

Leadership Advisory Board

Travis County

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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

February 2014

- 5 Last Chance CEU's Class - Beef & Brush
- 6 Composting for the Home Garden
- 7 All Bugs Good & Bad Webinar Series
- 8 Rose Selection and Care
- 13 Last Chance CEU's Class
- 17 Presidents' Day Observed - OFFICE CLOSED

March 2014

- 1-16 Star of Texas Fair & Rodeo
- 1 4-H Shooting Sports - March Madness Invitational
- 6 Rainwater Harvesting
- 7 Pesticide Applicator Training
- 8 Heirloom Plants in the Spring Garden
- 18 Healthy Cooking School
- 25 Beekeeping Program
- 29 Zilker Garden Festival
- 29 District 4-H Food Challenge Contest

April 2014

- 3 Maintaining a Healthy Lawn
- 12 District 4-H Livestock Judging Contest
- 12 East Austin Garden Fair

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY
Cooperative Extension Program

In Cooperation With... TRAVIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

Samuel T. Biscoe
County Judge

Ron Davis Bruce Todd Gerald Daugherty Margaret Gomez
Commissioner, Precinct 1 Commissioner, Precinct 2 Commissioner, Precinct 3 Commissioner, Precinct 4

CONTACT US

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Travis County
1600-B Smith Road
Austin, Texas 78721

TEL: 512.854.9600
FAX: 512.854.9611
E-mail: Travis-TX@tamu.edu
Web: <http://travis-tx.tamu.edu>

EDITORIAL TEAM

Paul Schattenberg, Editor
Communications Specialist

Dolores Sandmann
County Extension Director

Elida Urtado
Office Supervisor

Angela Reyes
Administrative Assistant

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension Program are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age or national origin.

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY
Cooperative Extension Program

Making a Difference

WINTER 2014

in Travis County



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

Message from the Director:

As we look back on 2013, 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 2013, we made more than 406,000 educational contacts throughout Travis County. We also trained and involved over 2,055 volunteers who gave back 47,817 volunteer hours to our communities, representing a value of over \$1,058,600 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 assistance 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

Travis County Master Gardeners Recognized

The Master Gardener program in Travis County, a volunteer horticulture program of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, held an end-of-year recognition event to honor outstanding Master Gardeners for their accomplishments in 2013. The event was attended by 165 volunteers and their family members. "New Master Gardener graduates' who performed their internship in 2013 were also introduced and honored, and were given certificates and official name badges," said Daphne Richards, AgriLife Extension Agent for Horticulture in Travis County. "And new Master Gardener interns who were 2013 participants in the training program were introduced at the event."

Richards said 29 volunteers who served as Master Gardeners in Training (interns) in 2013 "graduated" to become fully certified Master Gardeners and 33 new volunteers who completed the training course at the end of November, 2013 were inducted as interns for 2014.

She noted that during the 2013 program year, **Master Gardener volunteers performed over 12,000 hours of service**, representing a benefit of over \$271,000 to our community, as calculated using the currently accepted per-hour value of volunteer time of \$21.97 (independentsector.org).



"For the 2014 program year, there are 188 certified Master Gardeners and 33 Master Gardeners in Training (interns), for a total of 221 active Master Gardener volunteers in Travis County," Richards said.

EFNEP had a “Healthy” Year in 2013

The results for 2013 are in and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) of AgriLife Extension in Travis County once again had an excellent year serving its mission of providing food and nutrition education for limited-resource families throughout the county.

“EFNEP nutrition assistants help low-income families and youth acquire the knowledge, skills and behaviors needed to establish nutritionally sound diets and to help their personal development and that of their families,” said Maggie Johnson, AgriLife Extension Agent for Travis County EFNEP. “The program offers practical lessons in basic nutrition, food preparation, food budget management and food safety, presented convenient settings like schools, churches and community centers. We present in English and Spanish, as required by those attending.”

Johnson said in 2013 EFNEP in Travis County enrolled 667 low-income families and made 5,140 youth contacts through its youth programming.

“Sixty-seven percent of these families were at or below the federal poverty level and 83 percent were enrolled in one or more food assistance programs,” Johnson said. “In addition, 91 percent of these participants were Hispanic or Latino and four percent were black.

She added that **in 2013 a total of 349 program volunteers donated 2,433 hours of service**, which at the Texas rate of \$22.57 per hour translates to a value of about \$55,000 for their efforts.

