



Extension Education in Jim Hogg County

Making a Difference

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

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.

Jim Hogg County – Summary of 2017 Educational Contacts

Total Contacts:	31,483
Educational Events	9,027
Other Contacts	12,096

	Contacts	Hours
All Session Contacts	9,027	13,802
Plan Level		
In Depth	7,123	10,774
Outreach	1,626	2,738
Organizational Support	278	291
Task Type		
Planning Group	4,229	6,041
Educational Method	4,420	7,218
Interpretation	378	544
Delivery Method		
Face-to-Face	8,976	13,719
Technology Assisted	51	83
Demographics Ethnicity		
White	993	2,414
Black	29	46
Hispanic	7,978	11,297
Asian	25	38
American Indian	2	8
Cash and In Kind Donations by AgriLife Supporters and Collaborators	\$20,959	

2017 Healthy South Texas Plan

Developed by: Jazmin Alvarado
Health Extension Agent

The overall goal is to reduce preventable diseases and their consequences in South Texas by 25 percent by 2025, by piloting first in 27 counties in Texas. The focus will be initially on building highly functioning interdisciplinary health coalitions within each county, addressing the need for physical activity through Walk Across Texas and other physical activity programs and recruiting and training 4-H Healthy South Texas Youth Ambassadors. Community-based coalitions will work with agents to identify and implement other program goals based on local needs of the county.

Relevance:

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, 62 percent of adult Americans were overweight in 2000, up from 46 percent in 1980. In addition, physical inactivity is associated with an increased risk of a number of chronic health conditions including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, some cancers, high blood pressure, as well as overweight and obesity. More than 2/3 of adults and nearly 1/3 of children and teens are obese or overweight and Texas ranks 12th as the most obese state in the nation. If changes are not made in this trend, it is projected that by 2030, Texas adult obesity rates will be at 57.2% compared to current rate of 30.4%. Sixty-one and a half percent of children aged 9 to 13 years do not participate in any organized physical activity during their non-school hours and 22.6% do not engage in any free time physical activity. Additionally, research indicates that only 43% of adults and 25% of high school students get regular, moderate exercise. 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 children'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. Fortunately, county AgriLife Extension agents have the knowledge and expertise to provide resources that will help encourage a healthier lifestyle and behaviour change.

Response:

Healthy South Texas aims to improve both health education and health outcomes. The effort will educate community members on healthy food preparation, encourage regular physical activity, and provide resources for preventing diabetes, asthma, and infectious disease. We will engage families and work with community partners such as hospitals and clinics. Major programs, events, and other activities were implemented in Jim Hogg County such as:

- **Walk Across Texas**, a web-based, 8-week program to help people of all ages support each other as they engage in regular physical activity
- **Healthy South Texas Youth Ambassadors**, youth health advocates trained to share health education with their peers and community.
- **Dinner Tonight! Healthy Cooking Schools**, offering cooking tips, nutrition education, menu-planning basics, and information on healthy living.
- **Medication Assistance & Diabetes Program**: Partnership with Texas A&M Health Science Center to offer Education to the community of Hebbronville.

- **Back to School Event:** We were able to provide school supplies for the youth and health screenings for the community.
- **2nd Annual Health Fair-** Close to 35 agencies participated and provided free health screenings and information to the community. Approximately 140 people attended the health fair.
- **Learn, Grow, Eat, & Go-** a total of 97 students participated in the 10-week nutrition, gardening, and physical activity curriculum at Hebbronville Elementary School.

Results:

Based on the results of the major programs, events, and activities, we were able to identify the impact of the programs within the community and the economic impact in Jim Hogg County. Also, thanks to our Healthy South Texas Coalition, we were able to identify health concerns and health issues within the county. Last, but not least, collaborations with other agencies have been an open door to expansion of programs, events, and other activities in Jim Hogg County.

Summary of Results:

HEALTHY SOUTH TEXAS COALITION MEMBERS

Our county recruited, trained, and mobilized a community Healthy South Texas coalition, identifying the most critical health needs in our community and helping assess the best way to address those needs.

15 COALITION MEMBERS REPRESENTING:	
Agrilife Extension (1)	Elected Officials (2)
Health (3)	Law Enforcement (2)
State/Federal Agency (2)	
Education (5)	

EMPOWERING YOUTH

Healthy South Texas Youth Ambassadors are local, high-school age youth recruited by agents and trained to serve as a community health and wellness advocate. These ambassadors also assist county Extension agents in providing leadership to the youth components of Healthy South Texas.

