

TEXAS EXTRA

TEXAS EXTENSION ASSOCIATION OF
FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

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The 2021 TEAFCS State Conference is just around the corner! Make sure you save the dates, July 28 - 30, 2021. The 2021 conference will be hosted by District 5 TEAFCS in beautiful Tyler, Texas!

Be sure to like 2021 TEAFCS Conference on Facebook for information and updates!



REGISTRATION INFORMATION IS COMING SOON!

Holiday Inn Tyler
5701 South Broadway
Tyler, Texas 75703
(903) 561-5800



District Happenings ...

DISTRICT 2

North Region FCH Agents

Love Your Appliances



A team of D1 and D2 agents (Kathy Carr-Bailey, Felice Acker-Castro, Wendy Case-Parmer, Chelsey Rash-Oldham, Kendra Callahan-Lamb, Sidney Atchley-Carson, Melode Watson-Crosby and Courtney Lowe-Multi County Health) has created a yearlong social media educational effort called “Love Your Appliances” The effort will focus on an appliance each month. There will be weekly tips, safety information, using that appliance as well as recipes for that appliance.

February focused on Loving your Oven. March was Love your Air Fryer. April will be mash up month with each week being a smaller appliance like: Blenders, deep fryer, indoor grill, and waffle maker. The posts generating interest and multiple responses from followers. Followers are asking questions, wanting more information, and showing interest in the recipes.

The weekly information can be found on any of the agents Facebook pages. If you need a couple to for look at Castro County-Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and 4-H or Building Healthy Counties-Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.

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Borden County

Color Me Healthy

February focused on Loving your Oven. March was Love your Air Fryer. April will be mash up month with each week being a smaller appliance like: Blenders, deep fryer, indoor grill, and waffle maker. The posts generating interest and multiple responses from followers. Followers are asking questions, wanting more information, and showing interest in the recipes.

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District Happenings ...

Lamb County

Virtual Bread-In-A-Bag

Courtney Lowe, EA-Health hosted a virtual Bread-In-A-Bag for 70 Littlefield Kindergarten students. Bread-In-A-Bag is an annual program done with the Kindergarten classes that is typically done in person after the class reads *The Little Red Hen* book. This year due to COVID-19 restrictions, we adapted the program to be virtual. Each student received their own set of ingredients and the agent instructed the classes virtually via Microsoft Teams.

Each student was able to mix, knead and create their own mini loaf of bread. We discussed that the flour came from wheat plants, the importance of including whole grains in our diet, and how the ingredients worked together to make the bread. The students loved it, even virtually, and were so proud of their bread! One teacher took the education a step further and made butter in mason jars with her students.

DISTRICT 2



DISTRICT 4



Hopkins County

4-H Sewing Fun

Hopkins County FCH Extension Agent, Johanna Hicks, didn't know about the massive snow storm that would swallow Texas when she planned the annual January 4-H sewing event. As it turns out, "4-H Sewing Fun Day – Everything Fleece" was very timely! Hicks provided fleece blankets (purchased with a grant from Joann's Fabrics from the local big box discount store), sewing machines, cutting boards, rotary cutters, and thread for the 4-H'ers to use. Project instructions were provided for making loop-top or straight fringe-top toboggans, fringe scarves, pocket scarves, and keyhole scarves. All participants were able to complete two or more projects during the workshop.

In order to maintain safe physical distances, two sessions were held to safely accommodate the participants. Two Master Wellness Volunteers were on hand to assist with trouble-shooting and clean up. Eight 4-H members and 3 parents participated in the workshops. Stations for sewing and cutting were set up, and participants selected the fabric they wanted to use. In marketing the workshop, they were also given the opportunity to purchase their own fleece (discount sales on blankets were encouraged). One participant stated, "Ms. Johanna, I'm going to make these to sell!" Now, that's entrepreneurship!!

District Happenings ...

