

WHAT WE DO:

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is a unique education agency that provides programs, tools, and resources on a local and statewide level that teach people how to improve agriculture and food production, advance health practices, protect the environment, strengthen the economy, and enrich youth. In all 254 counties, County Extension Agents serve families, youth, communities and businesses throughout the state.

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

Cooperative Extension Program

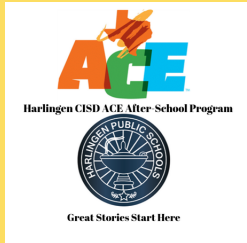


FAMILY &
CONSUMER
SCIENCES

Cooperative Extension Program Family & Community Health By: Gloria Carter, EA- Family & Community Health



HCISD Lights on ACE event - On October 29th, *Agent Carter* facilitated a physical activity using exercise dice and a nutrition lesson on the importance of reducing our sugary and unhealthy drinks intake during Harlingen CISD's Lights on ACE event for **133 participants**.



In November, **12 parent volunteers** from **La Feria CISD's C.E. Vail Elementary** completed the **A Taste of Latin American Heritage (ATOLAH) program**. **ATOLAH** is a plant-based nutrition & cooking program created to inspire healthy eating by introducing participants to their ancestors' traditional healthy foods and flavors. Participants learned the principal foods of the Latin American Diet Pyramid and how to prepare them easily, along with the vibrant history, culture, and nutrition of Latin American heritage foods.



On December 13th, *Agent Carter* facilitated a demonstration for **15 families** participating in the **Harlingen CISD Family Plus Program** on preparing food mixes in a jar as budget-friendly gift-giving options for the holidays.



On November 11th, **18 participants** from **Cano Health-Brownsville** attended the **Managing Medications presentation** to learn best practices for handling and safely taking medications. On November 22nd, **13 participants** attended the **Healthy Food Choices During the Holidays presentation** to learn strategies for making better food choices during festive occasions.

Family & Community Health By: Lilian Mezquida, CEA - Family & Community Health



Healthy South Texas – Womens Health

Dr. Lena Speck talked about Menopause and different ways to deal with it.



On **October 29, 2022** we hosted the childcare training for Directors and Childcare providers. The childcare providers received **5 clock hours** towards their licensing. There were **44 registered participants**.



Weslaco Childcare conference

Walk Across the Texas. **4 Teams** completed the **8 weeks** program. Team Walking Warriors completed **1049.59 miles**, Texas 2022 completed **723.41 miles** and Lonestar RGV completed **638.28 miles** and Noon Walkers completed **149.13 total miles** walked **2560.41**.



Walking Warriors
1049,50 miles



Texas 2022
723.41 Miles



Lonestar RGV
638.28 Miles



Time and Stress Management



Infections Diseases

Better Living for Texas

By: Nidia Garcia, Extension Agent - Better Living for Texans
Esmeralda Avila, Nutrition Education Associate

Hudson Elementary Graduates



Be Well, Live Well - 5 session series designed to help older adults aspire to the ideal of successful aging that includes reduced risk for disease, high cognitive and physical capacity, and active engagement with life. **26 adults** participated in the program.

Color Me Healthy for SNAP-Ed - 9 session series developed by North Carolina State Cooperative Extension for preschoolers and kindergarteners with fun, innovative, interactive, learning opportunities on physical activity and healthy eating. **28 students** from La Encantada Elementary ACE program participated.

A Fresh Start to a Healthier You! -

4 session series designed to help adult participants learn the importance of healthy nutrition with an emphasis on increasing fruit and vegetable intake, physical activity, food safety, and food resource management. **65 adults participated** in the program.

Choose Healthy - 4 session series for middle schoolers that focuses on the MyPlate food groups, physical activity (energy balance), making healthy food choices, and choosing healthy drinks. **29 students** from IDEA - Harlingen and **161 students** from Stillman Middle School participated in the program. Stillman Middle School students preparing a healthy snack: Cranberry Oatmeal Balls.



