



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

TARRANT COUNTY

WINTER 2024



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 2023 event was held on Thursday, December 14th at the Tarrant County Plaza building with nearly 50 in attendance.

The following awards recipients were recognized by the Tarrant County team.



Bob Byers FRIEND OF EXTENSION AWARD FORT WORTH BOTANICAL GARDEN BOTANICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TEXAS



From Left to Right: Laura Miller, County Extension Agent Comm Hort, Bob Byers, award recipient Courtney Davis, County Extension Director

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.



Cherrelle Tillis JOHN SOUTH SPIRIT OF EXTENSION AWARD P.E. CURRICULUM SPECIALIST FORT WORTH ISD



From Left to Right: Robin Hall, Extension Agent EFNEP, Cherrelle Tillis, award recipient Courtney Davis, County Extension Director

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.



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: Kate Marshall, County Extension Agent - 4-H, Kacee Gordillo, award recipient and Courtney Davis, County Extension Director

Nourishing Success: Texas 4-H Food Challenge Empowers Youth Through Culinary Creativity

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

One of the Tarrant County teams that participated in the District 4-H Food Challenge Contest in Sulphur Springs, TX last November. Pictured Left to Right: Lane Olmstead, Evelyn Cook & Avilee Jacinto.





Renetta White DIRECTOR'S AWARD TRANSITION CENTER FORT WORTH ISD

From Left to Right: Jordan Peldyak, Extension Agent CEP - 4-H, Dolores Haley, Nutrition Education Assistant - EFNEP, Renetta White, award recipient and Courtney Davis, County Extension Director





Allison Reid DIRECTOR'S AWARD

From Left to Right: Kate Marshall, County Extension Agent - 4-H, Allison Reid, award recipient and Courtney Davis, County Extension Director The Director's Award recognizes an Individual Or Organization for providing exemplary support for Extension educational programs and volunteers.



Congratulations to all of our Recipients! In the heart of Texas, a group of enthusiastic and talented young individuals recently took part in a transformative experience - the Texas 4-H Food Challenge. This competition not only tested their culinary skills but also empowered them with knowledge about nutrition, food safety, and the importance of adopting healthy habits to reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

The Texas 4-H Food Challenge is a unique competition that goes beyond the conventional cooking contest. It encourages youth to explore the world of nutrition, safe food preparation, and the significance of making healthy choices. Teams of 4-H members are tasked with creating a delectable dish using only a predetermined set of ingredients. The challenge involves not only identifying and preparing the dish but also presenting it convincingly to a panel of judges.

One of the primary objectives of the Food Challenge is to allow participants to showcase their knowledge and culinary skills. Youth involved in the competition delve into the art of creating nutritious and safe meals and snacks. Through careful planning and execution, they learn to navigate the world of ingredients, demonstrating their ability to make informed choices that contribute to a healthy lifestyle.

The Food Challenge places a strong emphasis on collaboration and teamwork. Participants work closely with their team members to brainstorm ideas, allocate responsibilities, and bring their culinary creation to life. This aspect not only hones their culinary skills but also instills crucial teamwork values that extend beyond the kitchen. The experience of working together towards a common goal fosters a sense of camaraderie and unity among the youth.



In addition to the culinary aspect, the Food Challenge offers a platform for participants to enhance their public speaking skills. Each team is required to make a presentation about their dish to the judges. This component of the competition encourages participants to articulate their thoughts, share their culinary journey, and effectively communicate the nutritional value and significance of their creation.

The Texas 4-H Food Challenge goes beyond the kitchen to provide valuable leadership opportunities for the youth. Participants are entrusted with responsibilities such as decisionmaking, planning, and organizing. These experiences contribute to the development of leadership skills, helping youth become confident, capable leaders both in and out of the kitchen.

The Texas 4-H Food Challenge is not merely a cooking competition; it is a transformative experience that empowers youth with valuable life skills. From honing their culinary talents to fostering teamwork, promoting public speaking, and providing leadership opportunities, this unique challenge equips young individuals with the tools they need to thrive in various aspects of their lives. As these budding chefs continue to create delicious and nutritious dishes, they are also shaping a healthier and more empowered future for themselves and their communities.



2023

Jacklyn Jones-Doyle, County Extension Agent, Agriculture and 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 ever has 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.

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 are balanced by community development concerns and 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.

The Agriculture and Natural Resources department is continuing with the goal of offering programing that supports the small acreage producers and new landowners. 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.

Be on the lookout for more information on the following "Agricultural Management" programming.

