

## RELEVANCE

Healthy South Texas (HST) Youth Ambassadors are a pivotal component of healthy lifestyle programming in our counties. These youth, individually, spend 40+ hours of their time volunteering in HST programming for their respective counties, yearly. As agents we wanted them to have a deeper knowledge of their communities, resources and our HST specific programming.

## RESPONSE

In response to our youth's need for specific HST programming, FCH and HST Agents gathered to create a series of training programs to develop the skill set of our ambassadors. Together we have 55 HST Youth Ambassadors. The programming would focus on the following items- local commodities, volunteer work, healthy lifestyle activities, goal setting, leadership skills, college/career exploration and education/training in HST programs. Agents worked in clusters to develop programs in Kleburg, DeWitt, Nueces, Victoria, and Aransas Counties.

### Kleburg County, "Javelina for a Day"

26 HST youth ambassadors traveled to Kingsville to visit Texas A&M University-Kingsville to explore college and careers. Youth participated in an in-depth tour of the Vet Tech Center, the Texas A&M College of Pharmacy and the School of health and Kinesiology.

### DeWitt County, "MyPlate- Where does your food come from?"

24 HST youth ambassadors traveled to DeWitt County to take a more in-depth look at local commodities. Youth toured the Cuero Pecan House, Cuero Regional Hospital, Twelve 27 Farms, Turkey Hollow Farms, and the local community garden. Youth also participated in a yoga class with Holy Yoga.

### Nueces County, "Play it Safe"

22 HST youth ambassadors traveled to Port Aransas in Nueces County. Youth spent time learning about pollution and bacteria with UT Marine Science Institute. Then spent an hour cleaning up trash on the jetty. Afterwards youth spent time learning about rip currents with the Ja'Sani Smith Foundation then learned about being a lifeguard with the City of Port Aransas Beach Rescue.

### Victoria County, "Foodie Trip"

31 HST Youth Ambassadors traveled Victoria for the Healthy Texas Ambassador Road Trip. Participants toured Baskin Robbins to learn about food safety, toured University of Houston, completed a diversity awareness consumer decision making activity, and volunteered at the Golden Crescent Food Bank for two hours packing 365 emergency food kits.

### Aransas County, "Surf & Turf"

26 HST youth ambassadors traveled to Rockport in Aransas County to participate in Healthy Lifestyle activities including fishing and kayaking. Youth were also trained in the Grilling 101 program and enjoyed some fresh steak. Afterwards youth watched a food demonstration from HST specialist David Leal and gave the youth's tips and tricks to better their demonstrations.





## RESULTS

As a result of HSTYA Road Trip we have youth that are more aware of the commodities and resources in their local and surrounding communities. They developed their leadership, teamwork, and communication skills. As well as fostered relationships with other ambassadors that reach across counties/districts, which they have maintained and continue to bounce ideas off each other. Furthermore, they learned about the importance of networking, the managing of their busy schedules and gained confidence to lead sessions.



Overall, due to this program, the visibility of the HST Youth Ambassador program has improved in our counties and has increased interest from other 4-H members for future participation.

Quotes from youth on impact of the HSTYA Road Trip:

*"Whenever you hear about eating healthy and being active in your life you really don't pursue it, but whenever you truly learn about it with peers and friend you do pursue it."*



*"Most youth only think about themselves. Our 4-H Healthy Texas Youth ambassadors are taught to think about others and by combining all the counties, they realized that together we are a force. Together we can make a huge difference against the fight against preventative chronic diseases."*

*"The ambassadors realized that some of the youth had a powerful "WHY"! When we asked, "What's your Why" we found out that one ambassador actually had diabetes, one was a cancer survivor, one lost their grandparents to cancer, one had a sibling with cancer."*

## FUTURE PROGRAMMING

We find this program to be a model that can work in any county cluster that desires a deeper educational training program for their ambassadors. The HSTYA Road Trip committee is currently planning 2022 Road Trip that will impact approximately 60 youth across 11 counties and two districts. Next year's Road Trip will be an in-depth program where we will gauge growth in skill sets and knowledge gained.

## SPECIAL THANKS

Texas A&M University- Kingsville Vet Tech Center, TAMU College of Pharmacy, TAMU-Kingsville School of Health & Kinesiology, Victoria County Master Gardeners, Golden Crescent Food Bank, University of Houston-Victoria, Baskin Robbins, Victoria Mall, University of Texas Marine Science Institute, Je'Sani Smith Foundation, City of Port Aransas Beach Rescue, Cuero Pecan House, Cuero Regional Hospital, Twelve 27 Farms, Turkey Hollow Farm, Growing Kindness Project, Holy Yoga, Texas Beef Council, FlatsWorthy, HST Specialist David Leal, and RJ Shelly CEA-CMR and Emilee DeForest CEA 4-HYD with the Calhoun County 4-H Sportfishing Club.

