

Making A Difference

HARRIS COUNTY
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 21, ISSUE 2

JULY 2021



TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION



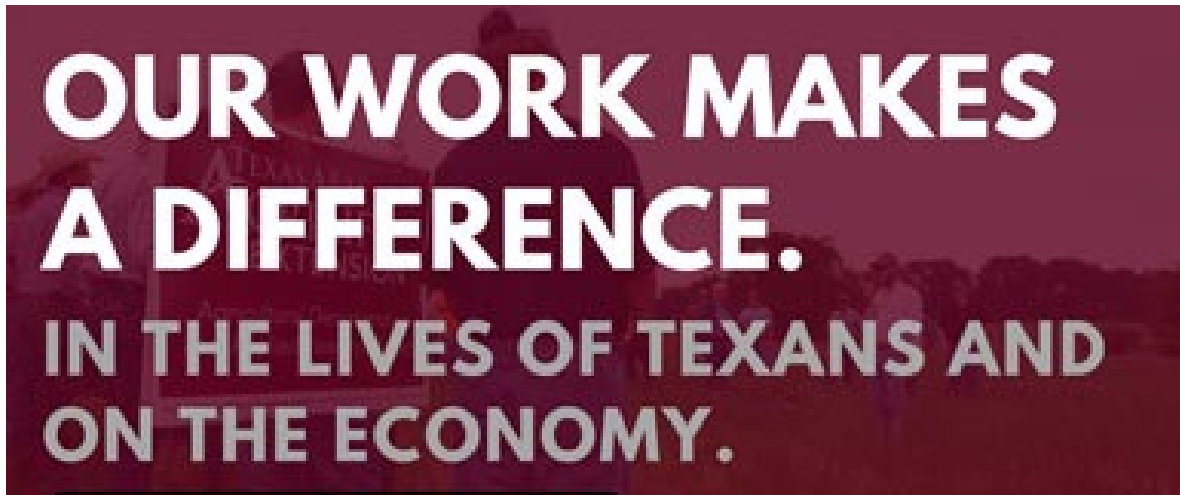
PRAIRIE VIEW
A&M UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Cooperative Extension Program



Extension Education in Harris County

Howdy and Welcome to Harris County!



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.”

LET'S TALK:
A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
Service - Harris County

Our team at Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has been hard at work in communities across Harris County. The opportunity to collaborate with so many of our partners who share a passion for our engaging educational programs, continues to inspire our work in AgriLife Extension. Our county extension agents, staff and volunteers remain resilient as we approach a new quarter and your support builds upon our firm foundation as a leader in the Greater Houston Area. The diligent work of our professionals over the past three years, continues to lead us toward enhanced developments and achievements, which I hope you will enjoy viewing in this latest edition of Making a Difference. We appreciate the support of our Commissioner's Court for their leadership and guidance. Thank you for believing in our mission and vision for the future AgriLife Extension.

Respectfully,

David D. Wright
County Extension Director – Harris County
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