<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>TBD</u>
Pollinators	Wildlife	Water Well	Grazing
*CEUs will be	Management	Management	Pasture
offered	*CEUs will be	*CEUs will be	Management
	offered	offered	

In 2023, we also launched the inaugural Women in Agriculture Conference. This conference was a day and a half, which was inspired by Annie's Project. We had ladies attend from all over Texas, as well as Kansas and Alabama. The feedback in the conference was overwhelmingly positive, and we will be continuing with the conference for the 2024 programming year. More information will be 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 2024!



2023 YEARLY SUMMARY (TARRANT COUNTY)

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

Water/STEM In-Depth Plan

My first In-depth Plan focused on weather and climate education (water) and computer science coding programs. A Youth Gardening In-Depth Plan 4-H youth water and science plan was needed to address youth water education by teaching youth participants about My second In-depth plan was in youth growing garden water systems, weather and climate, clean water ways, and education. A 4-H youth gardening plan is needed to help serve potential career opportunities associated with these areas. and provide garden education to underserved and vulnerable Texas's population is expected to double by the year 2026, audiences in Tarrant County. Youth gardening programs give this will dramatically increase the need for more fresh water youth the opportunity to foster responsibility. Gardening is good sources. Health impacts and physical effects are increasing for psychological well-being. Outdoor time promotes exercise from climate change." (Texas aquatics science). This plan through exposure to being outside. Gardening and working with also addressed the growing need for youth technology skills others promote a way to connect and encourage healthier to help further their skills for the workforce. Panther eating habits (verywellfamily.com). Through garden programs Programmers Computer Coding is a state-wide computer youth engage in hands on group and individual learning science program created by Prairie View A&M University experiences that help them develop an appreciation for the Extension, to teach and improve skills within the computer environment. science field and increase the number of youth interested in going into STEM related careers. (According to the Institute for Health Disparities, in 2021 only 11% of STEM related 4-H CEP Grows Outreach Education Plan My final Plan was the 4-H outreach plan "4-H Grows." This plan

careers are held by underserved college students). addressed the administrative and management of 4-H Survey results include data from January 2023 - August programming. The CEP 4-H Advisory committee helped with 2023. Numbers in parathesis include data from September 2022 - August 2023. the planning process and implementation of 4-H programs throughout the year.

Water/Science In-Depth Plan Youth Reached:

69 (92) total graduates from weather and climate programs and 49 (0) graduates from coding programs totaling 118 (141) total graduates in this plan. (41 participants completed the post-test survey for the weather and climate program. Fortythree students completed the post-test survey for the Panther Programmers Coding Program). Youth completed six educational hours or more in these programs. Pre and posttest results from graduates were completed including two questions from water education graduates and one question from post-test coding graduates shown below.

- ▶ 92.68% (38 out of 41 answered) Chose the correct answer for defining what relative humidity is.
- 90% (36 out of 41 answered) Strongly agree or agree that they would be interested in a career in weather and climate or another agriculture / STEM related career.

4-H Contacts	Contacts Reached	Tarrant County 4-H CEP Clubs	4-H Committees
 I.M. Terrell Range & Pasture ID contest: <u>9 youth</u> Tarrant County Talent Showcase: <u>43 youth</u> Fort Worth Stock Show Range & Pasture ID contest: <u>7 youth</u> Tarrant County Food Show: <u>3 youth</u> Weather & Climate contest: <u>10 youth</u> 4-H CEP State-wide Photography contest: <u>37</u> 	 Total outreach contacts: 5,045 (5,232) Total adult volunteers: 17 Total volunteer hours: 239 Total 4-H Enrollment: 550 Total 4-H CEP Enrollment: 75 Total in-depth numbers: 254 (369) 	 I.M. Terrell Academy 4-H North Tri-Ethnic CC 4-H East Fort Worth 4-H Everything 4-H Thomas Place 4-H JRB Fort Worth 4-H - youth programs 4-H 	 4-H CEP Water Education Chair 4-H State-wide Programming Panthers 4-H State-wide CEP Garden 4-H CEP Jr. Youth Lab 4-H Texas Military Partnership 4-H District Talent Showcase 4-H District Shooting Sports 4-H National Thrive Network District Record Book S.A.L.E Scholarship

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65% (28 out of 43 answered) Would like a job involving
coding, robotics, technology and or a STEM career.

