

**SNAP-Ed Monthly Project Activities and Outcomes Report
FY 2017**

Contractor: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Contract Number: 529-17-0002-00003
Reporting Period: April 1– June 30, 2017



Describe SNAP-Ed activities and outcomes during the current reporting period.

SNAP-Ed Program Summary:

- **Progress in achieving overarching goals:**

Objective 1: Health promotion to help the SNAP-Ed eligible target audience establish healthy eating habits and a physically active lifestyle.

In the third quarter, the Better Living for Texans program continued to meet this goal by providing programs focused on nutrition and physical activity with both youth and adults. In the months of April, May, and June, County Extension Agents and Better Living for Texans (BLT) Assistants conducted 2,305 educational sessions on general nutrition, physical activity, gardening, food safety, food resource management (includes pantry pests), as well as reducing sugary drinks, with a total of 52,235 direct educational contacts. Of these programs, ~1,028 sessions were taught from a combination of the eight evaluated program series BLT offers which includes participants completing a pre, post, follow-up and/or retrospective surveys. (Adult series: *A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!*, ~238 sessions; *Eat Smart, Live Strong* – senior adults, ~80 sessions; *Step Up, Scale Down*, ~16 sessions; *Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities*, ~106 sessions; youth series: *Balancing Food & Play*, ~36 sessions; *Learn, Grow, Eat & GO!*, ~278 sessions; combined youth and adult series: *Walk Across Texas* and *Walk N Talk*, ~274 sessions)

In addition to these series, another significant day-long program offered to elementary/middle school-aged youth during the school year was Ag Literacy Days. These programs focus on agriculture, how food and other resources come from the field/ranch to stores, then to their homes. The MyPlate food groups are often emphasized during these programs. During the third quarter, ~31 programs were presented throughout the state of Texas.

Objective 2: Reduce risk factors for chronic diseases among the SNAP-Ed eligible target audience such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.

All the single education programs and program series offered by BLT focuses on healthier eating, consuming more fruits and vegetables, and the importance physical activity to help reduce the risk and/or onset of obesity and of chronic diseases. Several of our County Extension Agents are trained to teach a diabetes series entitled, *Do Well, Be Well*. While it is not listed as an intervention program with our SNAP-Ed eligible audiences, when offered to them at no charge, a portion of the curriculum covering general nutrition, portion control, and the importance of physical activity are discussed.

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Objective 3: Increase collaboration of nutrition, physical activity, and wellness education across the state.

Collaboration and partnerships are essential for the success of all AgriLife Extension programs, both within to the AgriLife Extension agency and with external agencies/organizations. Two exciting initiatives are Healthy South Texas/Healthy Texas (internal; collaborative effort within Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and with the Texas A&M Health Science Center) and a Univision San Antonio project (external). During the second pilot year (2016-2017) of the Healthy South Texas initiative, a significant need for BLT programs was identified. Thus, BLT assistant positions were created in four counties of the South Region. In a short period of time, the new assistants have already made a positive impact through the nutrition and gardening programs they have started.

This past June, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service entered into an agreement with Univision San Antonio to develop segments based on Healthy Texas related topics. Episodes are to be aired four nights a week from June through August, plus weekly compilation shows each Saturday. Recipes from *A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!* BLT series have been featured in cooking demonstrations along with basic cooking tips. The videos have been translated into Spanish for the airing on Univision, thus, are available in both English and Spanish.

The more common collaborations across the state continue where BLT programs are held and presented to clientele associated with county/local agriculture organizations, child care facilities, senior adult/citizens centers, parks and recreation centers, schools of all age levels, faith-based groups, food banks and pantries, food stores, nonprofits, government agencies, human service agencies, workforce development groups, and worksites.

Objective 4: Increase consumption of fruits, vegetables, and other foods that comprise a healthy diet among the SNAP-Ed eligible population.

During the third quarter, the gardening programs *Learn, Grow, Eat & GO!* (LGEG) and *Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities* (GNHC) were in full swing. In some parts of the state, Extension agents and teachers were creative with ways to successfully start plants for the schools that implemented the ten-session LGEG series in the spring semester so students were able to gather a harvest from the gardens before classes dismissed for the year.

While the LGEG programs were winding down in April and May, many of the GNHC programs were starting up. While this program has been predominately implemented in the south and southeast parts of the state, county agents and BLT assistants identified, with input from their county program committees, the need of accessibility to fruits and vegetables in low-income communities. The GNHC six-session program has been started or is in the planning stages for implementation with fall gardens.

The Double Up Food Bucks program is being piloted in two regions and their surrounding communities, Lubbock/Amarillo and San Antonio. AgriLife Extension has partnered with

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the Lubbock/Amarillo project to offer nutrition tips/educational information and food/recipe samples highlighting produce being sold at Farmer's Markets offering the Double Up Food Bucks incentive to SNAP recipients.

Objective 5: Increase ongoing physical activity among the SNAP-Ed eligible population in accordance with the recommended Physical Activity Guidelines.

The BLT programs focused on increasing physical activity along with a nutrition message that continue to be implemented across the state are *Balancing Food and Play* (youth, 4 weeks/20 total sessions), *Step Up, Scale Down* (adult, 12 sessions), and *Walk Across Texas* and/or *Walk N Talk* (youth and adult, 8 weeks). While each of these programs offer varying number of sessions, they continue to be requested and well received.