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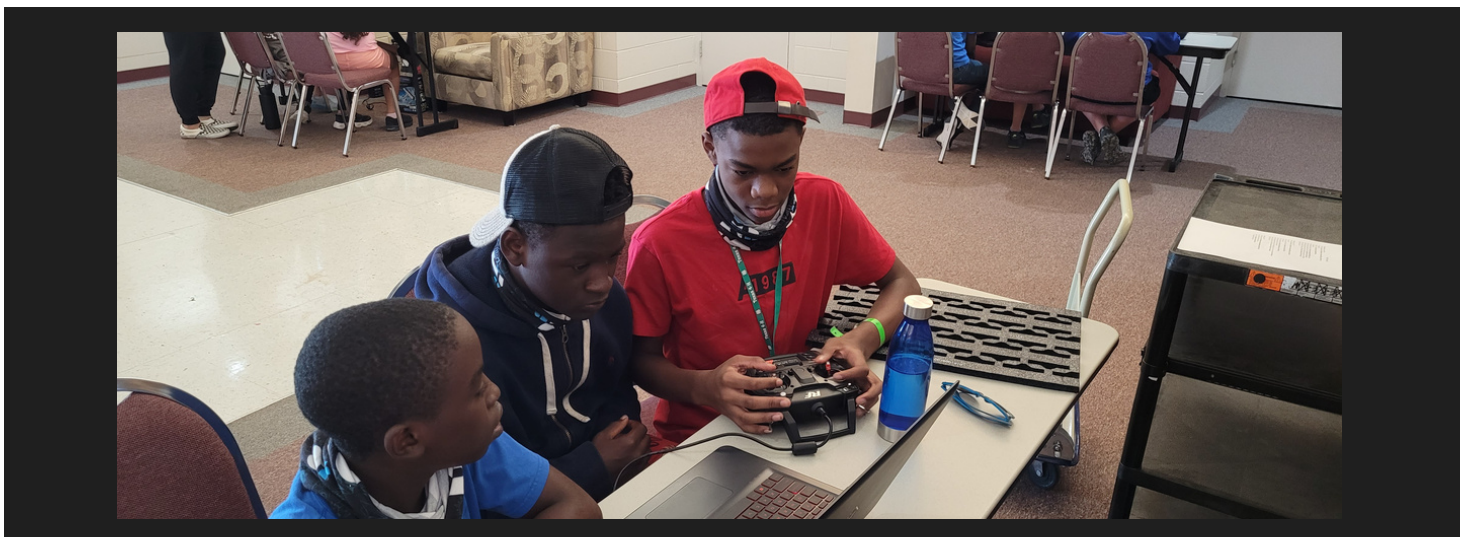
4-H STEM CAMP WITH DISCOVERU



Written by Zachary Giblin, Harris County 4-H & Youth Development Program Assistant

Harris County 4-H began the summer in partnership with DiscoverU, a non-profit youth serving organization, by providing a 3-day long STEM Camp at the Texas 4-H Center located in Brownwood, Texas. Sixteen youth from HISD Schools made the trip to participate in a range of educational activities, including: building robots, creating art with 3D printers and pens, facing flight simulator challenges, launching rockets, and using knowledge of math and physics to create miniature rollercoasters.

Additionally, the participants were able to have the camp experience created by the staff at the Texas 4-H center with campfires, camp games, and enjoying the beautiful outdoor scenery. We would like to thank our partners at DiscoverU for working with us to provide this group a positive summer camp experience.



HARRIS COUNTY 4-H AWARDED GRANT

*by Misha Chakraborty, Harris
County 4-H Program Assistant*

We are honored to be awarded a grant of \$6640 by the Harris County Precinct 3 Commissioner Tom S. Ramsey. Dr. Misha Chakraborty and Mr. Zachary Giblin represented Harris County 4-H at the event.

"It is easy to sit up and take notice. What is difficult is getting up and taking action."-Honoré de Balzac.

The vision of Texas A & M AgriLife Extension Service - Harris County 4-H, along with strong leadership is to motivate us to achieve success collaboratively through hard work, passion, commitment, and enthusiasm.



The celebration event was well organized by Harris County Department of Education: Case for Kids. This grant is offered for the first time, and we hope it continues to help the community in need. Special thanks to the board of Trustees, Superintendent of HISD, Case for Kids director and associated employees.



Harris County 4-H



4-H ROBOTICS CAMP

by Rashayla Johnson, Harris County 4-H Program Assistant

4-H has a long history of supporting robotics programs through 4-H clubs, after-school programs, camps and curriculum. Through robotics, 4-H'ers learn teamwork, problem-solving, critical thinking, engineering and design.

To increase the number of 4-H youth in Harris County that are interested in the robotics project, a robotics summer camp was held on June 2nd and 3rd.

The students were able to learn about robots, coding, and programming using the EV3 Mindstorms kit and application on the laptops. They were instructed in the basics of a 4-H robotics project, what a robotics challenge looks like, and a few testimonials from youth that compete in those challenges.

