Extension Education in Harris County

Making a Difference 2010

Educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.
The Texas AgriLife Extension Service has been dedicated to serving Texans for nearly a century. The agency was established in 1915 under the Smith-Lever Act to deliver university knowledge and agricultural research findings directly to the people. Extension programs have continued ever since to address the emerging issues of the day, serving diverse rural and urban populations across the state.

Through a well-organized network of professional educators and more than 100,000 trained volunteers, Extension delivers practical research-based knowledge to Texans in all 254 counties. Our expertise and educational outreach pertain to the food and fiber industry, natural resources, family and consumer sciences, nutrition and health, and community economic development. Among those served are the hundreds of thousands of young people who benefit annually from Extension’s 4-H and youth development programs.

Texans turn to Extension for solutions. Its agents and specialists respond not only with answers, but also with resources and services that result in a significant return on investment to boost the Texas economy. The agency custom-designs its programs to each region of the state, relying on residents for input and for help with program delivery. Here are just a few highlights of Extension’s impacts on this county and its people:

### Harris County – Summary of Educational Contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Educational Programs Conducted</td>
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<td>Cash and In Kind Donations by AgriLife Extension Supporters and Collaborators:</td>
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2010 Harris County Urban Rancher Landowner Education Summary
Developed by: Jeff Koch, County Extension Agent, Agricultural & Natural Resources, Harris County

Relevance:
Landowner education is an important concept as land fragmentation has brought in landowners seeking education on agriculture production and rural living. Harris County is offering to the public a 12-week series of courses that address subject matter across 16 different subjects. Participants meet every Tuesday night from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Tracy Gee Community Center in Pasadena and for six hours on four separate Saturday workshops at various locations. The Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee is composed of eight individuals (Gary Underwood, Ross Palmie, Russell Ballard, Keith Crenshaw, Keith Royston and Dick Bumstead). Ross, Russell and Keith are all past Urban Rancher participants and all are instrumental in establishing goals and implementing tasks of the landowner education program.

Response:
Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Harris County developed 12 lectures and 4 workshops that address this relevant issue. The topics addressed in the lectures are: Landowner Liability and Condemnation, Toxic Plant Management, Cattle Issues, Introduction to Beef Cattle Breeding, Purchasing Farm Equipment and Farm Equipment Safety, Farm Pond Construction and Management, Livestock Selection and Marketing, Soil and Water Conservation and Rainwater Harvesting, Feral Hog and Predator Control, Livestock and Equine Nutrition, Rural Laws and Volunteerism.
The workshops included:
• Brush Identification and Control
• Fence Construction
• Livestock Health and Handling and Calving Assistance Demonstration
• Pasture and Forage Management/Sprayer Calibration/Grazing Software

Partners and Collaborators: The Texas AgriLife Extension Service – Harris County would like to recognize the partnership with Larry Cole, Texas AgriLife Extension – Brazoria County, Texas AgriLife Extension – Fort Bend County, Texas AgriLife Extension/Research Specialists, Stay-Tuff Fence Company, Mr. Gene Sollock (Sollock Farm), Rosharon Livestock, Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, Harris County Sheriff's Department, Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University, Texas Department of Agriculture and NRCS Regional Office.

Results:
In order to determine programmatic results of the 2010 Harris County Urban Rancher Landowner Education Summary a retrospective post evaluation was administered to participants. Mean score differences using a Likert scale to reveal perceptual knowledge concerning the 2010 Harris County Urban Rancher Landowner Education Summary increases using a retrospective post evaluation strategy. The Likert scale is indicated by the following scale: 1= poor, 2 = average, 3 = good, 4 = excellent. All participants showed an increase in knowledge and had a percent increase of at least 54 %. The following show an increase in knowledge and had a percent change of 125.1 – 150 %:
- Understand how to calibrate a boom less and boom sprayer and the importance of calibrating spray rigs.
- Understand where to seek information on symptoms of poisoning in livestock.
- Understand how to identify/recognize toxic plants.
- Understand how to recognize problem areas.
The following show an increase in knowledge and had a percent change of 100.1 – 125 %:
- Understanding how to correctly stock ponds with appropriate number and species of fish. Understand where the power to condemn comes from, which entities have this power, and knowledge of the condemnation process in Texas. Understand the difference in terms of ownership of feral hogs and wildlife,
the difference between feral hogs and javelina and the physical and economic impact feral hogs can have on your property.
- Know that the American Brahman Breed actually resulted from the breeding of three breeds of Bos indicus cattle from India (the Guzerat, Nellore, and Gir breeds).
- Understand various types of traps, trap gates, how to properly bait feral hogs into a trap as well as other methods to control feral hogs and the importance of controlling feral hogs.
- Understand that F1 stands for the first result or first generation of a cross breeding.
- Understand the six documents to consider in estate planning.
- Understand the difference between a controlled burn and a prescribed burn.
- Understand the different types of vaccines, the minimum vaccines required for cattle, the proper time to vaccinate your cow herd and the importance of primary vaccinations and boosters.
- Understand the various types of grains, grain by-products, protein supplements, fat supplements, vitamins and minerals that horses can and should consume.
- Understand how to use the soil survey, that software exists to help you manage your pastures and grazing and that there are programs that assist with costs of certain priority areas in your county.
- Understand how to formulate management strategies to minimize livestock losses.
- Understand Toxic Plant Management Basics:
  - Never graze the pasture too short
  - Never let animals graze areas just treated with herbicide or fertilizer
  - Always provide plenty of hay as forage becomes scarce
  - Understanding that the degree of responsibility owed to third parties depends on the legal classification of the person when injured (invitee, licensee, and trespasser).
  - Understand that cattle have three stages of parturition, determine if the cow can deliver the calf, the proper method to pull a calf and how to revive a calf after it has been pulled.
  - Knowledge of various fence stretching techniques such as stretching from either end and splicing in the middle. The following show an increase in knowledge and had a percent change of 75.1 – 100 %:
  - Understand the differences of a revocable and irrevocable trust.
  - Understand that county sheriff’s department is the primary unit in charge of stray livestock and that you must contact the owner or sheriff’s department if the neighbors livestock come on to your place (not haul them without notification).
  - Understand the importance of body condition, maintaining body condition on cows, supplying minerals to livestock and different ways to supply supplements to livestock.
  - Know that the livestock laws (laws pertaining to strays, fences, brands, etc.) of the State of Texas are available under the Texas Penal Code – Texas Agriculture Code at http://www.texascattleraisers.org/livestock_laws_Texas_cattle_tscra.asp
  - Understand how a rainwater collection system can be set up, the materials needed to set up a rainwater collection system, and that these can be beneficial to supply water to livestock and wildlife, watering plants, gardens and even small pastures.
  - Understand the importance of year-round grazing, rotational grazing, how to run an operation on a least cost basis and that you must take the first step to get to where you want with your operation.
  - Understand various chemical methods of brush control (foliar, basal trunk, cut-stump) and when each is most effective. Understand that genetic progress in beef cattle herds is accomplished through sire selection.
  - Understand the various methods to control brush.

Looking Ahead:
Programming efforts in the future will address issues and concerns that were listed on the surveys that were collected at the different lectures and workshops. The Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee in Harris County also assists in determining issues or new subject matter that may need to be included in future Urban Rancher courses. The results of the programming efforts will be interpreted to the Harris County Leadership Advisory Board, specific program area committee as well as the Harris County Commissioner’s Court.
2010 Urban Horticulture Output Plan Summary
Developed by: Carol Brouwer, Ph.D., County Extension Agent,
Horticulture, Harris County

Relevance:
According to the US Census Bureau's 2009 population estimates, Harris County has approximately 4.1 million residents. Many Harris County residents have home landscapes and gardens along with the related pest problems and concerns. The way residents manage these horticultural activities directly impacts the environment. Through Extension’s grassroots issue identification process, Texans suggested to Extension that enhancing natural resource conservation and management is vital. In order to reach residents with correct, environmentally responsible and relevant information, a well-trained corps of volunteers is vital.

Response:
Accurate, research based horticultural information is delivered through planned workshops and lectures. Presentations to local civic groups occur at various times throughout the year upon request. Information is also made available via telephone, the Harris County Extension website and educational publications.

Results:
Green Thumb Gardening Series seminars are designed to provide community members with a solid foundation of home horticulture information. Participants will leave with practical information and knowledge to help them have the best looking yards in the neighborhood. The topics chosen mirror the Master Gardener volunteer training classes. For those unable to take the Master Gardener course, this may provide a viable alternative. Lectures are 2 ½ hours in length and taught in 2 locations in Harris County.

• 129 – AgriLife Extension Office, Harris County
• 389 – Bass ProShops, Pearland, TX

Monthly Lectures:
Three lectures are given each month; two are at the Extension Office and one at a community center in Clear Lake Park. The events include a one hour educational lecture and are open to the public. Topics are determined by a committee of Master Gardeners with the input of the County Extension Agent.

