



Doug Andrews  
County Extension Director

# Extension Changes Lives



Texas A&M System

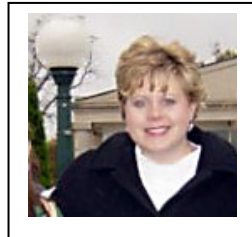


## in Dallas County

Spring/Summer 2009 Newsletter

It has been a very busy spring and early summer for Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Dallas County. In the following pages one can see just a few of the educational programs our County Extension Agents have conducted. From natural resource protection and conservation, to youth development, to emergency preparedness, our Extension Agents are addressing the issues faced by Dallas County residents. We could not do this without the continued support of our partners and stakeholders such as the Dallas County Commissioner's Court, the Texas State Legislature, volunteers and many other agencies and organizations. Our special thanks go to each of our collaborators. Enjoy reading about these programs in the pages to follow!

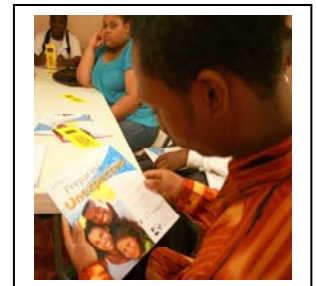
## Welcome Tamra McGaughy 4-H & Youth Development Agent



Dallas County welcomes the new 4-H and Youth Development Agent, Tamra McGaughy! Tamra, a native Texan, is an experienced leader of Texas AgriLife Extension Service. She joined the Extension family in December 2002 through the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). Over the last six years, she has coordinated nutrition education for limited-resource families in Dallas County. Tamra will provide a strong foundation for 4-H and youth outreach programs in Dallas County. As a young girl she was involved in 4-H and participated in a number of activities. Tamra stated "4-H taught me dedication, determination and developed leadership skills, which help me in everything I do".

## Emergency Preparedness Extension Disaster Education Network

During the month of April 2009, Dallas Extension Agent, Marvin Young, conducted 7 disaster emergency preparedness presentations to 247 Dallas County residents. The sites receiving the presentations included Mabel Meshac White Manor (an elderly community living complex), Jubilee Park Community Center (1<sup>st</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> grade & teens), Jubilee Park Community Center Spanish class Rapturea Church After-School program, Grand Prairie Rotary Club, and the Dallas County Government Complex. Mr. Young not only provided 247 "Preparing for the Unexpected" handbooks, but he also delivered information on how Dallas county residents can "Get Informed", "Get Prepared", and "Get Involved" in order to lessen the effects of disasters by preparing early. As a result of presenting this information and providing handbooks, 247 Dallas families are better prepared to reduce risks and death by now knowing the different types of disasters, that can occur in our area, how to make a family plan, how to make a family emergency kit, and are knowledgeable about various emergency and non-emergency telephone numbers and agencies to contact if needed.



## **EARTH-KIND™ / WaterWise Demonstration Gardens Recognized by Dallas City County**



On April 8, 2009 a group of Dallas County Master Gardeners from the EARTH-KIND™/WaterWise Demonstration Garden at Commissioner Maurine Dickey's facility on Joe Field Road and the EARTH-KIND™/ WaterWise Butterfly Demonstration Garden at the City of Dallas' Bath House Cultural Center on White Rock Lake projects met for an awards ceremony at Dallas City Hall with Mayor Tom Leppert. Both gardens received a Recognition Award for the positive impact they have made on the Dallas environment. This event was a public recognition of Extension's best management practices for the environment and real world applications. In attendance from the Demonstration Gardens were Dallas County Master Gardeners program volunteers Ann Lamb, Jim Dempsey, Jane Larner, Gary Sestito, Janet D. Smith and Carmel Womack.

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## **Extension Honored by Dallas City Council**



On May 20, 2009 Texas AgriLife Extension Service- Dallas County was recognized and honored by the Dallas City Council for its work at Lake Cliff Park. The Dallas County Master Gardeners, City of Dallas Parks and Recreation Department, and Friends of Oak Cliff organization collaborated to establish an Earth-Kind Rose Garden at the historic park in Oak Cliff. This project has received national recognition by the Garden Clubs of America. Dallas County Extension Director Doug Andrews addressed the Dallas City Council with an interpretive presentation regarding the benefits that The Texas AgriLife Extension Service provides to local communities. Dallas Mayor Tom Leppert and City Councilwoman Dr. Elba Garcia provided a response of gratitude and appreciation to Extension and presented a formal Resolution honoring Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Dallas County Master Gardener Association.

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## **Annual Career Futures Initiatives Job Expo & Career Fest**

At the invitation of State Representative Barbara Mallory-Caraway, Agent Lexie McGrane, along with Dallas County Master Wellness volunteers, represented Extension during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Career Futures Initiatives and Career Fest held on Saturday, April 4, 2009, at the J.B. Priest Institute at El Centro College. This event was attended by six hundred teens and young adults who are preparing to enter the workforce and embark on independent living. An exhibit depicting MyPyramid guidelines for healthy eating and related handouts provided information on nutrition and healthy eating to participants.



