

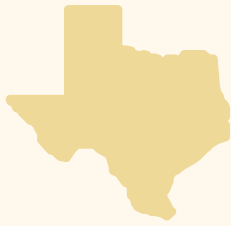
TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

Making a Difference in Harris County *QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER*



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

harris.agrilife.org Cooperative Extension Program



Extension Education in Harris County

Howdy and Welcome to Harris County!

Making a Difference in Harris County



Photo above: Jasmine Carey & Sarah Ellis – Extension Agents – Better Living for Texans

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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.”

**OUR WORK MAKES
A DIFFERENCE.**
IN THE LIVES OF TEXANS AND
ON THE ECONOMY.

Frontpage: Baker Ripley collaborated with the Harris County Better Living for Texans program performing a cooking demonstration. More information on page 5.

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.”



Extension Education in Harris County

Howdy and Welcome to Harris County!

Making a Difference in Harris County

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



CONTENTS

PAGE 4-5

HARRIS COUNTY SPOTLIGHT

PAGE 6-8

4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

PAGE 9-14

*FAMILY AND COMMUNITY HEALTH
BETTER LIVING FOR TEXANS
EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION
EDUCATION PROGRAM*

PAGE 15 -16

*HORTICULTURE
MASTER GARDENERS*

Quarterly Highlight:



NUEL Conference 2023, participants at NRG stadium

NUEL SOUTHERN & 1890'S REGIONAL CONFERENCE

There were 156 attendees representing 13 States:

**Texas
Kentucky
Mississippi
Virginia
Georgia
North Carolina
Louisiana
Florida
Maryland
Tennessee
Oklahoma
Arkansas
Alabama**



ABOUT NUEL SOUTHERN & 1890'S REGIONAL CONFERENCE:

The 2023 NUEL Southern and 1890's Regional Conference was hosted by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Harris County in August. This year's conference was a celebration of innovation, community engagement, and sustainable agriculture. From Master Wellness and Strengthening Communities to Urban Youth Development and Charting a Path for Youth Success, this conference encapsulated a spectrum of topics that hold the potential to transform lives. The power of partnership and the urban programming approach was highlighted throughout the conference.

GUEST SPEAKER:

Keynote Speaker William S. McArthur, Retired U.S. Army Colonel and NASA Astronaut, delivered an inspiring presentation at the 2023 NUEL Southern & 1890's Regional Conference. He shared his remarkable journey of exploration, offering valuable insights on teamwork, innovation, and perseverance from his illustrious career as an astronaut. Mr. McArthur's speech was a highlight of the conference, leaving attendees motivated and inspired.





Nutrition activity for the Two Hearts 4-H Club at the Richard and Meg Weekly Community Center.



VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR:

On September 12th, adult 4-H volunteers hosted a lively nutrition activity for the Two Hearts 4-H Club at the Richard and Meg Weekly Community Center. Guided by Gabby Kanu, County Extension Agent Volunteer Management, Katherine Hamilton, CEA 4-H & Youth Development, and Jocelynn Lewis, 4-H Program Assistant, the young participants learned about nutrition and the importance of a balanced diet, with a fun twist in the form of the MyPlate Grocery Relay. It was an engaging and educational event, highlighting the commitment of our team to nurturing young minds.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR:

Harris County Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service Community Engagement Coordinator, Karrie Calloway, joined forces with HISD and the non-profit organization COOLXDAD, in collaboration with the Houston Texans football team, to make a meaningful impact in the local Houston community. Their joint effort was focused on providing school uniforms to the students at Blackshear Elementary School in the heart of Houston's Third Ward. This initiative not only involved the distribution of uniforms but also fostered engagement with the youth in HISD, strengthening the bonds within the community and showing the power of collective action.





Collaboration Programs

We are thrilled to share a remarkable event that unfolded on August 14, 2023, at the San Mateo Episcopal Church located at 6635 Alder Drive, Houston. Baker Ripley collaborated with the Harris County Better Living for Texans program, Harris County 4H, Horticulture, and FCH units, embarking on a journey that not only enriched the lives of our community but also sowed the seeds for a healthier and greener future.



Culinary Delights

Volunteers took the stage to prepare two delectable recipes in front of the class - the Seed Roller Energy Bite and the Red Leaf Lettuce and Strawberry Salad. These dishes not only tantalized taste buds but also highlighted the importance of nutritious eating.

