandry, and showmanship. With hands-on training for clipping, blowing, and showing of cattle. The 35 attendees left feeling more comfortable and knowledgeable about their project. Thanks to our sponsors Capital Farm Credit, Texas Farm Bureau, Browns Distributing and TSC, we were able to award the best showman with banners to take home!

SHEEP/GOAT CLINIC

Travis County and Burnet County partnered together to host a sheep/goat clinic presented by an industry expert and fellow agent Josh Blaneck. This clinic took a dive into what your showbox should have in it, nutrition guidelines for your project, exercise regimen, show schedule from time of purchase to time of show, shearing fundamentals, and showing tips. The 15 families took home handouts, tips/tricks, and a lifetime of knowledge.

SWINE CLINIC

Travis and Burnet Counties also hosted a swine clinic. Thanks to Taylor Osbourn, a fellow agent and expert in experience, 13 families were able to learn more about what it takes to raise swine competitively.



BEXAR COUNTY

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Commissioner Rebeca Clay-Flores
Commissioner Justin Rodriguez
Commissioner Grant Moody
Commissioner Tommy Calvert



DALLAS COUNTY

County Judge Clay Jenkins
Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia
Commissioner John Wiley Price
Commissioner
Andrew Sommerman
Commissioner Dr. Theresa Daniel



EL PASO COUNTY

County Judge
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Commissioner Jackie Butler
Commissioner David Stout
Commissioner Iliana Holguin
Commissioner Sergio Coronado



FORT BEND COUNTY

County Judge KP George
Commissioner Vincent Morales, Jr.
Commissioner Grady Prestage
Commissioner Andy Meyers
Commissioner Dexter L. McCoy



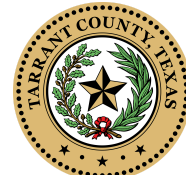
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County Judge Lina Hidalgo
Commissioner Rodney Ellis
Commissioner Adrian Garcia
Commissioner Tom S. Ramsey
Commissioner Lesley Briones



TARRANT COUNTY

County Judge Tim O'Hare
Commissioner Roderick Miles Jr.
Commissioner Alisa Simmons
Commissioner Matt Krause
Commissioner Manny Ramirez



TRAVIS COUNTY

County Judge Andy Brown
Commissioner Jeff Travillion
Commissioner Brigid Shea
Commissioner Ann Howard
Commissioner Margaret Gómez



With the support of the County Judge and County Commissioners, each Texas A&M AgriLife Extension County Office offers the knowledge resources of the Texas A&M University System to local citizens for self-improvement, individual action, and community problem-solving.

Thank You.