

Leon County FCH Focus Newsletter



Winter 2019

Your Leon County Extension Staff...



Richard Parrish - County Extension Agent (CEA)-Ag & Natural Resources, Laura Petty - CEA-Family & Community Health, Jofran Edwards - Office Manager and Cassie Ferguson - CEA-4-H & Youth Development

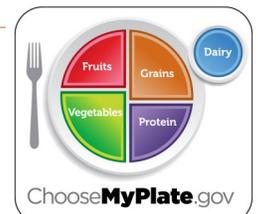
Hello from your new County Extension Agent for Family & Community Health! I've had the pleasure of working here in Leon County in the 4-H & Youth Development position since Feb. 2016. I made the switch over to the FCH position on Oct. 1st, and boy, do I have to lot to learn! Cassie Ferguson joined our staff on Jan. 2nd as our new 4-H agent. I have worked with Extension for 26 years, and look forward to working with the great folks of Leon County!

I plan to publish this quarterly newsletter as a means of promoting and highlighting our programs, as well as offering some educational info. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Thanks,

Laura Petty
Laura Petty

The holidays are behind us, and now we look forward to 2019. Whether you are one to make New Year's resolutions or not, you might be looking for some tools and support to help you plan and provide a healthier year for you and/or your family. The MyPlate Plan, available in English and Spanish, is a great resource!!



- **Shows your food group targets—what and how much to eat within your calorie allowance**
- **Personalized plan based on your age, sex, height, weight and physical activity level**

Find out more at <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/myplateplan>

American



Heart Month

During the month of February, Americans see the human heart as the symbol of love. February is American Heart Month, the perfect time to learn about your risk for heart disease and the steps you need to take now to help your heart.

Heart disease—and the conditions that lead to it—can happen at any age. High rates of obesity and high blood pressure among younger people (ages 35-64) are putting them at risk for heart disease earlier in life. Half of all Americans have at least 1 of the top 3 risk factors for heart disease (high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking).

You Could Be at Risk

Many of the conditions and behaviors that put people at risk for heart disease are appearing at younger ages:

High blood pressure - Millions of Americans of all ages have high blood pressure, including millions of people in their 40s and 50s. About half of people with high blood pressure don't have it under control, which is one of the biggest risks for heart disease, stroke and other conditions.

High blood cholesterol - High cholesterol can increase the risk for heart disease. Having diabetes and obesity, smoking, eating unhealthy foods, and not getting enough physical activity can all contribute to unhealthy cholesterol levels.

Smoking - More than 37 million U.S. adults are current smokers, and thousands of young people start smoking each day. Smoking damages the blood vessels and can cause heart disease.

Obesity - Carrying extra weight puts stress on the heart. More than 1 in 3 Americans—and nearly 1 in 6 children ages 2 to 19—has obesity.

Diabetes - Diabetes causes sugar to build up in the blood, which can damage blood vessels and nerves that help control the heart muscle. Nearly 1 in 10 people in the US has diabetes.

Physical inactivity - Staying physically active helps keep the heart and blood vessels healthy. Only 1 in 5 adults meets the physical activity guidelines of getting 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity activity.

Unhealthy eating patterns - Most Americans, including children, eat too much sodium (salt), which increases blood pressure. A diet high in trans-fat, saturated fat, and added sugar increases the risk factor for heart disease.

4 Ways to Take Control of Your Heart Health

You're in the driver's seat — learn how to be heart healthy at any age!

Don't smoke - Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the US. If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, learn how to quit.

Manage conditions - Work with your health care team to manage conditions such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol. This includes taking any medicines you have been prescribed. Learn more about preventing and managing high blood pressure and cholesterol.

Make heart-healthy eating changes - Eat food low in trans-fat, saturated fat, added sugar and sodium. Try to fill at least half your plate with vegetables and fruits, and aim for low sodium options. Learn more about how to reduce sodium.

Stay active - Get moving for at least 150 minutes per week. You can even break it up into 10-minute blocks. Learn more about how to get enough physical activity.

Find out more at <http://www.cdc.gov/features/heartmonth>



We compile an annual Leon County Extension Volunteer Report to determine the impact of these extremely valuable non-paid staff members such as our Leadership Advisory Board, various boards and committees, 4-H leaders, Master Gardeners and Extension Education Club members.

For 2018, there were **405 volunteers** who gave **18,028 hours** of service. Putting a dollar value to that service totals **\$424,739.68!** This is an incredible service to the residents of Leon County, and we are so blessed to work with these great folks!!

