

JULY 2020

# WOW-E

The official newsletter of  
Working on Wellness Environments

## WHAT IS INSIDE

PHYSICALLY DISTANCED,  
BUT VIRTUALLY  
TOGETHER

WOW-E TEAM MEMBER  
SPOTLIGHT

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

RESOURCES



## JULY REFLECTIONS

BY VALERIE JAUREGUI

At the start of the pandemic, no one anticipated COVID-19 would continue to impact our daily lives in July. As time goes on, many of us have had to adapt to our new "normals". This includes working together to adapt projects and programs in relevance to COVID-19.

While most community participants and leaders continue to be excited and passionate about making changes to improve the health infrastructure and systems in their communities, everyone has approached moving forward in ways that are best for their communities and constituents. This has included WOW-E continuing virtually. In this issue, you can find how we've been virtually engaging, a spotlight on Kelsey Coats, and a grant opportunity that may be calling out to you.





## MEETING DIGITALLY

BY VALERIE JAUREGUI

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many of us to work differently. Whether it's taking on a new or additional job or household responsibilities, quarantining at home or wearing facial masks and protective gear, we've all had to adapt to these unprecedented times. This also includes adapting our outreach for WOW-E and working with many groups to meet online.

After some initial time to adjust to COVID-19, some local coalition groups and the WOW-E team have been able to engage in planning meetings and coalition meetings online. Victorino Cantu, in Starr County, and the counting experts from TTI (Texas Transportation Institute) were able to "visit", plan, and troubleshoot pre-use counts using Zoom, Google Earth, mapped cell phone images, email, and good old fashion phone calls.

Of course, these new changes come with challenges. Most of our coalition members are involved in frontline COVID-19 response efforts. Additionally, internet access and access to computers prohibited some from being a part of the efforts as mentioned by one of our groups in Webb county. Finally, some members may have no experience with zoom. While some have found asking their children and grandchildren for help has been helpful, and are on their way to becoming zoom professionals, others do not see this as the solution for themselves!

Please be reassured that we continue to work with our local agents and team members are listening to you all as we work together in responding to and adapting our outreach to continue to support local coalitions in the efforts to continue to push for healthier infrastructure and systems in your local communities. Know that you can reach out to me with questions, ideas, or concerns through my email [valeria.jauregui@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:valeria.jauregui@ag.tamu.edu) or my direct phone line (956) 821-1476.



## WOW-E SPOTLIGHT

BY VALERIE JAUREGUI



The Working on Wellness Environments team would like to extend our best wishes to our own Kelsey Coats. As an Extension Assistant of Program Outreach PSE, Kelsey has been involved in every aspect of the WOW-E project from providing technical assistance for community planning efforts, logistical support for site visits and workshops, to contributing to the communication efforts.

Kelsey began her career with Texas A&M Agrilife Extension as a student worker with the Urban and Municipal Parks program, where she excelled in this role for a year and half. After graduating, Kelsey transitioned into a full-time role with WOW-E and Texas A&M Agrilife Extension's Urban and Municipal Parks Program. Kelsey's background and experience in Recreation, Park, and Tourism Sciences and her previous work in community planning, allowed her to succeed as part of the physical activity subject matter expert team, as well as the communications team.

When the RFA process was introduced, Kelsey had a key role in guiding communities through readiness assessments, asset identification, and setting clear goals and action steps. As projects progressed into planning phases, Kelsey's involvement included leading walking audits in Rio Grande City and Sierra Blanca, TX, planning pop-ups with the downtown Rio Grande City, TX group, planning story walks with the Rio Grande City Library in Rio Grande City, TX, and guiding all groups through various site inventories. Additionally, Kelsey shared these best practices with other community leaders at two state conference presentations and in her article for NRPA (see below).



Instrumental to the communications team, Kelsey has been involved with social media, newsletter and blog creation, and has taken lead in creating videos that highlight the dedicated community champions of our 4 counties. With strong writing skills and a bird's eye view of best practices, Kelsey was invited to [write an article](#) for the National Recreation and Park Association magazine, where she highlighted community engagement in relation to the WOW-E project. Kelsey participated in a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention panel, where she was invited to speak about the communication efforts of WOW-E and our local coalitions who are active followers of the communication pieces.

Kelsey's favorite part of being in this role is working with a multidisciplinary team. She enjoys looking at issues from a health standpoint. She also enjoys getting to know our four counties and seeing local groups get excited about making change in their counties.

As for her steps, Kelsey will be attending Cornell University in Ithaca, New York where she will be pursuing a master of Regional Planning. She is excited to not only approach planning with her background in parks, but with health in mind.

The WOW-E team would like to thank Kelsey for her dedicated contributions to WOW-E. While we will not see her as much, we are looking forward to continue working with her on a part-time basis.

*"I've enjoyed getting to know the 4 counties and seeing them get excited about change in their communities." - Kelsey*

# *GRANT OPPORTUNITIES*

## **EMERGENCY FUNDING TO SUPPORT MEAL PROGRAMS**

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is offering the availability of grant funds to provide emergency funding relief to local park and recreation agencies to support sustained operations of meal programs that have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic throughout summer 2020. Learn more and apply [here](#).

## **LISA LIBRARIES GRAND PROGRAM**

Nonprofit organizations that serve low-income or underserved areas are eligible to apply for in-kind donations from The Lisa Libraries. Lisa Libraries provides donations of free books for community facilities to host their own small libraries or operate programs where children can take the book home. Learn more and apply [here](#).

## **THE FRUIT TREE PLANTING FOUNDATION GRANT PROGRAM**

Municipal entities, local nonprofits, and public schools are eligible to apply to support the planting of fruitful trees and plants to alleviate hunger, combat global warming, strengthen communities, and improving the surrounding environment. Learn more and apply [here](#).

## **KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL'S COMMUNITY RESTORATION AND RESILIENCY FUND**

Keep America Beautiful's Community Restoration and Resiliency Fund benefits Keep America Beautiful Affiliates that serve communities directly affected by natural and environmental disasters. Learn more and apply [here](#).

# RESOURCES



## WHEN TO WEAR GLOVES

*For the general public, wearing gloves is not necessary in most situations, like running errands. CDC recommends wearing gloves when you are cleaning or caring for someone who is sick. Read more [here](#).*

## AGRILIFE CARES ACT COURSE

*Online trainings to help local leaders navigate the federal funding process, and in turn, respond and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Read more [here](#).*

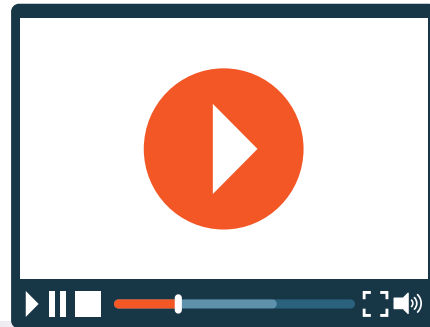


## AGRILIFE COVID-19 MYTHS AND RESPONSES

*You can find many claims about COVID-19 online. Texas A&M Agrilife Extension answers COVID-19 myths. Read more [here](#).*

## SOCIAL DISTANCING

*Keep a safe Distance to slow the spread. Limiting close face-to-face contact with others is the best way to reduce the spread of coronavirus disease. Read more [here](#).*



## FAQS ON CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS DURING COVID

*Looking for information on your options for feeding kids during school closures and through the summer? No Kid Hungry answers your questions [here](#).*



## GET THE FACTS ABOUT COVID-19

*Take steps to care for yourself and help protect others in your home and community. CDC has more information [here](#).*