• 1183 – 1st Tuesday at Noon (Extension Office)
• 311 – 3rd Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. (Extension Office)
• 614 – 4th Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. (Clear Lake Park)

Speakers Bureau:
Master Gardener volunteers to provide informative talks to local groups and organizations.

• 1775 contacts
Ask a Master Gardener Helpline:

Master Gardeners answer questions from callers and people visiting the Extension Office on topics of horticultural interest.

Agent Presentations:

Carol Brouwer, CEA-Horticulture gives presentations to local community groups, Master Gardener classes and meetings in Harris County and surrounding counties, Pesticide Applicator CEU classes and the Green Thumb lecture series.

- 1622 people were reached in 41 presentations.

Ask a Master Gardener Kiosk:

The Master Gardeners have three traveling kiosks that they used at numerous events around the county to provide information on environmentally sound landscape and gardening practices.

Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo:

Master Gardeners hosted a booth at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. 567 people visited the Master Gardener booth at HLSR, gave out 511 publications, submitted 51 question cards and answered 217 non-gardening questions.

Workshops:

The Master Gardeners hold plant sales each year for fundraising and educational purposes. Only plants well suited to our area our available. Plant sale overviews and workshops are held in conjunction with each sale. Additionally, educational workshops are planned throughout the year. New this year is the Open Garden Day held monthly at the Precinct 2 Demonstration and Production Gardens. Because these gardens are not open to the public on a daily basis, special permission was obtained to open the gardens monthly to the public.

- 42 – Grow Your Own Fruit and Vegetable Workshop
- 175 – Fruit Tree Sale and Symposium
- 125 – Tomato Pepper Sale and Expo
- 215 – Spring Sale and Workshops (P2)
- 77 – Spring Sale and Symposium
- 155 – Fall Sale and Workshops (P2)
- 101 – Fall Plant Sale and Expo
- 46 – Grow Your Own Vegetable Workshop (P2)
- 33 – Build Your Own Rain Barrel
- 334 – Monthly Open Garden Day at (P2) Gardens (new)

Future Program Actions:

Customer Satisfaction Surveys showed the Green Thumb series to be well received. In 2010 Green Thumb will be held at the Meeting Room at Clear Lake Park in South Houston and the Trini Mendenhall Sosa Community Center in NW Houston. Speakers Bureau, the Helpline and monthly lectures will continue as usual. New and different workshops will be planned and presented throughout the year.
Relevance:
Many children in our community have never seen fruits and vegetables growing and do not know how their food is produced. Because they do not have an appreciation for fruits and vegetables they have poor nutritional habits.

Children participating in the Cylinder Gardening program learn how food is produced by growing it themselves and in the process improve their own nutrition and grow personally as well. Children are more likely to eat fresh fruits and vegetables they have grown themselves. Studies also show that by growing plants, children will gain a sense of pride, responsibility, determination while improving their attitude toward the environment.

Through Extension’s grassroots issue identification process, Texans suggested to Extension that good programs for youth that develop personal skills and improve nutrition are major need. The Cylinder Gardening program committee is comprised of Harris County Master Gardeners that greatly assist in the implementation and improvement of this program.

Response:
Cylinder Gardening is a curriculum enrichment program that uses bottomless cylinders (1/2 of a 5 gallon bucket) as small, individual gardens for growing vegetables. The program includes a 6 lesson curriculum that teaches children about plant anatomy, what plants need to grow and IPM. Children participating in the program will have the opportunity to grow and eat their own vegetables.

In the spring of 2008 the Cylinder Gardening program expanded to include a new butterfly curriculum. Schools can sign up for either or both vegetable and butterfly gardening. Schools are limited to 10 cylinders per grade for butterfly gardening and one cylinder for every two students participating in vegetable gardening.

Results:
12454 children at 89 schools in Harris County participated in the 2010 Cylinder Gardening program. 3013 participated in butterfly gardening and 9441 in vegetable gardening. The demographic breakdown included 4228 (34%) white, 2564 (21%) black, 5006 (40%) Hispanics, 629 (5%) Asian, and 27 (<1%)American-Indian. There were 6346 boys and 6108 girls participating. 7915 students participated in the spring and 4539 in the fall. Teachers were asked to complete a survey at the end of the spring semester. 13 of 77 (19%) evaluations sent to teachers participating in the spring semester were returned.

- Scores on the horticulture knowledge pretest/posttests administered by the teachers improved from 67% to 89%, an increase of 22%.
- 13 of 13 teachers (100%) reported observing other benefits to the children such as improved social skills, academic performance or self-development as a result of participation in the program.
Teachers were also asked to respond to the following questions with a response of very much, much, some, very little, none.

- Do you grow vegetables at home? 8% don’t garden at home.
- Did the Cylinder Garden program improve your personal gardening confidence? 100% said very much, much or some.
- Was the Cylinder Garden easy to grow? 75% strongly agreed or agreed.
- Do you feel the Cylinder Garden Program is useful teaching tool? 100% strongly agreed or agreed.
- Did you use the Cylinder Gardening Curriculum? 51% said much or very much. 17% said some and 34% said none or very little.
- If you used the curriculum, did you find it useful? 72% very much or much, 9% said some or very little.
- If you did not use the Cylinder Gardening curriculum, what was the reason? 67% said it was not appropriate for the age or learning level of their students. 0% said it could not be integrated into required curriculum. 0% said the activities didn’t seem useful. 33% said other with time being the reason for not using it.
- Did the Master Gardener Volunteer assist you in any way besides delivering the materials? 25% said very much or much; 16% said some or very little; 58% said none.
- Does the availability of a Master Gardener volunteer make a difference in your choice to participate in the Cylinder Gardening program? 42% said the availability of Master Gardener assistance made a difference in their choice to participate.
- If a Master Gardener was not available to assist you, other than to deliver materials, would you continue to participate in the Cylinder Gardening program? 91% said yes, even without the assistance of a Master Gardener, they would continue to participate.

Results indicate that children participating in the Cylinder Gardening program are gaining horticultural knowledge and their teachers see improvement in their social skills, academic performance and self-development as a result of participation in the program.

Future Program Actions:
The Cylinder Gardening program has consistently shown that it is valuable curriculum enrichment program for Harris County. Future plans for the program are to continue to strengthen the planning committee and improve volunteer training and participation.
2010 Harris County Master Gardener Training Program Outcome Summary
Developed by: Carol Brouwer, Ph.D. County Extension Agent, Horticulture, Harris County

Relevance:
According to the US Census Bureau's 2009 population estimates, Harris County has approximately 4.1 million residents. Many Harris County residents have home landscapes and gardens along with the related pest problems and concerns. The way residents manage these horticultural activities directly impacts the environment. Through Extension’s grassroots issue identification process, Texans suggested to Extension that enhancing natural resource conservation and management is vital. In order to reach residents with correct, environmentally responsible and relevant information, a well-trained corps of volunteers is vital.

Response:
The purpose of the Master Gardener training class is to teach new volunteers research-based horticultural practices. Two classes were held in 2010. One was held at the Harris County Precinct 2 Road Camp in southeast Harris County during the summer. The second was held to be held at the Extension office in far west Harris County during the spring.

Seventy two hours of training is provided to the interns. Classes are taught by Extension agents, Extension Specialists, Master Gardeners and local experts. Topics include botany, propagation, soils, plant nutrition, entomology, ornamental plants, fruits and vegetables, turf, IPM, pesticide safety, fire ants, landscape design, and Earth-Kind landscape practices.

Participants are required to volunteer 60 hours of their time to the Harris County Extension Horticulture Program in order to become certified Master Gardeners. Thirty hours must be assisting at the P2 Genoa Friendship Garden for those taking the class at that location. The remainder of the required hours is contributed in educational outreach activities such as Speaker's Bureau, Cylinder Gardening, care of demonstration gardens and putting on educational workshops.

Results:
The Master Gardener training program in Harris County is evaluated by assessing knowledge level changes of the participants. A pre-test and a post-test are given and the scores are compared at each location. The class of 27 people at Precinct 2 had a pre-test average of 50% with post-test scores increasing to 73%. The class of 60 people at the Extension Office had pre-test scores of 4%. The average post-test score was 64%. Average test scores increased by 23% and 20% respectively, demonstrating that students participating in the Master Gardener course increased their knowledge of horticultural concepts.

Future Program Actions:
Past evaluations of the Master Gardener training program in Harris County shows the program is successfully teaching Master Gardeners research based horticultural information. The Master Gardeners are implementing the information in their own lives and sharing it with others. The program will continue as long as it continues to produce these desired results. In the future, evaluations will continue each year to so adjustments in speakers and emerging topics can be incorporated as necessary.
Project Diabetes Education Awareness Prevention (DEAP)
Developed by: Shervelle “Belle” Washington Harris County Extension Agent,
Prairie View Cooperative Extension

Relevance:
Project DEAP focuses on reducing the incidence of diabetes in minority populations through educational interventions. The project supports the mission of the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University. We are committed to delivering researched based information that focuses on identifying issues and addressing the needs of Texas residents, primarily limited resources, diverse and socioeconomic backgrounds. According to National Institute of Health, 23.6 million people 7.8 percent of the population- have diabetes. Also, Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death listed on the U.S. Vital statistics for 2007.

