

2010 SUPERIOR SERVICE AWARD

Awards Category: Program Specialist

Name of Nominee: Amanda R. Scott – Program Specialist, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

Mrs. Amanda R. Scott assumed leadership of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in July 2004. As Program Specialist, Mrs. Scott provides leadership in program planning, development, implementation, evaluation, and reporting for EFNEP. She is also responsible for training of professional faculty and paraprofessional educators on various food and nutrition subject matter topics, and in program management, delivery methods, curricula, evaluation, policies, and procedures. She ensures that the program follows federal program guidelines; and develops and manages state and local EFNEP budgets which total 4.3 million annually.

Program Impact, Outreach, and Development

Program Impact and Outreach: The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program is based in 11 Texas Counties and consistently reaches large numbers of limited resource families and youth. Although program outreach can fluctuate due to staff vacancies, EFNEP has seen growth under Mrs. Scott's leadership. Specifically, she has worked with EFNEP agents and Administrators to add new paraprofessional staff to high performing EFNEP units resulting in increased program outreach. In fact, EFNEP youth outreach has increased from 32,945 during FY2003-04 to 58,351 in FY 2008-09. In addition, two new EFNEP units focusing on adult work based in the high need areas of Webb and Willacy Counties have been added under her leadership.

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program also continues to note strong program impacts as indicated by evaluation results from a sample of 3,069 adults during the 2009 reporting year:

- ✓ 82% of participants improved food resource management practices such as planning meals in advance.
- ✓ 62% of participants improved food safety practices such as thawing foods safely.
- ✓ 87% of participants improved nutrition practices such as reading food labels. Additionally, reported intakes of fruits, vegetables, and milk foods increased after participation in the program.

Evaluated youth reported the following positive impacts:

- ✓ 89% of youth improved practices in food preparation and safety.
- ✓ 93% of youth improved physical activity behaviors or attitudes.

Program Development: Mrs. Scott has taken several steps to foster continued development of EFNEP:

Implementation of Walk Across Texas Program for EFNEP Audiences: Beginning with the most recent release of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, physical activity became appropriate subject matter for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. Then, in FY 2007 EFNEP was given a new federal reporting requirement related to physical activity. In response to the need for a stronger emphasis on physical activity within program classes, Mrs. Scott partnered with Child Health Specialist Alice Kirk to modify the Walk Across Texas Program for use by EFNEP paraprofessionals. All EFNEP units now report Walk Across Texas data and in calendar year 2009, 1,789 EFNEP participants walked 136,223 miles with an estimated economic impact of \$18.8 million dollars.

EFNEP/BLT Recipe Database: In 2009 Mrs. Scott guided development of a recipe database for use with EFNEP programs. The recipe database helps to ensure food demonstrations convey proper nutrition education messages and also streamline program purchasing. The recipe database is used not only for EFNEP programs but also jointly by the Better Living for Texans program including Extension Family and Consumer Sciences agents.

Development of Healthy Food, Healthy Families Curriculum for the EFNEP Adult Program: In 2009, Amanda formed a taskforce consisting of 5 EFNEP Extension Agents, 2 program assistants, one Specialist, and one Extension Assistant to create a series of new lessons for the EFNEP adult program in the dialogue or learner-centered format. The taskforce adapted materials from Cornell Cooperative Extension to create a new curriculum called "Healthy Food, Healthy Families". The project was piloted in 2009 and subsequent revisions made in early 2010 with implementation underway. Preliminary data from implementation of "Healthy Food, Healthy Families" has improved EFNEP behavior checklist data.

Extension Staff Training

As described above, Mrs. Scott is responsible for training and professional development of Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program staff. In the past few years, she has planned and delivered several major trainings for both FCS agents, Better Living for Texans (BLT) staff, and EFNEP personnel. Below please find a list of major accomplishments. In addition to the specific trainings listed below, Amanda regularly provides subject matter updates via TTVN for BLT and EFNEP staff. She has also developed several training resources including Centra presentations such as "MyPyramid 101" and "Shopping Your Way to Safe Food" which have been used by FCS and EFNEP educators.

- *Enhanced 24-Hour Food Recall Workshop:* In 2005, Mrs. Scott trained 12 Agents, 69 EFNEP staff and one FCS agent on an enhanced food recall method designed to improve the accuracy of evaluation of dietary change among adult EFNEP clients.
- *Nutrition Symposium:* In 2005, Mrs. Scott worked closely with BLT staff to organize and plan Nutrition Symposium. She was involved with all phases of the project – budget preparation, organizing meeting space, equipment needs, and menus for the conference. In addition, she collaborated with Extension Specialists to plan the conference agenda including identification of training topics and speakers. Mrs. Scott also partnered with Helen Monda from the Food and Drug Administration and together they conducted five two-hour food safety education breakout sessions during the symposium. This provided needed subject matter training to approximately 325 conference attendees and also secured food safety education resources for the Extension educators. Amanda also planned provided program training for 75 EFNEP staff on various program related topics. **This training was especially significant to EFNEP staff as this was the first time the paraprofessionals had been invited to attend a state-wide training in the 36-year history of the program.**
- *EFNEP State Meeting:* In 2007, Mrs. Scott organized a state-wide training for EFNEP paraprofessional staff. The meeting was specifically designed to improve the program delivery skills of EFNEP educators. Training topics included physical activity, food insecurity, childhood obesity, extending education experiences of EFNEP participants, and engaging the audience. In addition to subject matter training, an awards banquet was held for the paraprofessional staff. At the banquet, several program assistants were recognized with various EFNEP specific awards such as the "Sunshine" or "Practice What You Preach" awards. **This event promoted comradely among program assistants from all counties and was the first time that program assistants traveled to College Station for training.**
- *Navigating for Success (NFS):* In 2008, Mrs. Scott arranged for EFNEP Extension Agents, Better Living for Texans regional program managers, FCS Regional Program Directors, and other food and nutrition/FCS administrators to be trained on a new curriculum entitled "Navigating for Success". NFS is a curriculum designed to build the core competencies of paraprofessional nutrition educators and covered core topics such as facilitation of adult groups, accuracy of paperwork and reporting, and pertinent subject matter. The training, provided by Cornell Cooperative Extension, was designed to allow attendees to implement NFS with their paraprofessional staff. Subsequently, beginning early 2009, EFNEP Extension Agents provided 17 six-hour trainings to program assistants and associates using the NFS curriculum. Implementation of NFS had additional impacts on general FCS program activities as well. Specifically, Amanda assisted in training all FCS and Better Living for Texans staff on selected aspects of NFS in three regions of the state during late 2009 and early 2010. She replicated the training in August 2010 with four Specialists, 16 new EFNEP staff, and 1 new BLT staff member. She will train the 4-H specialists in October 2010.

