

## Protecting Our Environment

The Pros in the Parks lesson series engaged 185 Tarrant County parks employees involved in the day-to-day operation of over 300 parks and public spaces encompassing more than 15,000 acres throughout the county. The lesson series included topics related to water conservation, irrigation management, trees in parks, and quality control.



The stream trailer water erosion activity was presented to 4,880 youth and adults to provide real life examples of what happens when water erodes the earth, as well as the effects of water pollution on our water supply.

In cooperation with.....

### Tarrant County Commissioners' Court

B. Glen Whitley, County Judge

Roy Charles Brooks, Commissioner, Pct. 1  
 Andy Nguyen, Commissioner, Pct. 2  
 Gary Fickes, Commissioner, Pct. 3  
 J. D. Johnson, Commissioner, Pct. 4

Tarrant County Master Naturalists are 67 specially trained Extension volunteers who provide programs and activities to help protect the natural environment through home and community environmental best management practices.

## Supporting Our Agriculture

Pizza Ranch 2014 was a huge success with 4,000 students learning first-hand where the raw ingredients which go into the making of their favorite food – pizza – really come from. They learned about milk's role in making cheese, how wheat is used in the crust, how vegetables and herbs go into the sauce, and using beef as the meat ingredient. The children were then treated to pizza, milk and yogurt, courtesy of Domino's Pizza, Southwest Dairy Farmers and other kind sponsors.



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Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension Program are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status.

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 COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE  
 AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
 Cooperative Extension Program



Making a Difference  
 2014

## Extension Education in Tarrant County

The mission of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is to enhance the quality of life for Tarrant County residents through custom-made educational programs, based on community-identified needs, and developed by local volunteers.

Celebrating 100 Years! In 2014, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the passage of the Smith-Lever Act, the legislation which officially created the national Cooperative Extension System. We reflect on a century of service and we look forward to continuing our commitment to provide quality, relevant, science-based education to the residents of Tarrant County.

Extension is embedded in the Tarrant County community, involving community members in:  
 1) serving on planning committees that developed educational programming to address community identified issues; 2) connecting with community partners to expand our capacity and better serve the people; and 3) engaging volunteers in meaningful educational roles to enhance the quality of life for their fellow Tarrant County residents.

## Improving Our Health

Extension nutrition and health classes use learning-by-doing activities which teach practical information about basic nutrition concepts, simple food preparation, food safety practices, comparison shopping, kitchen sanitation, and increased physical activity.



### 2014 Educational Outreach

Educational Programs Presented: **2,065**  
 Attendance at Educational Programs: **63,531**  
 Individual Contacts: **249,373**  
 Volunteers Involved: **1,198**  
 Volunteer Hours: **81,649**

Valued at **\$1,841,185\***

\*Hourly value of volunteer time, provided by Independent Sector



## Improving Our Health (cont.)

Over 10,000 youth and over 1,000 adults were involved in a nutrition-oriented lesson series with impressive results: 85% of youth improved their ability to choose foods according to nutrition knowledge, and adults reported an average cost savings of \$67 per month on their food budget.

Dinner Tonight! is a program to promote at-home family dining through providing easy, healthful, and economical meals. Email subscribers receive a weekly email blast on Monday which includes a new recipe and a video webcast demonstrating how to prepare the featured dish. Dinner Tonight! Healthy Cooking Schools have also been developed to bring people together in a fun environment to learn healthy meal planning and preparation.



## Strengthening Our Families

The Building Young Families Conference provides teen parents/high school students, both male and female, resources and education. This year the conference engaged 96 teens, including 14 teen fathers. Topics included: preparing for college; preventing poisoning in the home; child support for both males and females; child abuse and neglect recognition and prevention; and other health-related topics.

Extension's financial literacy lesson series focuses on helping adults develop a spending plan, increase their savings, and reduce their debt. A significant program audience is parents who are in arrears with child support, and 183 of these adults attended the mandatory monthly class. Ninety days after the class, 82% continued or started a savings plan and 82% were more able to fit child support payments into their current spending.

## Enhancing Our Horticulture

Tarrant County is proud of the 400 plus certified Master Gardeners that provide a variety of volunteer service activities which include educating others about gardening, conserving water, and practicing environmentally sound procedures as they manage their home landscapes.

Tarrant County Master Gardeners manage 20 projects across Tarrant County as a community service.

They are required to recertify their Master Gardener status each year through continuing education and volunteer service. In addition, Master Gardeners may choose to become a specialist in 12 different areas, including greenhouse, plant propagation, Junior Master Gardener, composing, fruits, and vegetables.

This specialist certification allows them to better serve the community by using their specialized training to enhance learners' experiences.



## Developing Our Youth

The 4-H Youth Development model essential elements are: 1) a caring adult, 2) life skills through experiential learning, 3) youth leadership, 4) community service and 5) family engagement, carried out through a structured club experience in an informal environment in the neighborhood.

4-H volunteers serve as 4-H club managers, project leaders and parents at the club level to provide caring adults for the youth as they grow. Caring adults are a key component to positive youth development as they provide sincere caring, teaching life skills for adulthood, providing structure in an informal setting, and providing consistency to help the youth feel comfortable.

The 4-H motto is "Learning by Doing". Since the first 4-H club in 1903, 4-H has used experiential learning models to help youth learn by actually experiencing the activity rather than reading about it, or watching someone else do the activity. These life skills range from manners and protocol, to career exploration and workforce development. Experiential learning helps youth feel positive and optimistic about themselves.

Offering youth opportunities to provide leadership in a formal leadership role or an informal role for a specific activity is important in 4-H. It helps the youth work towards objectives and gain confidence.

The Tuft's University *4-H Study of Positive Youth Development* found that 4-H'ers are nearly four times more likely to make contributions to their communities (Grades 7-12). Service activities provide opportunities for memorable experiences and social interactions for youth are often associated with meaningful development.

Families play a key role in any 4-H club. They serve as volunteers. They provide support for their own children and other youth. Families play a critical role in helping youth succeed in high school and beyond. Families make more of a difference than neighborhoods

In the eight-year longitudinal *4-H Study of Positive Youth Development*, 4-H club youth were compared with similar youth participating in other out of school time activities. 4-H participants reported high academic competence in Grades 7, 9, 11, and 12 and higher school engagement in Grades 11 and 12 than participants in other activities. 4-H'ers are nearly twice as likely to participate in science, technology, engineering and math programs during out of school time (Grades 10-12). 4-H girls are twice more likely (Grade 10) and nearly three times more likely (Grade 12) to take part in science programs compared to girls in other out of school time activities.



Today over 400 Tarrant County youth participate in regular meetings at 21 neighborhood 4-H clubs. There they learn important life skills, practice real-life leadership roles and contribute valuable community service. 160 adult volunteers in Tarrant County provide leadership to the 4-H program, providing much of the teaching, plus organizing learning experiences in a wide range of settings as 4-H'ers "learn by doing."

Heroes 4-Health is a youth service-learning program dedicated to developing youth advocacy and benefitting communities through nutrition and physical activities. Twenty teen ambassadors were trained to teach younger children about good nutrition and the value of physical activity. Nearly 700 younger children learned from their teen ambassadors, and of that number 86 % reported learning "how to make healthy food choices," 74% now "eat more fruits and vegetables," and 91% reported that "being active is good for me."