The students broke into groups of three to four, set up the Lego robotics kits, and built their robots. Once their robots were complete, they began to program it to perform simple tasks such as moving forward one rotation. On the second day of the camp, students practiced coding the first half of the camp day to “compete” in the mock robotics challenge. A total of nine youth participated within the two days.

The 4-H robotics program inspires young people and develops an early interest in robotics engineering and technology.



AEROSPACE STEM 4-H SUMMER CAMP

*by Rashayla Johnson, Harris County 4-H
Program Assistant*

Harris County 4-H Program Assistant Rashayla Johnson, along with the help of the STEM specialist at Davila Elementary School, conducted a three-week summer camp for the students enrolled in summer school at this campus on the Southeast side of Houston.

The camp was designed for students to meet for four hours each Wednesday starting June 23rd and ended on July 7th. The purpose of this camp was to give the students a fun way to learn about STEM, 4-H, and aerospace. The students learned about Newton's three laws, the history of rocketry, and early and modern rocketry. A total of 136 youth and 6 adults participated.

The participants received an understanding of how rocketry and aerospace are connected to everyday life. After learning about Newton's three laws, the youth were able to better understand gravity and how much thought is involved when launching a rocket. The students really enjoyed using balloons to understand the first and third law. At the end of the camp, the students were given the opportunity to design and launch their own rockets.



Many children and teenagers living in urban areas do not have the opportunity to explore the natural world around them or recognize how we are all interconnected with it. In an effort to introduce youth that are historically underrepresented in the STEM field to these topics and outdoor experiences, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Harris County partnered with the YMCA of Greater Houston to develop and implement the "Nature Explore" program in summer 2021.

This program explores the concepts of local ecology, habitat, adaptation, water use, plant & animal identification, land management, environmental careers, and more! We believe that prolonged, informal exposure to STEM increases a child's interest and builds a foundation for STEM proficiency, environmental stewardship, and recognition of how they are interconnected with our natural systems through High School and beyond.

The YMCA Nature Explore-Connecticut program was adapted by Harris County AgriLife Extension's Jaden Kelly, to better reflect the regional ecology of Greater Houston. Over 50 YMCA staff members were then trained by Harris County AgriLife staff to implement this program across 32 YMCA locations and reach over 2,250 youth in our region.

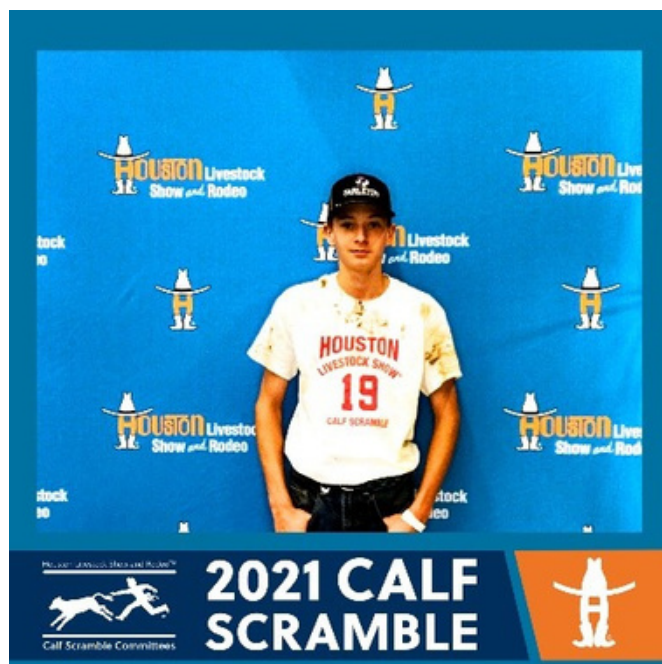
FROM TINY SEEDS GROWS MIGHTY TREES

BY JADEN KELLY, HARRIS COUNTY 4-H
IMAGINE SCIENCE PROGRAM
COORDINATOR

Being the first program of this magnitude, AgriLife Extension personnel Jaden Kelly and Rashayla Johnson routinely made site visits to assess the quality and impact of the lessons being implemented. Students & staff members are also being surveyed to learn the impact of this program and gain insights into how we can make improvements in future programming being executed at this scale.