DISTRICT 4

Tarrant County

Healthier Kids for Our Future

During the Fall months of 2020, the “Healthier Kids for Our Future” initiative supported by Cigna teamed with Tarrant County FCH Agents, Fralonda Aubrey and Alaina Woolsey, developed a plan to support the need for reducing food insecurities in Tarrant County youth. Although the program would originally be offered in person, the program was altered to be conducted virtually. Chisholm Trail Intermediate School of Keller ISD was selected as a partner for the program. Through support and coordination with Trish McKeel, Chisholm Trail Intermediate Principal, and Kimberly Leitko, 6th grade teacher and Parent Engagement Advisor, the FCH unit developed a new program titled- Panthers in the Kitchen Virtual Cooking School.



With funding support provided by Cigna the program was offered to all students, both in-person and remote learners. The team developed protocol for safe delivery and pick up of food supplies and conducted an invitational meeting via Zoom to welcome students and families to participate. Each Tuesday beginning November 17 through December 15, 18 families were provided groceries for their Tuesday night dinner. Students were asked to log onto Zoom and prepare the recipe provided with their parents as they followed along with an Extension Agent. This cooking school provided a unique learning experience for both students and caregivers; allowing them to learn cooking skills and nutrition from the safety of their own homes. During the cooking sessions participants learned about ingredients, food and kitchen safety, cooking tools and techniques, and about the nutrient content of ingredients. Other benefits associated with the program include increased intake of fruits and vegetables, knowledge of heart healthy recipes, family mealtime, and lower sugary beverage consumption.

The Panthers in the Kitchen Virtual Cooking School will resume session for the spring of 2021.

Fannin, Hopkins, Rockwall, and Titus Counties

Do Well, Be Well

Agents in Fannin, Hopkins, Rockwall, and Titus counties worked together to offer a virtual Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes series in February and March. Twenty participants completed the course, logging on weekly for 2.5 hour classes on Zoom. Each session featured a guest speaker from one of the hosting counties.

Throughout the series, participants were very engaged, voicing questions and comments in group discussions and submitting questions via chat. This series was part of the DSHS Diabetes Evaluation grant, so classes were offered for free and incentive items were provided and mailed to participants. Each participant received a class notebook, Food Lists for Diabetes manual from the American Diabetes Association, and handy AgriLife branded measuring bowl.



District Happenings ...

DISTRICT 8

Limestone County

Explore Limestone

Emily Fisher, Limestone County FCH Agent, with assistance from Program Specialist Mike Lopez, developed and piloted “Explore Limestone” in as a way to market Walk Across Texas! to county youth.

A few years back, the app “Pokemon Go” quickly rose in popularity and inspired users to get up and move to find the various Pokemon hidden throughout their area. Using this concept and geocaching, this program encouraged Limestone citizens to find new places and explore their own county. This idea involved compiling a list of checkpoints for participants to visit and explore. Each checkpoint had its own QR Code for the participant to scan to “check-in.” These codes offered more information, discounts and even some free items to encourage participation and county exploration.



Photo posted to the Limestone FCH Facebook page with #explorelimestone.

The first step in creating this program involved contacting local businesses/ checkpoints and asking for their permission in involving them. Businesses had the option to provide discounts, free items, etc. or simply to link codes to their social media. No location was posted without first getting it approved. Once the list was compiled, codes were created with the approved message for each location. Codes were free to create and made it easy to see how many participants checked in and where; this made it simple to report numbers. Codes were put on flyers and posted in a high-traffic locations at each spot. To make it easy to follow, a website specifically for “Explore Limestone” was created. This site held a list of the checkpoints for participants to view. This site allowed participants to ask questions and see tagged photos when posted. The goal was for participants to check-in to as many locations as possible. In addition, photos posted to social media platforms with the hashtag #explorelimestone were entered into a weekly drawing, helping to promote the program to a larger audience.

Explore Limestone created a game out of exploring one’s own hometown. People checked in at local events, State Parks and many more locations. This surge in activity also promoted a “shop local” mindset and encouraged partnerships between locals and the Extension Office. By making it a game of sorts, there was more interest in participating by both youth and adults. Agent plans to expand to include additional areas throughout Limestone County.

Bell County

Homeless Symposium

Bell County CEP Agent, Sheryl Austin, serves as a member of a Bell County Community Task Force. The purpose or mission is to provide education, engage and equip our community when addressing current issues.

