



Doug Andrews
County Extension Director

In this issue you will find that County Extension Agents in Dallas County were providing educational programs in a variety of subject matter areas to the citizens of Dallas County. Our unique network of professional staff and trained volunteers allowed us to reach 300,969 individuals with research-based information to enhance their quality of life in the areas of health and wellness, agricultural and horticultural production, youth development, family issues, and natural resources management. Many thanks go to all who support these efforts to educate our citizens on locally identified needs. 1420 educational programs were conducted in 2009. 2337 volunteers were involved. 74,965 volunteer hours were recorded for a value of \$1,518,041.

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Extension Changes Lives



in Dallas County

Winter/Spring 2010 Newsletter

Child Care Providers Conference

Child care providers play a vital role in caring for today's children. The quality of care that children receive is essential to their development. Child care providers are required by the state of Texas to obtain 15 clock hours of professional development training on an annual basis. Directors must obtain 20 hours. On March 20, 2010, Dallas County Extension Agent Wenhsing Cheng conducted a Child Care Provider Conference at the Texas AgriLife Extension Service Dallas County Office. Topics included "Managing stress: Finding balance between boredom and insanity" and "Communicating with parents." Sixteen child care providers and directors attended the training and each earned three clock hours of professional development at the completion of conference. Some of the comments about the conference were: "It was a very good conference!!!" "Thank you! Enjoyed it." "It was great!"

Welcome! Jeff Raska 4-H Program Assistant



Jeff was born and raised in Fort Worth, Texas and is a 3rd generation of Farmers. He has worked in several phases of the Green industry

for 30 years and recently retired from a national Wholesale Nursery. Jeff is married to his lovely wife Sandy of 27 years and has two children Jennifer (a R.N. at a McKinney hospital) and Paul (a senior at Texas A&M CC) who wants to teach. Jeff will be working under the direction of the County Extension Agent 4-H and Youth Development to provide specialized educational programs to youth in after school settings. These programs focus on subject matters related to horticulture and animals. Jeff is happy to be working with kids and is very excited for the opportunity to work with Extension's staff in Dallas County.

2010 North Texas Mid Winter Green Industry Symposium

The 2010 "N. TX Mid Winter Green Industry Symposium" hosted by the Dallas County Horticulture Committee occurred Tuesday, January 26th at the Dallas County office learning center. Three committee members including the co-Chairman were present. There were 45 participants who attended the Green Industry Symposium. Five Dallas County Master Gardeners assisted the event. 'Trends in The Industry and How to Utilize Them' was conducted by Dr. Marco Palma, 'Lawn/Landscape Maintenance, 'How to Reduce Costs While Serving Clients Needs' was presented by Dr. Jim McAfee, 'Pests; ID, Controls and Reducing Your Bottom Line Impact' was conducted by Dr. Scott Ludwig and 'Plant Disease ID, Controls and Reducing Impact on Your Bottom Line' was presented by Dr. Karl Steddom at the event. A customer satisfaction survey of attendees was conducted and results will be available after formal analysis.

Bodies: The Exhibition



On Tuesday, March 23, 2010, Dallas County Family & Consumer Science Agent Marvin Young of Prairie View A&M University's Cooperative Extension Program presented two programs at "Body: The Exhibition" in downtown Dallas. The two programs entitled, ***"Take Charge of Your Health"*** and ***"Worst Fast Foods"*** was presented to 65 Dallas County Middle School and Medical Assistant students. As a result of this collaborative activity, the audience learned three simple methods to take charge of one's health (take down fat; take in more fruits and vegetables; and take action). They also observed the effects fast food has on the human body. After the presentation, the audience was able to observe actual human bodies and the actual effects too much fat intake has on the body. They were also able to observe other conditions diabetes and poor food choices have on the human body. As stated by one participant, "to see and hear the presentation is one thing; but to actually go to a human body and observe it immediately after leaves a lasting impression".

Empowering Foster Families

Foster care enables families to open their hearts and homes to children who cannot live with their parents due to family circumstances. Foster families can make a positive, lifelong impact on children as they help them grow physically, spiritually, emotionally and intellectually. Methodist Children's Home offers foster care and family preservation services through its Community Services Program. The foster families are required to complete pre-service training in order to become a licensed foster family. The pre-service training covers topics such as grief and loss, attachment, discipline, and child development.

On January 23, 2010, Dallas County Extension Agent Wenhsing Cheng conducted a parenting program on Positive Discipline at a pre-service training held by the Methodist Children's Home-Dallas Outreach. Ten participants (five married couples) attended the training. These couples were parents and had children of their own. The group engaged in a lively discussion about the reasons to discipline children, the strengths and weaknesses of different parenting styles, and positive discipline techniques that would be or have been applied in their parenting.

North Texas Master Naturalist Honored by the City of Irving

On Monday, December 14, 2009, North Texas Master Naturalist program, a partnership among the AgriLife Extension Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department received the City of Irving's 2009 Community Service award. The following statement is a direct quote written by the City of Irving's Parks Board recognizing the NTMN program and volunteers: "In North Texas we have a very active Master Naturalist chapter, and they have been tremendously involved in the ecotourism activities taking place at Campion Trail. In the summer 2009 eight master naturalist volunteers helped lead groups on night hikes as part of Cool Nights at Campion program. They opened the eyes of children and adults alike to the possibilities that exist in nature after night falls. In both 2008 and 2009, the Master Naturalists served as nature experts for teams from the city's recreation centers as part of the award-winning BioBlitz program. These nature experts connected children with nature by helping them see the diversity that exists on Campion Trail, and encouraged them to learn the kind of fun they could have in catching grasshoppers, searching for new plant species, and getting themselves muddy. They helped to catalog a record 190 species in 2008, and went beyond this level in 2009 with a count of 278 species. Outside of these formal programs, Master Naturalists such as Jim Varnum and Susan Thrower have been working to conduct informal plant and bird surveys at Campion trail, in order to help expand our knowledge of the species that can be found at Campion Trail year-round. Among the Master Naturalists that have helped the city this year include longtime volunteers Jim Varnum, Sara Beckelman, Sandy Schriever, Pauline Schaefer, Evelyn Womble, J. and Wanda Rubrecht, Catherine Rogers, Carroll Mayhew, and many others. Their service has helped to make ecotourism at Campion Trail a success, and we hope to continue to partner with the Master Naturalist program for years to come. It is important to recognize these individuals and the entire North Texas Master Naturalist program, and thank them for their service to Irving's green spaces.