Diagnosed: 17.9 million people
Undiagnosed: 5.7 million people
Prevalence of Diagnosed and Undiagnosed Diabetes among People Ages 20 Years or Older, United States, 2007
Ages 20 years or older: 23.5 million, or 10.7 percent, of all people in this age group have diabetes.
Ages 60 years or older: 12.2 million, or 23.1 percent, of all people in this age group have diabetes.
Men: 12 million or 11.2 percent, of all men ages 20 years or older have diabetes.
Women: 11.5 million or 10.2 percent, of all women ages 20 years or older have diabetes.
Non- Hispanic whites: 14.9 million, or 9.8 percent, of all non Hispanic whites, ages 20 years or older have diabetes.
Non- Hispanic blacks: 3.7 million or 14.7 percent, of all non- Hispanic blacks, ages 20 years or older have diabetes.

Response:
This report is a brief summary of the accomplishments for 2010. In addition to the Diabetes Education Awareness classes that consist of a series of six lessons that focus on Understanding Diabetes, Diabetes and Meal Planning, Diabetes and Physical Fitness, Medication Management, and Having a positive relationship with your Healthcare provider are several of the topics reviewed to inform and educate participants on diabetes prevention and self management care for persons living with diabetes. Over the past year, Project DEAP focused on one of many projects that would continue to educate and inform community residents on the awareness of diabetes such as the Diabetes Dance-A-Thon, and Cook-Off, held at the Crestmont Community Center, and the 2010 Diabetes Expo that was held at the Hiram Clarke Multi Service Center on 11/5/2010, with an estimated guest attendance of 290.

Results:
From each of the classes and community projects well over 6,500 community residents had the opportunity to benefit from the education CEP offers to county residents. Several participants have written great testimonies as to how they have benefited from the education. Project DEAP has been a significant benefit to many community residents. Many participants have made great changes by starting to exercise or become a part of a local walking club and make changes regarding the way they prepare meals. Project DEAP of PVAMU has a great partnership with the Texas Diabetes Council. According to the National Institute of Health the “Estimated Diabetes Costs in the United States in 2007”
Total direct and indirect cost: $174 billion.
Direct medical cost: $116 billion.

Future Plans:
The Prairie View Cooperative Extension Program DEAP Project will continue its outreach efforts in Harris County working closely with healthcare providers, local church’s physicians, and grass root organizations. The DEAP Program will reach an estimated 700 participants through educational lessons, health fairs, community wide events, and 2011 Walk-A-Thon, and Diabetes Expo. An estimated number of eighty volunteers assisted in different areas in support of the programs offered through Extension. Program will continue to recruit more volunteers, and sponsors. The FCS Advisory Board is currently in active status and will begin to meet in May 2011, to plan for the 2011 Diabetes Expo. Also, Project DEAP participants will be recruited through local healthcare clinics, physicians, community centers and referrals.
2010 OUTPUT PROGRAM Summary
Developed by: Shervelle “Belle” Washington, Harris County Extension Agent, Prairie View Cooperative Extension

Relevance:
The annual output programs focus on providing educational information and resource support for parenting, financial management, and youth activities. Outcome programs support the mission and goals of the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University. Each program focuses on providing a positive learning experience that provide support and encouraging outcomes for families.

Response:
This output report is a brief description of several programs that were implemented for the 2010 program year. Each outlined output program was a great success: With a special emphasis that the Harris County F.C.S. Agent “S. Belle Washington” Coordinated a 4-H Youth Gardening/Ribbon Cutting Ceremony in February 2010. After a ten month planning project and support from the School Administration and 4-H student body the project concluded with great attendance and support from community leadership. The 4-H North Forest High School Garden Club/event was a huge plus/success for the School’s overall image.

Output plan title and planning groups involved:
A. Health and wellness for youth: (Teen Parenting Special Interest Program) Barbara Jordan H.R.C. Planning Team Member-Adult Parenting Education- Planning Team Members- S.Belle Washington, Mr. Issac, Ms. Coudoura. Santa Maria Women Center, Houston Recovery Center,

B. 4-H Up & Atom Club (Youth 4-H special interest group)Planning Team Members- S.Belle Washington, Emily Bartley, Willie De Walt, Elaine Ward.

C. Family Resource Management- Planning Team Members- S. Belle Washington, Mr. Issac, Ms. Coudoura.

Educational program events and methods conducted:
Teen Parenting education provided for Teen mothers at the Barbara Jordan facility. Parenting lessons conducted on the topics of communication, setting boundaries, discipline, and parents as role models. Program conducted during the last quarter of 2010. (October) Also, Adult parenting education and financial management was held over a three month period (Saturday Programs) at the Santa Maria Women Center and weekly programs held at the Barbara Jordan H.R.C. Adult parenting education consisted of the same lessons as the teen parenting program. However, the education for the adult
parents was held over a longer period. Lesson on financial management was conducted at the same locations and covered topics such as: borrowing basics, credit, loans, balancing a check book, the power of saving, emergency money, and financial planning for the future. Over 300 adult parents benefited from the parenting education and received certificates, and over 200 participated in the financial management classes and received certifications. Power point presentations were part of the educational delivery and parents had the opportunity to role play different scenarios to better understand how they communicate and respond to their child. The 4-H Up & Atom Club members attend North Forest High School. The students participated in a ten month long gardening project with a great outcome, vegetable were planted and the students took great care in their project. The club celebrated it's garden with a the ribbon cutting ceremony in February 2010, with well over 100 guest in attendance and had a second celebration in May, 2010 where guest were invited out to enjoy vegetable from the garden.

Results:
Each of the above output programs do not have a survey tool. After the completion of Parenting and Financial Management lessons each participant receives a certificate of participation.

Goals for 2011:
Agent will continue with adult parenting and financial management education with an outreach goal of reaching fifty participants for each program. Also, agent will target youth special interest group and focus on the Organ Wise program for 2011.
Relevance:
In Harris County, an estimated 15.3% have incomes that are 185% of poverty or below; 371,475 receive food stamp benefits. Research has shown that individuals who live in poverty have dietary intakes that are not congruent with current recommendations (i.e. Dietary Guidelines or MyPyramid). This audience, like many, may not recognize their risk for foodborne illness. Stretching resources so food is available throughout the month is also a challenge.

Response - Better Living for Texans:
The Better Living for Texans (BLT) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-Ed) project is funded by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), and the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) of USDA. The program is offered in every county that is served by a County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences (CEA-FCS), including Harris County. A component of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), BLT provides educational programs to food stamp recipients, applicants, and other approved audiences to help improve their ability to plan and prepare nutritious meals, stretch food dollars, and prepare and store food safely.

BLT is delivered through a variety of teaching methods that reflect audience needs. Teaching methods include, lesson series, single education events, one to one consultations and demonstrations. With the presence of BLT in almost every county in the state, Extension is poised to reach all areas of Texas, both rural and urban, and increase the likelihood of meeting the nutrition education needs of under-served Texans.

During 2010, more than 5,225 Harris County adults participated in the BLT Eat Better to Live Better series. This program focuses on meal planning, stretching food dollars, and adopting selected behaviors that can reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

Results:
Evaluation of the Harris County BLT program was conducted via the use of a pre, post, and 30-day follow-up survey. This allowed for the collection of data that reflected current behaviors, behaviors that participants intended to adopt, and extent to which behaviors were actually adopted. This report represents 77 adults who participated in the program and completed the pre, post and 30-day follow-up surveys.

In relation to meal planning and food resource management- the following reflect adoption of behaviors. At the beginning of the program, most individuals reported planning their meals, shopping with a list, comparing prices, and using unit pricing “sometimes.” Immediately after the program ended, there was a definite intent to adopt all 4 behaviors at “always” or “sometimes” by all the participants. These trends were sustained 30 days afterwards as demonstrated by the high percentage of participants reporting the use of all 4 behaviors either “always” or “sometimes.” Consequently, fewer participants were “never” practicing these behaviors.
In relation to food safety the following results are reflective of the participant’s adoption of behaviors. A large percentage of the clients were not practicing hand washing or general kitchen cleanliness when they began the BLT program. Improvements were identified immediately after the program ended and were sustained 30 days later. Still, given that nearly 1 in 5 were not washing their hands before and during food preparation and 15% were not washing their cutting boards and utensils after cutting up raw meat poultry, these may be areas for future programming efforts. In addition the percentage of participants who rated their ability to prepare nutritious meals as either “good” or “very good” was 53%.

Participant’s Comments:

*I feel I am changing my eating habits and nutritional habits.*
*I am eating less fried and fatty foods.*
*I am also cooking at home more.*

Acknowledgements:

The BLT program reaches a very diverse and expansive audience. This is achieved by our agency’s strong partnerships that include the following agencies and organizations: Beale Village Senior Retirement Center, Leo Daniels Retirement Center, Houston Recovery Campus, Spring Branch I.S.D., Acres Homes Senior Nutrition Center, Independent Heights Senior Retirement Center, Crestmont Community Park, Anna Dupree Senior Retirement Center, Greater Jerusalem Church, Wallop Middle School, Telephone Road Senior Living Facility, Lincoln Park Community Center, J.W. Pevey Community Center, Kashmere Multi-service Center, Lone Star Community College and Vietnamese Senior Center.