On Jan. 28th, the group hosted a Homeless Symposium via zoom and Facebook Live with up to 50 attendees. A panel representing various sectors such as the Killeen Police Department, Feed My Sheep, Baylor University, and Central Texas Youth Services gave input on how the community can empower versus enable our homeless population.



District Happenings ...

DISTRICT 8

Bell County

Do Well, Be Well

Jackie McLaughlin, Bell County FCH Agent, teamed with one of her Master Wellness Volunteers, Martha Williams, RN to offer a Do Well, Be Well to members of the Bell County area. The Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes class will be counted towards the Texas Department of State Health Services Grant Project that numerous counties in Texas are participating.



The class had four dedicated attendees. Curriculum instruction and hand on activities are the premier function of the class. Response and attendance were positive with all willing to make changes to their carbohydrate choices and incorporate new lifestyle and eating patterns.

Bell and Williamson Counties

HHSC Foster Grandparents Programs

Bell FCH, Jackie McLaughlin, Williamson FCH, Andrea Haubner, and BLT Agents, Jonathon Rodriguez and Leann Raborn, teamed to provide programs to the Texas Health and Human Services Grandparents Program with planning starting in February. The HHSC Grandparents program is a Americorp Vista program. Grandparents are typically retired community members that will go to the public schools to provide mentoring to the students.

The program has not been in schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic but needed training time in order to receive their program stipend. Their information was shared with the AgriLife Agents and were seeking ways to provide that training with health and wellness information. Andrea and Jackie provided TEAMS virtual programs using the HealthTalk Express program, Stress Less: Mind Matters, Coping in Times of Uncertainty as the kick off program and Jonathon and Leann provided BLT programs using Be Well, Live Well as the kickoff program. The response has been overwhelmingly positive and very complimentary.

Bosque, Leon, and Johnson Counties

Health Literacy Series

FCH Agents from Bosque, Leon, and Johnson Counties teamed up to provide an online virtual Health Literacy series for adults in their communities. Reaching older audiences has been more difficult due to COVID, so offering the class online was a way to engage individuals who are still unable to attend in-person classes. Utilizing Zoom, Laura Petty, Chris Coon, and Keely McCrady taught four sessions of Health Literacy along with Program Specialist Andrew Crocker, who kicked off the series by teaching session 1. The series was not only attended by adults 65+, but also caretakers for aging seniors. To make registration a simple process, Google Forms was used to create an online registration form, and Google Docs continued to be used to share session recordings with participants throughout the series. In total, there were 11 participants representative of District 8, 3, and 9.



District Happenings ...

DISTRICT 8

Erath, Limestone, and Williamson Counties

Stress Less with Mindfulness Series

The past year has been a stressful one for many people. The uncertainty of COVID-19 and the issues that accompanied it led to many people experiencing increased isolation, stress, anxiety, and much more. Many people also found themselves indulging in less healthy coping skills to help them get through this time. To address this issue, a team of agents from Erath County, Limestone County, and Williamson County offered a virtual Stress Less With Mindfulness Program from mid-January through mid-February.

Open to anyone in the state who was interested in attending, the program covered mindfulness basics, including sessions on “Beginning with the Breath”, “Mindful Eating”, “Mindful Movement”, and more. Each session built on the skills learned from the session before, in addition to introducing new material. A short mindfulness exercise was incorporated into each program session, as well as activities that were discussed as a group. Agents each took a turn leading a session and co-teaching a session together so that participants could hear from multiple educators. To increase engagement with this program being held virtually, a significant amount of time was dedicated to participant response in each session, and an environment of open sharing and communication was fostered.

A total of 153 participants registered for the virtual Stress Less with Mindfulness series. Participation at each session averaged around 30 participants. To evaluate the series, participants were asked to complete a pre-test and a post-test, which measured increases in behaviors such as developing a daily mindfulness practice, being more present and focused, and other skills related to the program series. Comments from participants reflected the value they saw in the series, and many stated how much they enjoyed tuning in during the sessions for an hour of mindfulness time during their lunch break.

