

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION
MAKING A DIFFERENCE
IN HARRIS COUNTY
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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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!

**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.”

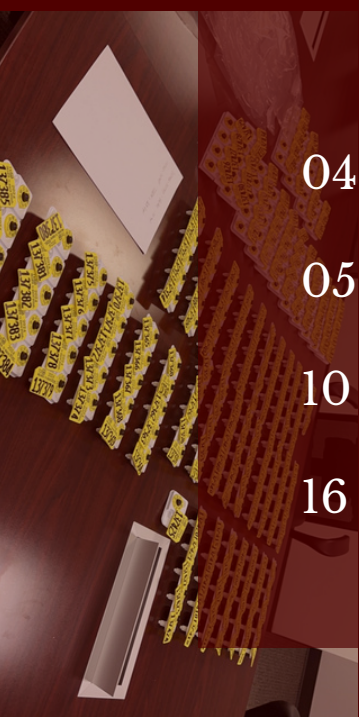


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The Texas A&M
AgriLife
HARRIS COUNTY
Houston Community College (HCC)

Singular Vision Sets the Destination - Collective Actions Ensures the Journey Toward Success

We are delighted to share some exciting news about a remarkable collaboration between Harris County 4-H and Houston Community College (HCC) Northwest College.

The 4-H Unit of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service In Harris County, in conjunction with Harris County Master Gardeners and HCC, worked tirelessly to create an engaging summer camp for 46 enthusiastic children.



The camp was carefully crafted to provide a perfect blend of enjoyment and education, making it an unforgettable experience for all attendees.

Their imaginations ran wild as they tinkered, built, and explored the possibilities of creating with their own hands. The joy and pride on their faces were a testament to the value of empowering young minds with practical skills and creative thinking.



The week of June 5th through June 9th witnessed a fun and enriching youth summer camp experience at the HCC Katy Campus, where young minds aged 7 to 12 came together for a week of learning and exploration.

By Zachary Giblin, County Extension Agent - Urban Youth Development



By Linzee Yelderman, - 4-H & Youth Development Program Assistant



Houston Community College AgriLife Summer Camp

During the month of June, the Harris County 4-H staff collaborated with the Houston Community College staff to organize an engaging and enlightening Natural Resources and Science summer camp. The picturesque Katy campus served as the perfect backdrop for this exciting educational event.

With a strong emphasis on water-related topics, our presentations were thoughtfully designed to enrich the students' understanding of this vital natural resource. We covered various aspects, including water tension, watersheds, states of matter, ecosystems, evolution, and adaptation, providing the young minds with a comprehensive view of the importance of water in our world.

To make the learning experience hands-on and enjoyable, we curated a series of interactive activities that left a lasting impact on the students. For instance, they had the opportunity to create their own watershed, allowing them to grasp the significance of how water flows and interacts with its surroundings.

Don't blink an eye!



Summer 2023 Harris County 4-H and FFA Livestock Validation



By Steven Frederick, 4-H Livestock Coordinator - 4-H & FFA Livestock Validation

The Summer 2023 Harris County 4-H and FFA Livestock Validation has reached its conclusion, marking the completion of another successful chapter. Months of meticulous preparation paved the way for the validation of numerous youths' animal projects in Harris County, all aimed at qualifying for the upcoming State Fair of Texas in Dallas and the Heart of Texas Fair and Rodeo in Waco, coming soon in early fall.



4-H Livestock Update

Don't blink an eye!



Summer 2023 Harris County 4-H and FFA Livestock Validation



By Steven Frederick, 4-H Livestock Coordinator - 4-H & FFA Livestock Validation

This tremendous achievement would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions of our dedicated office staff, committee members, and passionate ag science teachers. The unwavering support of our committed volunteers also played a pivotal role in ensuring the event's smooth execution.

The scale of this year's Summer validation was truly remarkable, as Harris County witnessed a staggering total of 607 livestock heads being validated, with 163 belonging to enthusiastic Harris County 4-H members.

As these young exhibitors set forth to showcase their cherished animals across the vast landscape of Texas, we extend our heartfelt wishes for their success. May they find luck and triumph in every endeavor as they proudly represent Harris County on a grand stage.

By Sonja Stueart-Davis - Family & Community Health County Extension Agent | Sarah Ellis & Lora Jorgensen - Better Living for Texans Extension Agents

Harris County Precinct 1 - Older Americans Celebration

On May 19th, an exceptional event, the Harris County Precinct 1, Older Americans Celebration, took place at Alexander Duessen Park, thanks to the combined efforts of Harris County Family & Community Health agent, Sonja Davis, and Better Living for Texans (BLT) agents, Lora Jorgensen, and Sarah Ellis. The event saw the participation of dedicated Master Wellness Volunteers who contributed to its success.

The heartwarming event brought together a remarkable turnout of over 235 seniors who were warmly welcomed and served by the organizers. The seniors expressed their deepest gratitude for the fantastic occasion, which provided them with an opportunity to forge new connections, build fellowship, and enjoy themselves to the fullest.

