



# Hidalgo County 4-H & Youth Development

Learn more about the Hidalgo County 4-H program!



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Hidalgo County 4-H Program team consists of Andrea Valdez, CEA-FCH, Joanne Ureste-Armijo, CEA-FCH, Ashley Gregory, CEA-Horticulture and Vidal Saenz CEA-Agricultural and Natural Resources who assist in 4-H responsibilities in 4-H educational programs, events, and contests. County, District, and Statewide.

Texas 4-H is a youth organization for kids and teens between the ages of 5-18, and it is bigger than most people think. Components of the 4-H Youth Development program include 4-H clubs/groups, club managers, volunteer leaders, and the 4-H Program Area Committees. In addition, it includes the implementation of marketing and promotion efforts aimed at recruitment of new 4-H volunteers and members. Other efforts to expand 4-H programming include community, project, and SPIN club development. It also includes management and oversight of projects, activities, and events that enhance the 4-H members experience and contribute to their development in the areas of life skills, responsibility, leadership, and citizenship. Texas 4-H is part of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas A&M System. The 4-H program helps build future leaders in all aspects.

## "The 4-H Motto"



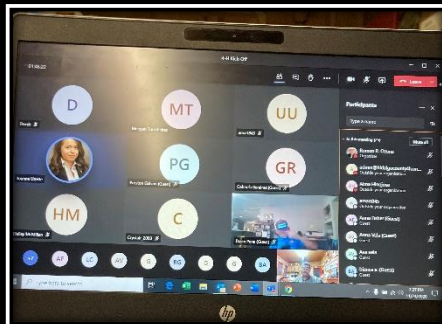
*"To Make The Best Better"*

**2019-2020 4-H County Council Officer Retreat** 4-H County Council Officer Retreat is to provide and give the 4-H Council the opportunity to collaborate and work together as a **TEAM** to create an educational program. Extension agents. Council officers and agents met throughout the summer to plan works in several educational presentations including: **Livestock, 4-H Projects, Interview Skills, Ag. Advocacy, and Parliamentary Procedures.** **34 participants** **24 evaluations** were turned in

- **4.76 % to 95.24%** understood what livestock projects require.
- **9.09 % to 90.91 %.** understood what makes a good leader.
- **13.64 % to 81.82 %** understood what it takes to complete a good interview.

2019-2020 Hidalgo County 4-H Program charted **20** community-based clubs and **2** chartered school clubs. **496** total active 4-H members were in enrolled.

- A total of **3,532 youth** was reached through School-based enrichment curriculum.
- Registered & Screened Volunteers Supporting Clubs were **180** Club Managers, Co-Managers, and Project Leaders were **100** and hours contributed by volunteers in support of 4-H clubs were **18,000** totaling **\$457,740.00.**
- **4-H** Graduating seniors received over **55,000.00** dollars in academic scholarships.
- **1- 20,000.00** scholarship recipient form the **Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo**
- **68** 4-H members advanced to District 12 4-H events in Photography and Educational Presentations and Public Speaking
- **40** 4-H members representing Hidalgo County at the **Major Livestock Shows** in Livestock, Shooting Sports, Beef Skillation, and Public Speaking.



**TEXAS A&M**  
**AGRI LIFE**  
**EXTENSION**

Hidalgo County AgriLife Extension 4-H Youth and Development

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## 2020 Hidalgo County Agriculture and Natural Resources

### Commercial Agriculture



#### RGV Bull Gain Test & Heifer Development Program

A total of 1,609 bulls and 1,110 heifers have been entered in the 22 years the program has been conducted. Two online programs provided information on the importance of the measurements taken on bulls that enter the gain test and how to use data to improve their herd, bull development and selection; as well as fly control in cow/calf operations, fever tick updates, preparing your cattle for the winter. **24 consignors brought in 79 bulls and 20 heifers to participate in the testing.**

#### Hidalgo, Cameron, Willacy, Starr Crop Production Program

Research demonstrations on five producer farms were conducted to produce an unbiased source of performance data that are used by growers to determine the most profitable varieties and farm practices for their area. This information was shared with producers to help them make informed decisions for purchasing seed for the 2021 crop season.

#### 26<sup>th</sup> Annual RGV Cotton & Grain Pre-Plant Conference

There were 159 producers who attended from four counties. Evaluation results showed a 74% increase in the level of understanding of the introduced topics. 99% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the activity and 93% of the respondents anticipate benefitting economically as a direct result of what they learned from the Extension activity. 100% of the respondents said they would recommend this activity to others.