Youth Gardening In-Depth Plan Youth Reached:

- 136 total graduates from the programs, completing six educational hours or more. Pre- and post-test results were collected from graduates including statistics from three questions asked to all gardening graduates. Post-test results below show the number of participants that selected they know the question well or very well. (87 participants completed the post-test survey).
 - ▶ 70.12% (61 out of 87 answered) Know the components it takes for plants to grow.
 - 74.71% (55 out of 87 answered) Know how soil fertility affects plant growth.
 - 78.8% (67 out of 85 answered) Learned more about gardening and/or STEM careers.
 - Results above are students who surveyed 3 (well) or above in knowledge gain.



WINTER IS NOT A SEASON, IT'S A **CELEBRATION!**

"In seed time LEARN, in harvest TEACH, in winter ENJOY." – William Blake

Brittnay Meyer, County Extension Agent, Horticulture

'Tis the season once more, a time when everyone gathers with family and friends to revel in the achievements of the past year and anticipate the possibilities that lie ahead! Here are a few standout moments from the year 2023!

The youth in Tarrant County have had a dynamic year in 2023! A total of 33 teachers from across the county engaged in training sessions focused on our Junior Master Gardener (JMG) Program, aimed at integration into their classrooms. Designed for Pre-K to 8th grade students, the program offers a selection of seven different curricula. This classroom-ready curriculum is aligned with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKs) and comes complete with a list of required materials and the estimated time for each lesson. Teachers received guidance on seamlessly incorporating these lessons into their yearly program plans, with additional expert support available from our Master Gardener program.

The accomplishments of the Tarrant County Master Gardeners are truly remarkable, as they have dedicated an impressive 33.529 hours of volunteer time to benefit the community. Among their achievements, they distributed over 300 ready-made rain barrels to homeowners, conducted 25 virtual classes, and engaged with more than 7,652 community members at public events. It's an understatement to say that these committed individuals have been exceptionally busy! I eagerly anticipate the addition of more members and the ongoing enhancement of this already incredible program in Tarrant County.

I am looking forward to more classes and programs in 2024! If there is a class you would love to see, email our Help Desk at <u>tarrantmg@ag.tamu.edu</u>. Here are events on the 2024 calendar so far:

2024 Calendar of Events

March 9	March 16,	March 19	July 9 & 10	November 9
4-H District 4	June 8, & September 14	Bee Keeping	Junior Master	Holiday Floral
Entomology &	a September 14	101	Gardener	Design Class
Range ID	Earth-Kind		Teacher	
Contests	Workshops		Training	

Master Gardener Virtual Classes: Check tarrantmg.org or Facebook for dates! Follow Tarrant County - Ag and Natural Resources on Facebook for up-to-date information on classes and events!



HOW DO YOU MEASURE A YEAR? COUNTING DOWN TO 2024

Laura Miller, County Extension Agent, Commercial Horticulture



Water Efficient Recognized Green Professionals

We welcomed a new cohort of 25 pros who joined the 124 landscape service providers that have completed the five-week course since its inception in 2016. Designing and maintaining multiple commercial and residential landscapes, they have a big impact on the adoption of water conserving practices.

Grapevine

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 2023 we were happy to complete four in person classes in Fort Worth and three in Arlington. This year 263 participants came from Fort Worth, Arlington, Mansfield, and Burleson to attend one or more of the seven sessions with topics that ranged from managing invasive species to park assessment. 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.

2024 classes begin January 18th in Arlington & 23rd in Fort Worth

North Texas Urban Forestry Conference

A record setting 221 arborists attended the 2023 conference to discuss protecting trees during construction and ways to mitigate tree loss as population of people, not trees, continues to grow rapidly in North Texas.

2024 Conference: Texas Trees & Technology is February 15th in Hurst



2024 classes start January 10th in







Arborist Short Course



Our Certified Arborist Short Course has helped arborists prepare for the challenging **International Society for Arboriculture** examination since 2018. 15 aspiring credential holders completed the three-day course this year, and two of them have already earned their certifications.

The 2024 Short Course will be November 12th -14th in **Fort Worth**

MY 2024 DAILY HEALTH PLANNER

Christa DeStefano, County Extension Agent, Family & Community Health

DATE:

TWTFS S Μ

activity

MY WORD OF THE YEAR IS:

WHAT DOES HEALTH MEAN TO ME?

HOW WILL I FIT MY HEALTH INTO MY DAY?

