



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

TARRANT COUNTY

SPRING 2022

Director's Message

Howdy from your local Tarrant County AgriLife Extension Office! As always, we hope this newsletter finds you well; and that you and those around you are healthy and safe.

If you have any questions or if there is anything we can do to serve you, please contact our office. Also, join us in welcoming our three newest Tarrant County AgriLife team members, Matt, Kate and Sanci!



Courtney Davis,
Tarrant County
Extension Director

MATT KEYS

New Expanded Food & Nutrition
Education Program (EFNEP) Nutrition
Education Associate



Howdy Y'all, I am Matt Keys. I have joined the Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) as a Nutrition Education Associate and I am excited to work with the AgriLife Tarrant team! I was born and raised in Fort Worth, Texas bordering Arlington. I moved to the Pacific Northwest for school but quickly realized how much I loved the place I was from (the sun, trees, southern hospitality, etc.).

I love playing chess, drinking tea, reading manga, and watching a good thriller. I try to have a positive attitude for most situations and think any project can go smoother if you are having fun or sharing laughs. I prefer the country over the city, but I think Fort Worth has a good balance of both.

I eventually want to move and settle down in the country (a few cows, chickens and live off the land!) and maybe go into the city every now and then. Teaching has been a declining field since the pandemic hit, especially amongst the youth, but I think there are good apples that make it all worth it. I am looking forward to starting classes and getting to know everyone in the office!



KATE MARSHALL

New County Extension Agent for 4-H
& Youth Development



Howdy!

My name is Kate Marshall & I love ALL things 4-H! I am excited to be serving as the 4-H Agent for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Tarrant County. I had somewhat of a storybook education attending a one room schoolhouse in rural Nebraska kindergarten through 6th grade. I went on to get my Bachelors degree in Family and Consumer Science and my Masters in Agricultural Leadership from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

While I grew up in Nebraska, I have also spent time living in Oklahoma and East Texas. I have served in several different 4-H positions within Extension in both Texas & Nebraska. I love helping youth find their “spark”. I was a 10 year 4-H member growing up and I know my experiences in the program helped shape my career and who I am today. I have been involved in a variety of project areas over the years including STEM & robotics, leadership, foods and nutrition, clothing and textiles as well as a little bit of livestock and small animals.

My husband Kendrick and I love to cook and try new food experiences. We’ve also discovered that some of the places on Guy Fieri’s Food Network show “Diners, Drive-ins & Dives” truly are dives! I’m looking forward to meeting our members/families & helping to make the best better in Tarrant County 4-H.



BETTER LIVING FOR TEXANS

SANCI HALL

New Extension Agent for Better Living for
Texans (BLT)



In my family, if you cook, you don’t have to do dishes. I hate doing dishes! So, I learned to cook early and often! I’ve been cooking and baking with my family since I was 5 years old, and I love sharing my passion for food. Nutrition was one of the few courses I took in college that I could immediately apply to my daily world. I learned quickly how important vitamins and minerals were and where to get them.

I am excited to be Tarrant County’s new Better Living Texans AgriLife Extension Agent. I was born in Texas, served in the military in Texas, and after 13 years, finally moved back to Texas!

My husband, two kids, and way too many family pets are loving our new community and excited to live in the county I serve.

As a reminder, Better Living for Texans (BLT) is a nutrition education program for adults and children that are SNAP participants and SNAP eligible. If you would like to discuss how BLT can assist you or your organization, please reach out to me at sanci.hall@ag.tamu.edu or call me at 817-884-1297. I look forward to working with you.



I was honored to host my first nutrition class at VFW Post 8235 on Santa Paula Drive in Fort Worth. What an amazing group of veterans! We talked about basic nutrition and Better Living for Texan’s programs. They were enthusiastic to learn about the different series that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension can bring to the community. I am excited to work with them to host nutrition, wellness, and gardening programs! I was blessed to have my son with me to assist in the food demonstration. We prepared and served Beef and Rice Florentine. Everyone seemed to enjoy this quick, healthy recipe. Thank you, VFW Post 8235, for allowing me to visit!