Nature Explore shows how working in partnership with other youth group organizations can increase the overall impact and success of youth programs in our community. By using Harris County 4-H expertise in program development and training, YMCA members and staff, and assistance from the 4H departments in Harris, Fort Bend, Galveston, Montgomery, and Walker County, the Nature Explore program was able to maximize our reach to youth participants in our community without limiting the quality of our content.





HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO CALF SCRAMBLE

by Steven Frederick, Harris County 4-H Program Associate

In April, five Harris County 4-H members participated in the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ Calf Scramble.

With the drop of a cowboy hat, 15 calves are released into the arena for 30 4-H/FFA members to chase and attempt to catch. Each student who catches a calf is awarded a \$1,750 certificate to purchase a registered beef heifer or market steer to show at the Houston Livestock Show the following year.

Returning as an exhibitor, the student shows in a special competition with other calf scramble and judging contest winners. The student receives a \$500 bonus if program requirements are fulfilled throughout the year. Congratulations to Ryan Smee, Kaylee Soto, Royce Martinez, Trinity Harrison, and Elleanna Pittman for catching a calf.





LIVESTOCK JUDGING

In April, Harris County 4-H had a Livestock Judging Team compete in the District 9 4-H Livestock Judging Contest. The team consisted of Dawson Sherrouse, Ashlyn Stadelbacher and Reid Irmiter. In this contest, they identified market and breeding characteristics in cattle, sheep, goats, and swine. The team placed in the top 10 by placing 5th and Dawson Sherrouse was 1st place individual in the Sheep & Goat category.



4-H has a rich history in Texas. Since 1908, youth have been gaining valuable life-skills through hands-on activities taught and supported by caring adult volunteers and Extension Agents.

4-H ROUNDUP

In June, Harris County 4-H had an Ag Product Identification team compete in the 75th Annual Texas 4-H Round-Up in College Station, Texas. The team consisted of Ryan Smee, Justin Reaves, Laura Reaves and Emma McMillian. The contest consisted of 20 agricultural products from across the State of Texas in which you must identify the product such as a fruit, nuts, beef, pork and many more to then determine the commodity, where it is grown and what the product is used for in the agricultural industry. The team was 13th out of 35 teams and Justin Reaves was 9th high individual in the contest.



AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

PASTURE FIELD DAY

*by Shannon Dietz,
Harris County Agriculture & Natural Resources Agent*



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service - Harris County Ag & Natural Resources Dept. recently partnered with Corteva AgriScience and the Texas Animal Health Commission for two pasture field days in Harris County. The field days were held on June 9th in Crosby and June 16th at the Katy Prairie Conservancy.

The program consisted of highlighting Corteva herbicide on cattle pastures showing the effects and cost savings of the product to the 30 participants. Corteva also sponsored and presented a drift management class that offered a CEU credit for participants. Information was distributed and questions were answered concerning product reliability, effectiveness and weed control. A demonstration was conducted with a boom sprayer to show participants the correct methods and timing for spraying pastures. Proper handling procedures were also discussed and demonstrated when handling restrictive herbicides and chemicals.

Representatives from the Texas Animal Health Commission were on site to present the latest information on combating and controlling feral hogs in Texas. Information was also given on slaughtering practices, baiting, and trapping, along with disease and safe handling practices with meat. Participants were able to ask questions and have open discussion on what control methods work the best and what is being worked on in research. All participants received 2 CEU credits towards their TDA pesticide recertification.



INTRODUCING THE HOME GROWN PODCAST

by Brandi Keller, Harris County Horticulture Agent

Last May, in an effort to adapt to the changes that stay-at-home orders initiated, our Horticulture and Agriculture & Natural Resources Department started a Lecture Series aimed to provide education to the public from the comfort and safety of their home. Later that year, we introduced a monthly newsletter with more local resources pertaining to gardening and agriculture.

