



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

TARRANT COUNTY

WINTER 2023

Director's Message

Each year the Tarrant County AgriLife Extension team hosts an interpretation luncheon and volunteer awards reception to close out the year and celebrate AgriLife's big wins. The 2022 event was held on Thursday, December 8 at the Tarrant County Plaza building with nearly 70 in attendance. The following awards recipients were recognized by the Tarrant County team.

VOLUNTEER AWARDS

2022



From left to right: Jacklyn Jones-Doyle, County Extension Agent-ANR, Kathryn Carter, Jordan Simons and Courtney Davis, County Extension Director

FRIEND OF EXTENSION AWARD

Fort Worth Stock Show

The Friend of Extension Award recognizes an individual or organization for outstanding service to the people of Tarrant County by their exceptional support and personal involvement in Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

VOLUNTEER AWARDS 2022

JOHN SOUTH SPIRIT OF EXTENSION AWARD

Eleanor Tuck



The John South Spirit of Extension Award recognizes a program area committee member for exemplary service in the design and delivery of educational programs which enhance the quality of life for the people of Tarrant County.



From left to right: Courtney Davis, County Extension Director, Brittney Meyer, County Extension Agent-Hort, Linda MacAhan, Intern, Bob Siglin, Intern, Cheri Mills, Intern Coordinator, and Craig Holland, Intern Coordinator

DARLENE MYATT FRIEND OF CHILDREN AWARD

2022 Master Gardener Interns

The Darlene Myatt Friend of Children Award recognizes an individual or organization for dedicating time, talents and treasure to teaching children with dynamic enthusiasm and loving leadership.



From left to right: Courtney Davis, County Extension Director and Kristen Camareno on behalf of the Tarrant County ARPA team

DIRECTOR'S AWARD Tarrant County

The Director's Award recognizes an individual or organization for providing exemplary support for Extension educational programs and volunteers.

4-H MEMBERS LEARN HOW TO BE STARS IN THE KITCHEN THROUGH THE FOODS & NUTRITION PROJECT

**Kate Marshall, County Extension Agent,
4-H & Youth Development**

Through the foods and nutrition project, youth learn about kitchen and cooking safety and how to prepare nutritious meals and snacks. Recently, some Tarrant County 4-Her's participated in the District IV 4-H Food Challenge Contest held in Sulphur Springs.

Food Challenge is a team contest where youth work in groups of 3-4. Each team provides their own "supply box" of basic cooking equipment. At the contest, each team receives an information sheet with their contest category and "key" ingredients for that category (no ingredient amounts, recipe, or instructions are provided). Youth need to be creative and have basic knowledge of food preparation skills to make a successful dish in a time frame of 40 minutes. Teams also have access to a "grocery store" of additional ingredients which can be purchased with coupons.

Once completed, youth present their dish to a panel of judges. Teams are evaluated on preparation, serving size, food safety concerns, nutritional value, and cost.

Congratulations to all of our participants! We know the skills you have learned from this project will take you far in life.



***Congratulations
to all of
our participants!***

2022...3



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

A basic appreciation for, and a lack of knowledge by the consumer on the value of agriculture to their everyday lives is evident in Tarrant County. Residents do not fully understand the importance of agriculture or the basic concept of agricultural production. The time-tested saying, “If you eat, you’re involved in Agriculture” is as true today as it has ever been. Obviously, the food we eat is a direct result of production agriculture, but many consumers do not recognize the benefit we derive from the various by-products of agriculture production and processing, and the economic benefit associated with all the aspects of the food chain.

If you eat, you’re involved in Agriculture

Small acreage producers (under 100 acres) typically have a negative net cash farm income. The availability of educational activities in small scale farming and ranching enterprises in Texas with diversified goals incorporating possible labor limitations, quality of life goals, environmental goals, and wildlife management balanced by community development concerns are currently available only as piecemeal segments. Small acreage agricultural operators and commercial producers in rural and suburban areas will become more knowledgeable in effectively identifying and evaluating diversification strategies for risk mitigation and improved economic sustainability based on total management goals and optimal resource-based use.