Future Plans:

Our plans are to continue to work with our partners to sustain and increase our outreach in the community. Our goals are to substantially increase our presence in the community and to really focus on our targeted audience.
Harris County Inmate Re-entry Life Skills Program
Developed by: Elizabeth Trejo, Harris County Extension Agent, Family and Consumer Sciences

Relevance:
According to a study from the Urban Institute Justice Policy Center, the four-fold increase in incarceration rates in America over the past 25 years has had far reaching consequences. In 2003, alone more than 656,000 state and federal prisoners returned to communities across the country, affecting public safety, public health, economic and community well-being, and family networks. The impact of prisoner re-entry is further compounded by the returning jail population with its unique set of challenges and opportunities. The inmates face many distinctive obstacles when they reintegrate into the community:

- Men and women enter U.S. prison with limited marketable work experience, low levels of educational and vocational skills.
- When a parent is sent to prison, the family structure, financial responsibilities, emotional support systems, and living arrangements are all potentially affected.

Restoring these relationships, reuniting with the family, and undertaking these roles and responsibilities upon return can be a difficult and almost impossible task. Although these are national facts and statistics, Texas Department of Criminal Justice at the Plane State Jail in Dayton, Texas 2000 survey seems to reinforce those same issues. The results of the 2,069 women inmates surveyed indicated that they needed to build their life skills in order to meet challenges in their daily life. The main issues of concern for these women included: family life skills, financial literacy and women's health. In response to this issue, Texas AgriLife Extension Service and Texas Department of Criminal Justice are partnering in a community intervention program via distance education, to provide these inmates with the life skills necessary to have a chance of real success in the outside world.

Response:
In support of this program area in 2010, 50 sessions were presented via distance education, 5488 contacts were made. The core subjects include financial literacy, strengthening families, diet, nutrition and health. Other topics presented include: breast health, accessing health services, how to obtain legal services, job skills/employment service, A.I.D.S education, dealing with domestic violence, transitional housing information, child support/custody issues, drug & alcohol rehabilitation, decision-making, how to seek assistance with mental health issues, how to obtain tutoring free services for your children and motivational messages.

Results:
In Harris County in 2010, 50 educational programs were presented to the inmates at the Plane State Jail in Dayton, Texas and to the inmates at the Kegans Unit in Houston, Texas. The number of participants reached totaled 157 and 5488 total contacts. The following are the evaluation results: When the participants were asked what new money management information did you learn from this course, these were their responses.
100% Setting financial goals  
85% How to save money  
77% How to establish and maintain credit  
69% How to prepare a budget  
54% Stretching your food dollar  
46% Method of planning bill paying  
46% Method to control spending  

Overall 85% of the participants stated that they planned to use the information learned to set financial goals for myself and my family.

Results for the Strengthening Families sessions are as follows. When the participants were asked about the various parenting and transition skills they learned 85% stated, I learned several strategies and skills that will be useful to me. Evaluation results indicate that 46% of the participants were significantly more confident in their parenting skills now, than before the class. 62% of the participants stated that they plan to use two or more new parenting strategies with their family.

Participant’s comments:

“This course is the best thing for pre-release on this unit. The classes were very, very informative and insightful.”
“It taught me how to be a better person, loving mother and grandmother, how to hold on to a job, have faith in myself, respect others, how to save money, pay my bills and not get bad credit. It also taught me to take good care of myself.
What I have learned is that there are things that I was unaware of, and I was glad to attend all the sessions.
I learned a lot from each one of the sessions. I really intend and have a strong will to do the right things for myself and my children.
Because I love them so much, I don’t want to disappoint nor hurt them anymore. I plan to use all of the information that was given to me during this class.

Acknowledgements:

The Inmate Re-entry Life Skills Program Advisory Committee will continue to give direction and identify issues to be addressed by this program. Volunteers, agencies, and organizations that collaborated with our agency to present sessions included: South Texas College of Law, Christian Women’s, Job Corp, Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southeast Texas Inc. Career and Recovery Resources, Northwest Assistance Ministries, A.I.D.S Foundation, Susan Komen Foundation, The Bridge Over Troubled Water, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, Workforce Solutions, Inner Wisdom Counseling Center, and Tutors with Computers.

Future Plans:

The Inmate Re-entry Life Skills Program Advisory Committee will continue to support our outreach and expansion of this program. Efforts will be made to identify, recruit volunteers and other agencies & organizations to enrich and develop this program.
2010 Harris County Financial Literacy Program  
Developed by: Elizabeth Trejo, Harris County Extension Agent,  
Family and Consumer Sciences

Relevance:
With the recent economic downturn, many families and individuals have been facing numerous and difficult financial challenges. Compounding that fact, according to the Federal Reserve Division of Consumer and Community Affairs’ 2002 paper, *Financial Literacy: An Overview of Practice, Research and Policy,* “consumers lack a working knowledge of financial concepts and do not have the tools they need to make decisions most advantageous to their economic well-being.” Often this lack of knowledge leads to the following situations:

- The average American family spends $1.22 for every dollar it earns.
- The average American household with at least one credit card carried a balance of nearly $8,000 in 2000.
- America is the richest country in the world, yet, ironically, we have the highest percentage of people living paycheck to paycheck.

Response:
The Financial Literacy program “Building Fiscally Fit Families,” is a six lesson money management series, that assists those with financial literacy deficiencies. This series provides information to help participants develop a better understanding of personal finance and the ability to use that understanding to benefit their economic condition. After the series is completed, a post evaluation is conducted and participants that complete the series are recognized with a completion certificate. In 2010, Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Harris County presented financial literacy educational programs to a diverse audience. (A listing of those collaborators and partners is listed in the acknowledgement section of this document.)

The “Building Fiscally Fit Families,” money management series includes the following topics:

- Budgeting 101 Strengthening Your Dollars and Cents
- Setting Your Household in Order
- Power of Credit
- Identity Theft: When Bad Things Happen to Your Good Name
- Feeding Your Family Without Starving Your Wallet
- Thrive By Five

Results:
In Harris County, 112 educational programs were presented using the “Building Fiscally Fit Families,” six lesson money management series. The programs were conducted throughout the county. The number of participants reached totaled to 8,196. The following are the evaluation results:
When the participants were asked what new money management information did you learn from this course these were their top ranked responses:

(70%) Stretching Your Food Dollars  
(60%) How to Prepare a Budget  
(60%) Methods to Control Spending  
(58%) What Credit Report is & How to Maintain Good Credit  
(55%) How to Safeguard and Prevent Identity Theft  
(52%) Methods of Planning Bill Paying  

Overall 60% of the participants stated that they planned to use the information learned to set financial goals for myself and my family.

Participant’s Comments:

- Thank you so much for all you have taught me.
- I learned how to save my money and not to buy unnecessary things.
- I also learned how to safeguard my important papers and how to guard my credit.
- You taught us how to manage our money, how to save, and how to track our spending.
- I am now more careful with my credit use.

Acknowledgments:

The Financial Literacy Advisory Committee continues to provide guidance and direction to the programming efforts. The program outreach is also supported by the following collaborators and partners: Alief I.S.D. schools-Hicks Elementary School, Boone Elementary School, Heflin Elementary School, Martin Elementary School, (at these schools the agent worked with the parent center clients) Houston Recovery Campus, Harris County Office of Domestic Relations, Texas Nursery and Landscape Association, Salvation Army, Pam Lychner State Jail, Volunteers of America (Rogers and Lavender sites) H.I.S.D. Sam Houston Elementary, Patterson Elementary School Evenstart Program, Texas Teen Challenge, All About Recovery, Houston Department of Health & Human Services Harris County Area on Aging, Golden Vista E.E. Club, New Hope Housing, and Housing Authority.

Future Plans:

Continuing to work with the Financial Literacy Advisory Committee, plans are to expand on our breadth and outreach of the program. Efforts will be made to identify and recruit additional volunteers, organizations and agencies that support our efforts.
Strengthening Families
Developed by: Abneshia Steele, County Extension Agent,
Family and Consumer Sciences, Harris County

Relevance:
During the 2004 Texas Community Future Forum, parenting was indicated within the top five major issues that communities face. Educating Families about positive parenting practices and healthy family functioning is essential to improving overall child/family health and well-being. Research indicates that parents who are warm and affectionate, monitor children’s activities, and offer children guidance without harsh punishment are related to positive outcomes for children including academic competence, high self esteem, positive peer relations and fewer child behavior problems. For parents/caregivers to guide and discipline their children, they must first have a good understanding of child development and age appropriate practices. Parents that develop the appropriate skill sets can during times of high stress for the family and the child such as financial hardship, divorce, or family illness can often act as a buffer against such stressors and help children develop coping and adjustment skills. Without these skills poor parenting practices lead to behavioral problems and diagnosed mental health conditions. The Strengthening Houston Families Task Force meets three times a year to identify needs of Houston families and agencies that focus on this unmet need.

