



Extension Education in Live Oak County

Making a Difference

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has long been dedicated to educating Texans. Extension education evolved nationwide under the 1914 federal Smith-Lever Act, which sought to extend university knowledge and agricultural research findings directly to the people. Ever since, Extension programs have addressed the emerging issues of the day, reaching diverse rural and urban populations.

In Texas, all 254 counties are served by a well-organized network of professional Extension educators and some 100,000 trained volunteers. Extension expertise and educational outreach pertain to the food and fiber industry, natural resources, family and consumer sciences, nutrition and health, and community economic development.

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Providing Solutions*

Among those served are hundreds of thousands of young people who benefit annually from Extension's 4-H and youth development programs.

Texans turn to Extension education for solutions. Extension agents and specialists respond not only with answers, but also with resources and services that result in significant returns on the public's investment. Extension programs are custom-designed for each region of the state, with residents providing input and help with program delivery. Here are just a few highlights of Extension impacts on this county and its people.

Live Oak County – Summary of 2016 Educational Contacts

Total Educational Programs Conducted	25
Total Participants	450
Total Contact Hours	600
4-H Members	190
4-H Clubs	7
4-H Volunteers	33
Curriculum Enrichment	112
Office Contacts/ Site Visits	1200
4-H Newsletter Contacts	1870
Web Contacts	3667
News Releases	185
CEU's Offered for Applicators	3

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Healthy Harvest Community Garden of George West

Relevance

The high prevalence of obesity in Texas is cause for concern because it is linked to negative health consequences for families. 31.9% of Texas adults are obese and 19.1% of Texas children are obese. Chronic diseases account for 70% of deaths and 75% of U.S. health-care costs each year. Having access to fresh fruits and vegetables has a positive impact on communities and may be associated with higher vegetable consumption which would directly affect behaviors associated with obesity. The home environment is also an important influence on a families' eating and activity behaviors. The greater the frequency of vegetable consumption and physical activity by parents, the greater the consumption of these foods and exercise by their children. With obesity rates among low-income families in Texas ranging from 10% to over 20%, engaging families in prevention efforts is critical.

Response

Agent formed the Healthy Harvest Community Garden committee. Committee started a community garden in George West. Committee members decided to have garden beds fully prepared before they could be reserved. Advertisements for the garden beds were put in the Progress and marketed through the Chamber of Commerce. Committee members built and delivered the garden beds and a group of volunteers filled the beds at Menchaca Park with the approval of the City Council. All committee members were responsible for advertising and recruiting interested parties.

Results

The Healthy Harvest Community Garden of George West committee will start gardening next planting season. The garden is prepared and ready for planting. Interested parties will contact the extension office to reserve a bed.

Walk Across Texas 2016**Relevance**

- 31.9% of Texas adults are obese.
- 19.1% of Texas children are obese.
- 29% of American adults are not physically active at all
- Chronic diseases account for 70% of deaths and 75% of U.S. health-care costs each year.
- Texas ranks 8th in the nation as the most physically inactive state.
- Texas ranks 11th as the state with the highest adult obesity rates.
- Texas ranks 10th as the state with the highest childhood overweight rates.
- Regular physical activity and controlling weight can significantly reduce the incidence and impact of chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, and depression.
- Regular physical activity is also associated with fewer hospitalizations, physician visits, and medications.
- Estimated direct costs of obesity and inactivity together account for approximately 9.4% of U.S. health expenditures.
- With regular physical activity, 58% of people with pre-diabetes were able to temporarily or permanently delay the onset of type 2 diabetes.
- Community-wide programs like Walk Across Texas! have been strongly associated with significant increases in physical activity.

Response

Walk Across Texas! is an eight-week program to help people of all ages support one another to establish the habit of regular physical activity. Walk Across Texas is recognized as a Best Practice Physical Activity Program by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Teams of up to eight people, school classes, or individuals walk 833 miles for eight weeks across a map of Texas.

- The program begins by an Extension agent forming a community coalition with members from targeted groups such as schools, worksites, churches, etc.
- Plan Kick-Off, Half-Way, and Recognition activities.
- Train site managers, captains, teachers, and other volunteer helpers.
- Register participants.
- Walk for eight weeks.
- Enter mileage.
- Provide recognition for the team walking the most miles and the team reaching the “destination” (833 miles) first.

Results

- This program significantly increases participant physical activity
- The average weekly mileage of WAT! Participants in Live Oak County improved 5.2 miles from week 1 to week 8.
- 88 adult participants walked 17,640 miles
- 16 student participants walked 1,221 miles
- It is estimated that 12 of the adults who completed the WAT! Program could avoid or delay the onset of diabetes through increased physical activity.

Economic Impact to Live Oak County

- Of the 104 participants completing the eight-week program continue walking at the same level as during WAT!, they have the potential to save in health care costs by avoiding type 2 diabetes and by reducing work absences.
- In Healthy South Texas Year 1, including the cost of lost wages, the total potential economic impact for Live Oak County WAT! participants is approximately \$955,826.