Agent Team: Andrea Brooks-Erath County FCH, Emily Fisher-Limestone County FCH, Andrea Haubner-Williamson County FCH



Williamson County

Virtual Mental Health Conference



The Williamson County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Mental Health Task Force was formed in April 2020 to plan and implement educational opportunities and offer resources to residents of the county in response to current and emerging needs related to mental health and/or emotional wellness. The Williamson County FCH Agent assembled a task force with representation from six local agencies: Bluebonnet Trails Community Services, Georgetown Behavioral Health Institute, National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) Central Texas, Rock Springs Hospital, Williamson County Juvenile Services, and Williamson County and Cities Health District. The task force swiftly decided to plan a virtual two-day conference targeted at two audiences: mental health professionals in need of CEUs and families in need of education and/or resources. Moral Injury & Compassion Fatigue, Healthy Stress & Coping Mechanisms/Emotional Eating: Why We Don't Eat Broccoli When Stressed, Suicide Prevention, Mental Illness, & How to Ask the Hard Questions, and Substance Abuse & Isolation sessions were offered.

A total of 123 Williamson County Residents and/or mental health professionals attended the first day of the conference, five task force members assisted, and nine professionals/experts in their field spoke. The second day of the conference featured a keynote speaker from NAMI Central Texas who talked about how to stay resilient in the face of change and also allowed participants to pick from any of the six following breakout sessions: Mental Illness & Suicide Prevention-Ending the Silence for Youth, Mental Illness & Suicide Prevention-Let's Talk for Parents, Isolation & Substance Abuse, Empowering Youth-Body Safety for Caregivers, Building Community Resilience, or an informational session on how to utilize Aunt Bertha. Participants could choose to attend one of the sessions, or all six of the sessions offered. Forty-five attended the second day. A special thanks to the task force partners for making this event possible!

District Happenings ...

DISTRICT 9

Brazos County

Meal Preparation in a Jar

On January 28, 2021, Texas A&M AgriLife Employee Wellness hosted a Meal Preparation in a Jar as a lunch and learn. This fun event addressed precautions to take with jars, food safety practices in meal prep, and using jar prep as a healthy option for busy families. Canning jars can be a useful method for meals on the go and even for gift giving of dry mixes.

Presenters were Brazos County Extension Agents Flora Williams, Katie Zender, and Hendrix Broussard representing Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Better Living for Texans, and Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program. Each agent demonstrated a main dish, side dish, dessert, and a beverage. Working behind the scenes were 4-H Extension staff members Avery Martin and Makayla Cruz.

Nearly 100 employees attended this virtual event. Yummy recipes included: breakfast parfaits, make ahead oatmeal, smoothies, chicken and fruit salad, chipotle chicken taco salad, instant chicken ramen, country chili mix, homemade cornbread mix, friendship soup mix, double chocolate peppermint candy hot cocoa mix, spiced tea mix, French vanilla coffee mix.



Brazos County

Monthly Certified Food Managers Courses



Food protection management classes were set to be offered monthly in 2021. The classes look and feel different this year due to trying to maneuver through and complying with Covid-19 protocols, mandatory office closings due to icy roads, a historic winter storm that hampered the delivery of exams in time for class.



The January class was postponed twice from January 4 to January 11, but the third time was the charm on January 19. Students drove in from Alvin, Bastrop, Rosenberg, and locally to attend. Coming soon to Brazos County will be an establishment featuring tamales. Yummy! The February class did not fare as well because of the storm. The exams arrived too late for the course and the class was merged with the March class.

Thank you to co-instructor Julie Prouse with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and guest health inspector Zac Rodriguez with Brazos County Health District the class went off without a hitch.

District Happenings ...

DISTRICT 9

Brazos County

Hand Washing Super Stars

Brazos County FCH Agent, Flora Williams, worked with toddlers and preschoolers at Southwood Learning Center had a class on how to be SUPERSTAR hand washers. Oh, what fun learning why, what, how, and when to do the proper hand washing process. Class concluded with a song and practicing hand washing steps.

Thank you to Southwood Learning Center for partnering with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. Thank you to Master Wellness Volunteer, Julie Prouse, and BLT Extension Agent Katie Zender for making it a fun experience.