In 2022 the goal of the Agriculture and Natural Resources department was to offer programming that supported the small acreage producers; offering

programming from Ag Valuation to Beef Cattle Production while focusing on the producers that are new to the industry or who have limited acreage. The programming was such a success that we have decided to continue with the program series in 2023.

Be on the lookout for more information on the following “Agricultural Management” programming:

March

Local Resource Professionals

April

Pond Management (CEUs will be offered)
Rainwater Harvesting

May

Weed/Brush Management
Drought Management/Recovery

Also, for the 2023 year a new program will be rolling out to support Women in Agriculture. In September we will be hosting a day and a half summit, inspired by Annie’s Project. We will be covering information on human resources, production risk, marketing, financial risk management, legal risk management, and family financial planning. More information will be forth coming as we get closer to the meeting date, but it will be an event you will want to mark your calendar for.

May we all have a blessed 2023!

**Fort Worth Museum of Science & History
STEM Family Fair**

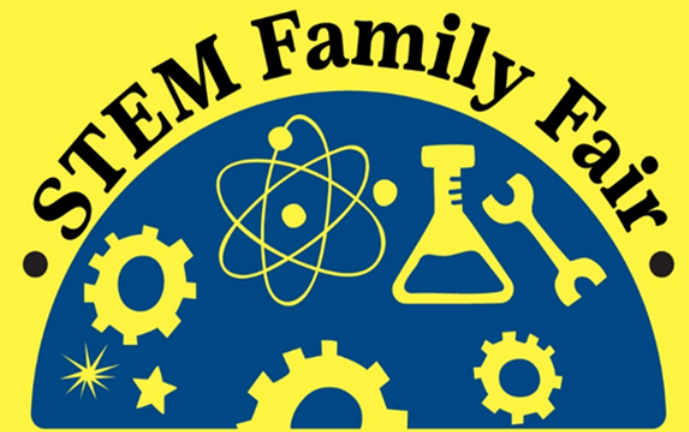
Jordan Peldyak, Extension Agent, Cooperative Extension Program, 4-H & Youth Development

On November 17th, I partnered with the Girl Scouts of Texas and Oklahoma Plains to participate in their STEM Family Fair that was located at the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History. This event was a partnership to bring STEM - related organizations together to share what programs they have to offer to the community of Tarrant County and provide a fun engaging activity for the families and youth to participate in. Each organization had a station to showcase their programs and activities to the community.

I represented Prairie View A&M University Extension, Tarrant County 4-H programs. I brought the enviroscape as my program activity to present to the youth and families. The enviroscape is a representation of a community with different common geographic locations. Using water and different colors it shows how point source and non-point source pollution can affect our water sources even in very large spread-out communities. The presentation allows the students to see visually by adding water and colors to the rivers and watershed to see the amount of pollution that can effect the water we use every day. The activity shows that everyone has an affect on our water sheds and how clean our environment can be. The students used spray bottles to amplify how storm water runoff can increase during rainstorms by spraying food coloring off land areas in water sources.

***As a part of my presentation,
I promoted Tarrant County
4-H programs and upcoming
programs and events
in the county.***

gstop



***at the Fort Worth Museum of Science & History
November 17 • 6-8 p.m. • Open to all ages!***



Winter is Nature's Sleep *I Need a Nap!*

“Do planning in spring, learning in summer, execution in autumn and enjoy your success in winter” - Unknown

Brittnay Meyer, County Extension Agent, Horticulture

As I sit here and write end of year reports, I cannot believe December has passed! 2022 has been wonderful for this agent as I complete my first full year in Tarrant County. I have been lucky to have a wonderful team to work with and a chance to meet some amazing individuals throughout the county that share the same passion as I for education. Here are some highlights from 2022!