Growing & Nourishing Healthy Communities

By: Kristina Loreda, Extension Agent - Better Living for Texans



The Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities

Program continued classes at Sanchez Elementary in La Feria, at New Hope Community Garden in La Feria, and at Perez Elementary in Brownsville. Future plans include programs and continued installation of raised bed gardens with La Feria Recreation Center, Gonzalez Elementary in Brownsville, and C. Vail Elementary in La Feria.



Agriculture

By: Marco Ponce, CEA - Agriculture

RGV 5-CEU Conference- County Agents from Cameron and Hidalgo Counties conducted a **5-CEU Conference** that was held at the District 12 AgriLife Center in Weslaco. This program was conducted for local pesticide applicators and for employees of various municipalities that were in need of continuing education units (CEU's). Some of the topics included: **Cotton and Grain IPM, Vegetable IPM, Federal and TDA Recordkeeping, IPM of Mosquitos and Flies, and Citrus Pests.**



Pesticide Applicator Training- County Agents from Cameron and Hidalgo Counties conducted a pesticide applicator training for private and non-commercial applicators. Participants viewed a series of videos and presentations that totaled over **4 hours of education**. Participants were able to follow along with a question and answer sheet that helped educate them in the areas of personal protective equipment, pesticide safety, calibration, and reading pesticide labels. This training served to effectively prepare the participants to take their certification exam.



Beef 706 Program- Participants from the Rio Grande Valley took part in the third session of the **Beef 706** program which was held on the campus of Texas A&M University – Kingsville. Participants received information on carcass quality and yield grading. A hands-on workshop was then conducted to cut and fabricate the carcass in to primal and sub-primal cuts. Participants were also able to attend a tour of an HEB meat market in Corpus Christi and listen to a presentation from their department manager.



Coastal & Marine

By: Tony Reisinger, CEA -Coastal & Marine Resources



Our two Texas Master Naturalist chapters, **South Texas Border and Rio Grande Valley** concluded this quarter with a total of **17,565 volunteer hours** benefitting the County, **valued at \$526,072 with 32,159 contacts!** We began using the South Texas Ecotourism Center for meetings and recently checked the ponds to see what was in them, finding mosquito fish which help control the mosquito population.



Mosquito Fish

Twenty Recreational Fishing Vessels Fishing Off Port Isabel after the Freeze in December 2022



The first major cold front in December brought closures by Texas Parks and Wildlife to deep water areas used by bay fish for refuges. When the areas opened, anglers flocked to them and reported excellent catches. Recreational fishing brings **over \$45 million** in economic activity to the Lower Laguna Madre annually.

Our **Bycatch Reduction Device, "Better BRD Project"** has concluded the BRD hunt and identified four new devices that look promising in reducing bycatch and shrimp loss. In **2023** we will begin preliminary testing of these devices aboard commercial Gulf shrimp vessels including our Cameron County fleet. Our fleet's production remains challenged by low shrimp prices due to import competition, high fuel costs, and difficulty attracting crews.



Bycatch Reduction Device BRD Training and Shrimp Unloading

The Juntos 4-H Program continued in the fall, with a **5-week** family engagement workshop series, implemented at Berta Cabaza Middle School in San Benito, TX. This series, facilitated by program volunteers, is designed for the students and their parents to learn and connect with each other as they prepare for the journey of post-secondary education. Workshops include: **1) Making Education a Family Goal, 2) Effective Communication at Home, 3) From Middle School to High School, 4) From High School to Higher Education, and 5) Graduation: Ready to Be a Successful Student.** Approximately **45 participants (adults and youth) and 7 volunteers** participated in the workshops at the school.



4-H Tech Changemakers- During the Fall semester, **3 youth at Riverside Middle School in San Benito, TX** have participated in educational outreach events at their school to teach adults digital literacy skills. Students gave presentations at Meet the Teacher night and Open House event, **reaching 404 adults.** Students presented in both English and Spanish and focused on topics such as email basics and how to navigate the school's parent portal.