- **Number of new projects implemented by identified primary approach (specify approach - Direct, Indirect, Social Marketing, Policy, Systems, or Environmental Change):**

The Univision project previously discussed is a new project. (Indirect, Social Marketing, Systems Change)

No other new projects (other than those noted in our original proposal) have been implemented.

- **Number of ongoing projects identified by primary approach (specify approach: Direct, Indirect, Social Marketing, Policy, Systems, or Environmental Change):**

As reported in the second quarter, our County Extension Agents continue to provide direct educational programs to SNAP-Ed eligible youth and adult audiences. Agents and BLT assistants were encouraged to share the Sherry Matthews Tuesday Tips on their county websites and Facebook pages. (Indirect, Social Marketing, Systems Change)

To better tell our story, the BLT Regional Program Managers began working more directly with county agents and BLT assistants to develop success stories that can be used to highlight at local, regional, state, and when appropriate national levels via print media, television, and other social media outlets. (Social Marketing)

BLT continues to produce monthly newsletters in both English and Spanish that are available to county educators to use or adapt as needed for their local audience(s). Each month a seasonal or current nutrition topic are often highlighted and accompanied with two recipes. April's newsletter featured recommendations on how long various foods should be kept, May's featured sweet potatoes, and June's featured the importance milk for all ages. (Indirect)

Our agents serving on school health advisory councils (SHAC) continued to do so through the end of the school year. Due to this involvement, the opportunity to implement the *Learn, Grow, Eat & GO!* program increased in several communities. (Systems and Environmental Changes).

Note: Because we do not have a single social marketing campaign strictly for BLT, we did not include that data on the EARS report.

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- **Partnership activities:**

For a detailed list of partnerships, please see our EARS report which lists the number of various locations where BLT programs are conducted. Our partnerships with community centers, churches, senior adult/citizen service centers, food banks/pantries, public and designated low-income housing, Head Start programs, school districts, and other agencies allow the BLT educators to continue to make positive impacts through programs that teach general nutrition, gardening and the importance of physical activity.

- **Staff/partner trainings:**

In April, the BLT State office staff (Program Director, Coordinator, Regional Program Managers, and business staff) held a face-to-face meeting in College Station. The purpose of the meeting was to build comradery, develop and work through the dynamics of serving all the entities involved across the state to deliver a consistent message and keep the program moving in a positive, more visible direction.

In May, a *Navigating for Success* training for new BLT assistants and a Regional Program Manager was held in College Station. The BLT and EFNEP State offices for both programs partnered together to present this research-based training that is required of all newly hired educators. This program teaches educators techniques of how to successfully engage low-income audiences.

- **Conference presentations and/or other journal publications:**

None to report.

- **Major achievements (not already addressed):**

Our gardening curricula continue to gain interest as more schools, youth agencies, and adults in underserved communities are eager learn more about these programs and their impact to teach basic gardening skills, build community gardens, thus provide increased access to fruits and vegetables. Non-measured impacts that emerge through these programs are the “community” it creates when the individuals and families involved come together and take ownership in the maintenance and care of the gardens.

- **Major setbacks, if any:**

None identified.

- **Overall assessment:**

While we are on track to meet our programmatic goals. the BLT program continues to work with our educators to identify ways to more effectively reach our BLT audience.

Please remember to submit your EARS Report along with the monthly summary.

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Better Living for Texans – Nutrition Focus



Graduates from *A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!* (Gregg County)

The County Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences partnered with the local food pantry to teach *A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!* The participants learn how to prepare healthier meals for themselves and their families. (Haskell County)



Creating the sections of MyPlate and choosing healthier foods for each section is a fun activity in the *Mobile Cooking School* curriculum. This program was created by the Family and Consumer Science Agent in Montgomery County and can be used with SNAP eligible youth and adult populations.

The *Mobile Cooking School* brings families together to learn basic cooking skills while creating healthy recipes. (Montgomery County)



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Better Living for Texans – Gardening Focus

Planting the garden for *Learn, Grow, Eat & GO!* is a team effort by the Agriculture/ Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Sciences County Extension Agent, and classroom teachers. (Haskell County)



With the help of the Family and Consumer Sciences County Extension Agent, students learn in the *Eat* section how to prepare vegetables for the recipe that are sampled from the *Learn, Grow, Eat & GO!* program. (Haskell County)

Students are preparing last year's garden for the spring planting. (Gray County)



Students in *Learn, Grow, Eat & GO!* are preparing for the next week's harvest... They will pick lettuce to taste and sample in a recipe. Their plants are flourishing this year!

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Master Gardeners volunteer their time to partner with BLT educators and participants of the *Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities* program. (Montgomery County)

Communities come together to build and maintain the gardens through the *Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities* program. (Starr County)



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Better Living for Texans – Physical Activity Focus



Walk Across Texas/Walk N Talk participants getting their Zumba groove on as they “walk” across Texas. The Extension office partnered with local Zumba and fitness instructors to provide weekly Zumba and walking classes. More than 100 people completed the eight-week nutrition and fitness program. (Shelby County)

The nutrition sessions of *Walk Across Texas/Walk N Talk*, emphasize the importance of eating fruits and vegetables, and is being led by the Better Living for Texans assistant. (Shelby County)