Brazos County

4-H Food Show and FCH Quiz Bowl

Sixteen AMAZING Brazos County 4-H Food Show contestants qualified for the District 9 4-H Food Show set for May 1 in Conroe. Two quiz bowl teams battled it out on the buzzers with their knowledge of FCH.

All the young people worked hard in the food and nutrition project. The number of contestants and teams were down by more than half, but participants' enthusiasm and drive were intact.

Gratitude is extended to the families, food and nutrition project leaders, and ambassadors who supported the contestants along the way. Many of the families served double duty through the year as they mentored and advocated for the project and helped other families learn about food and nutrition and the food related contests (even if most of it was virtual).

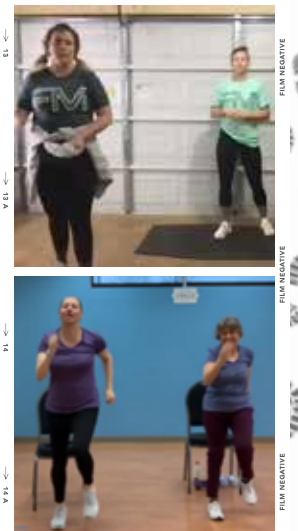
Brazos County

Hand Washing Super Stars



Brazos County is well on its way in year 24 of Walk Across Texas sponsored events by the WAT taskforce. We are proud to report 16 leagues (mostly worksites with headquarters in Brazos County), 172 teams and 1,228 individuals signed up. This year teams are encouraged to accept the "mission" to Walk Across Texas! as part of a "Mission: Possible" theme.

The all-virtual event is ongoing and has some new and enhanced opportunities added to this year's timeline. The Walk Across Texas Proclamation took place February 2 followed by the virtual kick off February 13. The taskforce did an amazing job executing the event in the absence of the agent. Weekly hosted virtual workouts via Facebook Live or Zoom are providing more opportunities for "group" workouts from strengthening and toning to line dancing and Pilates. These are a few that have taken place with more on the horizon as we move to the conclusion of the challenge. Participants are fired up, weekly e-news is going out, and people are getting active. Now on to the finish!



District Happenings ...

DISTRICT 9

Harris County

February is Heart Health Month!



On February 26th, Harris County FCH Agent, Amanda Krippel, along with UT Health Intern, Hannah Eason, gave an introductory virtual lesson on the importance of maintaining a balanced diet and all other risk factors to avoid heart disease to the parents of Baker Ripley Head Start program.

The active group of fourteen participants enjoyed the lesson given in English and in Spanish and gained a better understanding of living heart healthy to reduce their risk of getting any type of cardiovascular disease.

Harris County Stress Eating

Amanda Krippel, Harris County FCH Agent, gave a virtual presentation on Stress Eating in partnership with Collaborative for Children. The Houston Collaborative for Children is a non-profit organization that works with parents to lead the way in equitable early education for children.

Presenting to parents in both English and Spanish the twenty-one parents in attendance gained an understanding of how coping with food is not always the best choice. The presentation gave parents several strategies on how to reduce our tendency to stress eat.



Harris County

#December2Remember

The #December2Remember Interactive Calendar was designed as an educational publication to be used on social media, and through other “virtual” means, providing educational information to help individuals/families navigate the stress on the pandemic without actually focusing on the pandemic. The final publication was a PDF document that utilized a calendar for the month of December 2020. Each day of the week was designated with a theme: Spiritual Sunday, Money-Saving Monday, Traditions Tuesday, Wise-up Wednesday, Thankful Thursday, Flavorful Friday, and Self-Care Saturday. Team members each took responsibility for a day in the calendar to create a short educational video corresponding with the day’s theme. Participants accessed a video each day or jumped ahead to any topic of particular interest.