Response:
The Strengthening Families Program was developed in 1982 by Karol L. Kumpfer, Ph.d, with the initial funding by the National Institute of Drug Abuse. The Curriculum has been adopted by the state of Texas. The target audience includes Harris county residents, Parents who are court ordered by CPS, Parents in Aldine, Alief, Houston and Spring School District Parent Teacher Organizations, Christian Women’s Job Corp, Communities in Schools, Houston Recovery Center “Almost Home” Program. A total of 54 sessions were taught and 1,350 people participated as well as 2,700 contact hours.

Program Benefits:
The goal of this program is to develop self efficacy in parents so that they are confident in their ability to be a great parent. By learning the necessary skill sets to accomplish this goal they learn not only to communicate effectively with their children but develop the confidence to successfully achieve other accomplishments with in their lives.
Results:
Evaluation Data is collected through a survey of random participants enrolled within program. Surveys are created based on questionnaire developed by Rick Peterson. They were tabulated by Abneshia Steele, County Extension Agent in Harris County.

- 86% of participants stated that they learned a lot of new information that was useful to them.
- 78% of participants learned several Strategies and skills that would be useful to them.
- 100% of participants said that they were at least a little or more significantly more confident in their parenting skills after attending the class than before the class.
- 86% of participants plan to use three or more of the new parenting strategies with their family.

Participant Quotes:
“Thanks to the strengthening families program, I have learned to sit down and have more family talks and listen to my children more.”
“I have learned to have more of a positive attitude and I have self esteem and better parenting skills.”
“I have learned how to prepare my kids to be better and show them how to be responsible.”
“I learned that I am not alone; we are parents and kids are learning. We have rules in which we (as parents) have to follow otherwise our children can’t learn to be good people.”
“Great class Abbie, I learned a lot and see big changes! Thank You”

Acknowledgements:
Strengthening Families is supported through Dr. Rick Peterson, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist. **Partnerships and Collaborators:** Texas AgriLife Extension of Harris County would like to recognize the partnership with Aldine, Alief, Houston and Spring Branch School District Parent Teacher Organizations, Christian Women’s Job Corp, Communities in Schools, Texas Southern University’s Center on the Family, various Harris County Child Care Providers and Houston Recovery Center.

Future Program Actions:
Strengthening Families is scheduled to be repeated at least six times in 2011 at various locations in Houston, Texas.
Master of Memory
Developed by: Abneshia Steele, County Extension Agent,
Family & Consumer Sciences, Harris County

Relevance:
Just like the rest of our bodies, our brains change as we age. Most of us notice some slowed thinking and occasional problems remembering certain things. However, serious memory loss, confusion and other major changes in the way our minds work are not a normal part of aging. Most people over 65 complain about experiencing some levels of memory loss, only a fraction of those people ever do anything to improve brain function. Issues such as inactivity, stress, depression, loss of a loved one, medical conditions, medications, diet and exercise, may all play a role in how your memory works. Studies have shown that positive changes can be made through monitoring health, medication social activities and memory strategies that the memory can be improved.

“Master of Memory” is a 6 lesson series developed to help seniors and older adults identify and use strategies to improve memory function. As well as create ways to address the changes in order to understand and help to prevent them.

Target Audience:
The target audience includes Harris County residents, participants in the Harris County Senior programs and senior independent living facilities.

Response:
The Master of Memory Program was developed by Andy Crocker, Texas AgriLife Extension Specialist for use in all 254 Texas Counties to help meet the educational needs of older adults and seniors in subject area. The goal of program was to educate older adults of factors that contribute to possible memory loss and to identify strategies to prevent and regain loss. Participants were able to recognize issues that cause the issue of memory loss individually and collectively as seniors and learn activities (repetition, consistency, brain teasers, lists, social activity etc.) to help maintain brain function. A total of 48 sessions were conducted and 1,728 contacts were made and 2,444 contact hours were made.

Partners and Collaborators:
Texas Southern Center on the Family, Julia C. Hester House, J.W. Peevy Senior Center, Jim and Jo Ann Fonteno Senior Education Center, Harris County Community Centers and churches throughout Harris County.
Evaluation Data:
Evaluation data is collected through pre and post survey as well as individual lesson surveys. Surveys are sent to Andy Crocker for tabulation.

Results of Program:
As a result of this program 92% of participants attended all six classes and completed surveys to receive their certificate.

Participant Quotes:
- “I plan to use the information I learned during this class.”
- “I had no idea my memory can be enhanced thru my eating habits and physical habits.”
- “I learned a lot and will use this information to help others in the community.”
- “I really enjoyed attending this training!”
- “Good program helps me be aware of the aging process.”
- “Program was presented in an manner for older people to understand.”
- “Great Lesson, enjoyed the information given at our meeting was wonderful!”
- “Very good presentation really learned about the memory and how to preserve it.”

Acknowledgements:
“Master of Memory is supported through Andrew Crocker Extension Specialist-Gerontology.”

Future Program Plans:
Master of Memory is scheduled to be repeated at least four times in 2011 at various Harris County locations.
Relevance:
Harris County has a need for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). 2009 data show 19.3% of Harris County families with children under the age of 18 were living below poverty level, compared to 16.6% of U.S. families. Poor health disproportionately affects low-income and minority populations in the U.S. and a recent study shows people who are most food insecure are at greater risk for poor health and obesity than those who are food secure.

With the increase of adults who are overweight or obese, and the incidence of children who are overweight, the need for nutrition education is vital. Obesity is a costly and serious public health concern that can lead to an increase in heart disease, hypertension, stroke, diabetes and some types of cancers.

A USDA Economic Research Service study reports that parents with greater knowledge and interest in nutrition are less likely to have overweight children than those with less knowledge and interest. Understanding the nutritional needs of family members, planning and preparing nutritious meals and snacks, smart shopping on a limited budget and food safety skills are all required to combat poor health, poor nutrition habits and obesity among low-income families.

Response:
The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program help 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. EFNEP also includes a walking program for adult participants. Program graduates reflect significant, lasting improvement in eating behaviors and healthy food habits.

Harris County EFNEP nutrition assistants teach in homes, schools, churches, and community agencies. EFNEP nutrition assistants help low-income families and youth acquire the knowledge, skills, and changed behaviors necessary for nutritionally sound diets and to contribute to their personal development and the improvement of total family diet and nutritional welfare.

Results:
EFNEP goes beyond information sharing; it focuses on behavior change and is highly successful in achieving sustainable behavior change in a number of areas critical for the health population. Using “hands-on” experiences, EFNEP adult participants complete at least a six-lesson series on stretching food dollars, improving eating habits, and practicing food safety principles. In FY 2009-2010, ethnically diverse EFNEP nutrition assistants reached 3,137 families with 2,880 adult clients graduating from the program by completing at least six food and nutrition lessons.

Adult Program Impacts:
As a result of participation in EFNEP the following food and nutrition behaviors were achieved:
· 97% with positive change in any food group at program exit. Specifically, EFNEP participants consumed 1.4 more cups of fruit and vegetables and 0.7 additional cups of milk at completion, compared to entry.
· 88% improved in one or more food resource management practices such as using a list to go grocery shopping.
· 91% improved in one or more nutrition practices such as using the “Nutrition Facts” on food labels to make food choices.
· 51% improved in one or more food safety practices such as thawing food safely.
· 37% of program participants reported a positive change in physical activity. In fact, participants reported walking 9,905 miles during the 2009-10 reporting year. As a result of this physical activity, an estimated 22% of program participants could prevent the onset of diabetes over their lifetime through increased physical activity. Including the cost of lost wages and annual health care costs, the total potential economic impact for these participants is approximately $3.7 million.

Youth Program Impacts:
The EFNEP-Youth program is directed toward low-income youth ages 6-12. These students participate in a series of fun and educational lessons on good nutrition and food safety as part of after school activities and summer programs.

In FY 2009-2010, EFNEP enrolled 5,388 limited resource youth. The following results show how youth participants’ food behaviors improved after attending EFNEP classes.

· 85% now eat a variety of foods.
· 90% increased their knowledge of the essentials of human nutrition.
· 90% increased their ability to select low-cost, nutritious foods.
· 94% improved practices in food preparation and safety.
· 97% improved physical activity behavior or attitude.

Cost Benefits 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 Harris County, this is $8.6 million in estimated health care cost savings and almost $1.7 million in food costs.

Participant’s comments:
“I walked out with a better knowledge of how to prepare a better balanced meal whether it be breakfast, lunch, or dinner. I learned where the coldest area of the refrigerator are, I learned how to read the Nutrition value labels on packages. I learned how to pick out better quality foods, and learned how to lower your fat intake.”