Hands-On Learning in Action

Our participants had the opportunity to explore various curriculum activities, such as creating an "underground root table" using pipe cleaners to understand the diversity of plant roots. Real sunflower seeds and construction paper were transformed into beautiful sunflowers, inspiring creativity and a love for nature.

Planting the Seeds of Knowledge

The highlight of the day was the "Early Childhood - Learn, Grow, Eat & Go!" (EC-LGEC) program.

A Junior Master Gardener curriculum tailored for pre-kindergarten students. This innovative initiative is designed as a train-the-trainer program. AgriLife Agents and Master Gardeners trained school staff to deliver these invaluable lessons to their young students.

By coming together on August 14, 2023, at the San Mateo Episcopal Church, we planted the seeds of knowledge, creativity, and a healthier lifestyle. It is through events like these that we continue to make a significant impact on our community, fostering a love for nature and learning in our youngest members. We look forward to nurturing this growth and witnessing the flourishing gardens of knowledge in the years to come.



4-H Program



STEM AND ROBOTICS CAMP AT THE WEEKLEY COMMUNITY CENTER

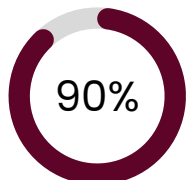
By County Extension Agents Katherine Hamilton (4-H & Youth Development), Zach Giblin (Urban Youth Development), Linzee Yelderman (4-H Livestock Coordinator), Shannon Sullivan (Assistant Extension Agent – ANR/Horticulture)



INCREASED STEM INTEREST

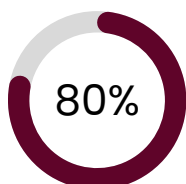
According to surveys completed by the participating youth:

- 90% of participants learned new information during the camp.
- 80% of participants showed an increased interest in pursuing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) careers after participating in the camp.



9 OUT OF 10

90% OF PARTICIPANTS LEARNED NEW INFORMATION DURING THE CAMP.



8 OUT OF 10

80% OF PARTICIPANTS SHOWED AN INCREASED INTEREST IN PURSUING STEM (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS)

20 youths between the ages of 8-12 years old attended the camp each Friday during the month of July.

Projected STEM Shortage: By 2024, the United States is projected to face a shortage of 1.1 million STEM professionals, emphasizing the importance of initiatives like the STEM and Robotics Camp to inspire future STEM leaders.



Howdy Folks

What an exciting day it is with the opening of the State Fair of Texas! We'd like to extend our best wishes and good luck to all the exhibitors at both the State Fair of Texas and the Heart O' Texas. Your hard work and dedication are truly commendable.

We also want to offer heartfelt congratulations to the outstanding 4-H members who participated in the premium heifer show starting in September at Heart O' Texas. Your achievements are nothing short of remarkable, and you've made your community proud.

Special shout-outs to:

- Kallie Hornback, for securing 2nd place in class and excelling in the Division Drive.
- Kayleigh Conant, for achieving 2nd place in class and shining in the Division Drive.
- Bailey Hornback, for an impressive 1st place in class, earning the title of Grand Champion Chianina Division and competing in the Supreme Drive.

Your accomplishments exemplify the spirit of dedication and excellence that 4-H represents. Keep up the fantastic work, and we look forward to hearing more about your successes in the future!



In the month of August, a total of 40 families registered for the 4-H Livestock Youth Program.

Family & Community Health Unit



Grandparent Expo - Promoting Health and Wellness

A heartwarming and health-focused initiative that recently unfolded, thanks to the collaborative efforts of the Harris County FCH unit, and with the valuable support of the City of Houston and the Harris County Area Agency on Aging, we hosted a delightful 2-hour Grandparent Expo event.



Empowering Seniors

This special event, held on September 7th and 21st, 2023, at two congregate meal sites, Sunnyside and Northeast Multiservice Centers, aimed to celebrate and uplift our cherished seniors. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Better Living for Texans (BLT) Agents Jasmine Carey, Sarah Ellis, and Lora Jorgensen collaborated with Family & Community Health Agents Sonja Davis and Amanda Krippel to make this event a memorable success.