The following agents and Extension staff contributed to the calendar; Tonya Poncik, Fallon Foster, Amy Ressler, Norma Munoz, Cameron Peters, Flora Williams, Lora Jorgensen, Kristina Brown, Clara Walker, Misha Chakraborty, Ja’Shae Horn, Michele Scaife, Kathy Farrow, Sonja Davis, Kashara Bell, Lori Schindler, Brandi Keller, Natalie Knesek, Michelle Wright, Dianne Gertson, Erika Bochat, Jiamin Yan, Amanda Krippel, Zachary Giblin, Tina Broesche, Carla Hayes, Mary Sanders, Alexis Cordova, Rashayla Johnson, Gabby Washington, and Meredith Cryer. Susan Hubert, Administrative Assistant and Thomas Bao, UTHealth Intern, collected and designed the calendar.



District Happenings ...

DISTRICT 9

Montgomery County

Community Help Expo

The Montgomery County Behavioral Health & Suicide Prevention (BHSP) task force was created in 2018 by a local Justice of the Peace who was concerned about the number of suicides he was seeing. Several community and faith leaders united with him, and the effort grew to a county wide call to action that drew over 500 volunteers. Today, BHSP has 12 workgroups dedicated to working as behavioral health advocates. The BHSP Task Force exists to create a happier, healthier community by raising awareness about behavioral health and suicide through education, prevention, and connections. A BHSP website has been developed to house information and resources: www.CommunityHelp.org.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Montgomery County was already working in mental health, so naturally AgriLife was one of the organizations who joined the BHSP Task Force. Local staff facilitated a connection with Extension's efforts utilizing grant funds from Rebuild Texas to implement a community awareness event/conference. Joining forces, AgriLife and BHSP, planned and conducted the Community Help Expo. The event included an art exhibit, educational sessions called Community Conversations, a panel discussion, and keynote speaker Kevin Hines (nationally known speaker who survived an attempt to take his own life by jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge. His motto is #BeHereTomorrow).

After rescheduling and adjusting for COVID-19 precautions, the Community Help Expo was held on November 12, 2020 in Conroe at the Lone Star Convention Center and online via Zoom. Registration for the event was 331, including volunteers and representatives of BHSP workgroups hosting information tables along with local organizations. The event was streamed though Facebook Live via the BHSP page and received upwards of 1000 viewers at any given point during the event. Informal reports following the event indicated that at least two attendees chose not to end their lives after attending the event.



Amy Ressler hosted a panel discussion with BHSP Governance Board



Community Conversation presentations provided information and advice



An Art Exhibit provided alternative ways to express and deal with tough issues



A survey sent to registrants garnered 44 responses, of which 50% indicated attending in person, 45% attending online, and 5% utilized a combination of in-person and online. Other results include participant indications that they learned something new about behavioral and mental health, have a better understanding of BHSP, and connected with a resource or potential collaborator. Participants also reported very high satisfaction levels with the presentations.

Montgomery County Extension Staff Pictured: Rose Cervantes, Mike McBride, and Amy Ressler

Victoria County

Community Garden

The Victoria County Community Garden at the Health Department building has four key-hole beds maintained by the Victoria County Health Department, Master Gardeners, Earthworks Nursery, Victoria Advocate, and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. Residents are encouraged to eat from the garden. On March 17, 2021, the group planted tomatoes, green beans, yellow squash, zucchini, beets, carrots, and peppers. Victoria County FCH Agent, Gayle Bludau, said, "As you can tell from the photo, this group enjoys providing a garden for our residents. We truly care about people and we encourage everyone to eat more fresh vegetables!"



DISTRICT 11

District Happenings ...

DISTRICT 11

Austin, Fayette, and Washington Counties

Multi-County Child Care Conference

District 11 Family & Community Health Agents, Michelle Wright (Austin County), Sally Garrett (Fayette County), and Hannah Krebs (Washington County), hosted a 6-hour virtual Child Care Conference on February 6th. This all-day event was in partnership with the Turtle Wing Foundation, a tri-county organization.

The event with featured speakers that included a State Health Services Epidemiologist, Extension Specialists, Early Childhood Intervention Specialist and County Extension Agents. Topics presented were: "Transporting Children Safety in Child Care," "Dealing with Special Needs Children," "COVID Safety Precautions," "What's Hiding in Your Center-Protect Your Kids from Household Poisons," "Behavior Brainstorm," and "Toxic Plants, Outdoor Hazards & Pesticide Use in Centers."