Future Goals:
Future goals for the program are to continue to increase outreach and program impacts. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program for Harris County continue to have outstanding program impacts and dedicated paraprofessionals.
2010 Harris County Ag Literacy Program (Kids’ Day)
Developed by: Misty L. Young, County Extension Agent-4-H & Youth Development, Harris County & Jeffrey W. Koch, County Extension Agent, Agriculture & Natural Resources, Harris County

Relevance:
As today's urban youth are further removed from farming and agriculture, they do not understand the importance of agriculture and how it impacts their daily lives. Harris County is home to more than four million people, with the majority living in urban areas.

Response:
This Ag literacy program targeted 3rd and 4th grade students and teachers and provided the following educational components: educational support materials on Ag literacy, Kids’ Day field trip, a retrospective post test evaluation for students, teacher evaluation, and information about 4-H opportunities for the participants and parents. 293 students and 24 teachers participated in the event.

Students and teachers rotated through a series of educational sessions. Sessions included horticulture, dairy, nutrition, poultry, cotton, and wheat. Participants toured the gardens and the orchard at the Extension office as part of the horticulture session. Master Gardeners educated the students and teachers on the types of plants and flowers in the garden, as well as what types of fruits were grown in the orchard. The dairy session involved Southwest Dairy Famer's mobile dairy classroom. Participants learned about dairy cows and dairy products, and were able to observe a cow being milked. Harris County Farm Bureau directors led the sessions on cotton and wheat. The students and teachers learned how both commodities are grown and the types of bipo products that come from each. Participants were also able to see the cotton fibers being separated from the cotton seed by a hand crank gin. Texas A&M’s Poultry Science Department, along with the Texas Department of Agriculture led the poultry session. TAMU brought two day old chicks for the students to see. TDA demonstrated how to candle eggs. The students loved being able to hold and study the tiny chicks, as well as being able to see inside of the eggs. The nutrition session focused on the fruits and vegetable part of My Pyramid, as well as fiber. Students enjoyed activities centered around “finding your fiber”.

Results:
At the conclusion of the sessions, students were given a retrospective post test. Once their evaluation was completed, they were awarded with ice cream which was donated by Blue Bell Creameries. Teachers were also given an evaluation to complete. Below is a sample of the results.
Sample of Student Evaluation Results:
Today’s field trip allowed me to understand the importance of agriculture. Yes-98.3%

I am going to tell my parents about the importance of agriculture. Yes-94.5%

74.7% of participants ranked their experience at the event as Great.

Which of these items is not made from milk?
Cheese, Ice Cream, Marshmallows, Cottage Cheese
84% answered correctly

Which of these natural fibers is used to make US money?
Wheat, Corn, Silk, Cotton
62.1% answered correctly

Horticulture is the science of growing _______________.
Plants, Beef Cattle, Fish, Chickens
83.3% answered correctly

What is MyPyramid?
The pyramids that were created in Egypt, A picture of the food groups and what we should eat each day,

(A)dance - 82.6% answered correctly

Sample of Teacher Evaluation Results:
75% of teachers rated the presenters’ preparation as Excellent.
70.8% of teachers rated the information being informative as Excellent.
62.5% of teachers rated their overall satisfaction of the event as Excellent.
83.3% of teachers Strongly Agreed that the field trip was a good investment of their school’s time.
Because of the event, 83.3% of teachers Strongly Agreed that they increased their knowledge of agriculture. Overall, both evaluations indicate that the program was a success and accomplished the intended goals.

Some comments from teachers are as follows:

➢ “The field trip was fantastic! It engaged students motivated their interest, and encouraged them to explore their prior knowledge and correct popular myths about agriculture.”

➢ “Everything was fabulous, exciting, and informative!”

Future Plans:
We plan to conduct this event in May for three days, rather than two. We would be able to reach more students and teachers. We also plan to add additional sessions, possibly including bee keepers, cattle, and horses.
Relevance:
The United States is falling behind other nations in developing a future workforce of scientists, engineers, and technology experts. In the US, 18 percent of high school seniors are proficient in science (NAEP 2005) and only 5 percent of college graduates in the U.S. earn degrees in science related fields compared to 66 percent in Japan and 59 percent in China. Texas ranks 29th among states graduating students into careers as scientists and ranks first in the number of high-tech jobs lost between 2000 and 2005. Additionally, science education achievement gaps continue to be significant among both economically disadvantaged and non-Asian minority students. Economic development in Texas is dependent on a sustaining a workforce with scientific and technological expertise. Texas 4-H is aligned with the National 4-H Council initiative to develop “one million new scientists” to meet this demand.

Response:
Harris County 4-H Urban Youth Development was a pilot site for the National 4-H Council, Science in Urban Communities Digital Storytelling Project. The project combines science content learning with community engagement as youth become leaders and decision makers for a science film production. The program targeted under-served minority youth attending Precinct2gether Inc. afterschool and summer programs in Galena Park ISD. Extension staff partnered with Precinct 2 Youth Services, North Shore High School Media Department to assemble a team and attend training in at the National 4-H Conference Center. Three teen teachers and two adults volunteered to deliver a minimum of 20 hours of consecutive sessions utilizing 4-H Filmmaking Studio modules for content learning and mentor completion of youth science films. Youth participants researched issues impacting the community, conducted interviews with professionals, explored careers and took field trips to learn about the science behind the issue. They worked in production teams taking on new roles as researchers, script writers, narrators, actors, news reporters, storyboard illustrators, film editors, and videographers. Each film was produced to meet specific criteria to convey factual information and initiate a “Call to Action” to their community. Extension coordinated 148 hours total 64 sessions of science education reaching 55 middle school youth as follows:

- Green Valley Elementary/Afterschool (December 2009-June 2010) 32 session total 64 hours delivered by media teacher and teen teacher reached 15 Gifted/Talented 3rd to 5th grade students and produced two 4 minute films on Houston’s Air Quality. The group took field trips to Houston Air Quality Control, filmed on location, interviewed professionals and went on a boat tour of Houston’s Ship Channel.

- Sam Houston Elementary/Afterschool (April to June 2010) 12 session total 44 hours delivered by Extension staff and Precinct2gether Inc. site staff reached 12- 5th graders who researched School Recycling, interviewed custodians, conducted school survey, processed data for Pie Chart, shot footage for “Houston's Green Spot” TV News Show.

- Sam Houston Elementary/Summer Camp (June-July) 5 weeks 10 sessions total 20 hours delivered by Extension staff and teen teachers reached 18- 5th graders and produced two videos exploring the “Oil Spill” and School Recycling. They interviewed professionals from Galveston Bay Foundation and Houston’s Research Association, and filming on location at Sylvan Beach.
North Shore Middle School/Summer Camp (June-July) 5 weeks 10 sessions total 20 delivered by Extension staff and teen teachers reached 10- 6th graders and produced two films, one on recycling at school “Talking Trash” and litter in the ocean “Sea of Trash”. They interviewed professionals from Galveston Bay Foundation and Houston’s Research Association and filming on location at Sylvan Beach.

Results:
A Post Test Youth Survey was administered at the end of the summer program to assess abilities in critical thinking and use of technology, intent to use science skills in the future and general attitudes about science. Sixteen of nineteen (84%) of youth surveyed responded usually or always to the following statements indicating critical thinking abilities: I can express thoughts on a problem; I use more than one source of information to solve a problem; I compare ideas and keep an open mind before making a decision.

Participants responded to questions (Yes or No) indicating intent to use the skills in the future.

Question 17- List things they have done in the project:
19 of 19 (100 %) used a computer to create or edit a digital photo or video
16 of 19 (84%) showed a friend or family member how to do something on a computer
15 of 19 (78%) searched the internet for information about science, engineering and technology
12 of 19 (63%) watched a program about science, engineering or technology 14 of 19 (73%) read about science in a magazine

Responses to questions identified attitudes toward science were significantly positive. When asked if they agree or disagree with statements about science 13 reported they liked science, 12 they thought they were good at science, and 15 agreed that science was useful for solving everyday problems.

Other results included the establishment of a 4-H Science Media Team to teach and mentor younger youth, a new partnership with North Shore High School Media Department and expansion of the 4-H Science Digital Storytelling project to new youth audiences.

Economic Development Included:
160 volunteer hours valued at $2,952.00, three student stipends awarded in the amount of $900, $5,500 grant funding and donations secured to support programs additional $2,000 funding to support programs in 2011. Total value added $10,452.00.

Future plans:
Include expanding the 4-H Science programs to additional afterschool site to provide 4-H Science afterschool education opportunities for youth from 5th to 8th grade and use digital media filmmaking as a tool for evaluation of science abilities.
Relevance:
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. Youth healthy lifestyles programs and related 4-H & Youth Health and Nutrition projects are one of the cornerstone programs of Texas AgriLife Extension. Nationally, 19% of children ages 6-11 years are obese (95th percentile for body mass index (BMI) by age/gender). In Texas, 23% of fourth grade children are obese. Childhood obesity is associated with increased risk for diabetes, high blood pressure and adult overweight/obesity. While nearly 17% of United States children and adolescents are overweight, more than one in three Houston children, ages 6-17, are overweight and nearly one in five are believed to be obese.