- Twelve Jim Hogg County youth have been selected through the application process and trained on Walk Across Texas; Learn, Grow, Eat, & Go!; and My Plate. They have been participating in numerous events in Jim Hogg County.
- They attended a Health summit in the summer related to chronic illnesses, diabetes, and asthma.



DINNER TONIGHT/NUTRITION EDUCATION

Healthy eating begins at home and with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services Dinner Tonight! program, we make it easier for people to plan and cook healthy meals. Recognizing the challenges of busy families, this program uses face-to-face cooking schools and an all-access website to teach cooking tips and techniques, provide reliable nutrition information, address food safety concerns, and give guidance on food preparation.

Jim Hogg County agents and BLT assistant participated together to host the first Dinner Tonight! Cooking School on July 25, 2017, which drew 50 participants and 10 exhibitors. The event was held at the American Legion Hall in Hebronville, TX.

- Participants indicated high satisfaction in education and presentation at Dinner Tonight Healthy Cooking School including: 80.8 % completely or mostly satisfied with the Dinner Tonight Program; 81.5 % first time participating in an AgriLife activity.
- Chef Marcel, from the McAllen Culinary Academy was our celebrity chef and made an appetizing beef recipe.
- HST Youth Ambassadors along with their parents assisted with a food demonstration and were assisting with registrations and serving the food for the participants.
- In addition to local vendors and health care providers, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agents handed out information to the public ranging from ANR, Better Living for Texans (BLT), and Healthy South Texas information, not only to educate the public, but also to promote other facts of extension.



Jim Hogg County

Walk Across Texas!

<http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu/>

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.

The Issue

- 32.4% of Texans are obese⁴.
- 27.2% of American adults report no leisure time physically activity².
- 16.6% of youth report no physical activity².

- Only 19% of adults and 30% of youth reported they get regular, moderate exercise to meet physical activity guidelines².

Background

- Regular physical activity and controlling weight can significantly reduce the risk and impact of chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, and depression.

- Regular physical activity is also associated with fewer physician visits, hospitalizations, and medications.
- Chronic diseases account for 70% of deaths and 86% of U.S. health-care costs¹.
- Community-wide programs like Walk Across Texas! have been associated with significant increases in physical activity.

Severity of the Problem

- Texas ranks 9th as the most physically inactive state⁴.
- Texas ranks 10th as the state with the highest adult obesity rates⁴.
- Texas ranks 10th as the state with the highest rates of obese 10-17 year olds.

The Educational Program

For eight weeks, teams of up to eight people, school classes, or individuals virtually walk 832 miles across the State of Texas.

- Visit <http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu>.
- The program begins with a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service agent forming a community task force 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 online.

- Enter mileage online.
- Participate for eight weeks.
- Provide recognition for various accomplishments throughout the program!

Impact of Walk Across Texas!

This program significantly increases participant physical activity.

- 155 Texas counties participated in 2017.
- 46,969 people registered statewide in 2017.
- 898 adults and children in our county registered and participated in the WAT! program.
- 122 adults and 608 children in our county completed the eight-week program.
- Adult participants' average weekly mileage increased 3.1 miles from week one to week eight.

Economic Impact to the County

If the 122 adults completing the eight-week program continue walking at the same level as during Walk Across Texas!, they have the potential to save a collective \$1,069,810 in future health care costs by avoiding type 2 diabetes and by reducing work absences which calculates a total impact in all of the participants.

Participants' Comments

- 99% reported they or their family benefitted from participating in Walk Across Texas
 - Quote 1: "I set my personal goal that I wanted to lose weight and within the 8-week, I lost a total of 25 pounds. My nutritionist helped me with my process and I feel better and I'm keeping up the

process brought my AC1 numbers down.”

- Quote 2: “I’ve been cleaning my acres everyday by cutting trees, trimming trees, carpentry, and a lot more. I didn’t realize by doing this everyday can accumulate a lot of miles. I really enjoyed being in the program for 2 years straight and will continue for next year.”



WAT Celebration Event

Future Program Actions:

To incorporate Walk Across Texas! With an event that will attract more people of all ages to engage and maintain being active including schools involvement.