Upcoming Classes

Be Well, Live Well Senior Nutrition and Wellness Series

April 6th, May 4th, June 1st
July 6th, and August 3rd
10 am – 11 am.

Sharon Washburn
Center at the Emerald Run
Apartments

7500 Maplewood Avenue.
North Richland Hills, Texas
76180

Senior Synergy

May 12th
from
8:30 am – 1 pm

Will Rogers – Amon G
Carter Jr. Exhibit Hall

3400 Burnett-Tandy Drive
Fort Worth, Texas 76107

Be Well, Live Well Senior Nutrition and Wellness Series

July 6th, August 3rd
September 7th
October 5th
and
November 2nd
1pm – 3pm.

North Richland Hills Rec
Center, 6000 Hawk Ave,
North Richland Hills, Texas
76180

Growing and Nourishing Healthy Community Gardens

Dec 7th, 2022
Jan 4th, 2023
February 1, 2023
March 1, 2023
April 5, 2023
and May 3, 2023
1 pm – 3pm.

North Richland Hills Rec
Center, 6000 Hawk Ave,
North Richland Hills, Texas
76180

Congratulations

TARRANT COUNTY JUNIOR LIVESTOCK SHOW

Jacklyn Jones-Doyle, County Extension Agent, Agriculture/Natural Resources

What a day for Tarrant County Agriculture Youth! On Saturday March 12th, the Civic, Business, and Industry Leaders of Tarrant County came together for Tarrant County 4H and FFA Agriculture youth and set records!

Exhibitors enrolled in Agriculture education programs in Tarrant County school districts had their annual Livestock show at the Will Rogers Complex this past week. These exhibitors have raised animals over the past

year and learned the importance of agriculture to our daily life activities. Saturday was the culmination of all that work to come together for a big reward and helping these kids take the next step in their lives. 209 kids from Tarrant County FFA chapters participated in the 72nd Tarrant County Junior Livestock Sale on Saturday. \$456,118 was raised for Tarrant County Agriculture youth by area business and community leaders. These dollars were invested into these kids for getting them onto the next step of their lives. Some will be buying animals to raise and sell at next year's show; others will be using those funds for tuition at local trade program institutions or at area colleges and state universities. Sale dollars spent by local businesses at this sale create and develop skills needed going into the future workforce of Fort Worth, Tarrant County, and state of Texas.



Top left to right:

Grand Champion Dairy Doe - Sasha Norwood
1st Place Intermediate Horse Skill-A-Thon - Emma Harvey
Grand Champion Reserve Champion Art - Sammi Schrader
Grand Champion Commercial Doe - Sammi Schrader

Bottom left to right:

Grand Champion Market Steer Exhibitor - Hunter Bedford
Reserve Champion Dairy Doe - Toi'Cean Simmons,
Grand Champion Dairy Doe - Sasha Norwood
Grand Champion Market Sheep - Gavin Slough

The Tarrant County Junior Livestock Show wants to say Congratulations to the following Grand and Reserve Grand Champions:

Grand Champion Steer – Hunter Bedford – Keller 4H

Grand Champion Swine – Ryan Wells – Grapevine/Colleyville FFA

Grand Champion Lamb – Gavin Slough – Keller 4H

Grand Champion Dairy Wether – Ryan Osborn – Brewer FFA

Grand Champion Goat – Reagan Blanton – Mansfield FFA

Grand Champion Broiler – Peyton Williams – Azle FFA

Grand Champion Turkey – Kate Phillips – Mansfield FFA

Grand Champion Single Fryer (Rabbit) – Emily Weber – Keller FFA

Grand Champion Rabbit – Cathryn Elle Coleman – Azle FFA

Reserve Grand Champion Steer – Nicole Greer – Grapevine/Colleyville FFA

Reserve Grand Champion Swine – Taylor Burney – Crowley FFA

Reserve Grand Champion Lamb – Heather Hurley – Grapevine/Colleyville FFA

Reserve Grand Champion Dairy Wether – Brooklyn Sinclair – Birdville FFA

Reserve Grand Champion Goat – Kaileigh Slough – Azle FFA

Reserve Grand Champion Broiler – Grant Bradberry – Azle 4H

Reserve Grand Champion Turkey – Gloria Ruiz – Arlington Heights FFA

Reserve Grand Champion Single Fryer (Rabbit) – Katie Savage – Birdville FFA

Reserve Grand Champion Rabbit – Elizabeth Padilla – Crowley FFA

Congratulations to all the Tarrant County Junior Livestock Show participants!!