Independence and Longevity

Throughout the event, health and wellness topics were addressed to emphasize the importance of maintaining independence and leading a long, healthy life. The agenda included informative sessions, with FCH Agent Amanda Krippel presenting a Master of Memory lesson, while Better Living for Texans Agents Lora Jorgensen and Sarah Ellis educated participants on Added Sugar and how to read Nutrition Facts Labels. Physical activity was also a key component, led by FCH Agent Dr. Sonja Davis and CEA Volunteer Management, Gabrielle Kanu, who introduced participants to cardio drumming and line dancing.



BETTER LIVING FOR TEXANS

Gratitude and Appreciation

The response from the participants was heartwarming. They not only gained valuable insights into health and wellness but also enjoyed the physical activities and camaraderie. As a token of appreciation and to facilitate healthier choices, each participant received a Nutrition Facts Label magnifier to make reading food labels easier.

Community Engagement

On September 7th, 55 participants attended, and on September 21st, 26 participants, all seniors aged 50+ and of Black heritage, enriched the event with their presence. This initiative is a testament to the commitment of our agency and its employees to empower our seniors with the knowledge and tools they need to lead healthier and more fulfilling lives.

Continuing the Journey

The Grandparent Expo was just the beginning. We are excited to announce that one more session is scheduled for October 4th at the Hiram Clarke Multiservice Center. Together, we are making strides in promoting health, wellness, and happiness in our community, one event at a time.

By Texas A&M AgriLife Better Living for Texans program Agents Jasmine Carey & Sarah Ellis worked with Family & Community Health Agents Sonja Davis, Khadija Ghaffar and Amanda Krippel, County Extension Agent-Volunteer Management Gabby Kanu, and Intern Krithaka Maki

Better Living For Texans Program

Program at the Opportunity Center

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Harris County Better Living for Texans program joined hands with the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department at the Opportunity Center (located at 6500 Chimney Rock Rd, Houston) to bring valuable nutrition education and life skills to young individuals in need.

Empowering Through Education

The highlight of this initiative was two single education sessions held on June 28th and July 5th, 2023. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Better Living for Texans Agents, Jasmine Carey, and Sarah Ellis, worked tirelessly alongside Family & Community Health Agents Sonja Davis, Khadija Ghaffar (EFNEP), and Amanda Krippel, Gabby Kanu County Extension Agent Volunteer Management, and Intern Krithaka Maki to make a difference.

Nutrition, Kitchen Skills, and Food Safety

During these two-hour sessions, our dedicated team covered crucial topics such as general nutrition, kitchen skills, and food safety. They also conducted recipe demonstrations that not only expanded the participants' culinary horizons but also encouraged healthier eating habits.

Hands-On Learning

A unique aspect of these sessions was the hands-on approach. Participants engaged in a mock shopping trip to gather ingredients, prepared the recipes themselves, tasted the delicious creations, and even took part in cleaning up afterward. To further reinforce the educational aspects, participants received practical kitchen items, such as cutting mats.

Delicious and Nutritious

The featured recipes, Caribbean Casserole and Stir Fry Vegetables and Beef, showcased the importance of incorporating vegetables into daily meals. By making nutritious cooking both fun and accessible, our team aimed to instill lifelong healthy eating habits.

Addressing a Critical Issue

It's important to note that only 1 in 10 Americans consumes the recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables. Initiatives like these are crucial in addressing this nutritional gap and ensuring a healthier future for our community.

The collaborative effort between Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services and the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department at the Opportunity Center exemplifies the power of education and community support. Together, we are making a meaningful impact on the lives of our young participants, equipping them with essential skills for a brighter and healthier future.



BETTER LIVING FOR TEXANS

Community Impact

Seventeen youth and 3 adults participated.

Texas A&M AgriLife Better Living for Texans (BLT) Agents Jasmine Carey, Sarah Ellis, and Lora Jorgensen worked together with Family & Community Health Agents Sonja Davis & and Amanda Krippel, as well as Agent Khadija Ghaffar (EFNEP)



EFNEP - Changing Lives, One Young Person at a Time

For over five decades, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) has been a beacon of support and empowerment in local Texas communities. We have dedicated ourselves to providing food and nutrition education to vulnerable, limited-resource families and youth, with the goal of making a lasting difference in their lives.

Reconnecting with a Vital Partner

Our journey has been marked by partnerships that amplify our impact. One such crucial partner is the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department (HCJPD). While our collaboration with HCJPD dates back many years, the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic briefly interrupted this vital connection. However, this summer, we reignited our collaboration to serve the youth at the HCJPD downtown residential facility.