Response:
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 increasing the opportunities for a longer healthier life. In partnership with Harris County Precinct 1, Commissioner El Franco Lee’s staff, City of Houston Health and Human Services, Cooperative Extension Program staff and interns, local stores and volunteers, Texas AgriLife Extension Service conducted a Summer Fitness Camp at Lincoln City Park. The camp was conducted ½ a day for five days. Throughout the week, 58 youth, ages 6 to 13, participated in physical fitness boot camps, where they were taught the importance of increased heart rate, increasing daily physical activity, nutrition, diet and health. Other workshops offered during the week included sun safety, Patriotism through Preparedness, Grooming, Teamwork, Bullying, and Plant People. Other activities conducted during the camp to promote physical fitness were archery, golf, line dancing, angling and a field day. Extension nutrition curriculums were taught to participants to increase knowledge related to healthy diets, healthy weight, fruits and vegetable consumption, and sweetened beverage consumption.

Other Activities:
- 4-H Food and Nutrition Project Training to 34 4-H Club Managers and Volunteers.
- Food and Nutrition Project Training to two clubs Reynolds Elementary School and explorers 4-H club in preparation for the County Food Show.
Results:

- 35 males and 23 females attended the Camp. Of the 58 youth who participated in the Summer Fitness Camp, 33 completed the evaluation instrument.
- 33% of the campers were pleased with the nutrition workshop and gain knowledge about nutrition and food selection.
- 66% of the participants benefited from the boot camp and gained information about exercising daily.
- 33% of the participants were pleased with the grooming class and learned the various uses of baking soda.
- 33% liked the Archery Workshop and gained skills. The most enjoyable workshops during the Summer Fitness Camp were archery, line dancing, field day activities and golf.

Future Plans:

Future plans will be to continue providing educational programs to the youth of Harris County on the importance of physical activity and a healthy diet.

- Continue to partner with Harris County Precinct One and possibly conduct the camp at a different park or community center.
- Utilize more 4-H Curriculums such as the Winning Nutrition Curriculum and Balancing Food and Play.
- Focus on a specific age group, instead of the entire sites population.
- Developing an age appropriate instrument to accurately measure outcome measures and knowledge gained by participants.
2010 Teen Healthy Lifestyles Program
Developed by: Sonja Davis, County Extension Agent, 4-H & Youth Development, Harris County

Relevance:
Texas has the third highest teen birth rate in the nation. In Houston, more girls under 15 give birth than any other U.S. city according to research conducted by the nonprofit, Child Trends. Teen pregnancy has been directly linked to increased poverty, dependence on social services, risky behaviors, lack of education and poor outcomes for children born to teen age mothers. Only 35% of teen mothers receive a high school diploma and 1.5% receive a college degree by age 30. 50% of children of teen age mothers are more likely to perform poorly in school. In 2006, Houston reported 6,591 teen births, the nation’s third highest. Hispanics accounted for 4,201, Blacks 1,881 and Anglos 442.

Response:
County Extension Agents, Sonja Davis and Abneisha Steele along with the volunteers from Opportuniteez Knocs, Harris County Community Supervision & Corrections, and New Faith Baptist Church planned, partnered and hosted the “Wearing Our Crowns Proudly” Girls Conference. The goal of the conference was to empower young girls to make healthy lifestyle choices by cherishing and respecting their bodies. Approximately 20 youth participated in four workshops on My Body as a Temple, Covered, Strength Courage and Wisdom and Purposefully Created. They received information on abstinence education, self esteem, nutrition diet and health, body image, and grooming. Mr. Jeff Nickerson, SAFP Officer with Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections shared information about drugs and alcohol and his career as a probation officer. He also shared personal tragedies that his family has endured as a result of drugs. Dr. Kourtney Sims, MD was the guest speaker and answered questions that the participants asked related to when to see a doctor and sexually transmitted diseases.

Other Educational Efforts Included:
- Abstinence educational workshop at the Nimitz 9th Grade School with the Girls Club. The educational workshop provided participants with information on the various effects and consequences of premarital sex. 33 females attended the 2 hour workshop.
Abstinence education workshop conducted at the Boys and Girls Regional Leadership Conference to 107 youth. Participants participated in a workshop that discussed risk associated with unhealthy behavior such as sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy and how the choices made during the teen years can affect adulthood.

Abstinence Education workshop presented during the Parent Engagement Summit to 16 youth.

**Results:**

After participating in the Conference:

- 50% of the participants understood the benefits of abstaining from sex until marriage after the workshop.
- 66.7% increased their knowledge of being able to identify symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases.
- 83.3% understood how the choices they make now will affect their future.
- 50% understand the requirements for obtaining and maintaining healthy weight.
- 77.8% understand the emotional risk of premarital sex.
- 83.3% understand the social risk related to premarital sex.
- 77.8% understand the physical risk related to premarital sex.
- 82.4% understand the spiritual risk related to premarital sex.
- 94.1% will make better choices related to nutrition and diet.
- 66.7% will exercise a minimum of 30 minutes a day.
- 83.3% will make better choices about their wardrobe selection.
- 94.4% will make better choices about their personal hygiene.
- 88.9% of the participants were able to identify 5 characteristics about themselves that they like.
- 100% of the participants accept who they are and aren’t willing to change to please others.

**Future Plans:**

Future plans are to continue conducting Abstinence and Health Lifestyle programming throughout Harris County. Plans are to conduct another “Wearing Our Crowns Proudly” Girls Conference and to increase the number of participants and the diversity of the participants. Additional sponsorship still be sought. The speakers this year were dynamic and all would like to be involved next year.
Relevance:
The Workforce Investment Act Title 1-Youth was based on research conducted by the Department of labor (1998) (2000). The research stated that youth seeking employment lack the basic knowledge to obtain employment. To prepare youth for the workforce in the 21st century certain basic skills must be developed. To obtain these skills the knowledge and resources must be gained, through workshops and classes before the process of career search can begin.

Response:
Goals of the Cooperative Extension program Workforce Preparation is to deliver training and programs through education and training to hard to reach audiences in Harris County, Texas: in the areas of Workforce preparation and youth development over a one-year period that includes:

- Use of The Workforce solutions –A One –Stop Web site that provides Employment, business, education, legislative, and financial information for all Texas residents
- How to properly prepare an application hard copy and computerized format.
- How to write a cover letter.
- How to write a Resume.
- All youth were given an employment hunting kit which included (Resume and Application templates and employment search web sites)
- Mock interviewing was also conducted and dress for success workshops.

Plan Objective:
To identify youth and young adults and respond to critical areas of work force preparation by adapting, developing, and delivering basic employment workshops that increase opportunities for employment and advancement.

Targeted Audience:
The audience includes youth and young adults from age groups of (14-17) and (18-21) seeking summer and future employment and career planning. Audience consists of a sample of 100 students from Prairie View A&M University (Youth Laboratory) and 200 students from the Texas School of Business. And 24 youth located in the Juvenile Detention Center, Chimney Rock, Houston, Texas.
Results:
Participants were evaluated at the conclusion of each session. The following questions were placed on a five point Likert scale which consists of before and after knowledge based questions.

The Ten Questions chosen are as follows:

1) How to find employment through networking?
2) The importance of following directions when completing an application?
3) The importance of good grammar and spelling on my application?
4) How to dress, be well groomed, and present myself for a job interview?
5) How to prepare myself for an interview?
6) The proper attitude, good behavior and good etiquette to have at work?
7) How to keep my feelings under control while at work?
8) How to have a good working relationship with my supervisor?
9) How to greet people and customer at work?
10) How to have good working and personal relationship with co-workers?

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<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
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The ten questions were rated from the highest 1-5 knowledge bases before and after survey questions. The questions with the most change were numbers 1, 7, 10.
2010 Harris County Environmental Turfgrass Management Program  
Developed by: Dr. Anthony Camerino, County Extension Agent, Horticulture, Harris County

Relevance:
As of 2006, the state of Texas had over 900 golf courses which produced a $7.4 billion economic impact and supported almost 100,000 jobs (2007 Texas Golf Economy Summary Report; http://www.txga.org). Harris County is an urban county that has about 100 golf courses for a total estimated size of 19,600 acres (2007 survey by Harris County Extension Office). The golf courses managed by Extension program attendees in 2009 had an average size of 268 acres and an annual fertilizer/chemical budget of $105,000. Golf courses can be valued not only for their recreational and economic benefits but also for their potential to provide wildlife habitat, areas for ground water recharge and storm water/waste water management, and urban air pollution mitigation. Golf course superintendents and their staff have the capability to positively or negatively influence significant green space acreage in Harris County through their horticulture practices, turfgrass maintenance decisions and pest management programs. Partnering with the South Texas Golf Course Superintendents Association (STGCSA), Texas Parks and Wildlife, the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses (ACSP), The Club at Falcon Point, Murff Turf Farms, Memorial Park Golf Course and the Club at Carlton Woods, this Texas AgriLife Extension – Harris County Office horticulture program’s goals are to increase the number of best management practices implemented on golf courses in Harris County.