The BLT agents and volunteers played an instrumental role in the event by providing valuable health and nutrition information to the attendees. Adding a touch of excitement, the smoothie bikes were made available, offering a fun and interactive way for seniors to engage in making nutritious and delicious smoothies.



One of the highlights of the event was the cardio drumming activity led by Agent Sonja Davis and summer interns, including Krithika Maki.

The seniors enthusiastically joined in the activity, finding joy in drumming to the beat, which brought laughter and cheer to the celebration.

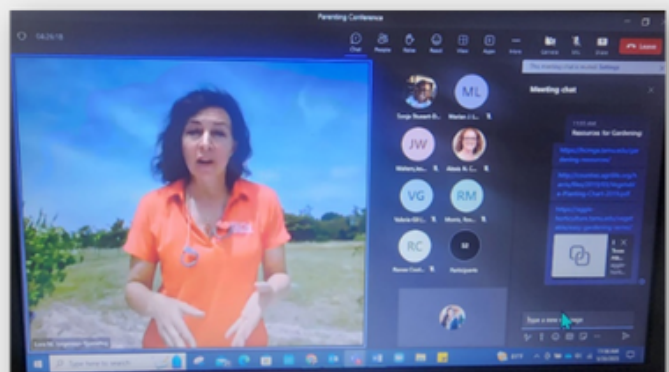
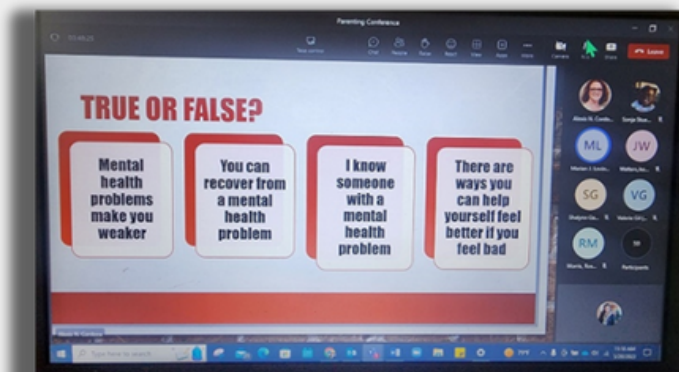


Sonja Stueart-Davis - Family & Community Health County Extension Agent | Sarah Ellis & Lora Jorgensen, Jasmine Carey – Better Living for Texans Extension Agents | Khadija Ghaffar - EFNEP Agent | Te'Anna Donaldson, Leticia Hardy, Alexis Cordova, Extension Agents - Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension Program Family & Community Health



In May 2023, the Peace of Mind Health and Safety Virtual Conference took place, dedicated to equipping parents and caregivers with essential knowledge to safeguard the health, safety, and overall well-being of children. The timing of the conference in May was specifically chosen to empower parents with the necessary insights as they considered childcare and summer camp options for their kids.

This initiative originated in 2022 when agents collaborated with partners from the Department of State Health Services. The aim was to address a pressing concern – the proliferation of individuals advertising childcare services on social media platforms without proper licenses or state approval. These services, often enticing due to their affordability, posed potential risks to children under their care. By educating parents and caregivers about the crucial factors to consider when evaluating childcare options, this initiative sought to mitigate these risks.



HIGHEST RISK OF EXPERIENCING HUNGER

By Khadija Ghaffar EFNEP Agent

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is dedicated to assisting young families and youth with limited resources, particularly those who are at the highest risk of experiencing hunger, food insecurity, and difficulty accessing support systems. By offering practical lessons in basic nutrition, food preparation, food budget management, and food safety, EFNEP aims to empower participants to improve their overall well-being.

EFNEP provides "hands-on" experiences to adult participants through a comprehensive six-lesson series, which focuses on stretching food dollars, enhancing eating habits, and practicing food safety principles. Through their involvement in EFNEP, participants develop essential skills to prepare more meals and snacks at home, become more physically active, manage portion sizes, and experience increased energy levels.

This program has effectively addressed the growing economic challenges and food insecurity its target audiences face. Studies have demonstrated that for every dollar invested in EFNEP, an estimated \$10 is saved in health care costs, and an additional \$2 is saved in food expenses by the participants. In Texas alone, this has amounted to approximately \$45 million in estimated healthcare cost savings and nearly \$9 million in food cost savings.

In 2022, EFNEP in Harris County successfully reached 1,177 adult participants. Survey data from the participants indicated that families were able to save an average of \$67 on their monthly food expenses, highlighting the program's positive impact on financial well-being.

One inspiring success story from an EFNEP Harris County participant illustrates how the program has significantly helped individuals and families achieve financial stability. (The success story has been translated from Spanish for wider accessibility.) *(Next Page)*

EFNEP's commitment to improving nutrition, empowering families with limited resources, and promoting healthy food habits has made a significant and lasting difference in the lives of participants. Through the program's efforts, individuals and communities are better equipped to overcome financial challenges and lead healthier, more fulfilling lives.