Acknowledgement

A special thanks to the following agencies that participated and sponsored our events throughout the Walk Across Texas:

Healthy South Texas Coalition
Jim Hogg County
Jim Hogg County & District Attorney
Jim Hogg County Sheriff’s Dept.
Jim Hogg County I. S. D.
Community Action Corporation of South Texas
U.S. Border Patrol Station
Texas Dept. State and Health Services
Central Furniture Store
Border Region Behavioral Health Center
Behavioral Health Solutions of South Texas
Duratuff Embroidery
Meridian Care of Hebbronville
Doctor’s Hospital of Laredo
Driscoll Health Plan



2017 Jim Hogg County Learn, Grow, Eat & Go!

The Learn, Grow, Eat & GO curriculum is a research and evidence-based school enrichment project of the International Junior Master Gardener Program. This multifaceted garden, nutrition, and physical activity curriculum is not only novel & academically-rich, it's also shown to increase student vegetable preference, physical activity, family gardening, family meal time and decrease student BMI. Learn, Grow, Eat & GO curriculum provides ten (10) concepts of instruction that emphasize Science, Math, Language Arts/Reading, Writing, Social Studies, Physical Education, Health, Horticulture, and Nutrition all with a solid correlation to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards.

Relevance: Research shows providing children with vegetable gardening opportunities, coupled with the implementation of the Jr. Master Gardener (JMG) curriculum and the Learn, Grow, Eat & Go curricula, improves nutritional knowledge and motivation to eat fruits and vegetables. Vegetable gardening improves math and science scores, increases vocabulary, and improves overall student attendance. As our area is consistently high in childhood obesity rates, it is important to the health and our community to support teachers in developing JMG health and nutrition programs. Incorporating classroom activity breaks and increased physical activity can improve school performance and the overall health and wellness of children.

Response: Hebronville Elementary School approved to have the curriculum integrated during their science classes and a total of 97 students (3rd grade) participated in the educational program.

Results: Students and teachers increased their knowledge of plant parts and plant needs and integrating science with other subjects. Students had a lack of interest in vegetables, but through the curriculum, they were able to grow they're on vegetables and their interest in vegetables increased. Results are currently pending.

Acknowledgement: A special thanks to Jim Hogg I.S.D and Hebronville Elementary School for providing support throughout the program; including the following 3rd grade teacher that made it possible: Mrs. Isela Pena. Also, a special thanks to Commissioner Sandalio Ruiz and County Employees who assisted during garden implementation along with the 3rd grade students and their respective teacher. To our local sponsor, thank you for supporting LGEG; Lowe's Home Improvement

Future Plans: LGEG will be implemented for the following school year and we'll be receiving numerous supports from the community to expand our vegetable garden.



2017 Better Living for Texans Plan

Developed by: Jazmin Alvarado
Health Extension Agent

Programs by: Zelina Zavala
Extension Assistant for BLT

Relevance:

1,784 households in Jim Hogg county receive benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (source: http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/research/TANF_FS.asp) Research suggests that SNAP recipients and other limited resource audiences consume diets that are not in agreement with current dietary recommendations, potentially increasing their risk for the development of chronic disease. Food insecurity, obesity, and lack of access to healthy foods are other issues that impact this particular audience and have strong potential to negatively impact health.

Response:

Local county agent and BLT extension assistant will offer the following program series in Jim Hogg County:

- A Fresh Start To A Healthier You
- Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities

By implementing these programs, we'll help participants improve food security status, diet quality, and reduce risk for chronic disease.

Results:

We are currently waiting for the final results of the programs, but approximately 10 participants completed the series A Fresh Start to a Healthier You and 8 participants completed the series Growing Nourishing Healthy Communities.

Future Plans:

For the 2018 program year, we plan to graduate 125 people from one or more program series in Jim Hogg County.

3rd Annual Back to School Event



2nd Annual Health Fair



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Jim Hogg County

Personnel

Jazmin Alvarado
Health Extension Agent
Email: jazmin.alvarado@ag.tamu.edu

Zelina Zavala
Extension Assistant-
Better Living for Texans
Email: zelina.zavala@ag.tamu.edu

Contact Us:

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
109 E Santa Clara St.
PO Box 729
Hebbronville, TX 78361
Phone: 361.527.3737