In May of 2021, we added the Home Grown Podcast as another educational tool. Since we have improved the efficiency of our education through technology, we take into account that people learn through various methods. Lectures are for visual and auditory learners, the newsletter is for visual learners, and the podcast is another avenue for auditory learners.

Podcasts are short interviews that can be downloaded and listened to at your convenience. They are easy to play while in the car or on the go and allow us to speak to community members, Texas A&M specialists, experts in the field, and other Extension Agents and volunteers.

Check out our first two podcasts [HERE](#). Episode #1 Introduces the County Extension Agents, Paul Winski, Shannon Dietz, and Brandi Keller. In Episode #2 Paul Winski interviews Bill Barr to discuss plant propagation and the nursery industry.

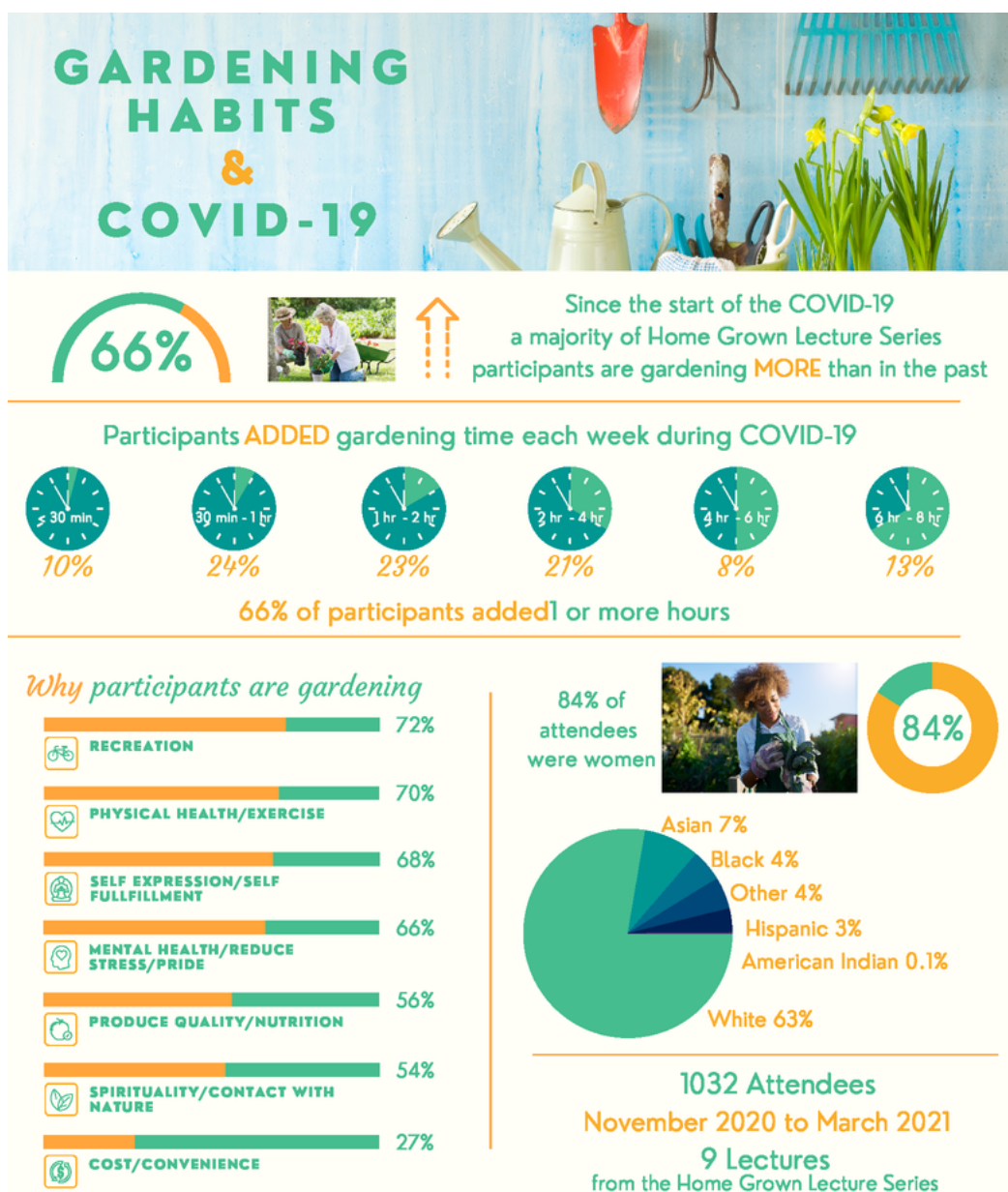
The series provides information on urban agriculture, horticulture, gardening, and ag literacy that is relevant to the urban gardener.