Two hundred and three childcare providers registered and were awarded a total of 1,158 workshop hours.



DISTRICT 12

Frio, Atascosa, Bandera, and Wilson Counties

Walk-N-Talk: Fruit and Vegetable Series



The FABLOW AgriLife team (a multi-county collaboration between Frio, Atascosa, Bandera, & Wilson) kicked-off their virtual Walk N Talk – Fruit & Vegetable Series (February 2021). This is their 2nd year implementing this program online using the social media platform Facebook (Private Group).

They were excited to connect with their participants using Facebook Live for cooking and walking sessions. The team is now half-way into the series, and the program is still going strong.



Frio County

4-H Digital Storyboard

If you haven't seen it, Frio County FCH Agent, Jocelin Villarreal, created some tutorial videos on creating a digital storyboard for the Texas 4-H Fashion Contest.



Make sure to check her YouTube Playlist (click on the YouTube logo); she's been adding additional videos this month (March). Don't miss out, the Texas 4-H Fashion Contest deadline is in April!



District Happenings ...

DISTRICT 12

Hidalgo County

Stress Less with Mindfulness

In March, the new Stress Less with Mindfulness (SLWM) curriculum was launched in Hidalgo County and is currently ongoing. There are two group cohorts in the SLWM course and are learning about their stress cues, mindful eating and other mindfulness exercise they can utilize to lower their stresses.



Hidalgo County

MCV: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

The Master Clothing Volunteers are having a Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Denim Challenge by repurposing an old pair of jeans to promote recycling. To join the challenge please post a picture of your repurposed item and tag us on Facebook at "[AgriLife Extension Family Resources Hidalgo County](#)" or email your photo to: Joanne.Ureste@ag.tamu.edu.

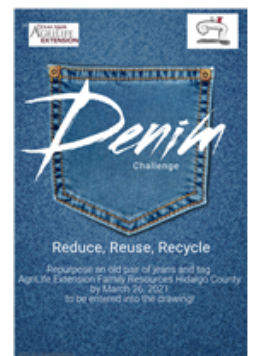
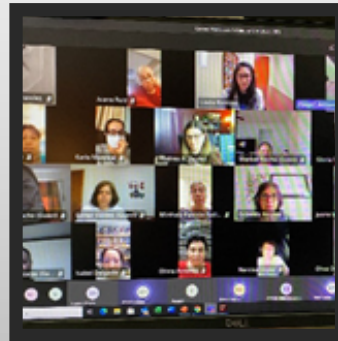
The United States Environmental Protection Agency estimates that textile waste occupies nearly 5% of all landfill space. While the EPA estimates that the textile recycling industry recycles approximately 3.8 billion pounds of post-consumer textile waste (PCTW) each year, this only accounts for approximately 15% of all PCTW, leaving 85% in our landfills (www.epa.gov).



Hidalgo County

Cooking Well with Diabetes

In January 2021, Andrea Valdez (CEA-FCH) implemented 2 rounds of Cooking Well with Diabetes. Partnering with PSJA ISD Parental Involvement, we had 23 graduates and the cohort with McAllen Housing Authority had 7 graduates learn about healthy habits and how to meal plan for their diabetes.



District Happenings ...

DISTRICT 12

Starr County

Access to Healthy Foods Starr County

Elva Yolanda Morado, FCH Agent in Starr County, partnered with Roma ISD to create a school garden. The long-lasting benefits of school gardens supports health and wellness and encourages students to choose nutritious foods. An innovative gardening program has been growing and is on its 8th year at R.T. Barrera Elementary School in Starr County.



The School garden supports and encourages healthful eating as a component of the student's physical well-being. Teachers also claim that the garden experience supports and aids their academics and social skills.

The garden has now expanded in to an orchard with 42 trees and soon a pollinator garden.



Starr County

Virtual Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities

Innovating engagement with audiences in virtual programing! Start County Better Living for Texans Agent, Heidi C. Lopez, is implementing a 10-week Multi-County virtual Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities class with Agents Kristina Loreda (Cameron County) and Andrea Torres-Barragan (Hidalgo County).