HIGHLIGHT

By Khadija Ghaffar EFNEP Agent

"Hello, my name is Daniela Villar. I am very grateful for the program EFNEP of Texas because I have seen major changes in my wallet. I have saved more than \$100 dollars per week *400 per month. And I have been able to change my foods to healthier ones and the best part is I have not run out of food at the end of the month as would frequently happen before.

Normally, I would always visit Walmart or La Michoacana daily, but with my list of planning my menus and my portions, I have seen great savings in my money and my time. I have eaten healthier, and it has motivated me and my family to eat at home, explore and experience new vegetables and fruits. I have felt that I am doing something for my health and my family's health. At first it was difficult but with the classes every week it has motivated me a lot to compare prices and to think if the food I am getting really nourishes and gives me health. Very grateful to Ms. Ivy for all her information and help and for motivating me to achieve my goals."

Prairie View A&M University

Cooperative Extension Program HARRIS COUNTY

Family and Community Health

SAFE RIDERS *By Te'Anna Donaldson, Extension Agent - Prairie View A&M University
Cooperative Extension Program Family & Community Health*



Te'Anna Donaldson, a dedicated Family and Community Health Agent, has been making a significant impact in Harris County and the surrounding areas through the Safe Riders Program. This program aims to address the crucial issue of child safety in motor vehicles by providing parents with car seats and educating them on the proper installation of child safety seats.

The primary objective of Safe Riders is to reduce the number of injuries and fatalities caused by motor vehicle crashes for unrestrained children in Texas. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) statistics from 2020 highlight the severity of the problem, with 607 child passengers aged 12 and younger losing their lives in motor vehicle crashes in the United States, and more than 63,000 sustaining injuries. Shockingly, 38% of the children killed in these crashes were not properly buckled up.

This underscores the vulnerability of children in vehicular accidents, making motor vehicle crashes one of the leading causes of death among children.

Prairie View A&M University

Cooperative Extension Program HARRIS COUNTY

Family and Community Health

SAFE RIDERS *By Te'Anna Donaldson, Extension Agent - Prairie View A&M University
Cooperative Extension Program Family & Community Health*

Through the Safe Riders Program, parents and caregivers receive essential support and knowledge to ensure the safety of their children during car journeys. By providing car seats and instructing parents on their proper use, Te'Anna Donaldson and her team are actively working to prevent injuries and save lives.

Te'Anna's efforts, along with the Safe Riders Program, serve as a lifeline for families, helping to protect their children from the risks associated with traveling in motor vehicles. By emphasizing the importance of buckling up every time they take a trip, parents and caregivers can play a critical role in preventing devastating accidents.

Horticulture Program

By Brandi Keller County Extension Agent – Horticulture

The Texas A&M
AgriLife

Extension's Horticulture Program

HARRIS COUNTY

The Annual Extension Volunteer Training

Training for the summer of 2023 commenced on June 8th, with 35 participants taking part in the Harris County Master Gardener volunteer training program. The training is scheduled to conclude on August 17th. During this period, the participants are considered "intern" volunteers until they successfully complete the training and graduate with at least 60 service hours each, which they are expected to accomplish by the year 2024.

Upon fulfilling these requirements, they will earn the title of Certified Texas Master Gardeners, equipping them to assist county residents in enhancing their knowledge of home horticulture. The aim is to help residents maintain beautiful, edible, healthy, and sustainable landscapes and gardens.

The training sessions take place all day on Thursdays, spanning 11 weeks in total. Throughout this period, the participants are immersed in a comprehensive curriculum that covers various fundamental topics related to horticulture. Expert instruction is provided by Texas A&M AgriLife Program Specialists, Agents, and experienced Master Gardeners.



Texas A&M

AgriLife

Extension's Horticulture Program

HARRIS COUNTY

By Brandi Keller County Extension Agent – Horticulture

Horticulture Program

Healthy Lawns Healthy Waters

AgriLife Extension Program Specialists, John Smith and Dean Minchillo presented Healthy Lawns and Healthy Waters Program on Tuesday June 27th at Trini Mendenhall Community Center. The free event was from 8:30am-12:30pm with 65 attendees from all around Harris County. Participants learned about design and installation of residential rainwater harvesting systems and appropriate turf and landscape species based on local conditions. As a bonus, all attendees were able to submit a soil test as part of the training, waiving the \$12 fee and postage. Thirty-six samples were collected, saving county residents a total of \$432 dollars. In addition, attendees valued the information learned at approximately \$100 per person.



**MAKING A DIFFERENCE
IN HARRIS COUNTY
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
IN COOPERATION WITH**

**Lina Hidalgo
Rodney Ellis
Adrian Garcia
Tom S. Ramsey
Lesley Briones**

**Harris County Judge
Commissioner, Precinct 1
Commissioner, Precinct 2
Commissioner, Precinct 3
Commissioner, Precinct 4**

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