



Cooperative Extension Program
Prairie View A&M University

AgriLIFE EXTENSION
Texas A&M System

Travis County 2010

CAPACITY

Improving Lives. Improving Texas.



Improving the lives of people, businesses, and communities across Texas and beyond through high quality, relevant education.

The Extension program in Travis County is part of the statewide Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University. It is part of The Texas A&M University System and is linked with Texas county governments and the national Cooperative Extension System. Extension values and promotes citizen and community involvement, scientifically-based education, lifelong learning and volunteerism.

Our Extension programs in Travis County provide residents relevant, research based information and services to improve individual health and wellness, promote agriculture, develop leadership and life skills for youth, protect our natural resources, and develop strong communities. In the midst of challenging economic times like these, Extension provides an outstanding return on investment by leveraging funding through grants, strategic partnerships, and extensive use of volunteers. We are pleased to provide you with this 2010 annual report of our educational activities in Travis County to respond to the unique needs of our dynamic urban area.

Developing Our Youth

One Day 4-H

Over 50 4-H youth and adults participated in community service projects around Travis County during National 4-H week, October 3rd to 9th. The annual One Day 4-H Community Service day featured youth projects including planting 300 trees, sponsoring a 3K event for the National Alliance for Mental Illness, educating 400 youth on water for National Youth Science Day, and providing water stations for 150 dog owners participating in the Austin NAMI Walk. One Day provides 4-H youth a hands on chance to learn community service.

Leaders 4 Life Contest

In June, six 4-H youth from Travis County participated in the first annual Leaders 4 Life Contest at State 4-H Roundup taking home 3rd place honors. The contest consists of four components; a mock meeting (utilizing formal parliamentary procedure) a Q&A session on parliamentary procedure, a quiz bowl and a service learning project. Youth participating in Leaders 4 Life learn parliamentary procedure, how to effectively conduct business meetings, teamwork and the importance of communication.

Youth Leadership Program

AgriLife Extension's Travis County 4-H Program partners with Toastmasters to conduct a four day workshop to help youth develop their skills in speaking before an audience and impromptu speaking. Participants in this year's program delivered their fourth and final speech before a large audience of family and friends at the recognition ceremony and received a certificate.

<p>2010 Educational Outreach</p> <p>Educational Programs Presented: 2,697</p> <p>Attendance at Educational Programs: 142,615</p> <p>Individual Contacts: 152,354</p> <p>Volunteers Involved: 1,352 38,845 volunteer hours valued at \$809,918</p>
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Agriculture Literacy

AgriLife Extension Agents and staff in Travis County conducted two Agriculture Literacy events at Pillow Elementary and the annual Food & Fiber EXPO at Crowe's Nest Farm in Manor. Youth learn the importance of agriculture and its role in our daily lives as well as many agriculture related career opportunities. An evaluation of the events showed that 100% of attendees agreed they learned something new about agriculture and the vital role it plays in our lives.

Improving Our Health

Project DEAP (Diabetes Education Awareness Prevention)

Diabetes is the leading cause of death for African Americans (50.9%) and Hispanics (46.0%) based on data from the Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department. Project DEAP (Diabetes Education Awareness Prevention) addresses creating lifestyle changes, including a healthy diet, exercise, and weight loss to prevent or delay the onset of diabetes, which is also connected to heart diseases. African Americans are more likely than other groups to have low incomes, and therefore poor health status.

Project DEAP programs were conducted in two zip code areas with a high prevalence for diabetes. A six lessons series taught: (1) Understanding Diabetes (2) Controlling Diabetes Through Nutrition (3) Get Up & Move (4) Medication Management (5) Monitoring Your Body and (6) Complications of Diabetes. A diabetes health symposium, newsletters, community health fair, and diabetes/obesity conference were also offered.

A community health fair focusing on diabetes awareness and prevention was conducted with a faith based partner in August 2010 with over 200 participants. At least 14 individuals were referred for additional medical testing. Free blood sugar, blood pressure, and immunizations were provided.

As a result of our Travis County Project DEAP education efforts: 179 participants enrolled in diabetes classes, 283 participants at culminating event (St. Patrick's Day Diabetes Dance-A-Thon), 96 participants attended a two day diabetes health awareness symposium, 200 participants attended diabetes community health fair, 2230 Project DEAP newsletters were shared with community partners, over 200 participants attended the diabetes/obesity conference, and 35 participants attended diabetes/obesity conference held at Prairie View A&M University.

Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

This past year, 3,203 adults enrolled in EFNEP, and 1,188

graduated by attending at least six lessons. In a 24-hour food recall evaluation, 96% had a positive change in at least one food group, and 25% reported positive changes in physical activity. Additionally, 84% improved food resource management practices (plans meals, compares prices, uses grocery lists), 92% improved nutrition practices (reads nutrition labels, makes healthy food choices), and 58% improved food safety practices such as thawing and storing foods properly.

6,646 youth clients from 229 different groups enrolled in the program. Evaluations indicate that 62% of youth participants now eat a variety of foods, 94% increased their knowledge of the essentials of human nutrition, 85% increased their ability to select low-cost, nutritious foods, 93% improved food preparation and safety practices, and 97% improved physical activity.

Travis County EFNEP agent Deborah Watt helped write a new 7-session researched based adult series called "Healthy Food, Healthy Families" that teaches healthy eating, family meal planning, food shopping basics, food safety, basic food preparation, and the importance of including physical activities in daily life. All materials are available in Spanish and English, and all of our educators are bilingual. A 24 hour food recall and food survey is administered at the first and last class to measure program effectiveness.

We are currently offering the adult learning series in Title I Schools in Austin, Del Valle, and Manor, with some Austin I.S.D. ESL sites, and with community partners such as Avance, the Catholic Charities Gabriel Life Project, Christian Women's Job Corp, Posada Esperanza and others.

Wellness & Weight Management Makes a Difference

In the past 30 years, the prevalence of overweight and obesity has increased sharply for adults and children. Wellness & Weight Management is an 8-lesson program provided through the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Travis County that teaches people to make better lifestyle and food choices in their fast-paced lives. In 2010, 16 programs were conducted for employees with 342 clients participating.

Evaluations indicated the following results: 100% reduced the amount of daily fat in their diet; 94% increased their daily consumption of fruits and vegeta-

bles; 89% use the "Nutrition Facts" on the food label to make healthier food choices; 89% now use the plate method to help with portion control; 89% now engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day, most days of the week, which is a 56% increase.

Comments from Wellness & Weight Management Participants:

"The information I learned was so valuable. I'm using it and will continue to be successful in meeting my weight loss goals."

"There were many great ideas that I now consider before I choose a meal. Like the percentage of fats, proteins, etc. that we should eat everyday."

"I learned to increase my consumption of vegetables, and to use healthier substitutes for fats and oils when cooking."

Better Living for Texans - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

437 programs were conducted in 2010, with 14,764 individuals and families participating. Using "hands-on" experiences, BLT participants completed a series of lessons on stretching food dollars, improving eating habits, and practicing food safety principles.

As a result of participating in BLT programs, the following dietary quality results were achieved: 89% use the Nutrition Facts label to determine fat content when shopping for food, 88% use it to determine serving size or portion control, and 85% use it to determine sodium content when shopping for food. 82%

always use a list when shopping to save time and money. 79% use unit pricing to save money, and 73% indicated that they would now plan meals in order to save money and time.

"For me personally, this program has helped out a lot. I lost 15 pounds with the changes I made in my diet. My husband has also learned to eat healthier. If you count up all the money saved in a year from coupons it's a lot of money and it's a great savings when collected together in a piggy bank. This program is a blessing. It allows the people to learn how to eat well. Thank you very much." - Margarita R., BLT Program participant

Walk Across Texas! Increases Physical Activity

Community-wide programs like Walk Across Texas! have been strongly associated with significant increases in physical activity. Our 2010 Walk Across Texas! Program included 842 total adults participating on 105 teams, with 552 adults finishing the program. Participants logged 163,850 miles, an equivalent of 197 times across Texas!

When surveyed, 95% are now physically active 71 minutes, 5 days a week, a 20% increase over pre-survey results, and 20 more minutes of exercise.

Medical research shows that exercise and weight loss can delay the onset of Type 2 diabetes in 58% of people. This means that 119 of our participants (22%) could prevent the onset of diabetes through increased physical activity over their lifetime. The average annual health care costs for people without diabetes is \$5,642 and \$13,243 for people with diabetes.

The estimated potential lifetime health care costs savings is \$5.2 million for females and \$1.6 million for males. When avoidance of lost wages is included, the estimated total economic benefit for 2010 Walk Across Texas! participants in Travis County is \$7.3 million!

Protecting Our Environment

2010 Master Gardener Program

The Master Gardener Program is an intense horticulture course for training volunteers about research-based, environmentally-sound gardening and landscaping. Participants receive over 50 hours of classroom training in horticulture, and then volunteer through Extension programs including horticultural seminars for the public, school garden consulting, plant clinics, answering phone requests for horticultural information at

the Travis County Extension office, and many other projects. Extension's Travis County Master Gardeners expand the scope of our horticulture program. In 2010, Travis County Master Gardeners contributed over 11,000 hours of volunteer service, representing a benefit of almost \$230,000 to Travis County residents.