TO DO LIST

Choose my word for 2024

Define what health means to me

Identify how health will fit in my day

Move more, sit less

Drink water

Plan/prep all meals and snacks

Sleep and mentally recharge

Track my steps/physical activity

Get outside and enjoy nature

Spend time with friends and family

MEAL PLAN

breakfast

lunch

dinner

SHOPPING LIST

- DAIRY
- FRUITS
- PROTEIN
- VEGETABLES
- WHOLE GRAINS



CHRISTA DESTEFANO COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT **FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH**

AGENT NOTE

SCHEDULE

time

Well hello there, 2024! There is something empowering that comes with the turning of the calendar and starting of a new year. Finding my "Word of the Year" sets the tone for all that I plan to accomplish in the coming 12 months. 2023 was all about STRENGTH...I hope last year gave you the STRENGTH to discover new and exciting ways to improve your health. My word for 2024 is FIT! Now "FIT" can be a noun, verb, or an adjective, and honestly, this year's context is all three. I challenge you to find ways to FIT health into your schedule each day in this new year. You would be surprised how little time we schedule for own health and fitness every 24 hours. I know, because I surveyed our Tarrant County Extension Team! It is guite shocking to see how challenging that can be once we keep a daily health calendar. I hope you find some tips on this planner that will help you FIT health into each day this new year.

Have a blessed (and FIT!) 2024!



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2023 - EFNEP's Year at a Glance Robin Hall, Extension Agent, Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program

Local Wellness Coordinators at FWISD campuses. This presentation opened up a door to vet another audience in the community. October 2023 **INTERN SEASON** Three dietetic interns from TCU's dietetic internship program and one from TCC's dietetic internship program completed supervised practice hours with Tarrant County EFNEP staff, learning about Extension and EFNEP, and assisting with EFNEP programming.

November 2023

NEW PARTNERSHIP

Facilitated classes with middle-school-aged students at Daggett Middle School. This was our first time to partner with this campus. We hope to partner with even more middle-schools in the new year!

Success training in College Station for more training on how to effectively deliver nutrition education programs.

Nourishing Reflections: A BLT Year-End Feast of Wellness

Sanci Hall, Extension Agent, Better Living for Texans

I'm sure I said this last year, but how is it January already! Last year flew by! We've been busy around here and I cannot wait to share some of our Better Living for Texans (BLT) success.

From October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023, BLT offered five adult nutrition curricula reaching 327 Tarrant County adult residents, with 166 of them attending four or more sessions to receive graduate status.

BLT developed and sent out 12 monthly newsletters, reaching an average of 140 contacts per month and made 172 Facebook posts to the Tarrant Co AgriLife Facebook page, averaging 180 views per post (30,000 views). We also supported adult outreach events around the county.

And we don't want to forget about our youth! We facilitated seven volunteer lead Learn Grow Eat and Go! (LGEG!) programs in seven locations (A.V. Cato Elementary School, Chisholm Trail Community Center, Mullendore Elementary

School, David E. Smith Elementary School, Holiday Heights Elementary School, O.H. Stowe Elementary School, W.J. Turner Elementary School) and supported Daddy Day Care to deliver a volunteer lead Color Me Healthy - SNAPed (CMH) to 39 3-5-year-olds Pre-K students.

We also supported youth outreach events such as Birdville ISD Lights on Afterschool and Keller ISD Back to School Bash. BLT presented single event nutrition education with Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo School Tours reaching over 4,300 youth!

BLT could not reach these participants without the support of our community partners. If I listed them all, I'd need several pages. Just know you are appreciated and valued. I also would like to thank the following businesses as they donated or sponsored equipment, books, and gardening supplies: Amazon, Amerigroup, Lowes, Tom Thumb, and Kroger.



Participants from Hurst Senior Center



David E. Smith Elementary students preparing Cinnamon Carrot Crunch

I cannot thank our Master Gardeners and our Master Wellness volunteers enough. They donate their time and their energy to make Tarrant County a better place. We even have some getting ready to teach BLT curricula in 2024! One unsung hero of our office is our Family and Community Health (FCH) Administrative Assistant, Tanica Bell. I would be lost without her organizational skills, her institutional knowledge of BLT, and most importantly her amazing positive attitude. Nothing phases Ms. Tanica!

Speaking of other amazing people, I have 7

Program Area Committee (PAC) members who donate their time each quarter to assist me in determining the needs of our youth and adults, connecting partnerships, and providing critical feedback on programs. Sharon, Steven, Camille, Sheryl, Pierre, Mamie, and Marcus, THANK YOU for your support and for seeing my vision and helping to bring positive healthy behavior changes to our community. I love working with these amazing people!

I am so excited to see what we can

accomplish next. We've got several programs gearing up in 2024 for our youth and adults. If this newsletter has inspired you to volunteer, please let me know and I am sure we can find a spot on the team for you!

What are our BLT Participants saying afterwards?