A Lifeline for Incarcerated Youth

Incarcerated youth often face limited opportunities for personal growth. Our nutrition education program was a ray of hope for approximately 350 teenagers at the facility. They enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to enhance their diet quality, food resource management skills, food safety practices, and physical activity. Small but significant gestures, like a young boy demonstrating proper handwashing, revealed the impact of our program and the positive changes it can bring to these young lives as they reintegrate into their communities.

Culinary Dreams Take Flight

Beyond the confines of the facility, we extended our reach to "The Opportunity Center," a transitional facility for youth transitioning through the HCJPD system. Collaborating with other Family and Community Health (FCH) staff, we hosted a "Culinary Camp" during the summer. The youth relished the chance to prepare healthy dishes while working together as a team. This experience sparked a genuine interest in culinary careers for some of these young individuals.

Expanding Our Horizons

The Opportunity Center has taken a step further by expanding its outreach to include youth from the surrounding communities. In partnership with the Boys and Girls Club, they have established a club at their location, offering after-school opportunities for local youth. Our EFNEP youth educator seamlessly integrated our curriculum with elementary school students, resulting in outreach to 25 young individuals during the summer. Another rotation is set to begin in a few weeks, ensuring that our impact continues to grow.



Mental Health First Aid Training Reaching Diverse Audiences

Mental Health First Aid is a program that equips individuals with the tools to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders. Our dedicated FCH Agent, Dr. Sonja Davis, collaborated with Dr. Lakshmi Mahadevan and hosted three training courses throughout Harris County.

The impact of this initiative extended to a broad spectrum of our community. Volunteers, teachers, counselors, and clergy members all benefited from the information presented. Group discussions allowed participants to share personal experiences and identify local resources available throughout Harris County.

Empowering Our Community

The impact of these training courses was substantial. A total of 45 Harris County residents dedicated their time and effort to complete Mental Health First Aid Training in July and August. The program was comprehensive, encompassing two hours of pre-work, an 8-hour training session, and a scenario-based exam. This certification is valid for two years, ensuring that participants are well-prepared to assist those in need.





Promoting Food Safety Education

When it comes to food safety, we understand that it's not just a matter of compliance, but a crucial element in ensuring the well-being of our community. Family & Community Health Agent, Amanda Krippel, has been at the forefront of an initiative that underscores the importance of food safety in Texas.

Equipping Students for a Safer Future

On Tuesday, September 28th, Amanda Krippel took the lead in training 10 students on the significance of food safety. The comprehensive training covered a wide range of topics, including preventing cross-contamination, maintaining personal hygiene, safe storage, handling, and preparation of food, and the importance of cleaning and sanitizing. Each lesson was enriched with supplementary resources and interactive activities to facilitate learning and retention of food safety information.

Powerful Partnerships for a Safer Community

Amanda Krippel partnered with two remarkable organizations, the Texas Council of Developmental Disabilities (TCDD) and The Hub Houston, each committed to serving their communities in unique ways. TCDD strives to help individuals with developmental disabilities reach their full potential for independence, productivity, and community integration. The Hub Houston, founded in 2015, is dedicated to supporting the neurodiversity community in Houston and surrounding areas.





A Taste of Latin Heritage: A Flavorful Journey

At Prairie View A&M University's Cooperative Extension Program, Family and Community Health Agent Te'Anna Donaldson embarked on an enriching journey with the community. Through the "A Taste of Latin Heritage" series, she created a vibrant and culturally rich health and wellness program.

Culinary Exploration

"A Taste of Latin Heritage" unfolded as a 6-week cooking and nutrition curriculum. It celebrated the vibrant, plant-based food traditions from various Latin American regions, including Mexico, South America, Central America, and the Caribbean. Participants not only learned about nutrition but also had the delightful opportunity to witness food demonstrations following each lesson, expanding their culinary knowledge and mastering simple yet delicious cooking techniques.

This program didn't just teach about healthier choices; it allowed participants to savor the essence of Latin heritage. Te'Anna Donaldson's efforts brought the community closer to their roots while fostering a deeper understanding of nutrition through the lens of Latin culture. It was an educational and flavorful journey worth savoring.