### Small Acreage Agriculture



This multicounty program continues to address the critical county issues of agricultural profitability, economic development, and *financial* and technical support for farming operations identified through the Texas Community Futures Forum.

Workshops and seminars focused on cost effective and sustainable methods to improve farming and ranching in the following areas: fruit and vegetable production, livestock production, economics, marketing and business planning.

- Buzz on Bees: Part 1; 29 participants
- Livestock Workshop: 31 participants
- Buzz on Bees: Part 2; 19 participants
- Goat Production; 42 participants
- Aquaponics/Hydroponics; 60 participants
- Fall Vegetable Gardening; 80 participants
- Healthy Lawns, Healthy Waters; 60 participants
- Beef Cattle Production & Management; 52 participants

## Horticulture and Community Gardens



### EarthKind Workshop Series

- NEW – “What’s Blooming Wednesday” YouTube series. Short videos highlighting native and adapted plants.
- 8 workshops were hosted reaching 248 people on a variety of Gardening Topics
- 175 people supported our Fall Plant Sale raising over \$4,000 for the Hidalgo County Master Gardener Association
- 25 gardening articles were written for the “Garden View” bi-weekly column published in the Monitor. (circulation: 35,000)

### Master Gardener Training

New Online Pilot allowed people to participate throughout the pandemic - 35 hours of online class and 20 hours of local instruction with 50 hours of hands-on volunteer time.

- 10 new volunteers graduated in 2020
- 17 people participated in the 2020 training
- 34 MGs volunteered 1,529 hours



### Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities

- 52 sessions were delivered face to face for a total of 675 contacts and 89 graduates.
- We built and installed Washing Stations in 7 gardens to provide gardeners a place to sanitize their hands and produce harvested.
- Despite COVID19 a total of 4,065 lbs. of produce were harvested from ten community gardens during Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 seasons.
  - Tomatoes (448 lb), Peppers (350 lb), Bokchoi (258 lb) and Broccoli (212 lb)
- 230 people participated in our virtual program
- 46 sessions were delivered virtually for a total of 1239 contacts
- 27 videos were created
- 122 participants have graduated from our virtual program
- Graduations were done via drive thru or virtually. Participants were excited about receiving their certificate and accomplish something despite COVID19.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Hidalgo County Family & Community Health team consists of Andrea Valdez, CEA-FCH, Joanne Ureste-Armijo, CEA-FCH, Melissa De Leon, EA-EFNEP, Stephanie Bowman, EA-PVAM CEP and assisted by county staff, Linda Ramirez and Elzie Martinez. Program topics include nutrition, MyPlate for youth and adults, hands-on food demonstrations, food handler certifications, physical activity, anger management and parenting skills, car seat installations and financial literacy.

## ABOUT FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH

## HEALTH & WELLNESS IN 2020

ANDREA VALDEZ, M.P.H.

In early 2020, a partnership with the Hidalgo County Employee Wellness Program hosted the Dinner Tonight Healthy Cooking School for county employees. Hidalgo County Judge Richard Cortez, Hidalgo County Commissioner Precinct #2 Eddie Cantu, and Hidalgo County Commissioner Precinct #4 Ellie Torres were guest chefs and hosts to highlight healthy recipes to the 136 participants.

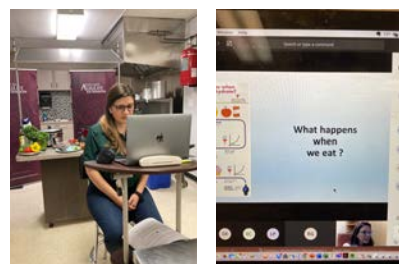
- 93% of the participants were completely or mostly satisfied with the program
- 58% of participants reported an increase in understanding of how the foods they eat impact their health after the program

In March 2020, the Mobile Cooking School partnered with the Community Service Agency of Hidalgo County with 22 participants completing one class before cancellations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hidalgo and Cameron County hosted the first Virtual Choose Your Way Diabetes Conference. Participants were treated to informative presentations by professionals from Doctors Hospital at Renaissance, Healthy South Texas and Texas A&M Health Science Center.