As Tarrant County grows and more people become a part of our community, demand on agriculture resources such as food production, commodity production, medicine, and other everyday products we use increases as the metro area grows. The kids of our local FFA and 4H Programs learn firsthand on what it takes to keep a population sustained and how food production and other agriculture resources reach everyone from pasture to plate and field to market.

REGIONAL 4-H POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CHAMPION NETWORK

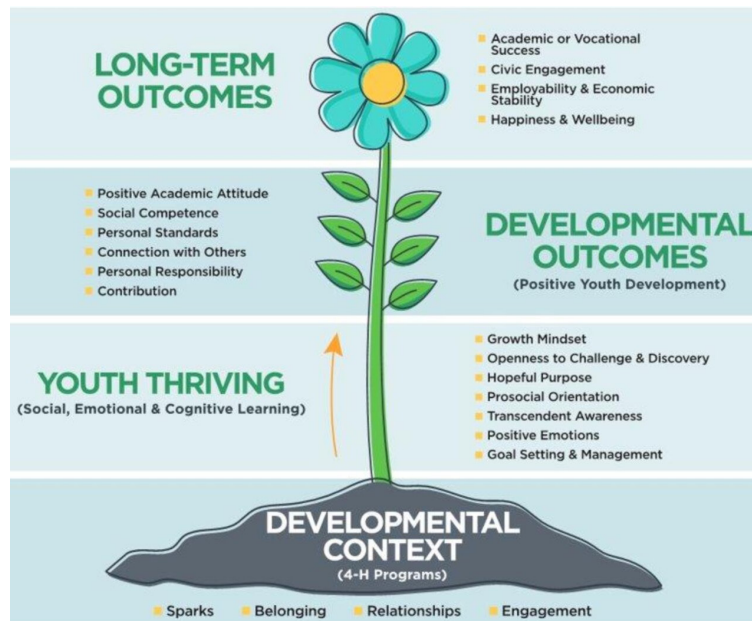
Jordan Peldyak, Extension Agent, Cooperative Extension Program, 4-H Youth Development

At the end of last year, I was nominated by Prairie View A&M University to serve on the Regional 4-H Positive Youth Development (PYD) Champion Network. After a month-long process, I was chosen to serve the southern region as a program champion. This will allow me the opportunity to work with 4-H professionals all over the country and gain new skills to better serve youth development programs in Tarrant County and across the country. This will give me a chance to take a step back and look at what really makes a good Extension program. The 4-H Champion network can help streamline successes from one region of the country to the next by providing educational trainings on Positive Youth Development to Extension professionals and volunteers. The overall aim of the Regional 4-H PYD Network is to ensure consistency in understanding and describing the way that 4-H impacts the positive development of youth. This will be accomplished through PYD capacity building with 4-H professionals and volunteers, leading

to improved PYD programming, and stronger and clearer program impact. Ultimately the aim of the regional 4-H PYD Champion Network is to secure the position of 4-H the leader in positive youth development programming.

The Regional 4-H PYD Champion Network consists of two 4-H professionals from Land-Grant Universities across the five Extension Regions. Champions are chosen through a competitive application process for a three year term. Champions work together in their Extension regions under the leadership of a national facilitator to advance the understanding and use of the 4-H Thriving Model as the theory of positive youth development in 4-H. Regional networks

focus primarily on capacity building efforts for 4-H professionals and volunteers, with a special focus on promoting a consistent, correct, and complete understanding of positive youth development in their state and region. I look forward to representing 4-H and Tarrant County as a program champion.