What WAT! Participants are saying:

- “Let us know when we will do it again next year!”
- “It was fun competing with the other teams in the county.”
- “Our school is being so competitive.”
- “When will you be coming again so we can dance?”

2016 Live Oak County Learn, Grow, Eat & Go Three Rivers Elementary

Relevance

The high prevalence of childhood obesity in Texas is cause for concern because it is linked to negative health consequences for children and their families. Schools are uniquely positioned to have a positive impact on children's knowledge and behaviors associated with obesity. For example, vegetable exposure plus school gardening has been shown to improve consumption of fruits and vegetables. Adding more frequent and more vigorous physical activities during school has been shown to improve student fitness and weight. The home environment is also an important influence on a child's eating and activity behaviors. The greater the frequency of vegetable consumption and physical activity by parents, the greater the consumption of these foods and exercise by their children. With child obesity rates among low-income children in Texas ranging from 10% to over 20%, engaging schools and families in prevention efforts is critical.

Response

The Learn, Grow, Eat & GO! (LGEG) curriculum emphasizes science, math, language art/reading, social studies and health through effective learning activities with the LGEG program. The LGEG curriculum was designed to engage children and their families in school gardens, vegetable recipe tastings, classroom activities, and take home family stories; therefore, the curriculum includes:

- Classroom raised bed or container garden
- Classroom vegetable tastings and food demonstrations
- Family stories for students to take home
- Option for the students to become LGEG certified through the JMG program

County Agent collaborated with Healthy South Texas Specialist, David Leal, and partnered with Three Rivers Elementary 3rd & 4th grade classroom educators. Agent and HST Specialist provided an overview of LGEG to administrators and faculty as well as a two-day training at the Extension office to assist educators in effectively implementing LGEG. The County Agent provided all supplies and support materials necessary for LGEG implementation by utilizing HST budget.

Results

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Live Oak County partnered with Three Rivers Independent School District to implement the Learn, Grow, Eat & GO! curriculum in six 3rd & 4th grade classes at Three Rivers elementary that included 112 students.

- 53% of student participants were female and 47% were male.
- 49% were Hispanic, 47% were Caucasian, 4% were African-American

Nutrition: Extension personnel and Healthy South Texas Youth Ambassadors led a total of twelve raw vegetable tastings and food demonstrations to increase child preference. Child preference for vegetables is a high indicator for consumption of vegetables. As a result of the raw vegetable tastings and food demonstrations:

- Approximately 50% of students were exposed to new vegetables and showed a preference for the vegetable.
- Approximately 70% of students showed interest in making the recipe at home with their family.
- Approximately 55% of students gained knowledge on vegetable nutrition benefits.

Garden: Students participated in planting, maintaining, and harvesting classroom garden beds. The LGEG program invites parents to participate in the gardening project and encourages students to share their experiences at home with their families.

- Students were given the opportunity to participate in every step of the garden planting. Students were educated on the importance of gardening and participated in making a seed beds, planting seeds, and watering the garden bed. Students were very eager to participate in the hands-on activity. They are eagerly awaiting their harvest.

What schools are saying...

- “We are so excited to start this curriculum. Thank you for including us.”
- “What do we get to taste today?”
- “The kids get so excited to come and watch the food demos and participate in the food tastings.”
- “Thank you for coming! Most of them have never tasted some of these vegetables.”

2016 Live Oak County Farmers & Artisans Market

Relevance

The high prevalence of obesity in Texas is cause for concern because it is linked to negative health consequences for families. Having access to fresh fruits and vegetables has a positive impact on communities and may be associated with higher vegetable consumption which would directly affect behaviors associated with obesity. The home environment is also an important influence on a families' eating and activity behaviors. The greater the frequency of vegetable consumption and physical activity by parents, the greater the consumption of these foods and exercise by their children. With obesity rates among low-income families in Texas ranging from 10% to over 20%, engaging families in prevention efforts is critical.

Response

Agent partnered with the George West Chamber of Commerce and created a Farmers & Artisans Market Coalition. The Farmers & Artisans Market was established in November of 2016. The mission of the market is to provide locally- grown foods and handmade crafts to interested consumers. This will be accomplished by improving access to fresh, healthy, affordable food and unique craft items through a direct farmer/artisan to consumer marketing venue that will serve a diverse population. Live Oak County Farmers & Artisans Market Coalition believes that small, local farmers and artist are essential to the economy. The Live Oak County Farmers & Artisans Market is open on the third Saturday of selected months. Vendors are required to complete a registration agreement.

Results

The Live Oak County Farmers & Artisans Market started with 31 vendors in November of 2016. We have had two successful Farmers & Artisans Market. There is an average of 200 market customers over a five hour period. Items sold at the market include: spinach, okra, eggs, canned goods, baked breads, jelly, jams, salsas, homemade soaps and lotion, jewelry, and handmade crafts.

What participants are saying...

- "We have been wanting something like this here."
- "The turn out for the market is very good compared to other markets."
- "Thank you for all your hard work to bring this here."

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Live Oak County

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