Food Handler certifications continued in 2020 with 149 county residents becoming certified. In December 2020, we also hosted the first online live food handlers class in the State of Texas.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Texas A&M AgriLife partnered with the Texas Department of Health Services to aid in contact tracing efforts. Andrea Valdez, CEA-FCH, logged 145 hours of contact tracing.



## STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

JOANNE URESTE-ARMIJO, M.S.

Throughout 2020, programs such as Parenting Connections (65 hours), Anger Control (56 hours), Child carseat inspections (62 inspections, 46 car seats provided) and Master Clothing Volunteers trainings (470 hours) continued to provide quality education to Hidalgo County citizens.

- 100% of participants felt more confident in their parenting skills after the program
- 92% of participants were able to utilize an anger log to identify their stressors
- 96% of the car seats inspected did not meet safety standards
- 36 sewing tutorials were published on YouTube by Master Clothing

Healthy South Texas programs were also utilized in 2020. The HealthTalk Express presentations, which encourages participants to take a proactive attitude towards their health, yielded 124 graduates and Maintain No Gain, which provides motivational tools and healthy recipes throughout the holiday season, yielded 125 graduates.

- 23% of HealthTalk Express participants stated they increased their physical exercises in the past month.
- 22% of Maintain No Gain participants have changed to planning their meals after the program ended.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Texas A&M AgriLife partnered with the Texas Department of Health Services to aid in contact tracing efforts. Joanne Ureste-Armijo, CEA-FCH, logged 190 hours of contact tracing.

# BALANCED LIVING

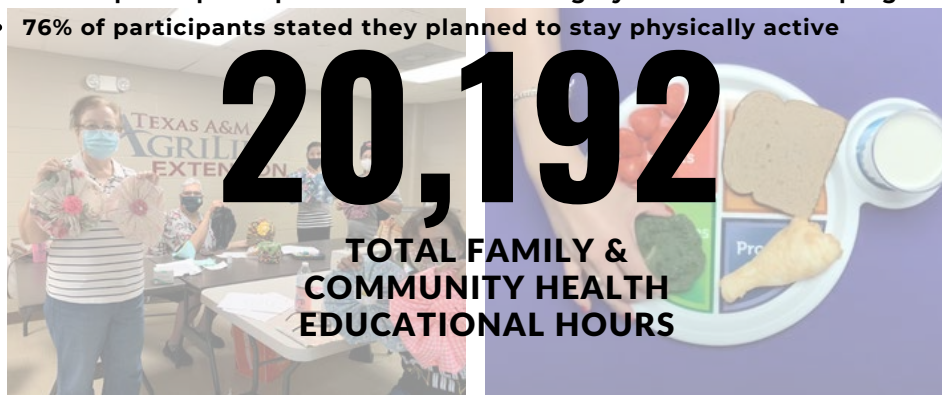
STEPHANIE BOWMAN, M.S.

The Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension Program presented the Balanced Living program to many audiences in 2020. This program addresses the major components of health and wellness, managing stress, balancing time and feeding and resting your body. The online Balanced Living series was viewed by 400 participants posted by the Mayor Joe V. Sanchez Public Library of Weslaco's FaceBook page.

Although COVID-19 altered most programming effort for the year, in January and February, 42 senior citizens participated in the Healthy Eating with Diabetes presentations to learn about diabetes risk factors, diabetes prevention, and how to eat healthy with diabetes.

In partnership with the Hidalgo County Head Start program, the financial literacy program, Money Matters, was held for 106 Head Start employees. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Choose Health: Food, Fun and Fitness program was implemented for school youth. Between January and March 2020, 551 youth received 6 or more hours of programming.

- 47% of participants planned to drink less sugary drinks after the program
- 76% of participants stated they planned to stay physically active



# HEALTHY HABITS

Celebrating 50 years  
**EFNEP**  
Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

MELISSA DE LEON, M.S.

The Expanded Food and Nutrition program (EFNEP) provides education to limited-resource adults with children on topics related to dietary quality, food resource management, food safety, and physical activity through a series of, at least six nutrition education lessons.

In addition to offering "hands-on" group settings and adjusting to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, several classes were offered in virtual group settings. 836 participants completed the series of EFNEP learning sessions on stretching food dollars, improving eating habits, and practicing food safety principles.

- 98.6% of adult participants reported a positive change in any food group at exit from the program.
- 84% of adults participants showed improvement in one or more physical activity practices

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 Hidalgo County, this is \$2.9 million in estimated health care cost savings and almost \$595,610 in food costs.