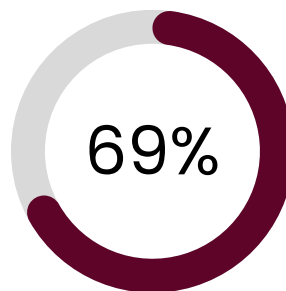
Connecting with Seniors

This program wasn't just about food; it was about connecting with the diverse Latin heritage that enriches our community. Seniors from across Harris County came together to explore their roots, savor flavors, and learn the traditions of Latin Heritage culture, especially when it comes to nutrition.

Master Gardener Program

SIX WEEK CYLINDER GARDENING PROGRAM

By Stephanie Gray, Master Gardener Program Coordinator



Enrollment in September 2023 saw a remarkable 69% increase in student enrollment and an impressive 192% increase in educator participation compared to September 2022.

Leadership Development

Teaching crucial life skills, including responsibility, planning, data analysis, accountability, teamwork, and experimentation.

Practical Gardening

Designed for urban settings, this method uses bottomless cylinders for accessible, no-fuss gardening.

Educator Support

Educators benefit from a comprehensive Teacher's Guide, crafted by Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service Agents, covering topics from planting to harvesting.

Volunteer Dedication

Over 25 Certified Harris County Master Gardener Volunteers contributed 200+ hours to the program's success.

In-Kind Donations

Generous in-kind donations valued at \$19,550 in seeds, food-grade buckets, and fertilizers supported program activities.

Community Outreach

Volunteers prepared 1,500 buckets and 1,666 seed and fertilizer bags, enriching schools across Harris County.

Future Opportunity

The upcoming semester, starting January 2024, presents another chance for students to join this enriching educational journey.



Horticulture Program

Assisting Residents Coping with Drought Through the Healthy Lawns Healthy Waters Program

By Harris County Horticulture Agent Brandi Keller

It has been a scorching and arid summer in Harris County, and in the face of these challenging conditions, our dedicated Harris County Horticulture Agent, Brandi Keller, has taken significant strides to empower our community. Brandi hosted two impactful Healthy Lawns Healthy Waters Programs, with a focus on the Lower Cypress Creek Watershed and Spring Creek Watershed Partnerships.

Enhancing Surface Water Quality

The core objective of these comprehensive 4-hour sessions was to empower residents with the best management practices for their landscapes, thereby making a positive impact on the quality of our surface water. As a bonus, registered participants had the unique opportunity to submit a soil sample to the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service soil, water, and forage laboratory at no cost. This seemingly small gesture resulted in substantial savings, with 66 residents collectively saving a total of \$1,122 in fees and postage.

Guiding Our Community

The results of these soil tests hold immense value for county residents, offering critical insights into the specific requirements of their soil. By acting on these recommendations, residents can save time and money, all while optimizing the use of water and soil nutrients for their lawns, landscape beds, or gardens.

Accessing Resources

For those eager to make use of this resource, you can conveniently access soil forms at soiltesting.tamu.edu under the "Urban Soil Submittal Form" section. In most cases, homeowners typically require only the #1 Routine Analysis, a cost-effective option priced at just \$12 per sample. The form is thoughtfully designed to guide you through the payment and mailing process, ensuring a straightforward experience.



Community Empowerment

The first of these sessions unfolded at the Trini Mendenhall Community Center on June 27th, and this was followed by another insightful gathering at the Houston Community College – Katy Campus on August 4th. These sessions were more than just educational; they were transformative for the 94 participants who attended.

Unlocking Valuable Insights

On average, participants estimated the value of the water conservation insights they acquired at an impressive \$590 each. Through pre- and post-tests, participants demonstrated a remarkable 61% average increase in their knowledge regarding crucial topics, such as residential rainwater harvesting, turf management, and water conservation.

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

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

David D. Wright

Harris County Extension Director & Urban Program Director

Email: David.Wright@ag.tamu.edu

13105 Northwest Freeway

Suite 1000

Houston, Texas 77040

Contact: (713) 274-0950

Website: Harris.agrilife.org

Email: harris-tx@tamu.edu

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION



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

Cooperative Extension Program



[@HarrisCountyAgriLife](#)
[@HarrisCountyHorticulture](#)
[@HarrisCountyMasterGardeners](#)
[@HarrisCountyANR](#)
[@HarrisCountyFCH](#)
[@HarrisCountyBLT](#)
[@HarrisTXEFNEP](#)
[@HarrisCounty4H](#)