To keep the body in good health is a duty... otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear.

Buddha



The Texas Community Futures Forum is a gathering of community members and leaders to sit down and discuss the issues that they feel will be affecting their community over the next 3-5 years. The issues that are identified are used by Extension to help plan relevant educational programming efforts to assist the residents of Leon County. The issues will also be used by local, county, and state decision makers in building a better Texas.

We'll be working with our Leadership Advisory Board to schedule the date, time and location for our Leon County event, so look for details soon, plan to join us and help make Leon County an even better place to live!



As Super Bowl LIII quickly approaches, the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reminds football fans that designated drivers are the best defense against the dangers of drunk driving. Super Bowl is a festive night in homes and bars across America, but if your night involves alcohol, plan for a sober ride home.

According to the Texas Department of Transportation, 1,024 people were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes where a driver was under the influence of alcohol in 2017, accounting for 28% of the total number of people killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes. The costs can be financial, too: If you’re caught drinking and driving, you could face jail time, lose your driver’s license and your vehicle, and pay up to \$10,000 in attorney’s fees, fines, car towing and repairs, higher insurance rates, and lost wages.

Safety should be your #1 priority. Before you head out, make a game plan that includes a sober driver—someone who will not drink at all, and who will safely bring you home. Follow these simple tips for a safe and happy evening:

- ⇒ Remember that it is never okay to drink and drive. Even if you’ve had only one alcoholic beverage, designate a sober driver or plan to use public transportation or a ride sharing service to get home safely.
- ⇒ Download NHTSA’s SaferRide mobile app, available on Google Play for Android devices and Apple’s iTunes Store for iOS devices. SaferRide allows users to call a taxi or a predetermined friend, and identifies the user’s location so he or she can be picked up.
- ⇒ If you see a drunk driver on the road, contact law enforcement.
- ⇒ Have a friend who is about to drink and drive? Take the keys away and make arrangements to get your friend home safely.



For more information on the dangers of drunk driving, visit www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov.



PREVENTION
is key 

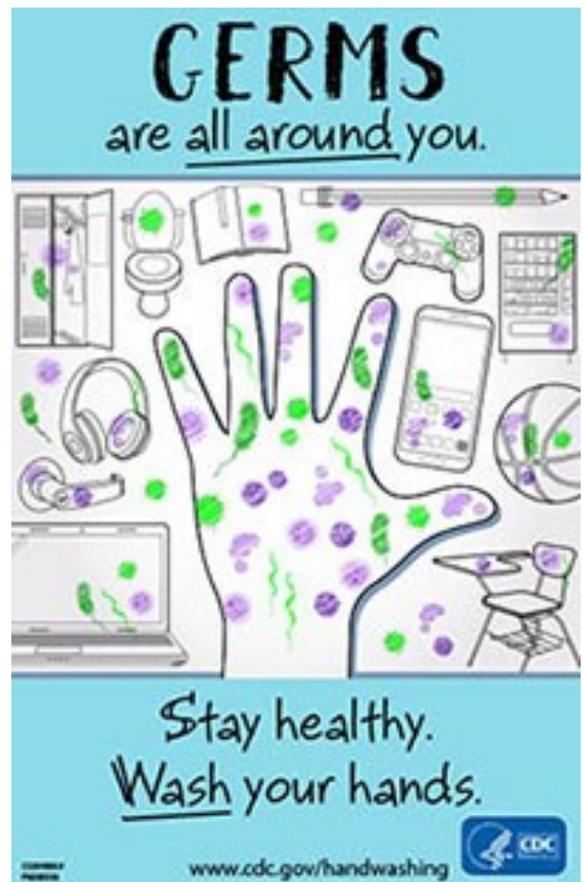
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, through a grant from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), has a campaign, **Watch UR BAC**, to teach Texans about the dangers of alcohol and other drugs misuse—including binge drinking, the understanding of alcohol poisoning and the dangers of impaired driving. The **Watch UR BAC** program is a free resource to Texas community groups, faith-based organizations, schools, and businesses. Find out more at <http://watchurbac.tamu.edu>.



Handwashing Program

We are in the midst of cold and flu season, and we continually tell our kids to wash their hands, but do they? Well, this program might just help drive the message home! We use our Glitterbug device to make learning proper hand hygiene - the most important means to prevent the spread of infections - an entertaining and illuminating experience.

Please contact me (Laura) to schedule the program.



Looking for Food Safety Training?