Below are the Regional 4-H Positive Youth Development (PYD) Champion Network Goals:

1. Build an accurate and consistent translation of the science of youth development into 4-H practice based on the 4-H Thriving Model, the science of learning and development and best practices identified in youth development literature.
2. Increase 4-H professionals and volunteer capacity for designing and implementing high quality 4-H programs that promote youth thriving.
3. Work collaboratively within Extension regions to identify PYD capacity strengths and needs.
4. Develop materials and resources to facilitate PYD capacity building with 4-H professionals and volunteers.

GROWING A LOVE OF GARDENING WITH OUR YOUTH

Brittnay Meyer, County Extension Agent, Horticulture

“Gardens and children need the same things- patience, love, and someone who will never give up on them.”
- Nicolette Sowder

When asking a child where their food comes from, more likely they will respond with the grocery store. Though the grocery store is where the majority of the population buys fruits and vegetables, children should understand the source of those necessary items.

AgriLife Extension provides an amazing program to do just that, all while helping to grow (pun intended) a love for gardening and being outdoors. The Junior Master Gardener (JMG) program is an international youth gardening program created for the university cooperative Extension system by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension for 3rd - 8th grade students. This program was developed not only by the amazing team from AgriLife but with the help of our Texas teachers! We wanted to create a program that added benefits to current curriculum without adding more stress or work to our teachers. The mission of the JMG program is “Growing good kids by igniting a passion for learning, success, and service through a unique gardening education.”

Children not only learn plant and garden basics, but by participating in the lessons, they develop leadership and critical thinking skills. These lessons also align with TEKS math, science, language arts, writing, physical education, health, nutrition, and social studies standards, ensuring these students are better prepared for the STAAR assessment test. Students participating in JMG have scored higher on science achievement tests compared to students participating in traditional classroom methods. Within the JMG program is the Learn, Grow, Eat, and Go (LGEG) program that combines gardening with nutrition, vegetable exposure, healthy recipes, physical activity, that encourages family and community involvement. LGEG is designed for Pre-K through 5th grade with the new Early Childhood curriculum for teachers of 4 & 5 year old students. Both JMG and LGEG have been reviewed,



tested and presented to maximize age-appropriate learning, while encouraging positive behavioral changes for better health!

These programs are in many Elementary and Middle schools throughout Tarrant County with this Agent’s goal to focus on youth education and implementing these programs into all schools in Tarrant County!

TIPS FOR GETTING YOUR GARDENING QUESTIONS ANSWERED:

- Contact the help desk
Phone: 817.884.1944
Email: TarrantMG@ag.tamu.edu
- Take high quality pictures
Include multiple perspectives
For insect ID: White background with a coin or know object for size reference
- Describe when the problem began and how it has developed.
- Inform of any previous work done around the area or to the plant directly.
- Observe if neighbors are having the same or similar issue.
- Note the plants age, location, the amount of daily light and water.

NORTH TEXAS URBAN FORESTRY CONFERENCE 2022 EDITION

Laura Miller, County Extension Agent, Horticulture

Back in pre-pandemic times, February 19, 2020 to be exact, 212 municipal and commercial arborists gathered at the Hurst Conference Center to listen to our State Climatologist, John Nielsen-Gammon, discuss the impact of trees on climate and Gretchen Riley, Texas A&M Forest Service, explain the research connecting trees and human health. No one is blaming the trees, but about a month later, human health became the only topic of discussion.

As the planning committee began getting ready for the 2021 conference, the spread of disease was on our minds, and we came up with a cute photo of a post oak wearing a giant disposable surgical mask and the theme Treedemic. Dr. David Appel, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension plant pathologist since 1981, graciously agreed to try to tell us everything he knows about how disease moves through tree populations, and Allen Smith, Texas A&M Forest Service, Emmett Muennick, Arborjet, and Haywood Morgan, City of Denton, promised to share their unique perspectives on the Emerald Ash Borer in North Texas. We added our water specialist Dr. Becky Bowling to provide the best pesticide laws and regulations talk ever, and we were all feeling great about our program plans for February 2021.