CHANGES IN GARDENING HABITS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

by Paul Winski, Harris County Horticulture Agent



Many things have changed because of the pandemic, some for the good and others maybe not so good. But the time spent gardening has increased and is a positive outcome from this event.

The Harris County Ag & Natural Resources Unit initiated the Home Grown Series in May 2020 as a response to the work from home order from Harris County. During that time, many of the greenhouse and nursery growers, along with retail garden centers, were reporting increased sales of green goods since people were working from home. Our team took this opportunity to determine how much time people were spending in their gardens and what was motivating them to garden.

The infographic above covers 5 months of survey results from our participants. The key takeaway: 66% of the participants are gardening at least 1 hour more than in the past; and they are gardening for holistic reasons such as: recreation, physical health, and self-fulfillment. We will continue to survey our attendees through 2021 to see if these trends continue.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS!

by Brandi Keller, Harris County Horticulture Agent

The Harris County Master Gardeners continue to earn recognition for their contribution to our local communities. In May, these volunteers won two awards during the TMGA (Texas Master Gardener Association) Search for Excellence Awards for 2020. Awards are given in each category according to volunteer group size.



HARRIS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Green Thumb Gardening Lecture Series won 2nd place for Educational Program

The free program is a monthly online lecture series through the Harris County Public Library System (HCPL.) Pre-covid, this talk was held in-person at four libraries, but it quickly transitioned to a virtual platform presented by HCPL with the capability of streaming to all 26 county libraries. The Facebook Live attendance during the program has ranged from 50-240, but the beauty is the ability for the public to watch it as a recorded post, reaching thousands each month. Houston Community College then adopted this online talk later in the year and was presented with their Community Learning program. Local collaborations have made our programs more accessible throughout the county. Many thanks to these organizations that help us educate.





Urban Dirt Monthly Online Newsletter wins 3rd place for Written Program

The Urban Dirt is a monthly newsletter written and published by Harris County Master Gardeners. Their information and articles bring research-based horticulture information to Texans interested in urban gardening. The team consists of up to twenty volunteers as they contribute to articles, editing, and proofreading. A 20+ page newsletter is posted monthly on their website and Facebook Page.

If you have not heard of or read the Urban Dirt, check out the link [HERE](#).

Harris County Master Gardeners are volunteers for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. These awards showcase how valuable they are in helping county residents improve their gardening skills



GROWING AND NOURISHING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

The Better Living for Texans (BLT) department of AgriLife Extension has been ramping up the gardening programs in Harris County! The “Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities” program is a 6-week gardening series for adults, that focuses on how to start growing vegetables at home or in community gardens, to increase the intake of fruits and vegetables. The series covers selecting a proper garden location, soils and composting, planting methods, garden maintenance, pests and diseases, and proper harvesting. The program can be given in an existing community garden, or by planting in containers.

In March, BLT Agents Lora Jorgensen and Kristina Brown started the series virtually with The Women’s Home. In April they started the series virtually with UT Physicians Multispecialty Victory, and The YMCA of Greater Houston. In May, they started the series in person with Hockley Community Center and the Thomas A. Glazier Senior Center.

More gardening series are planned for 2021! If you are interested in hosting this program at your site, please contact the Harris County AgriLife Extension office.