“We also need to acknowledge those partners who help make our program succeed,” said Johnson. Last year, new partners included Pflugerville ISD, We VIVA/Safe House Partnership, Foundation Community, and KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program).



Cooperative Extension Program helps students become “Heroes 4 Health”



During the months of October and November, The Heroes 4 Health program was implemented in physical education classes at LBJ High School.

According to Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program Agents Crystal Wiltz and Nathan Tucker, the program features an anti-obesity educational curriculum from which students can teach younger students or their peers.

In the case of LBJ High School, teen leaders selected from three of the school’s physical education classes and were trained by Wiltz and Tucker on how to use the curriculum to teach their high school peers.

“The program engages youth in teaching healthy eating and active living,” Tucker said. “Youth leaders participating in Heroes 4 Health will gain leadership skills and learn nutrition and fitness information applicable to their own lives.”

He said leaders at LBJ High School led their peers through the six lessons in the Heroes 4 Health curriculum and incorporated hands-on activities, including a Fruit and Vegetable Toss in which students try to name as many fruits and vegetables as possible while tossing a ball between one other.

The Heroes 4 Health program outreached a total of 226 students at LBJ High School and 154 post surveys were submitted.

“The program went very well and the students were impressed with the content,” said Renee Brown, the girls’ basketball coach and a physical education instructor. “It opened their eyes to certain eating habits, especially to the sugar content of what they drink. It also incorporated good team-building activities, and the students seemed more comfortable that other students presented the educational information.”

4-H CAPITAL Helps Kids Develop an Interest in Science

Last semester, 84.26 percent of K-2nd graders, 75 percent of 3rd-4th graders and 75 percent of 5th–8th grade 4-H club members indicated that 4-H had increased their appreciation for science through programs and activities presented through the Travis County 4-H CAPITAL program.

“The Travis County 4-H CAPITAL project provides high quality out of school time enrichment to at-risk school-age youth in Travis County,” said Lydia Domaruk, AgriLife Extension Agent for Urban Youth Development. “Our mission is to inspire youth to develop into inquiring scientists, citizens of character, partners in service, and engaged community members through participation in project-based learning experiences and collaborative community involvement.”

She said program success indicators included students’ interest in science, confidence in their ability to learn science and interest in pursuing a science career.

“For 4-H CAPITAL, the largest of our five curriculum areas -- the Youth Gardening program -- focuses on science through gardening, emphasizing science skills and terms and the use of the scientific method in gardening experiments,” Domaruk said. “Experiments in the garden help our students learn about soil quality, mutualism in the garden through companion planting, and about why insect populations vary in our gardens. They learn about careers in horticulture, entomology and other areas of science.” She said 4-H CAPITAL science programs expose Travis County students to a diverse curriculum that challenges them to think, work, and play separately and together.



4-H’ers Get Hands-on Experience with Robotics

Several Travis County 4-H club members and adult volunteers participated in the V.E.X. Robotics event in San Antonio on Jan. 3. The event was sponsored by the U.S. Army and facilitated by the Robotics Education & Competition Foundation.

The Travis County 4-H volunteers Colby Warwick, Tina Warwick (adult volunteer), Sofia and Javier Ramirez, Cynthia Bashara, Bryce Etheredge, Conner Williams and Jacob and Zach Pozos participated at the event helping score, reset game fields, set up, announce and fulfill administrative duties.

A total of 54 middle and high school teams came together to test their skills in the competition, with the Hill Country Austin 4-H TECHSAns team placing 8th at the contest. This team will be competing in the South Texas Regional VEX Robotics Competition on Feb. 22, in Stafford, TX.

Travis County 4-H currently has about 14 youths from middle and high schools involved in robotics. Several other robotics teams are being developed in Travis County at high school and middle school

levels through grants from the U.S. Army and Texas Workforce Commission.

“Two of the robotics event participants, brothers Colin and Trent Warwick of Hill Country Austin 4-H TECHSAns, have been involved in a robotics project made possible through a grant received from the Texas Workforce Commission,” said Cory Talley, AgriLife Extension Agent for 4-H and Youth Development in Travis County.

Talley said the project teaches participants about teamwork, problem-solving and decision-making, as well as giving them “hands-on experience” in applying science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM, skills.

The REC Foundation, a non-profit organization supporting robotics and technology events and programs with the goal of inspiring and motivating students toward STEM education, manages the VEX Robotics Competition program in which thousands of schools worldwide participate.