

## Leadership Advisory Board

### Travis County

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Walker Hale  
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Joe Morris  
Jerry Naiser  
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Karen Sonleitner  
Lydia Steinman  
Lupe Velasquez

For more information about these and other events, please call 512-854-9600 or visit our website:

<http://travis-tx.tamu.edu/>

## Calendar of Events

### January 2013

1 New Year's Day Observed—OFFICE CLOSED  
10 Texas 4-H Tweet Up on 4-H Scholarships  
11-13 Travis County Youth Show  
15 Pesticide Applicator Training  
16 Texas 4-H Leaders 4 Life meeting  
17 Saving & Starting Plants from Seeds  
18 Travis County Youth Fair & Livestock Auction  
21 MLK Day Observed - OFFICE CLOSED  
22-24 Last Chance CEU's Course - 16 hours offered

### February 2013

6 4-H Day at the Capitol  
7 Spring Vegetable Gardening  
14 Urban Legislative Event @ State Capitol  
18 Presidents' Day Observed—OFFICE CLOSED

### March 2013

8-23 Star of Texas Fair & Rodeo  
14 Caring for Your Soil



## PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY Cooperative Extension Program

In Cooperation With...

### TRAVIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

Samuel T. Biscoe  
County Judge

Ron Davis  
Commissioner, Precinct 1

Sarah Eckhardt  
Commissioner, Precinct 2

Gerald Daugherty  
Commissioner, Precinct 3

Margaret Gomez  
Commissioner, Precinct 4

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### EDITORIAL TEAM

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*Communications Specialist*

Dolores Sandmann  
*County Extension Director*

Elida Urtado  
*Office Supervisor*

Angela Reyes  
*Administrative Assistant*



# Making a Difference in Travis County

WINTER 2013



Dolores Sandmann  
County Extension Director  
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension  
Travis County

### Message from the Director:

Happy New Year – and what a year it has been! While the mission of AgriLife Extension is a seemingly simple one – improving the lives of Texans through high-quality, relevant education – carrying out this mission is a massive undertaking that requires a commitment from staff and our volunteers.

As we look back on 2012, I want to thank the Travis County Extension staff, as well as the many members of our volunteer organizations, including Master Gardeners, Master Wellness, Financial Literacy, and 4-H Adult Leader Volunteers who diligently support our efforts. Together in 2012, we made more than 283,000 educational contacts throughout Travis County. We also trained and involved over 1,720 volunteers who gave back 58,899 volunteer hours to our communities, representing a value of over \$1,283,400 million dollars.\*

I would also like to thank our Leadership Advisory Board and our many other community partners and stakeholders for their guidance, leadership and support throughout the year. As well as the support we receive from our county and state governments who continue to support our agency and its growing outreach to an increasingly urban audience.

Best wishes,

-Dolores Sandmann

\*Hourly value of volunteer time provided by independentsector.org

## NO KIDDING: 4-H CAPITAL Classic Goat Show a Success

4-H CAPITAL held the CAPITAL Classic Goat Show at the Burnet County Rodeo and Fairgrounds. Participants included showmen from schools in the 4-H CAPITAL Urban Animal Science Program, as well as the first year goat showmen from Burnet County.

“We typically have anywhere from 100 to 130 participants in the show itself accompanied by their friends, family, and school staff members,” said Mellanie Mickelson, 4-H CAPITAL Animal Science Specialist. “Most of our Animal Science Program participants are in third, fourth, or fifth grade, but we also have one middle school with students in sixth through ninth grade.”

Lydia Domaruk, Animal Science Program Coordinator, said the CAPITAL Classic is held as a practice show for our students to strengthen the skills and show techniques that program staff have taught them throughout the year.

“Since many of our participants have not shown before it also serves as an example and a confidence-building experience before they exhibit their goats at the much larger Travis County Youth Show in January,” Domaruk said. “It also provides them with a unique opportunity to meet with their peers from other schools and communicate about their experiences with showing goats.”

Domaruk said 4-H CAPITAL also worked with Travis County agent for 4-H and Youth Development, Cory Talley, who provided ‘livestock ambassadors’ to demonstrate showmanship techniques and answer participant’s questions.

The show also features a clinic for participants in which volunteers show 4-H CAPITAL goats while a judge explains the how and why of showing technique.

“This year, they demonstrated how to handle both well-behaved and poorly-behaved goats, then had a short question-and-answer period followed by their serving ‘ring stewards’ and coaches for all the show participants,” Mickelson said.



Photo: The 4-H CAPITAL Classic Goat Show boasted more than 100 participants, plus their friends and family members.



## Showmanship Leader Challenge Prepares Youth for County Show

Each year, the 4-H CAPITAL program conducts a practice show for their youth involved in after-school animal science classes with the goal of preparing them for the upcoming Travis County Youth Show in January. County Extension agents Julie Ansley and Cory Talley recently collaborated by bringing community organized 4-H members into the Showmanship Leader Challenge to help prepare the 4-H CAPITAL kids.

“Four young ladies took part in the 2012 challenge, which consists of the Showmanship Challenge and



then the Leadership Challenge,” said Cory Talley, AgriLife Extension agent for 4-H and Youth Development. This year’s participants were Elaine and Eller-

ie Jackson of Travis County, and Hannah Dockery and Callie Herring of Burnet County.

The Leadership Challenge allows 4-H youth 13 years of age and up enrolled in the lamb and/or goat project the opportunity to showcase their showmanship skills and mentor younger people. In the Showmanship Challenge, the teens don’t show their own goats, but are required to demonstrate using 4-H CAPITAL program goats. Judges are selected to observe the teen leaders during the entire challenge process and one youth is selected as Showmanship Leader Challenge Champion.