A drive by session for pick-up of educational reinforcement items at the Rio Grande City Public Library for participants was conducted and items included soil, planting pot, collapsible harvest bucket and herbs.



Willacy County

Learn, Grow, Eat, Go!

Based on new research of kids in school, the Learn, Grow, Eat, & Go! program combines the garden, nutrition, and physical activity into a unique package for learning more about healthy habits. Perla M. Flores, Willacy County FCH Agent, held a teacher training for Lyford Elementary School.

Five Lyford Elementary teachers successfully completed the LGEG training in January 2021 and have shared the program with their students. More than 250 students from pre-k to 5th grade have participated in the LGEG program since February 8th.



District Happenings ...

DISTRICT 12

D12 Multi-County Programs

Step Up, Scale Down/Walk Across Texas



The Rio Grande Team, including Cameron County, Willacy County, Hidalgo County, and Webb County, implemented the 12-week program, "Step Up, Scale Down" from November 2020 to January 2021.

In addition Step Up, Scale Down, the team utilized the Walk Across Texas-Howdy Health Portal to incorporate WAT into SUSD. In total, there were 87 registered for the program. On average, 15 people attended the weekly virtual classes and additional 20 people viewed the recorded classes through Facebook and YouTube. There were 35 members that were active and participating in the Facebook Challenges. During the Facebook group, members posted progress, such as losing 8 pounds or their stamina increasing. In total, there were 35 participants who graduated the program, participating in 75% or more.

The Step Up, Scale Down League completed 2,321.65 miles through Walk Across Texas-Howdy Health. The highest walker, Yolanda Garza, walked 401.85 miles. The next program session begins on March 3, 2021 and ends on May 26, 2021. There are 48 participants registered from Hidalgo County.

D12 Multi-County Programs

Virtual Dinner Tonight Healthy Cooking School

In February 2021, Agents from Hidalgo County (Andrea Valdez), Webb County (Angie Sifuentes and Corina Garcia), Brooks County (Katarina Rodriguez) and Kleberg/Kenedy County (Zelina Zavala) presented the first Dinner Tonight Healthy Cooking School virtually in District 12. Via a Facebook private group, 154 members watched and took a Trip to the Mediterranean with healthy recipes and tips!



D12 Multi-County Programs

Walk N Talk/Walk Across Texas

Walk N Talk/Walk Across Texas with Katarina Rodriguez, Brooks County; Lilian Mezquida, Cameron County; Marisa Dimas, Duval County; and Perla Flores, Willacy Counties during an 8-week virtual physical activity program helped participants learn the importance of keeping track of your steps. physical activity, learning about vegetables or rethink your drink.



District Happenings ...

DISTRICT 12

NEAFCS Member Spotlight

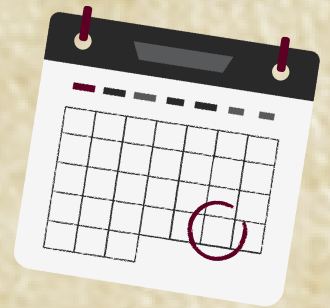
NEAFCS Member Spotlight - February 2021



Shout out to Jocelin Villarreal, Frio County FCH Agent, for being featured on the NEAFCS February Newsletter and Facebook Group. Jocelin is a Texas Affiliate member for the National Extension Association for Family Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS), a state officer for TEAFCS (webmaster), and currently the state liaison on the District 12 TEAFCS.

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LAEuFIAM7QU>

Dates to Remember



Texas Extra Dates

Submission Due Date

June 15, 2021
September 15, 2021
December 15, 2021
March 15, 2022

Edition Release Date

July 1, 2021
October 1, 2021
January 1, 2022
April 1, 2022

Editor's Note

Thank you to everyone that submitted something for this edition. I enjoyed seeing the different ways we continued to adapt programming with COVID-19 and enhance our digital presence and capabilities!

If you are a District Editor and did not receive a submission reminder from me or from your District President, please email sarah.latham@ag.tamu.edu, to ensure you are on my list and will receive future reminders.