I was given the opportunity to teach 2-5 years old at an outdoor pre-school about gardening, eating healthy, and staying active with our Early Childhood Learn, Grow, Eat, and Go curriculum at Anothren Pre-School. Not only were the kiddos ready to learn, but they were also a joy to work with; and them being adorable only had a little to do with that. They were excited about the lessons, willing to try new foods, and excited to grow their own garden! I look forward to having the opportunity to teach this program in more schools in 2023!

The Tarrant County Master Gardeners have done amazing work and have given 33,221 hours of volunteer time back to the community in Tarrant County. They supplied 300+ ready made rain barrels to homeowners, hosted 18 virtual classes, and interacted in some capacity with over 6,650 community members at public events. To say these dedicated folks have been busy would be an understatement! I am excited to continue to add more members and improve upon the already incredible program here in Tarrant County.



I am looking forward to more classes and programs in 2023!

Classes come up with requests or when time permits.

Here are events on the 2023 calendar so far:



Earth-Kind Workshops

February 18th
May 20th
September 23rd

4H District 4 Entomology Contest

March 4th

Rain Harvesting Workshop

April 28th

May Fest

May 4th - 7th

Junior Master Gardener Teacher Training

July 12th & 13th

Holiday Floral Design Class

November 14th

Master Gardener Virtual Classes

Check tarrantmg.org or [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/tarrantmg) for dates!

Follow Tarrant County Agrilife on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/tarrantmg) for up-to-date information!

NEARLY NORMAL? Together again in 2022

Laura Miller, County Extension Agent, Horticulture

When discussing the weather, it is widely acknowledged that normal never happens. 2022 marked the return of the really dry summer, reminding us all of the importance of water conservation. Inflation put a strain on consumers of all things including plants to eat and enjoy. Finally, Covid 19 continued to have a impact on individual health and the workplace, but we have all learned to live with that new normal and many programs returned to in person participation.

Volunteers are key in planning, implementing, and evaluating Extension programs and the 16 members of the Texas Water Star Tarrant Commercial Horticulture, with the help of 99 other project specific volunteers, donated over a thousand hours of their time to improve their professional community.



Pros in Parks

Providing ongoing continuing education to employees who care for our public park spaces has been a priority for this program area since 2008. In 2022 we were happy to complete three in-person classes in Fort Worth and four in Arlington. A total of 127 people completed one or more of the sessions, where they learned about everything from maintenance planning to urban stream management to how to control weeds efficiently. This partnership with the cities of Fort Worth and Arlington benefits the entire area by ensuring continued access to nature, opportunities for exercise, and better health for the environment and all citizens.



Certified Arborist Short Course

The first class was held in 2018, and has continued each November since, making the 2022 class our fifth. 85 arborists have participated, and while most of them come from the North Texas area, in the first class we had an arborist from Hawaii whose brother Lui Sanft works for the City of Fort Worth Forestry Department so the two of them took the class together. Having a place to stay probably encouraged him to make the trip! Our partners this year included Texas A&M Forest Service, Bartlett Tree Experts, Sam Hill Tree Care, and ISA Texas.

Water Efficient Recognized Green Professionals

Since 2016, 111 landscape service providers have learned how to make landscapes beautiful AND water efficient. In 2022, we returned to a fully in person experience and continued to partner with Tarrant Regional Water District. Thirteen new pros and 18 “old pros” participated. Designing and maintaining multiple properties, Green Pros have an outsized impact on the adoption of better practices.

North Texas Urban Forestry Conference

After postponement and ultimate cancellation in 2021, the Treedemic themed forestry conference featuring retiring Texas A&M AgriLife plant pathologist Dr. David Appel finally came to fruition and 157 commercial and municipal arborists learned about the spread of disease in tree populations.





