

Making a Difference 2010

Improving Health and Wellness in Panola County

Relevance

The Panola County leadership Advisory Board and the Panola County Family and Consumer Science Board have identified health and wellness issues as top priorities for public education efforts in Panola County. As attrition rates of Type 2 Diabetes, cardiovascular disease, Hypertension, cancers, and childhood obesity continue to rise, addressing diminished practice of physical activity, poor nutrition choices, and overall poor lifestyle choices are all priorities. Childhood obesity has more than doubled in the last 20 years. 61.5% of children aged 9 to 13 years do not engage in and physical activity during their non-school hours, and less than 40% participate on school-provided physical activity. Of additional concern, studies show that high-school aged youth in rural counties use tobacco at twice the rate of the national average.

Response

Cooking Well With Diabetes is a 6-lesson course that covers the basics of nutrition and self-care management of Type 2 Diabetes. Emphasis is placed on the strong role diet plays in Diabetes management, and participants are taught to make wise choices, and to modify favorite recipes to fit the Diabetic lifestyle.

Put It Outside teaches parents and caregivers the debilitating effect of second-hand smoke on fetuses, infants and children; and encourages adults to cease tobacco use, or to confine its use to outside of the home and family vehicle. It puts parents under contract to keep their home and their vehicles tobacco-free.

Master of Memory is a 6-part lesson series helps aging adults and their caregivers understand the effects that direct and in-direct aspects of aging can have on cognitive function. Participants learn ways to improve their memory, in particular, and their overall cognitive prowess in general.

Texas Extension Education Association exists to work with Texas AgriLife Extension Service to strengthen and enrich families through educational programs, leadership development, and community service.

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Results

100% of 13 **Cooking Well With Diabetes** participants reported increased knowledge, and 95% reported intent to change behavior. Behaviors changed include:

Modifying recipes to reduce sugar	-----63%
Modifying recipes to reduce fat	-----88%
Using noncaloric sweeteners instead of table sugar	-----88%
Using the Plate Method of portion control	-----50%
Increasing the amount of vegetables in recipes	-----75%

- * “I learned so much in this class! I feel much better about handling my Diabetes, now.”
- “These recipes are great! They don't taste like diet-food!”
- “Since taking Do Well, Be Well last year, my blood sugar has stayed down, and I am not taking any medicines to control it. Learning how to cook good meals will make it easy to keep it down.”

100% of 16 participants in **Master of Memory** reported that they learned new information in the class, and intend to use that knowledge. Knowledge gained includes:

That high blood pressure can adversely affect memory	-----	100%
That physical activity can improve memory	-----	100%
That hearing loss can affect memory	-----	100%
Doing puzzles and playing word games can improve memory	-----	98%
Taking herbal supplements can adversely affect memory	-----	97%
That there are steps one can take to improve memory	-----	100%

At the beginning of the lesson series, 87% reported that they worry about memory getting worse as they age. At the culmination of the lesson series, only 18% still did.

The **Put It Outside** program was presented as an output/public display type program 3 times throughout Panola County during the year. A total of 1150 county residents visited Put It Outside displays at Health Fairs, a School Open House, and in the Courthouse. At these events the FCS Agent was on hand to speak with participants and share knowledge with them. Visual aids such as posters, and diseased lungs, hearts, and fetuses were employed to help people understand the dangers of second-hand smoke to non-smokers. Literature, provided by the American Cancer Society, East Texas Council for Addiction and Drug Abuse, Texas AgriLife Extension and Texas Cancer Society was distributed at each event.

The **Texas Extension Education Association** is a vital part of Extension education efforts in Panola County. TEEA members have facilitated the production of 4-h competition by serving as judges, and helping to educate. Panola County's TEEA club's philanthropic endeavors include donating auction items to benefit Mission Carthage, raising money to provide scholarships to Panola County youth, and constructing custom-designed quilts for Ronald McDonald House in Galveston.

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