## Texas Master Naturalist Regional Conference

On Saturday, May 16, 2009, Dallas County Extension Agent-Natural Resources, Fred D. Burrell Jr., collaborated with Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and the North Texas Master Naturalist (NTMN) chapter to host a Texas Master Naturalist Regional Conference. The conference was held at the Dallas I.S.D Environmental Education Center in Seagoville, Texas. The thrust of the conference was to provide relevant and factual research-based information to successfully conserve, monitor and manage the North Texas Blackland Prairie and other ecosystems and the role that Texas Master Naturalists and teachers can play in teaching youth and adults to conserve limited natural resources. Eighty participants attended the all day workshop. The conference included experts from Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, the University of North Texas and the Texas Master Naturalist Association. The featured speaker was Dr. Ken Steigman, Director of the Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area for the Department of Institute of Applied Sciences at the University of North Texas. Several participants stated that as a result of the workshop they are more equipped to educate youth and adults to conserve and protect our most precious resource our natural resources.

## Dallas County Master Gardener School Showcase

The 2009 Dallas County Master Gardeners Training School Showcase/Orientation was conducted June 6<sup>th</sup> at the Dallas County offices of Texas AgriLife Extension Service. Specific projects of the Dallas County Master Gardener (DCMG) program were showcased, as well as the actual program. DCMG volunteers staffed each exhibit and interpreted their projects to the attendees/prospective students. The DCMG School Showcase Committee volunteers supplied snacks, desserts and drinks for the attendees. Bunny Williams, DCMG Association, President, Marilyn Waisanen, 2009 Volunteer School Coordinator, Doug Andrews, County Extension Director and Dale Groom, Extension Horticulturist, all welcomed the attendees to the formal orientation. DCMG member Dean Brown presented a Power Point presentation entitled "What Is a Dallas County Master Gardener?" Horticulture Agent Dale Groom conducted a Q & A session after the presentation on Extension and the Master Gardener program. There were 87 attendees plus DCMG program volunteers assisting with the day's activities. There are 64 new students now scheduled to begin the training program on July 27<sup>th</sup> at the Texas AgriLife Extension Service Dallas County Learning Center.

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## EFNEP Celebrates 40th

On Wednesday, April 22 2009, Texas AgriLife Extension Service's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the Juanita Craft Recreation Center. Approximately fifty people attended the celebratory event, including retirees, current program partners and elected officials. The Dallas County Extension Director, Doug Andrews, shared the economic impact of EFNEP and Amanda Scott, the State EFNEP Coordinator, spoke about the humble beginning of EFNEP. In addition, Pat Savage, the first EFNEP Agent in Dallas County, Amelia Zarate, an EFNEP retiree, and Janice Scott, a past EFNEP participant, gave remarks on how the program impacted their lives. In 2007-08, the Nutrition Education Assistants enrolled 755 program families, of which 555 participants graduated from the EFNEP nutrition lesson series and 2,504 youth contacts were made through the EFNEP youth program. The following results show how adult participants' food behaviors improved after attending EFNEP classes: 97% with positive change in any food group at exit; 80% improved in one or more food resource management practices such as planning meals in advance. The following results demonstrate how youth participants' food behaviors improved after attending EFNEP classes; 87% now eat a variety of foods; 97% increased their knowledge of the essentials of human nutrition.



## Lifeline Blog

Texas AgriLife Extension Service Dallas County embrace online technology aims to reach a younger and broader audience with a modern way of communication. County Extension Agent Wenhsing Cheng initiated the launch of a new blog called Lifeline (<http://agrilifeblogs.tamu.edu/blogs/lifeline/>). Agents Lexie McGrane and Marvin Young are the other two contributors/writers of Lifeline. The purpose of the Lifeline blog is to strengthen family life and family health in the Metroplex. Educational information related to financial management, food safety, health, nutrition, parenting, general safety issues, and/or worksite wellness will be posted on the blog each week. Over twenty articles have been posted from the three agents since the launch of Lifeline.

## **Project SAVE (Skills Advancement Vocational Education)**

On June 21-23, 2009, at Dallas County Youth Village, Extension Agent Fred D. Burrell Jr. and a host of Extension Master Gardener and Master Naturalist volunteers collaborated with the Dallas County Youth Village to conduct three evenings of horticultural training classes to thirty-six adjudicated youth. The aim of the training was to teach participants the principles of vegetable gardening. The training course is taught once a quarter to incoming youth. This training affords participants the opportunity to learn the basic principles of vegetable gardening and to learn about careers related to each stage of our Nations food and fiber supply from seed to table. The gardening program is one component of Project SAVE (<http://www.youthvillagefoundation.org/programs.html>).