2022

Tarrant County's EFNEP A Year in Review

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

2022 was a great year for Tarrant County's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). We are finally getting our feet back on the ground after COVID and were able to work with some great new program partners for both our adult and youth components. Some of these partners included the Fort Worth Public Library; Girl Scouts Youth Enjoying Summer (YES!) Program; New Horizons of Tarrant County; New Life Church Mid-cities, McLean Middle School; and REACH Tarrant County. During 2022:

EFNEP Adult Participants

- 98%** improved in their diet quality practices
- 91%** improved in their food resource management practices
- 65%** improved in their physical activity practices

EFNEP Youth Participants

- 80%** improved in their ability to choose foods according to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- 46%** improved in their physical activity practices

We had the pleasure of working with several dietetic interns from Tarrant County College and Texas Christian University (TCU) in 2022. These students were a breath of fresh air, bringing with them a level of enthusiasm and energy very much appreciated by AgriLife staff. They had the opportunity to participate and observe in many AgriLife and EFNEP activities, and their time with us proved to be a worthwhile experience. Don't just take my word for it – this is what TCU dietetic intern, Lina Robertson had to say:

“AgriLife has been such a great internship experience and I have learned so much from here. Coming into AgriLife I did not know what to expect other than that I would have to record a cooking demonstration video and 1-minute nutrition topic video. The cooking demonstration was such a fun experience and I learned to adapt on camera.

Another great learning experience came from my observations at Briscoe Elementary with EFNEP. During the first day at Briscoe, the after-school nutrition lesson took place in the gym, and the children were extremely energetic. It was hard for Matt (EFNEP Youth Nutrition Educator) to keep their attention on his original lesson plan, but he did a great job adapting to the situation and incorporating the nutrition lesson into a variety of physical activity games. I learned that it is important to adapt to your audience and that you can still get your main objectives across even when things do not go as planned. When we came back the following week, we were able to help more in the lesson. Since this was the last lesson for the children, we gave them a review of all the topics they had learned, and it was amazing to see how much of it they were able to recall.

At McLean Middle School we worked with the RISE students there and it was awesome to see how much they knew about nutrition. They were so enthused to make yogurt parfaits for a snack that day. Many of them wanted to take home their aprons and hair nets to show their parents what they did at school.

I also enjoyed observing the adult EFNEP nutrition class in White Settlement. I was able to observe how engaged the participants were and their genuine interest in the content.

Overall, I have loved my experience at AgriLife and believe that these experiences will set me up for success in the future.”

AgriLife Reflection

Alaina Woolsey, County Extension Agent, Family & Community Health

Grace Evans

During my time at AgriLife, my perception of community nutrition changed. Working with the kids at Edward J. Briscoe showed me how receptive the kids are to learning how to eat healthily and stay healthy and how important these programs are for the teachers. We associate healthy eating and staying fit with “expensive” products when there are cheap, easy ways to incorporate MyPlate and physical activity into our everyday life. Matt's workshop truly amazed me, watching the kids get excited to learn how to eat healthily even after a long day of school. Even on the last day, the teachers got involved in making the recipe and were astonished at how easy it was to make this snack that included three different groups of MyPlate and the cost per serving.

After I attended the adult group workshop with Yahaira, I left with a smile. This was the sixth session of this program, and it was humbling to see these six women take the time out of their day to come and learn how to eat healthier for themselves and their families. I grew up in a family where I was taught how to eat to fuel my body and had an excellent public school system that promoted healthy food choices and nutrition classes within our academic work. I now realize that not everyone has what I think of as “common knowledge” of nutrition. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, only about 12% of Americans have proficient health literacy skills. Instead of talking about the rise of obesity, we must take action and educate not only the children but also the people they look up to, their parents.

For my final thoughts, entering my community nutrition rotation, I had no interest in working in any of the fields. I have dreamt of being a sports dietitian since my passion for nutrition began. Still, these past two weeks have given me so much gratitude and happiness to give back and educate the community on how to feel your best and be your best self every day through nutrition. I am passionate about the impact food has on your physical and mental health, and each day of supervised practice has only increased my passion for giving back to the community in any way I can.