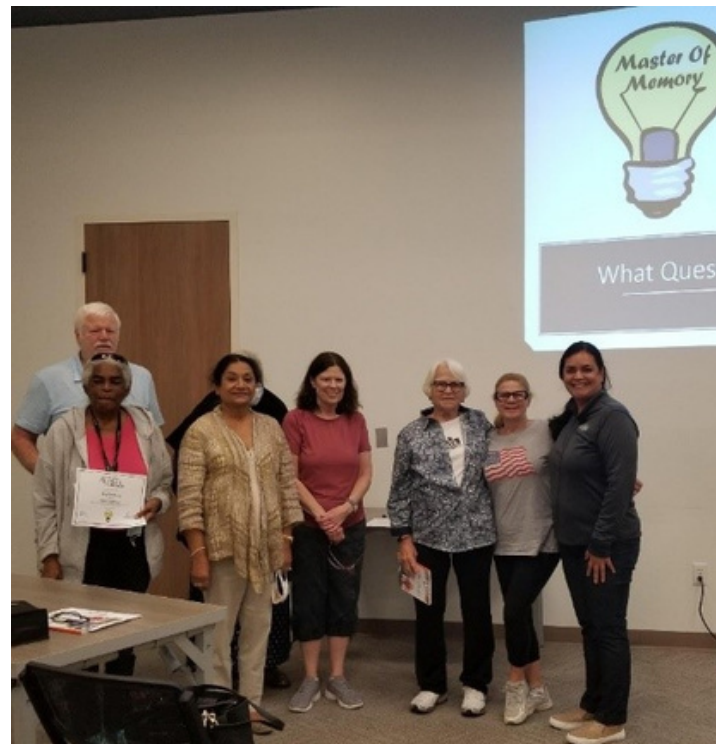


MASTER OF MEMORY SERIES

by Amanda Krippel, Harris County Family & Community Health Agent

On May 20, 2021, Harris County Extension Service Agent Amanda Krippel wrapped up her first in-person program series, Master of Memory, at Thomas A. Glazier Senior Education Center. A total of 9 participants graduated from the program series with over 81 members attending the overall series.

The goal of the Master of Memory program is to improve participants' memory function. Master of Memory encourages participants to recognize that they can impact their memory function, evaluate their own memory function, identify factors that may enhance or detract from their memory function, and find ways that may help address some of those factors. The six-lesson series includes presentations on memory and learning, memory strategies, nutrition, medications, medical conditions, and exercise for the body and mind.



ALL ABOUT CRAWFISH

by Amanda Krippel, Harris County Family & Community Health Agent

Wellness Wednesday has been a successful virtual program bringing fresh ideas straight to viewers' homes!

Harris County Ag & Natural Resources Agent Shannon Dietz, along with Family & Community Health Agents Amanda Krippel and Dr. Sonja Davis, gave a virtual presentation to a Wellness Wednesday audience of 28 on May 12, 2021.

Shannon Dietz gave an overview of Louisiana Crawfish, where to find them, how to cook them, and the health benefits of crawfish. He and Amanda Krippel then prepared a healthier version of Crawfish Etouffee. At the end of the presentation each participant was given the recipes for Crawfish Etouffee, Crawfish Cornbread and boiled crawfish. To be added to the mailing list for new Family & Community Health programs, please email susan.hubert@ag.tamu.edu.



WALK ACROSS TEXAS!

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

by Sonja Davis, Harris County Family & Community Health Agent

Sixteen teams and 11 individuals participated in the 2021 Walk Across Texas Challenge that ran from February 28th – April 24th. Collectively over 18,800 miles were walked. Grow Kits donated by Urban Harvest, motivational gallon water bottles, and other prizes were provided to the top walkers and ones who completed weekly challenges. Zoom sessions were held to motivate and encourage participants to keep moving. Zach Giblin, Harris County 4-H Program Assistant, conducted a session on stretching and Lee Merriweather, a Walk Across Texas participant, volunteered to teach two line dancing sessions.