The thrust of the gardening and horticultural program is three fold: education, therapeutic and vocational. Youth participants are instructed in the following areas: how to read a seed packet, soils, plant requirements, entomology, and cultural practices for vegetables, water conservation and basic knowledge of related career paths pertaining to our food and fiber supply from seed to table. As a result of previous training, youth participants are actively growing and harvesting vegetables from seven raised beds and growing several row crop vegetables on approximately 1 acre. During the spring planting period youth participants planted the following crops which are now being harvested: 8-ball squash, zucchini squash, purple hull peas, okra, tomatoes and watermelons. The goal of the program is to facilitate a sustainable vocational horticulture program at the Dallas County Youth Village and to empower youth with educational opportunities, life and career skills, to promote pro-social behavior and realize community benefits through collaborative efforts among community partners. Each participant receives a Certificate of Completion stating that they have successfully finished the horticultural training program. These certificates are to be presented to potential employers after the youth are released for employment at area restaurants, nurseries, florists and grocery stores. Several participants stated that this was the first Certificate that they had ever received and one stated that "he was going to give his Certificate to his mother because he had never received anything for doing anything good".

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### **4-H Farm Day**

The world of agriculture became a reality for 3,323 Dallas County fourth graders, their teachers and adult chaperones at Farm Day 2009. Celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> year, the event took place May 12 – 14 at the Mesquite Championship Rodeo's Resistol Arena. The goal of Farm Day is to present urban students with real world applications of agriculture in their lives. From computers to baseballs, from ice cream to t-shirts, students discovered how much their city based lives are intertwined with the agricultural community. Six learning stations were presented: Dairy, Produce, Barnyard Animals, Forestry, Natural Fibers and Cereal Grains. This major 4-H event, including lunch, was provided free of charge to all participants thanks to the support of agriculture based businesses and the corps of fantastic volunteers. Dallas County Commissioner Ken Mayfield added to the entertainment with his attempt to milk a cow for the first time in his life! Although his novice milkman status and his "city boy" status were confirmed, the audience showed great appreciation for his bravery in this "udderly" new experience. Several state legislators who were unable to attend due to the legislative session showed their interest and support of Farm Day and Texas AgriLife Extension Service by sending staff members to observe and report back to them. These legislators included State Senator Royce West, State Senator John Carona, State Representative Angie Chen Button and State Representative Robert Miklos.

### **Get Kidz Fit**

On Saturday, April 25, 2009, the Dallas Area Coalition to Prevent Childhood Obesity (DACPCO) hosted the second annual Get Kidz Fit at Fair Park in Dallas, Texas. Get Kidz Fit was a free, fun-filled festival which educated and engaged at-risk children and families about wellness and nutrition. The event showcased simple and fun ways families can incorporate physical activity and nutritious eating into day-to-day life. Approximately 5000 parents and kids participated in hands-on healthy cooking demonstrations presented by various community partners including Dallas and Tarrant County Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program and tried different sports and fitness activities including rock climbing, soccer, jump rope, tennis, and gardening. Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program played a lead role in this community project by providing leadership in recruiting over 200 volunteers, designing the logistic layout for the event, developing quality evaluations for parents and youth, and securing healthy food demos and fitness activities. People attended Get Kidz Fit from 26 cities, within Collin, Ellis, Kaufman, Denton, Dallas, Rockwall, and Tarrant counties.

## North Texas Master Naturalist Training Class

On Saturday, May 2, 2009, Dallas County Extension Agent Fred D. Burrell Jr. collaborated with Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Forth Worth Nature Center and the North Texas Master Naturalist (NTMN) to host a NTMN wetland field trip at the Forth Worth Nature Center. The focus of the field trip was to provide Master Naturalist volunteers with hands-on instruction pertaining to the vital role that wetlands contribute to water quality. Thirty-five volunteers participated in the all day training which concluded the 2009 spring Master Naturalist training class. Forty-five local residents started the class on February 17, 2009 and 43 completed the intensive forty hour training program. The program is designed to teach sound ecological principles and proper management of natural resources to participants and in return they agree to serve as volunteers to educate youth and adults with factual research based information. The Master Naturalist training program consisted of ten consecutive Tuesday night classes, February-April, and three Saturday Field trips. Experts instructed participants in the following subject matter disciplines: historical perspectives of natural history, basic ecological principles, geology of North Central Texas and basic entomology, forest systems I & II, aquatic systems I & II, (forest and aquatic systems field trips), prairie systems/prairie flora & fauna, prairie/urban systems field trip, urban ecology, environmental ethics and sustainable development. As a result of this intensive training program each volunteer is required to return 40 hours of volunteer service to the community in the area of natural resource conservation.

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## The Community Service Mission of the Texas Extension Education Association

The mission of the Texas Extension Education Association is to work with Texas AgriLife Extension Service to strengthen and enrich families through education programs, leadership development, and community service. This effective Extension volunteer organization strives through education to improve family and community life for all families, reaching across ethnic, age, and cultural lines. They are the catalyst for leadership development whose community service activities are the medium for the expression of charitable interests and community development. On June 3, 2009, Extension FCS Agent Lexie McGrane and members of the Desoto Extension Education Club, Dee Yates and Florene Ray, delivered 30 lap robes and 18 tote bags made by club members to residents at Lindan Park Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, 1510 North Plano Road, Richardson, 75081. Assisted by Lindan Park staff, Lexie, Dee, and Florene visited with residents who enthusiastically received these items.



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*In cooperation with....*

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County Judge

**Maurine Dickey**  
Commissioner, Pct. 1

**Mike Cantrell**  
Commissioner, Pct. 2

**John Wiley Price**  
Commissioner, Pct. 3

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