Thank you so much, Alaina and Robin, for your time and hard work. I know it's not a part of your routine to schedule interns for various activities, and we appreciate it! It's been fantastic to see you guys and your work's impact on the community, and I can't thank you enough for the opportunity!





Christa DeStefano, County Extension Agent, Family & Community Health

In 2023, I want...

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Because...

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My strengths are...

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Howdy and Happy New Year! As the calendar turns to 2023, the hustle and bustle of the holidays has faded and been replaced by the excitement of new beginnings. A few years ago, I decided to choose a “word of the year” that embodied my goals and outlook for the twelve months ahead. I invited my friends to choose their word as well not knowing that this simple act would become a highly anticipated annual tradition among my closest friends. My word for 2023 is “STRENGTH.” Our goal at AgriLife is to strengthen Tarrant County communities through educational programs that are relevant. What better time to focus on the relevance of our health than that with the ushering in of a new year? My wish for you in 2023 is to find your word that, empowers you to set goals, discover your “why” and utilize your strengths for becoming healthier in 2023!

My Word of the Year is:

A THANKFUL AND AMAZING YEAR

Sanci Hall, Extension Agent, Better Living for Texans

It has been an amazing year for the Better Living for Texans (BLT) program. BLT is a nutrition education program for adults and children that are SNAP participants and SNAP eligible. Our goals are to help people make healthy meals, improve their physical fitness, save money at the grocery store, grow their own foods, and adopt better food safety habits.

Let’s review what we were able to accomplish for our adults in Tarrant County. BLT offered one nutrition curriculum, Be Well, Live Well (BWLW) which is a senior program to improve healthy aging. BLT also offered Walk Across Texas! (WAT!), a physical fitness initiative for adults at Vista Ridge Middle School in Keller ISD.

Results

Six of the fifty-nine seniors (10%) completed both the pre- and post-survey for BWLW and 17 seniors completed four of the five BWLW lessons. Several healthy living related behavior changes were reported:

- 36.5% increase in seniors reporting a better diet after the 5 lessons.
- 35.5% increase in seniors doing moderate physical activities in the last week.
- 32.3% increase in seniors adding more fruit and vegetables to their lunch and/or dinner plates.

Of the 62 adults that competed in WAT!, they collectively walked 1,549 miles in 8 weeks. We had some great feedback from our participants:

- “I’m trying to eat better and read food labels.”
- “I’m eating healthier food.”
- “Watching my intake of veggies.”
- “Trying to eat more things.”

Next year, we are adding several more curricula for adults.

Future Programing

- Be Well, Live Well
- Get the Facts
- Healthy Carbohydrates
- Fresh Start to a Healthier You
- Getting a Taste for Food Waste
- Walk N Talk



Now let’s review what we were able to accomplish for our youth in Tarrant County. BLT offered two youth nutrition curricula including an elementary school age curriculum, Learn Grow Eat and Go! (LGEG) and a Pre-K age curriculum, SNAP-Ed Color Me Healthy. BLT also offered WAT! for youth at Vista Ridge Middle School in Keller ISD.

Results

For LGEG, all 183 participants completed a survey. Several healthy living related behavior changes occurred in our elementary aged youth.

- 77% increase in washing vegetables before cooking them.
- 20.8% increase in having more fruit or vegetables on their lunch and dinner plates.
- 14.8% decrease in the amount of screen time after school.

For Color Me Healthy – SNAP-Ed, 40 teacher surveys were completed of 68 participants (58.8%) and 22 parent surveys (32%). Several healthy living related behavior changes occurred in our Pre-K youth.