Heroes 4-Health- In October, **25 students completed the Choose Health: Food, Fun, & Fitness Series at both Dr. Cash Elementary School and Frank Roberts Elementary School.** This program focuses on improving diet and activity-related behaviors. A second cohort of students received the **8-session** program at both sites during the following months, reaching an additional **24 youth.** **CEP agents Gloria Carter and Stephanie Bowman** conducted a family engagement event at both schools in December to wrap up the program and give **16 families** an opportunity to prepare a healthy meal together.



Horticulture

By: Jennifer Herrera, CEA - Horticulture



Plant Sale- Over **500 participants** attend the Master Gardener Plant Sale and Educational Expo. Educational exhibits included composting, vegetable gardening, native plants and butterfly gardening.

Awards Ceremony- The end of the year Master Gardener recognition event was held at the Master Gardener Education Garden. Master Gardeners and Interns completed over **3,177 service hours valued at \$86,425.28..**

Kids, Kows & More- Over **1,200 youth** from Cameron & Hidalgo County attended a 2-day event in which participants learned about the different Agricultural Commodities produced in South Texas

Citrus and Vegetable Show- Contests included Food Challenge, Garden Plot contest, Ag Product ID, and Vegetable/Fruit Poster Contest. Over **70 poster** entries were submitted on fruits and vegetables from youth throughout the Rio Grande Valley.

Surviving the Holidays with Medicinal Herbs- Over **60 participants** attended the Small Acreage Program. Participants learned about business startup and how to make tincture, herbal syrups and salves to sell at local farmers markets.



SUPPORTING TEXAS FAMILIES WITH GREATEST NEED SINCE 1969

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) helps young families and youth with limited resources—those most at risk to suffer from hunger, food insecurity, and the inability to connect with available support systems. EFNEP offers practical lessons in basic nutrition, food preparation, food budget management, and food safety in settings convenient for the participants. Program graduates reflect significant, lasting improvement in eating behaviors and healthy food habits. Texas has a need for EFNEP—2019 data show that 16 percent of Texas families with children under the age of 18 were living below poverty level, compared to 14 percent of U.S. families.

EFNEP MAKES A REAL DIFFERENCE

Adult Program

Using hands-on experiences, EFNEP adult participants complete a **eight lesson series** on stretching food dollars, improving eating habits, and practicing food safety principles. As a result of participation in EFNEP, participants will learn to prepare more meals and snacks at home, be more active, control portion size, and have more energy.

Youth Program

The EFNEP Youth program is directed toward low-income school-age youth. These students participate in a **six lesson series** of fun and educational lessons on good nutrition and food safety as part of summer programs and classroom and after-school activities. Through fun and engaging activities, youth learn to build a healthy plate, set limits on sugar, fats, and sodium, be active, food safety, and to practice healthy behaviors.

EFNEP REACHES DIVERSE AUDIENCES

In Texas, ethnically diverse EFNEP nutrition assistants reach youth and adult groups whose principal language may be English or Spanish.

During the 4th Quarter of 2022:

- **469 Families enrolled**
- **322 Participants graduated**
- **1,328 youth contacts**
- **1,328 youth graduated**
- **100 % Participants have children under the age of 19.**
- **45% Families were at or below 100% of federal poverty level.**
- **53% Families enrolled in one or more food assistance.**



VOLUNTEERS STRENGTHEN EFNEP

During the 4th Quarter of 2022, **48 volunteers** donated **593 hours** of work to EFNEP in Texas. At the Texas volunteer rate of **\$29.95/hr.**, this volunteerism has a minimum dollar value of **\$17,760.35**.
this volunteerism has a minimum dollar value of **\$317,293.87**. Volunteers make a difference in their own communities and contribute to EFNEP's continued success.

COST -BENEFIT OF EFNEP

Studies have shown 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 Texas, this is **\$43 million** in estimated health care cost savings and almost **\$8.6 million** in food costs.