

Monthly Newsletter

DC EXTENSION

February 2025



Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

Welcome to the Dallas County Extension newsletter! We're excited to bring you the latest updates on all things happening in our community.

In this issue, you'll find highlights on upcoming local events, quick and easy five-minute recipes, inspiring stories of impact from our programs, an employee spotlight, and helpful health and wellness tips to keep you feeling your best.

We want to take a moment to thank our dedicated stakeholders—volunteers and partners—who help make everything we do possible. Your continued generosity ensures that we can offer valuable resources and services to families across Dallas County.

This month, we're especially proud to share of all the great work our agents have done throughout this year serving various communities throughout Dallas County.

As always, your involvement makes all the difference, whether through donating your time, resources, or simply spreading the word about our work. Together, we can continue to make a positive impact on the lives of our neighbors.

Thank you for being a vital part of our community.

Enjoy this month's newsletter!

*Dallas County
Extension*

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Community Updates

Our office recently hosted a Gratitude Luncheon to express our appreciation for the incredible support of our stakeholders and partners.

The event provided a wonderful opportunity to eat, mingle, and connect. During the luncheon our agents and staff had an opportunity to share insights on the impactful work they do day in and out. We even were able to honor one of our team members for her outstanding work in the community and office this year!

This luncheon was a meaningful way to celebrate the collaboration and dedication that helps us achieve our mission and strengthen our community.

We look forward to hosting more events like this to continue building relationships and working together toward positive change. Thank you to everyone who joined us in making this event a success!



Health and Wellness Tips

from Agent Liz Espie

Exercise Regularly - strive for at least two and a half aerobic exercise a week

Stay Socially Engaged - Maintain close friendships and meet new people.

Challenge your Brain - Challenge yourself with problem-solving puzzles.

Eat Essential Foods for the Brain - Foods that help protect the brain are usually high in essential fatty acids and high in antioxidants. Vitamins E and C, also help protect the brain.

Focus on Reducing Stress - Stress can damage the brain's memory center. Do something daily that allows you to relax.

Get Restorative Sleep - Sleep is critical for our memory function and prevention of dementia. Six to eight hours of sleep each night is essential.



Panama's Tropical Bounty Smoothie

from Agent Terri Wesley

Ingredients:

- 1 to 2 large mangoes (or 1 1/2 cups frozen mango chunks)
- 1 large banana
- 1 cup plain non-dairy milk (like soy, rice, or almond)
- Juice of 1 lime (2 tablespoons)

Instructions:

1. If using fresh mango's outer skin with a knife or vegetable peeler and discard. Then gently slice the fruit off of the large pit and cut it into chunks.
2. Place all the ingredients in a blender, with any frozen ingredients closest to the blade.
3. Blend on high to puree.
4. Pour into glasses and enjoy for breakfast, as a snack, or for energy after exercising.

Meet the Dallas County Extension Team



Reagan Hyde
Extension Agent
November 2023



Liz Espie
AgriLife County Ext. Agent
March 2022



Matthew Orwat
AgriLife County Ext. Agent
September 2023



Elver Pardo
AgriLife County Ext. Agent
January 2023



Terri Wesley
PVAMU Extension Agent
June 2022



Elias Espinosa
PVAMU Extension Agent
February 2024



Cara Kailukaitis
4-H Grows Coordinator (ARP)
May 2024



Cheryl Miller
Extension Agent
July 1993



Xiomara N. Diaz Vargas

Dallas County Extension Director

Xiomara Diaz Vargas, leader of Dallas County, Texas, brings over 20 years of experience in cross-cultural roles within the Extension System. She has worked in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and 4-H Youth Development, focusing on urban and rural programming, grant management, mentorship, and strategic partnerships. Xiomara, a second-generation 4-H'er and Extension agent, has impacted communities in Puerto Rico, Florida, Texas, and Indiana. A certified Navigating Difference facilitator, she advises national Extension committees. As a proud mom of three 4-H alumni, her priorities are making Extension services relevant in urban areas, increasing access for first-generation participants, and mentoring new agents.

“We may have all come on different ships, but we’re in the same boat now.” - Martin Luther King, Jr.

Meet the Team



Marvin Young
PVAMU Extension Agent
March 2006



Bria Cooper
PVAMU Extension Agent
June 2024



Alexis Horne
PVAMU Extension Agent
May 2023



Delilah Torres
Temp. Buyer
May 2004



Khristal Oduwole
Volunteer
Coordinator
April 2024



Carolina Veloza
Extension Agent
June 2023



Kimberly Randall
Teens as Teachers
Coordinator (ARP)
May 2024



Lexi Wesley
Outreach
Communications
Coordinator
December 2023



Kamilah Valentin Diaz
Teens as Teachers
Program Assistant (ARP)
August 2024

Staff Highlights



Carolina Veloza

Carolina Veloza has been an exceptional asset to our team as a BLT agent, demonstrating unparalleled dedication in her role. Her commitment to excellence and passion for delivering outstanding results have made a significant impact. We are incredibly proud of Carolina's hard work & the positive influence she brings to our organization, and we look forward to her continued success and contributions.



Terri Wesley

We are excited to announce the promotion of Terri Wesley from SNAP-ED Associate to Family and Community Health (FCH) Agent!

Terri has demonstrated exceptional dedication to empowering individuals and families through health and nutrition education. In her new role, she will continue to make a positive impact by promoting healthier lifestyles and strengthening community well-being. Please join us in congratulating Terri on this well-deserved achievement!



Alexis Horne

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!



Adrianna Olivarez

We are thrilled to welcome Adrianna Olivarez as our new Urban Farm Coordinator!

In her role, Adrianna will oversee the growth and development of our urban farm initiatives, fostering partnerships, engaging the community and ensuring our projects thrive. We are excited to have her on board and look forward to the impact she will make in advancing our mission!



Extension Team Updates

We are incredibly proud of our staff and the amazing achievements they have been making! Their dedication and hard work continue to drive our mission forward, and we couldn't be more grateful for their contributions.

Our office is also experiencing exciting growth with the addition of new hires to our team. These talented individuals bring fresh perspectives, energy, and expertise, strengthening our ability to serve our community. Together, we are building a stronger, more dynamic team, and we're excited for all that lies ahead.

Here's to celebrating success and embracing growth!



Stories of impact: 4-H Soccer for Success Training

We recently held a 4-H Soccer for Success training led by two of our staff members Elias Espinosa and Cara Kailukaitas for employees of the Boys and Girls Club.

This training marks the beginning of an exciting new program aimed at empowering youth in various communities through soccer and life skills development.

During the session, Elias and Cara shared valuable insights on how to integrate 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 the potential of this partnership and look forward to seeing the positive influence it will have 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!





"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.

Thank you for reading!



**visit our
webpage!**

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