Coordination and Cooperation

Mrs. Scott works collaboratively with others and has been involved with several key partnerships during the past six years:

Baylor College of Medicine Grant: From January 2006 through February 2009, Amanda provided critical leadership in the implementation phase of a grant in collaboration with the Baylor College of Medicine/Children's Nutrition Research Center. Mrs. Scott developed the data collection protocol for the grant and then worked with EFNEP agents to train staff on intervention and control protocols as well as data collection procedures. Additionally, she managed the budget for the grant project which totaled \$372,561 over a four year period, prepared the IRB proposal for the project, and helped agents with various project related issues including recruitment of subjects. Now completed, this project provided excellent insight to new strategies for nutrition education.

Visit from North Carolina Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program: In April 2007, Mrs. Scott hosted a group of nutrition educators from the North Carolina Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. The goal of the visit was for the North Carolina staff to learn how to program effectively to Hispanic audiences. Mrs. Scott created the training agenda, recruited speakers, organized a tour of the ARS/Children's Nutrition Research Center in Houston, and planned for observation of EFNEP classes in San Antonio. The three day event was hailed as "phenomenal" by the program coordinator from North Carolina. This excellent out-of-state visit showcased Texas programs and provided North Carolina the opportunity to exchange ideas about ongoing programs in their state.

Collaboration with the Cooperative Extension Program (CEP) at Prairie View A&M University: For the past few years the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M has received funds to implement their own Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. Mrs. Scott has worked closely with Dr. Carolyn Nobles and Elaine Freeney to help build their program and has provided information regarding program curricula, reporting, and evaluation strategies. Mrs. Scott also designed and delivered a training entitled "EFNEP 101 Workshop" for CEP educators and five new program partners in July 2007. The training included nutrition and food safety subject matter in addition to program documentation and evaluation. Mrs. Scott also invited CEP educators to participate and help plan the November 2007 EFNEP State Meeting and upcoming June 2011 training.

National, Regional, and Agency Leadership

Mrs. Scott is active with the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) at both the national and regional levels. She regularly attends conference calls for the Southern Region and annual meetings in Washington DC. In August 2007, Mrs. Scott co-hosted a national conference call with Georgia EFNEP Coordinator Gail Hanula and North Carolina Coordinator Lorelei Jones to discuss how EFNEP and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program could work together more effectively. Individuals from seven states attended the conference call including representatives from WIC. Mrs. Scott was recruited by the EFNEP National Program Leader, Helen Chipman to participate in planning the 2008 National EFNEP meeting held in Washington, DC. Amanda helped to develop the agenda and recruit speakers. At the meeting, she served as a panel member and discussed physical activity efforts in Texas and also led a roundtable discussion with other EFNEP coordinators on programming to hard to reach audiences. This year Mrs. Scott is serving on the national EFNEP web-based reporting system committee. This important committee is guiding development of a web-based version of the EFNEP federal evaluation software known as NEERS5.

In 2008 Amanda was selected to participate in the San Antonio Livestock Exposition – Leadership Extension program. This program is designed to build management and leadership skills of Extension employees. Amanda graduated from the two year program in November 2009.

Scholarly Activities

Currently Mrs. Scott is involved with several scholarly activities. For example, she worked with Dr. Jenna Anding to assess food safety practices of EFNEP participants. Two posters were presented in 2009 in conjunction with this project – one at the Society for Nutrition Education conference and the other at the American Dietetic Association meeting. She is also collaborating with Dr. Sharon Robinson to investigate nutrition practices related to childhood obesity among EFNEP participants. One abstract has been accepted for this project (Society for Nutrition Education) and another will be submitted for consideration and review. In addition, she is working jointly with Dr. Robinson on a manuscript related to project findings. Both of these projects involve EFNEP staff and will provide invaluable data useful in designing educational programs for this particular audience.

As outlined in this nomination narrative, Mrs. Scott has provided the leadership necessary to move the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program ahead in a positive direction. Her dedication to limited resource audiences and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program is evident and no doubt contributes to the successful outcomes of the program. Her strong work ethic and a realistic approach to nutrition education make her a recognized leader among her peers. The Texas AgriLife Extension Service is fortunate to have a talented, innovative and hard working individual who represents this agency extremely well. For these reasons, Mrs. Scott should be commended for her efforts through receipt of the 2010 Superior Service Award.