COMMUNITY PARTNERS: WORK FAITH CONNECTION AND CARL WUNSCHER SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

By Alfredo Alberto, Extension Agent - FCH - PVAMU Cooperative Extension Program

Alfredo U. Alberto, Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension Program Family & Community Health Agent's Money Management and Character Development program has benefited from a partnership with Work Faith Connection since fall of 2020. Work Faith Connection has played a key role for Houstonians by connecting those seeking employment, those underemployed and those seeking to sharpen their soft skills in the professional work world environment. Through our program partnership we have been able to connect Carl Wunsch Senior High School students with their I-Works soft skills and employability training certification program. Through our Money Management, Character Development program we have been able to connect Wunsch students to real world application of what they are studying in school through Work Faith Connection.

Alfredo received recognition as an Ambassador (Volunteer) of the month in WorkFaith Volunteer E-News | May 2021. Click [HERE](#) to read the article.



"Because of Alfredo's connections and heart of servitude, we have trained over 50 students at Wunsch High and we are currently working with them to partner in an even bigger way in the fall!"
— Latonia Oyeniran



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Cooperative Extension Program

UPCOMING EVENTS

Click on listings for more information.

HOME GROWN LECTURE SERIES
COOKING SAFELY OUTDOORS
AUGUST 5TH @ 10:00 A.M.

GREEN THUMB GARDENING SERIES
GARDENING FOR BEGINNERS
AUGUST 9TH @ 10:00 A.M.

HOME GROWN LECTURE SERIES
FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING
AUGUST 19TH @ 10:00 A.M.

HOME GROWN LECTURE SERIES
ENHANCING YOUR DISHES WITH FLAVORED BUTTER
SEPTEMBER 2ND @ 10:00 A.M.

GREEN THUMB GARDENING SERIES
PERMACULTURE
SEPTEMBER 13TH @ 10:00 A.M.

HOME GROWN LECTURE SERIES
GROWING MICROGREENS AT THE WINDOWSILL
SEPTEMBER 16TH @ 10:00 A.M.

LIFESCAPING SERIES
PLANT FORWARD CHARCUTERIE
SEPTEMBER 17TH @ 1:00 P.M.

LIFESCAPING SERIES
FOOD PRESERVATION
SEPTEMBER 24TH @ 1:00 P.M.

2021 SOUTHEAST TEXAS AG SUMMIT
BAYTOWN, TX
SEPTEMBER 30TH-OCTOBER 1ST

LIFESCAPING SERIES
GRILLING LIKE A TEXAN
OCTOBER 8TH, [CLICK FOR DETAILS](#)

HOME GROWN LECTURE SERIES
PLANT PROPAGATION
OCTOBER 11TH @ 10:00 A.M.

LIFESCAPING SERIES
BRAINS GAME FOR MENTAL ACUITY
OCTOBER 15TH @ 10:00 A.M.

2021 TEXAS URBAN EXTENSION SUMMIT

"ROADMAP TO URBAN PROGRAMMING"

OCTOBER 26 - 28, 2021

CHECK HARRIS.AGRILIFE.ORG FOR MORE DETAILS SOON

We provide programs, tools, and resources -local & statewide- that teach people how to improve agriculture and food production, advance health practices, protect the environment, strengthen our communities, and enrich youth.

IN COOPERATION WITH ...

Lina Hidalgo,

Rodney Ellis,

Adrian Garcia,

Tom S. Ramsey,

R. Jack Cagle,

Harris County Judge

Commissioner, Precinct 1

Commissioner, Precinct 2

Commissioner, Precinct 3

Commissioner, Precinct 4

Making A Difference Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 21, Issue 2

July 2021

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

David Wright, County Extension Director - Harris County

Email: David.Wright@ag.tamu.edu

13105 Northwest Freeway

Suite 1000

Houston, Texas 77040

(713) 274-0950

Website: <https://harris.agrilife.org>

Email: harris-tx@tamu.edu

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife..

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION



PRAIRIE VIEW
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