Sometimes the best laid plans go awry, and when the Hurst Conference Center became a vaccination site, we rescheduled the conference for May. Then we had to reschedule for February 2022. February 2022 finally rolled around and 161 commercial and municipal arborists rolled into the parking garage and filled the 800 seat ballroom as they spread out for a day of learning and earning their continuing education units. Of the participants who completed a program evaluation, 96% were mostly or completely satisfied with the activity. 79% increased their knowledge of tree disease development, 77% increased their knowledge about Emerald Ash Borer, and 71% learned something about pesticide labels.



One participant said “Outstanding speakers. Each topic was very informative and interesting. The venue is perfect. Great job to all.” Another said, “Being new to the tree world, this conference helped increase my knowledge. I will definitely attend again.”

Social distancing for trees?

It's complicated because some insects can travel, either on their own by flying or more frequently and farther by hitchhiking. Many plant diseases are spread by insect vectors. There's not an easy rule for all pest problems, but when it comes to Emerald Ash Borer, 15 miles is considered a safe distance from an infested tree.



The nitidulid beetles that vector oak wilt can only fly about ¼ mile.

There are some best practices for minimizing the spread of landscape problems that we can all adopt:

- Carefully inspect new plant material before purchase and installation. Don't pay for pests.
- Diversify plant materials and avoid leaning too heavily on a few species. There are reasons plants become extremely popular and widely used. They are often great plant choices, but their numbers make them vulnerable. Aim for a variety of plant families, genera, and species.

SPRING INTO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY WITH EFNEP

Robin Hall, Extension Agent, Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program

Spring is in the air, along with longer days, spring showers, and warmer weather. After such a long winter, many of us are welcoming spring with open arms, with plans to get out and enjoy the fresh air and revitalize our physical activity routine. Tarrant County's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) will soon be “springing” into new physical activity offerings for their youth and adult audiences; a change sure to be welcomed by all.

Last summer, EFNEP staff members from across the state were hand-selected by the EFNEP state office to travel to College Station to serve as models and participate in the filming of physical activity GIFs. Three Tarrant County EFNEP staff members were chosen to participate, along with representatives from Harris and Travis Counties; some participants were even invited to bring their children who would serve as youth physical activity GIF models.

Prior to filming, each model was assigned specific exercises in which they would be filmed performing, including various stretching, cardio, and muscle strengthening exercises, as well as modifications. Once filming began, those participating were given the opportunity to practice their assigned exercises with a physical activity expert, then they were filmed performing their exercises while simultaneously being coached by a different physical activity expert; the experts were there to make sure no one injured themselves while performing their exercises and to ensure that the models performed their assigned exercises using proper form. Over the course of two days, AgriLife's Digital Education Multimedia Specialists filmed both adult staff and their children performing everything from hip flexor stretches, to calf raises, to various types of boxing punches, and more.

Once all exercises had been filmed, it was up to the Digital Education Department to review and edit the film for shadows and other filming errors, then each exercise was converted to a separate GIF. Next, all GIFs were sent back to the EFNEP state office where they are currently being compiled into short videos that will be imbedded into virtual EFNEP youth and adult lessons, or available to be shown during face-to-face classes. In addition to cardio and muscle-strengthening exercises, the videos also include timed warm-up and stretching moves to which participants can follow along; much like exercising to a workout video.



“Spring” Into More Physical Activity

- Go for an outdoor walk, run, or hike.
- Try outdoor yoga – The Trailhead at Clearfork offers weekly free community yoga.
- Outdoor cycling on the Trinity Trails.
- Grab a buddy and pick a sport to do outside – play catch, shoot hoops, or throw the frisbee.
- Take your kids to the park – check out Play Grand Adventures in Grand Prairie.

We are excited for the rollout of the new physical activity GIFs, and we know EFNEP participants, youth, and adults alike, will benefit from following along to the videos. The Tarrant County EFNEP team invites you to “spring” into physical activity, as well. To inquire about or schedule EFNEP classes, contact us at 817-212-7501. In the meantime, here are a few tips you can try to increase your physical activity this spring.