"We had never had a garden and do now! This class and Sanci have really helped me build my confidence. It's opened up areas of research into things we hadn't thought of. These courses are a must for our community." ~ Participant

> "Healthy cooking can be yummy!" ~ Participant

"After our class, I went and cleaned out my refrigerator. I had stuff in there with a 2017 date! I was shocked and threw that stuff away!" ~ Participant

BETTER LIVING FOR TEXANS CLASS SCHEDULE 2024

Adult Gardening -Growing and Nourishing Healthy Community Gardens:

This 6-part teaches 6 main garden topics. Learn how to: Choose a Garden Location, Soil and Compost, Raised Bed and Container, Maintaining Your Garden, Diseases and Insects, and Harvesting Your Garden.

Heritage Elementary School 4001 Thompson Rd. Fort Worth, TX 76244 4:00 p.m. - Tuesdays -

March 5, 19, and 26, 2024 April 9, 16, and 23, 2024

Contact the site to sign up.

Arlington Public Library Northeast Branch 1905 Brown Blvd. Arlington, TX 76006 1:00 p.m. - Thursdays -April 11, 18, and 25, 2024

May 2, 9, and 16, 2024 Contact the site to sign up.

TARRANT COUNTY BETTER LIVING FOR TEXANS Sanci Hall, Extension Agent, Better Living for Texans

CLASS SCHEDULE 2024

Adult Nutrition Class – Get the Facts This 4-part series will help participants learn how to use the Nutrition Facts label to make healthy food choices when shopping. Special emphasis is given on sodium, fats, added sugars, and portion size.

Blessing Court

3100 Blessing Court Bedford, TX 76021 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. - Wednesdays -

January 3, 2024 January 10, 2024 January 17, 2024 January 24, 2024

Contact the site to sign up.

Adult Nutrition Class – A Fresh Start to a Healthier You Save More at the Grocery Store, and Celebrate Small Bites.

Learn how to: Create Safe and Healthier Meals, Balance Your Day - Meal Planning,

Haltom City Public Library	Mansfield	
4809 Haltom Rd. Haltom City, TX 76117 6:00 p.m 7:00 p.m. - <u>Thursdays</u> -	104 S. Mansfie 6:00 p.n - <u>Tu</u>	
January 4, 2024	Janua	
January 11, 2024	Janua	
January 18, 2024	Janua	
January 25, 2024	Febru	
Contact the site to sign up	Contact the	

Contact the site to sign up.

Adult Nutrition Class – Healthy Carbohydrates This 4-part series dives into how carbohydrates work in the body, incorporating them into a simple plate, and finding the right amount to eat.

501 Bourland Rd. Keller, TX 76248

11:00 a.m. - 12 noon - Thursdays -

> April 4, 2024 April 11, 2024 April 18, 2024 April 25, 2024

Contact the site to sign up.

Contact the site to sign up.

Haltom City, TX 76117

1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

- Wednesdays -

February 7, 2024

February 14, 2024

February 21, 2024

February 28, 2024



Arlington Public Library Southwest Branch 3311 SW Green Oak Blvd. Arlington, TX 76017 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. - Wednesdays -

January 3, 2024 January 10, 2024 January 17, 2024 January 24, 2024 Our Master Wellness Volunteer, Theresa, will be teaching! Contact the site to sign up.

Mansfield Public Library

104 S. Wisteria St. Mansfield, TX 76063 11:00 a.m. - 12 noon - Wednesdays -

January 3, 2024

January 10, 2024

January 17, 2024

January 24, 2024

Our Master Wellness Volunteer, Theresa, will be teaching!

Contact the site to sign up.

Public Library

Wisteria St. eld. TX 76063 m. - 7:00 p.m. <u>uesdays</u> -

ary 9, 2024 ary 16, 2024 ary 23, 2024 uary 6, 2024

Contact the site to sign up.

Watauga Public Library

7109 Whitley Road Watauga, TX 76148 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. - Mondays -

February 26, 2024 March 4, 2024 March 11, 2024 March 18, 2024 March 25, 2024

Contact the site to sign up.

Evergreen at Keller | Keller Senior Center 640 Johnson Rd. Building C Keller, TX 76248 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. - Tuesdays -April 30, 2024

May 7, 2024 May 14, 2024 May 21, 2024

Contact the site to sign up.

Kennedale Public Library 316 W. 3rd St. Kennedale, TX 76060 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. - Tuesdays -

> May 7, 2024 May 14, 2024 May 21, 2024 May 28, 2024

Contact the site to sign up.

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