Response:
The 2010 Harris County Environmental Turfgrass Management Program included six major educational efforts:
1. “Out of Bounds,” a monthly column. The column was published in Tee to Green, a newsletter for the STGCSA. The column covers topics not directly related to turfgrass culture, but instead focuses on other areas of golf course management (e.g. wildlife habitat improvement, pesticide safety, etc.). About 300 golf course management professionals receive this publication about 8 times last year.
2. Results demonstrations projects. These projects included 3 fungicide evaluations at the Club at Carlton Woods and 1 fungicide evaluation at Murff Turf Farm, and an emergent plant erosion and runoff prevention demonstration at the Club at Falcon Point.
3. 2010 Pest Management for Golf and Sport Turf Systems. This lecture format event was a pesticide applicator recertification education event where 5 CEUs are awarded. 104 people attended the event.
4. 2010 Turfgrass Management Practices Field Day. This event was held at Memorial Park Golf Course and covered best management practices for the use of wetting agents and topdressing materials in turfgrass systems. 39 people attended the event.
5. 2010 Environmental Golf Management Field Day. The event was a combination of lectures, walking tours, and discussion groups. The event participants learned about best management practices for golf courses, how to promote wildlife on their courses, and how to enroll in the ACSP. The event was hosted by the Club at Falcon Point and had 12 attendees.
6. 2010 Turfgrass Disease Clinic and Field Day (2 sites). This event had “hands-on” three hours of lecture, and a field visit to a near-by fungicide evaluation research plot. The event was held at Royal Oaks Country Club and Murff Turf Farms. 21 turfgrass management professionals attended one of these events.
Results:

Intentions to adopt evaluations were carried out on the three field day events. The following is a sample of the results from these evaluations:

- 97% (33 of 34) of respondents rated the events as good or excellent.
- 100% (4 of 4) of respondents not already pursuing the ACSP certification definitely will (6 already were in the process of certification and attended previous years’ events).
- 57% (4 of 7) of respondents not already converting turfgrass areas to wildflower meadows probably or definitely will.
- 70% (7 of 10) of respondents probably or definitely will implement the tree pruning practices demonstrated.
- 75% (3 of 4) of respondents probably or definitely will establish buffer strips along water bodies to prevent run-off (6 already have established buffer strips and attended previous years’ events).
- 75% (6 of 8) of respondents not already planting trees in groups with sufficient mulch definitely will.
- 43% (3 of 7) of respondents probably or definitely will use the wetting agents to conserve water.
- 100% (10 of 10) of respondents probably or definitely will use the recommended tree list provided by the Texas forest Service when deciding what trees to plant at their golf course.
- 92% (11 of 12) of respondents definitely will refer to what they learned at the turfgrass disease Clinic and Field Day and/or the provided research report when selecting fungicides for turfgrass disease control.
- 92% (11 of 12) of respondents probably or definitely understand the importance of replicated fungicide field trials conducted in the Houston area.
- 67% (8 of 12) of respondents probably or definitely will use laboratory diagnosis to confirm turfgrass diseases.
- 85% (11 of 13) of respondents probably or definitely will use proper cultural practices presented at the event to reduce disease pressure as possible.

Future Plans:

The program will continue to teach the skills and technologies needed so that turfgrass managers in Harris County will be able to implement best management practices.
2010 Harris County Urban Landscape Water Conservation Program
Developed by: Dr. Anthony Camerino, County Extension Agent,
Horticulture, Harris County

Relevance:
Water is a limited resource applied to urban ornamental and recreational landscapes to increase their performance and aesthetic value. Landscape irrigation use is a significant contributor to peak municipal water demand. During the growing season in Harris County, irrigation for urban ornamental landscapes can account for up to 60% of water demand. Efficient irrigation management is important not only because water is a limited resource, but also because water delivery and removal is an energy-intensive pollution generating process. Reducing potable water demand reduces energy demand and its corresponding pollution production. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates water and wastewater industries account for an estimated 75 billion kWh of overall U.S. electricity demand and costs $4 billion per year (Ensuring a Sustainable Future: An Energy Management Guidebook for Wastewater and Water Utilities, 2008). Managing irrigation efficiently reduces water use and loss of nutrients from a site via runoff. The demand for water continues to increase as the population in Harris County continues to grow. For these reasons, urban landscape water conservation is a priority for the citizens of Harris County. This educational program will focus on increasing knowledge and adoption of best management practices related to water and its use in urban ornamental and recreational landscapes.

Response:
The 2010 Harris County Urban Landscape Water Conservation Program conducted one major educational activity and obtained a donation for the new turfgrass research site in College Station, Texas:

1. Rainwater Harvesting for Landscape Professionals and Water Authorities

2. The "OUTREACH" Irrigation Task Force and the Houston Gulf Coast Irrigators Association met to discuss ways the industry and water regulators could work to support research on irrigation use.

Results:
The "OUTREACH" Irrigation Task Force and the Houston Gulf Coast Irrigators Association donated $15,000.00 to support the development of the new Turfgrass Field Lab in College Station, Texas.

Knowledge gain and intention to adopt evaluations were carried out on the Rainwater Harvesting for Landscape Professionals and Water Authorities education event. The following is a sample of the results from this evaluation:

- 100% (17 of 17) of respondents were satisfied with the event.
- 72% (13 of 18) of respondents anticipate benefiting economically as a direct result of what they learned from the Extension activity.
- 56% (10 of 18) of respondents increased their level of understanding of how rainwater harvesting can reduce water run-off from a property.
61% (11 of 18) of respondents increased their level of understanding of how rainwater harvesting can reduce potable water demand.

71% (15 of 17) of respondents increased their level of understanding of how rainwater harvesting impacts the water quality in a watershed.

78% (18 of 18) of respondents increased their level of understanding of the basic components of rainwater harvesting systems.

82% (14 of 17) of respondents increased their level of understanding of how to estimate rainwater yield based on rainfall and catchment size.

72% (13 of 18) of respondents increased their level of understanding of how to estimate plant water needs and reduce plant water use.

75% (12 of 16) of respondents increased their level of understanding of the basics of rainwater harvesting system maintenance.

87% (14 of 16) of respondents increased their level of understanding of how to properly treat rainwater based on the desired use of the water.

61% (11 of 16) of respondents probably or definitely will design landscapes to prevent stormwater runoff.

72% (13 of 17) of respondents probably or definitely will manage landscapes to reduce potential nutrient runoff.

72% (13 of 17) of respondents probably or definitely will install rainwater harvesting systems for irrigating plants.

50% (9 of 18) of respondents probably or definitely will install rainwater systems to reduce municipal water use.

61% (11 of 18) of respondents probably or definitely will manage soils to encourage water infiltration into the landscape.

42% (7 of 17) of respondents probably or definitely will offer rainwater harvesting installation as part of their business.

33% (6 of 18) of respondents probably or definitely will install rainwater harvesting for green building certification.

Future Plans:
Next year the program will expand to include two educational events on rainwater harvesting, one event addressing irrigation smart controllers, one event addressing drip irrigation, and a regular column submitted to the Houston Gulf Coast Irrigators Association newsletter.
## Texas AgriLife Extension Service
### Harris County

#### Extension Director, Agents and Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County Extension Director</td>
<td>Linda Williams-Willis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>Carolyn Hefner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office Manager</td>
<td>Becky Deasy</td>
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<td>County Extension Agent - Family &amp; Consumer Sciences</td>
<td>Elizabeth Trejo</td>
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<td>County Extension Agent - Family &amp; Consumer Sciences</td>
<td>Abneshia Steele</td>
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<td>Support Staff</td>
<td>Lisa Azarm</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Extension Agent – EFRNEP/FCS</td>
<td>Tonya McKenzie</td>
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<td>County Extension Agent-EFNEP/FCS</td>
<td>Peggy Adams</td>
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<td>County Extension Agent – Ag &amp; Natural Resources</td>
<td>Jeff Koch</td>
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<td>Diana Todd</td>
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<td>Carol Brouwer</td>
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<td>County Extension Agent – Horticulture</td>
<td>Anthony Camerino</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support Staff</td>
<td>Sheronda Bryant</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Extension Agent – 4-H &amp; Youth Development</td>
<td>Misty Young</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Sonja Stueart-Davis</td>
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<td>Support Staff</td>
<td>Susan Caraway</td>
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</table>
Extension Agent - (CEP-PVAMU) 4-H & Youth Development                             Ricky Mahaley

Extension Agent - (CEP-PVAMU) 4-H & Youth Development                             Shervelle Washington

Support Staff                                                                                           Tameka Thomas

County Extension Agent – Urban Youth Development                                                      Sheryl Nolen

Support Staff                                                                                           Christina Galindo

Integrated Pest Management Specialist                                                               Paul Nester

Support Staff                                                                                           Terri Lenert

Viticulture Program Specialist                                                                     Fritz Westover

Technology Manager                                                                                        Steve Winner

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