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service offers the following food safety courses:

Food Handlers Online Course

- * About 2 hours in length
- * \$15 per person and discounted group rates are available
- * Accredited by Texas Department of State Health Services
- * Once course is complete, print a Food Handlers card
- * Valid for 2 years and can be verified online

Certified Food Manager Training Program (CFM)

- * Face-to-face training that prepares you for the National ANSI Certified Food Manager Exam
- * Visit the website below for training dates and locations

Cooking up a Cottage Food Business Online Course

- * About 1 hour in length
- * \$7 per person
- * Designed to help people who want to start a cottage food production operation out of their residence



Find out more at <http://foodsafety.tamu.edu> or contact Rebecca Dittmar at 830-896-9037 or Julie Prouse at 979-458-2025.

Program Highlights & Information

FCH Advisory Committee

I will begin working on re-initiating our committee over the next few months. This committee guides Family and Community Health programming in Leon County. Members meet 4 times per year to identify community needs, develop program ideas, and receive information on new and upcoming initia-

tives in Family and Community Health.

As we begin to meet, we'll also be working on the committee structure, ensuring we have by-laws, a membership roster and officers.

Please contact me if you are interested in serving on the committee.

EE Members Stay Busy in 2019



In addition to a very nice Christmas luncheon last month, the Extension Education (EE) Club members collected numerous items for Toys for Tots!! A big thanks to all of them!

What is EE? As part of the Texas Extension Education Association (TEEA), EE clubs meet regularly to conduct business, learn from educational programs and conduct community service. These activities strengthen our community by providing information that focuses on family, education and service. Come participate in monthly club meetings, and enjoy fun and fellowship while we learn. Members also have opportunities to participate in trainings and take on roles at the county, district and state levels.

Here's info on our 5 EE clubs:

- **Buffalo** - meets 3rd Wed., 11 am
- **Jewett** - meets 2nd Mon., 10 am
- **Leona/Centerville** - meets 2nd Tue., 10 am
- **Normangee** - meets 3rd Wed., 10 am
- **Oakwood** - meets 3rd Mon., 6 pm

Please contact our office for more details.



We are especially proud to have 2 state officers from Leon County—Clara Jones and Nyanza Price.

Extension Education members had a great holiday celebration in which they collected numerous items for Toys for Tots.



I have the choice of being constantly active and happy or introspectively passive and sad.
Sylvia Plath

Program Highlights & Information

As I continue to transition into the Family & Community Health (FCH) position, I am having to re-discover these programs. I look forward to partnering with other agencies and community groups to provide some of these programs. Here are a few I'll be looking at offering for 2019, so please contact me to schedule!



Nutrition Programs

Better Living for Texans (BLT) is a nutrition education program for adults and children that are SNAP participants and SNAP eligible. Other eligible groups include families that participate in or receive Head Start program, WIC, TANF, SSI or receive

food from a food pantry or soup kitchen. The program helps people make healthy meals, improve their physical fitness, save money at the grocery store, grow their own foods, and adopt better food safety habits. Here are some program opportunities associated with BLT...

A FRESH START to a Healthier You!



- ◆ 3-4 session series for adults
- ◆ Learn to increase fruit and vegetable intake
- ◆ Learn to cook nutritious meals & spend less on groceries

- 8-week series
- Learn how to walk for fitness and how to include more fruits and vegetables in their daily routine
- Create teams with family, friends, and coworkers to log walking miles

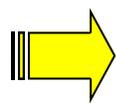
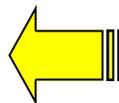


Walk[®] Across Texas!



Hydration and Infused Water

Explore water's importance in our body, examine a variety of drink choices and sample some excellent homemade flavored waters.



DINNER TONIGHT

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

<http://dinnertonight.tamu.edu>

<http://pathtotheplate.tamu.edu>

Attention Schools! Awesome Programs Available!

Our office offers a variety of programs for schools. Below are a few we'd like to highlight. Please contact Cassie at 903-536-2531 or Cassie.Ferguson@ag.tamu.edu to inquire and/or schedule these and other programs we offer.



Welcome to the Real World! (WTTRW!) - Program consists of 2 parts: financial education and real world expenditure decision-making opportunities. Real World is an active, hands on program that gives young people the opportunity to explore careers and make lifestyle and spending choices similar to those faced by adults. Geared toward high school, but could also be used at the upper junior high level.