“Participants then switched goats to have equal opportunity of working with a variety of goats and were judged on patience and ability to follow the instructions of the speaker,” said Julie Ansley, AgriLife Extension agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources. “In the Leadership Challenge, teens were assigned to assist and mentor 4-H CAPITAL youth as they showed their goats.”

The event was a test of patience, leadership and character, said the agents. This year’s Annual Showmanship Leader Challenge recipient was Elaine Jackson. Judges were impressed with her enthusiasm and ability to stay in the showmanship mode, plus her ability to relate to younger people on their level.

## STRONG STARTS: Urban Farming 101 Helps Small-Acreage Producers

Three STRONG STARTS: Urban Farming 101 program sessions for people interested in producing agricultural crops on small-acreage sites were held in October and November. There were 35 participants from 20-69 years of age, representing 11 Central Texas counties. Participants managed an average of 26 acres, with most owning five acres or less.

The October 25 session addressed planning a small-scale farming operation and included a presentation and field tour at certified organic Green Gate Farms. The November 1 session covered vegetable production and fruit crops, as well as insect and disease management and permaculture basics. The November 8 session focused on resources available to the small-acreage farmer, plus information on zoning, soil surveys, organic certification and grant writing.

“This program was offered in three parts to help home and small-plot producers, including producers who want to grow produce for farmers markets or are involved in sustainable foods efforts or community gardens,” said Daphne Richards, AgriLife Extension agent for Horticulture in Travis County. “Due to a renewed focus on fresh foods and sustainability, many Central Texans are transforming yards into gardens and bringing in layer chickens and honeybees.”

Instruction was provided by AgriLife Extension personnel along with representatives of other agencies, including the Texas Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service.

“There has been an increase in public interest relating to small-scale local food production and home-based backyard farming,” Richards said. “This program and others like it are being presented by the agency to address this growing interest.”



**Photo:** Erin Flynn, of certified organic Green Gate Farms, teaches Strong Starts participants about cultivating transplants in greenhouses to extend growing seasons.

## Backyard Poultry Seminar... Something to Cluck About

A Backyard Poultry Seminar, one of a series of the regional Backyard Basics programs, was held from 8 – 11:30 a.m. Oct. 20 at Callaghan’s General Store, 501 Bastrop Highway in southeast Austin.

Sixty-six urban and backyard farmers attended this seminar which provided information and instruction on egg production, egg sales, chicken coop set-up, and sale of both live and harvested chickens.

The workshop was presented by AgriLife Extension and included presentations by experts from the agency, said Julie Ansley, AgriLife Extension agent for Travis County. She described the program as “a multi-county event” which included involvement from her counterparts in Hayes and Guadalupe counties.

Topics included poultry feeding and nutrition; bird parasites, diseases and biosecurity; poultry anatomy and physiology, and regulations for the sale of live poultry.

“Participants also learned ways to diagnose illness in their flock and how to treat basic medical problems or diseases,” she said. “Most participants of the workshop were members of an online poultry meet-up group that is a new audience for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service programming efforts.”

Ansley said the workshop was also one of various Backyard Basics programs being piloted by AgriLife Extension in South and Central Texas, relating to healthy living through home-based food production, preparation and preservation.

Survey results from the workshop indicated 100 percent of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the instructor’s knowledge level on the subject; 97 percent were mostly or completely satisfied with the information being accurate and easy to understand. Additionally, more than four-fifths of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the helpfulness of the information in making decisions about their own situation and more than one-fourth anticipated benefiting economically as a direct result of what they learned from this program.



**Photo:** Dr. Morgan Farnell, Texas A&M Poultry Science Department, demonstrates a necropsy on a chicken at the Backyard Poultry Seminar held Oct. 20.

## EFNEP Provides Nutrition Education

Frances Pedraza, a Nutrition Education Associate and four-year employee of AgriLife Extension’s Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, or EFNEP, said she “loves her job” providing community-based nutrition education to residents of Travis County, especially those in limited-resource areas.

Since September 1 Pedraza has given nutrition education instruction to 74 adults using the agency’s ‘Healthy Foods, Healthy Families’ curriculum – a seven session series that addresses adult nutrition and how to develop better eating habits for yourself and your family. “We present the program at churches, schools, businesses and other community settings,” said Pedraza.



“Many of our participants are the parents or grandparents of kids that go to Title 1 schools in these districts,” she said. “Many of them have limited education and some don’t even read or write, so this personal instruction is really important to them. They enjoy learning healthier recipes for foods to serve their families and the importance of family mealtime.”

In 2012, EFNEP programs in Travis County reached 1,245 families with 2,706 children enrolled in the programs. Eighty percent of participating families were at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level.

Studies show that for every \$1 spent on EFNEP, \$10 were estimated to be saved in health care costs and \$2 saved in food costs by participants. For Travis County, this amounts to about **\$3.6 million in estimated health-care cost savings and about \$729,000 in food costs.**

### MEET THE STAFF: Lindsay Razzaz



Lindsay Razzaz, Horticulture Program Assistant, is an enthusiastic new member of the AgriLife Extension team in Travis County. In this position, she applies years of experience working in communications, planning & evaluation, and organizational capacity-building with nonprofit and governmental service providers. Lindsay holds a Masters in Public Affairs from the LBJ School of Public Affairs at UT Austin, and Bachelors degrees in both Communications and International Development from Tulane University. When not at work, Lindsay enjoys gardening (of course!), all manners of travel, Bikram Yoga, brass bands, and early morning walks with her pup.