HABIT S

Alaina Woolsey, County Extension Agent, Family & Community Health

Habit Stacking: the process of stacking a new behavior on top of an existing one or “stacking” a new habit with an old habit; utilizing old connections to create new habits.

The phrase ‘habit stacking’ was created in 2014 by author S.J. Scott in his book, Habit Stacking: 97 Small Life Changes That Take Five Minutes or Less. Scott suggests that you “build routines around habits that don’t require effort” because “small wins build momentum because they’re easy to remember and complete.”

Habit stacking involves linking a habit or routine that you already participate in with other smaller activities. This makes the new habit or routine memorable and gives you a trigger to initiate the habit. It can be summed up as: use the things you already do to remind you to do something else.

This strategy helps to eliminate both procrastination and the cognitive dissonance that can come with trying to start something new. It can also eliminate the guesswork of trying to figure out how a new habit can fit into your life.

In 2007, research revealed that adults have about 40% less neurons than newborns. As we get older, our brains perform synaptic pruning. In an effort to maintain the synapses that get used regularly, your brain removes (or prunes) the synapses that aren’t used on a regular basis. This synaptic pruning also strengthens existing connections, making them more hard-wired into our brains. Behavioral Psychologist and author of Atomic Habits, James Clear writes “Synaptic pruning occurs with every habit you build as your brain builds a strong network of neurons to support your current behaviors. The more you do something, the stronger and more efficient the connection becomes.” Clear proposes that you can utilize these stronger connections and build new habits from them.

T A C K I N G

Clear also gives us a manageable formula to begin stacking habits: After/While [current habit], I will [new habit].

- A few examples of a stacked habit could be:**
- While the coffee is brewing, I will unload the dishwasher.
 - While the coffee is brewing, I will practice 5 minutes of mindfulness.
 - After I wake up each morning, I will put on my gym clothes and shoes.
 - After I drop my kid off at their sports practice/dance practice/their activity, I will go for a walk/run/workout.
 - When I get home, I will go for a 10-minute walk.

A key thing to keep in mind that your trigger should align with the ideal frequency of your habit. For example, if you only drink coffee on Saturdays, then you’re only going to get a once-a-week habit of unloading the dishwasher while the coffee is brewing. If your kiddo only has karate twice a week, then you’re only going to work out twice a week. If you want a daily habit of working out, then choose a new daily trigger.

Keep it simple and don’t bite off more than you can chew! Habit stacking does not need to be complicated or hard. It is important that you start small. Don’t buy into the mindset that you must start big to see results. Even a small course correction can make a big impact on your life!

By stacking new behaviors with old habits, you can reduce the resistance to implementing these new habits. Habit stacking makes it easier to embed new, healthy habits into your lifestyle and making sure they become a consistent part of your routine!

My favorite habit that I’ve stacked recently

While coffee is brewing, I will make my breakfast smoothie! Here’s my smoothie recipe that I’m loving lately:

- 1 cup frozen berry medley
- 1 cup frozen spinach
- 1 scoop chocolate protein powder
- 8oz Fairlife Skim Milk
- 4 oz Nonfat Greek Yogurt

Chicken Apple Salad



SANCI HALL
Extension Agent for Better Living for Texans (BLT)

INGREDIENTS

- 2 apples, chopped
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- ½ cup raisins
- 2 chicken breasts, cooked, diced (about 2 cups)
- ¼ cup plain non-fat Greek or regular yogurt
- ¼ cup light mayonnaise
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1 head romaine, green or red leaf lettuce

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a medium size bowl, mix all ingredients, except lettuce.
2. To serve, arrange lettuce on serving plates, then top with chicken salad mixture.

Tip: Shorten prep time by using canned chicken.

Nutrition Facts serving size 1 ½ cups,
290 calories, 8 g total fat, 2 g saturated fat, 0 g trans-fat, 65 mg cholesterol, 330 mg sodium, 34 g total carbohydrate, 4 g dietary fiber, 12 g total sugars, 0 g added sugars, 25 g protein

Source: fruitandveggies.org