4-H Photography Workshop and 4-H Shotgun Club

Sixteen 4-Hers from across the county participated in a Photography Workshop at Old City Park. Participants learned how to take the “right” shot, history of Dallas, and how weather can impact the art of taking pictures. Eighteen 4-Hers submitted 101 photos in the County and District 4-H Photography Contest.



The 4-H Shotgun Club and Elm Fork Shooting Complex make a winning connect! Fifteen 4-Hers from throughout Dallas County diligently attend instructional sessions on the proper handling of guns and receive hands on training for Shotgun Competitions. These 4-Hers also learn about wildlife habitats, emergency preparedness and outdoor recreational activities. Learning opportunities are held every Thursday night and Saturday morning.



Dallas Home and Garden Show

Spring 2010 Dallas Home and Garden Market formally known as the Dallas Home and Garden Show event at Market Hall, Dallas. During the three day event multiple education presentations were conducted by members of Dallas County Master Gardeners Speaker's Bureau for 397 attendees. Visitors also were provided the opportunity to visit the Dallas County Master Gardeners/Texas AgriLife Extension Service educational booth where questions were answered. EDEN as well as BLT programming information was also provided. The 10' X 40' booth plus sound stage and all furnishings were compliments of International Exhibitions, Inc. (IEI) of Houston. The City of Dallas Water Utilities-Conservation Division and City of Dallas Storm Water Management, two program collaborators were also exhibiting in the DCMG/Extension booth. Total booth contacts were: 1,326.

Walk Across Texas

In 2009, one hundred eighty teams, 1,440 individuals participated and, as a group, walked 217,637 miles in the Walk Across Texas program in Dallas County. Participants represented worksites and community groups from: City of Grand Prairie, City of Coppell, City of Cedar Hill, City of Richardson, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, Parkland Hospital and Parkland Community Clinics, Green Oaks Hospital, Methodist Hospital Charlton, Family Resource Solutions, schools from the Dallas ISD, Highland Springs Retirement Community, Beckley Heights Church of Christ and senior citizens at several Dallas County Recreation Centers. The potential health care cost savings for this group, assuming they maintain the same level of physical activity in the future as during Walk Across Texas, is estimated to be \$6,940,330.

Pesticide Recertification Training



On November 12, 2009 Dallas County Extension Agent, Fred D. Burrell Jr., in conjunction with the Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas AgriLife Extension Specialist and resource specialist partnered to conduct a pesticide re-certification training course at the Dallas County office of Texas AgriLife Extension Service. The pesticide re-certification course provided continued education units for thirty-seven pesticide applicators who hold certified private applicators, non-commercial or commercial applicators license with the Texas Department of Agriculture. Presenters and subject matter included; "Protecting Water Resources from Pesticide Contamination", Dr. Dottie Woodson, Water Resources Specialist, Texas AgriLife Extension Service; "Urban Wildlife Management", Bonnie Bradshaw, 911 Wildlife; "Eleven New Insecticides for Sap Feeding Insects", Dr. Mike Merchant, Entomologist, Texas AgriLife Extension Service; "Pesticide Laws & Regulations"

Janet Hurley, IPM Coordinator, Texas AgriLife Extension Service. The workshop provided pesticide applicators with research-based information and best practices that will assist them in making more informed decisions when applying pesticides in schools, homes, businesses, landscapes and on food crops to better protect human life and our natural resources to include water, soil, air and wildlife.

Family Issues Summit

On March 4, 2010, FCS agents from Dallas, Collin, Tarrant, and Denton counties partnered with Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children to host a day long educational event, the "District IV Family Issues Summit: Issues and Solutions for Today's Families", which was held at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital. Social service workers, family caregivers, community educators, master wellness volunteers, and residents of Dallas County and of counties as far away as Bowie and Cass County, received information related to issues of importance to families, by attending this event. Break-out sessions provided information about topics such as family money management, nutrition, caring for the caregiver, and more. A healthy and delicious lunch was provided. The almost 70 participants who attended rated the Family Issues Summit as excellent and offered comments such as: "Very good workshops. Gained information that I can actually use." "Great conference. Thanks!" "I enjoyed the Family Issues Summit. It was well organized and beneficial." "Conference was great! Loved everything about it. Thank you!"

As a result of the success of this event, plans are underway to make this an annual educational event in Dallas County.

For more information, contact:

Doug Andrews
County Extension Director
Texas AgriLife Extension Service
10056 Marsh Lane, Ste. B-101
Dallas, Texas 75229-6071
Telephone: 214-904-3050
Fax: 214-904-3080
Email: td-andrews@tamu.edu
Website: <http://dallas-tx.tamu.edu>

In cooperation with....

Dallas County Commissioner' Court

Jim Foster

County Judge

Maurine Dickey
Commissioner, Pct. 1

Mike Cantrell
Commissioner, Pct. 2

John Wiley Price
Commissioner, Pct. 3

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