- 95% of Pre-K youth’s parents Agree or Strongly Agree that participating in the Color Me Healthy – SNAP-Ed program improved their child’s willingness to taste fruits and vegetables.
- 90% of Pre-K youth’s parents Agree or Strongly Agree that they noticed an increase in their child’s activity.
- 39% of parents made the recipes that were included in the program.
- 833 youth that competed in WAT! at Vista Ridge Middle School. They collectively walked 2,563 miles in 8 weeks.

We had some great feedback from our Pre-K Parents:

- “We added more vegetables to our dinner.”
- “She asks for fruit instead of candy.”
- “They sleep better at night.”

Next year, we are adding several more curricula for youth.

Future Programing

- Learn Grow Eat and Go!
- Early Childhood, Learn Grow Eat and Go!
- Color Me Healthy SNAP-Ed
- Choose Healthy
- Walk N Talk

BLT was also able to share nutrition, gardening, and active living while at Keller ISD Back to School Bash & Senior Synergy.



To stay updated on BLT events during the year, please subscribe to the BLT newsletter by emailing me sanci.hall@ag.tamu.edu or calling Tanica at 817-884-1294.

BLT Upcoming Events

Sanci Hall, Extension Agent, Better Living for Texans

ADULT GARDENING SERIES - GROWING AND NOURISHING HEALTHY COMMUNITY GARDENS

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm Mondays

March 6, March 13, March 20, April 3, April 10, and April 17, 2023

Learn how to: Choose A Garden Location, Soils and Compost, Raised Beds and Container Gardens, Maintaining Your Garden, Diseases and Insects, and Harvesting Your Garden.

Keller Senior Activities Center
640 Johnson Rd Building C, Keller, TX 76248

REGISTER AT:

<https://secure.rec1.com/TX/keller-tx/catalog>

ADULT NUTRITION CLASS - FRESH START TO A HEALTHIER YOU

Learn how to: Create Safe and Healthier Meals, Balance Your Day - Meal Planning, Save More at the Grocery Store, and Celebrate Small Bites.

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm Thursdays

**January 19, January 26, February 2,
February 16 and February 23, 2023 (Make-up Session)**

Keller Library
640 Johnson Rd Building C, Keller, TX 76248

**CALL TO REGISTER
817-743-4853**

1pm – 2pm Tuesdays

**February 14, February 21,
February 28 and March 7, 2023**

Haltom City Senior Center
3201 Friendly Ln., Haltom City, TX 76117

**CALL TO REGISTER
817-834-8021**

ADULT NUTRITION SERIES - HEALTHY CARBOHYDRATES

1pm – 2pm Thursdays

January 19, January 26, February 2 and February 16, 2023

Learn how carbohydrates can be incorporated into a healthy meal plan. This series dives into how carbohydrates work in the body, incorporating them into a simple plate, and finding your right amount.

Editions of Saginaw Independent Senior Living
824 West McLeroy, Saginaw, TX 76179

**CALL TANICA TO REGISTER
817-884-1294**

ADULT WALKING GROUP - WALK N TALK

9am – 10am Wednesdays

March 22, March 29, April 5, April 12, April 19, April 26, May 3, May 10, and May 17, 2023

During this 8 week walking series, friends, family, and others from the community come together to support one another in a fun, simple way.

Keller Library
640 Johnson Rd Building C, Keller, TX 76248

Watauga Community Center
7901 Indian Springs Rd., Watauga, TX 76148

**DETAILS
COMING SOON**

REGISTER AT:
<https://forms.gle/wMRJDLJCXmFVYHHV9>

SENIOR NUTRITION SERIES - BE WELL, LIVE WELL

11am Saturdays

February 4, February 11, February 18, February 25 and March 4, 2023

Learn how to: Be Independent: Eat Well, Be Able: Read the Label, Be Safe: Eat Safe, Be Creative: Plan Meals, and Be Fit: Move More.

Keller Library
640 Johnson Rd Building C, Keller, TX 76248

**CALL TO REGISTER
817-743-4853**