Hatching in the Classroom - Incubating and hatching chicken eggs is a hands-on learning experience that's great for students in all grades. Students learn biological concepts and develop a deeper understanding of the life sciences. Basic skills could include data measurement, collection, and analysis while higher level experiments teach complex systems such as nutrition and the circulatory system.

The Spring FCH issue of this newsletter will include more info about the **Veterinary Science, Junior Master Gardener and Learn, Grow, Eat, GO!** programs, but please feel free to contact us now if you're interested in learning more about any of these.

Our county-wide programs that we have offered over the last few years include:

- * **4-H₂O Water Fairs** - teaches 3rd graders about water and conservation
- * **Ag Fair** - 4th graders develop a greater understanding and appreciation about agriculture's impact in their daily lives
- * **Health Fair** - helps 6th and 9th graders recognize potential hazards and provides them skills to make healthy choices

Caraline Dudley shared information about wildlife with local 4th grad-



4-H₂O Volunteer Training

Thur., Jan. 31, 1:30-5 pm

Interested in helping with our youth water education program? Please join us for this training. Experience the sessions that teach 3rd graders about water, its importance and how it can be conserved and protected. Please call to sign up at 903-536-2531.

You never really know something until you teach it to someone else.

John C. Maxwell

Program Highlights & Information



4-H is AMAZING!

4-H Food Challenge teams whipped up some awesome dishes during the D8 4-H contest.



Our 4-H clubs have had a busy year so far. We have 5 active 4-H clubs across Leon County who meet monthly and participate in a variety of activities.

This past fall included our 4-H food project activities and 4-H food contests. We had 64 4-H'ers participate in the county contest. District results included 27 participants, with 7 top 5 awards, a state qualifying senior team, and 2 Team Spirit Awards.

Spring is just around the corner and that means our 4-H'ers will be busy with clothing, photography, public speaking, robotics, shooting sports, and livestock projects. We wish all of our 4-H'ers the best with their spring projects and contests!! Visit the 4-H website at <http://leontx4-h.blogspot.com> to learn more about opportunities 4-H has to offer.

**Come Support
4-H'ers at Leon
County Youth
Livestock Show
- April 15-19!!**



Many of our 4-H'ers have been busy over the last several months preparing for this event, which is taking place at the Leon County Expo Center. Come enjoy some livestock exhibits and join us for the auction on Friday evening. Visit <http://leon.agrilife.org> (click on Leon Co. Livestock Show) for more details.



4-H Alumni & Supporters!

We are trying to compile a database of 4-H alumni and supporters, and your help is needed. We have compiled a very brief survey for 4-H alumni and supporters to complete. Go to the survey at goo.gl/aTPrtS, and please share with others.



Feed your family and support Leon County 4-H - <http://www.schwans-cares.com/c/42676>. When ordering from Schwan's via phone or online, be sure to provide the campaign number of 42676 for Leon County, TX 4-H. Thank you!

2019 Lunch and Learn Gardening Series



This gardening series, brought to you by the Leon County Master Gardeners, is held 12:05-1 pm, in the Leon Co. Annex II Great Room. Bring your lunch and come learn how to improve your gardening skills! Programs include:

- February 12—Soils, Richard Parrish
- March 22—Diseases of Roses and Crape Myrtles, Greg Pitts
- April 9—Herps in the Yard, Novalene Thurston
- May 14—Plants for Healthy Houses, Charlene Manning and Mary Sue Watson
- June 18—Gopher Control, David Bradley and Ty Johnston
- July 9—Xeriscaping, Richard Parrish
- August 13—Crafting with Nature, Kathy Choate
- September 17—Pass Along Plants, Charlene Manning
- October 22—Photography in the Garden, Novalene Thurston

FREE WORKSHOPS

BO BO'S NURSERY
HWY 79 W BETWEEN JEWETT AND BUFFALO

FRUIT TREES, BLACKBERRIES, ETC.
SATURDAY, JANUARY 26, 2019
10 AM TO NOON

LOVE ROSES, BUT...

AFRAID TO PLANT, DON'T KNOW HOW TO CARE FOR THEM...

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2019
10 AM TO NOON

If you have a community event or resource you'd like to share in future editions, please feel free to e-mail that to me at ljpetty@tamu.edu.

You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.

C.S. Lewis

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service - Leon County

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

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<http://fch.tamu.edu>

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's Family and Community Health (FCH) unit helps Texans better their lives through science-based educational programs designed to improve the overall health and wellness of individuals, families, and communities.

Stay informed on Leon County
Emergencies including road closures:

<http://www.facebook.com/LeonCountyEM>