ISEC Home Pest Management Program with Austin Habitat for Humanity 2010

Pest control in the home often involves using whatever chemical is handy or cheap. This is especially true of low income and elderly homeowners who may be uninformed about alternatives. Spraying chemical pesticides in the home can be unsafe for the user and can result in environmental damage as pesticides enter our water resources. The ISEC Program teaches clientele to identify and prevent common home pest problems, usually without using pesticides, resulting in a healthier and safer

home environment.

The ISEC Home Pest Management Program was provided to 34 partners of the Austin Habitat for Humanity Program in 2010 and was translated into Spanish for non-English speakers. Each family took home an "IPM kit" that includes information on 10 specific pests and tools such as steel wool, glue boards, and caulk to utilize in lieu of pesticides.

An evaluation of participants in April showed an increase of 22% knowledge and practices with 73% of the class testing above 80% on the exam. In November test scores indicated an increase of 22% in knowledge and practices among residents participating in the course.

Environmental Education Conference for Schools

The Texas AgriLife Extension Service along with several partnering organizations conducted the "Get Growing & Keep Going" symposium at Gonzalo Garza Independence High School.

Teachers, administrators, counselors, dieticians, community gardeners and others were among the 211 individuals attending. Teachers attending the symposium primarily taught science and math at the pre-school, kindergarten and elementary school level.

Participants learned how they can initiate and integrate programs on horticulture, environmental appreciation and natural resource conservation into their schools. AgriLife Extension Master Gardener volunteers presented educational sessions on rainwater harvesting, composting, plant propagation, and the Junior Master Gardener program while Extension staff presented information on entomology.

Research supports the value of outdoor learning environments paired with integrative, hands-on curriculum. In school gardens, there are benefits to children's health and nutrition, their increased understanding of

the biological world and acceptance of their responsibilities as stewards of the environment. For children to care about the environment, they must experience nature. 91% of participants indicated that they would implement changes in their classroom based on what they learned at the conference.

Wood Glen Community Wide Management Program 2010 Satisfaction Survey

Fire ants are a serious problem in urban neighborhoods, causing danger to humans and companion animals. Annual expenditures for fire ants in Austin in 1998 was over \$3 million, while medical costs associated with fire ants approached \$22 million. Research has shown that community wide fire ant management programs can help reduce fire ant populations and reduce pesticide costs for residents. Treating yards, greenbelts and common areas in communities can reduce or delay reinfestation of fire ants.

The Texas AgriLife Extension Service has conducted an ongoing educational effort in one neighborhood of 525 homes spread over 224 acres. Evaluations of participants indicated that prior to the program they spent on average of \$32 a year on fire ant control. After the program the individual expenditure dropped to \$11, a savings of \$21 per household. Residents polled indicated a 64% reduction of in pesticide use.

Supporting Our Agriculture

Educating Beef Cattle Producers

Beef cattle and forage production are among the top 3 agriculture commodities in Travis County. The beef cattle industry is going through rapid changes in technology, soaring input costs and an evolving market place. Forage production, a key component of beef production, must mirror these changes as well.

An average of \$6 million in cash receipts for cattle and hay sales over the past two years led the Travis County Small Landowner Committee to identify beef and forage production as a key area of educational importance to the county. AgriLife Extension provided several educational programs in beef cattle nutrition, health management, brush and weed control, and nutrient management in 2010 to help producers remain competitive in these commodities. These programs were designed to target beef and forage producers, which manage over 65% of the total land area in Travis County.

Participants were surveyed to access the effectiveness of the educational workshops in beef cattle and forage production. 83% of respondents plan to take action or make changes based on the information from the workshops. 89% anticipate benefiting economically as a direct result of what they learned from these Extension educational activities.

Conserving Our Water

Water quality and conservation is an issue of ever increasing importance to the State of Texas, especially in Travis County. Our Extension Small Landowner Education Committee planned and conducted an educational workshop on rainwater harvesting. Participants learned how to effectively capture water for home use, as well as for agriculture and wildlife enterprises.

Evaluations indicated that 79% of respondents plan to make changes based on what they learned, and 68% anticipate benefiting economically due to what they learned at the Rainwater Harvesting Workshop.

In cooperation with....

Travis County Commissioners' Court

Samuel T. Biscoe
County Judge

Ron Davis
Commissioner, Pct. 1

Karen Huber
Commissioner, Pct. 3

Sarah Eckhardt
Commissioner, Pct. 2

Margaret Gomez
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Educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

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