

RELEVANCE

Due to growing populations, more and more youth are unfamiliar with the way agriculture works and how production on farms runs on a daily basis. Youth need to know what goes into ag production at all levels. Ag in Montague county is a small part of the income for most citizens. We need to educate everyone what agriculture can do with all age levels. Learning at an early age the importance of agriculture could benefit how they grow into adults. There are over 800 elementary youth who need to learn the basics of farm and agriculture for future generations to be aware of the need in all communities.

NUMBERS: Program was conducted in response to youth related issue identified during SHAC meeting.

- **815** youth in Montague County Elementary Schools
- **7,969** households in Montague County
- **498,000** Acres in agriculture production

As with many agriculture products, youth are unaware of where their food comes from, or how it is even produced. In Montague county of 19,956 persons, the loss of agriculture awareness is very evident. In order to help the younger generation understand the importance of agriculture, they need to know where is begins. Reaching out to local school districts can give us a chance to educate those who we can make an impression on. They are consumers too, and with that, will have the ability to make their decisions on what they consume.

RESPONSE

Through Hatching in the Classroom, Nocona and Bowie ISD students became familiar with how agriculture production can start with just an egg. Setting eggs in the classrooms and giving them a weekly educational update, they are able to watch from day one. Steps involved candling them weekly, educational presentations about how the chick is developing, and daily care of the incubator and eggs.

The SHAC committee of Nocona has identified Hatching in the Classroom as an educational approach to address the need for youth to learn about agriculture.

TARGET AUDIENCE

- 19 youth Nocona Elementary
- 32 youth Bowie Intermediate
- 36 eggs set to incubate at each school

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATORS

- Worked with volunteers to donate eggs, shavings, feed, and programs for the youth to have a great experience.
- Partnered with Nocona and Bowie school districts and teachers

VALUE STATEMENT

Hatching in the Classroom

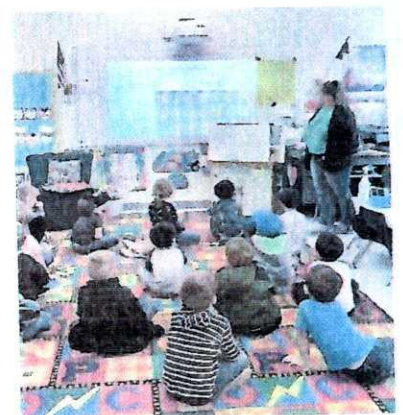
The Hatching in the Classroom we were able to reach the youth and teach them a little more on how agriculture works on a farm. Students explore how an embryo develops inside of a chicken egg over 21 days' time. Discussion of life cycles and other natural cycles are covered while the kids get to watch the chickens hatch.

4th in Nation
7.23 MILLION
 Poultry raised in Texas

38

Number of chicks hatched

1,028
Hours of incubation



Evaluation Strategy

A pre and post-test was conducted to measure the amount of knowledge the youth of Nocona Elementary and Bowie Intermediate gained. Surveys were taken at the beginning of the program and then followed up a week after the chicks had hatched. 51 youth were given the chance to learn in a great surrounding and watch how live of chicken started.

RESULTS

51 elementary youth were able to show their knowledge increase as stated:

- Percentage of youth who correctly learned that a chicken egg takes more than 18 days to hatch improved from 7% to 91%
- Percentage of youth who learned what candling eggs means, improved from 24% to 100%
- Youth gained knowledge that chicks are not all born yellow. 17% to now 88%
- After chicks are hatched, they need a warm and dry place to live with youth understanding with an increase of 14% from youth to 95% of youth.
- They now know that chicks do not climb into the egg before it incubated and hatched with a result of 18% youth to a total of 98%
- Youth learned that they needed to wash their hands before touching eggs in the incubator at beginning knowledge of 52% to 96% at the end of the program
- They learned that different species of birds (ducks, chicken, turkey, etc.) take different days to incubate with progress from 15% to 82%
- Pre-test average grade overall increased from 67% to 85%

Summary

The use of eggs and hatching them out with the help of the youth, taught them to have a better understanding of how farms and agriculture work. They also learned that not all eggs will hatch out and that only a few will make it through the hatching process to become a viable and productive chicken at their house. Birds were hatched out and given to the youth and sent home to be taken care of with some success.

Future Programming

Montague County Agrilife Extension Service will continue to work with the elementary teachers to provide more agriculture learning experiences via Hatching in the Classroom and Gardening all while working with the county school districts.



**"I like watching and hearing
the baby chicks hatch out, it's
the best part of my day"**

Elementary youth

For More Information:

**Justin
Hansard**

CEA-ANR
Montague County

940-894-2831
j-hansard@tam.u.edu

RELEVANCE

With the rising costs of groceries, everything from meat to vegetables, there is resurgence of growing their own product and consuming it themselves. Montague County continues to grow with new homeowners moving in monthly and want to create a garden and/or produce a natural organic food product. Homeowners and in particular, senior citizens have to watch what they spend on groceries and want to eat a healthy balanced diet. Achieving that requires them to learn what they can and grow garden vegetables that will produce in our area with little input if possible.

- 2020 to 2022 showed a population growth of 5%
- More than 80% of the population live in cities or towns
- 19,965 persons call Montague county home
- Median income in the county is \$63,336
- 13% of population live in poverty
- Median age of population is 44 years of age
- 26.1% of population is 65 or older
- 8.5% of seniors live in poverty

RESPONSE

The response to the outcome of needing to learn how to grow their own produce was met with different programs across the county to include:

- 6-week course on gardening
- Basic Soil Introduction
- Vegetable Varieties for north Texas
- Nutrients plants require
- Fertilizer 101
- Container Gardening
- Insect control options

The issue was identified and brought up by senior citizens on agriculture and how to grow their own food with gardening at the forefront.

TARGET AUDIENCE

- Senior Citizens
- Homeowners
- Small landowners

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATORS

- Worked with Whitecotton's Greenhouse, Helen Whitecotton, Nocona Senior Citizens center.

VALUE STATEMENT

Ex. Do Well, be well with Diabetes

The need to learn how to grow your own products, in this case vegetables, the audience was taught how to produce their own food from their gardens. Currently Montague County has a large population that live inside city limits and are restricted on the amount of space they can grow produce.

19,965
COUNTY
POPULATION

8.5%

1,697

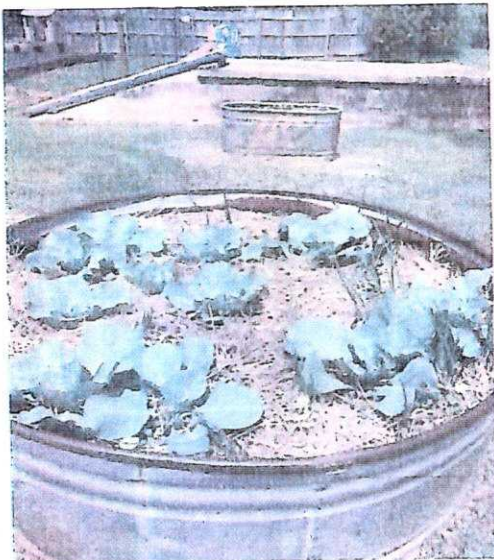
SENIOR CITIZENS LIVE IN
PROVERTY



In an effort to teach the public more about using their home property, land, and resources to grow their own vegetables, small gardens, and small pots. Agent taught them how to do multiple ideas on how to grow and produce their own homegrown products as well as managing soils, fertilization, insect management, and varieties for Montague county. Site visits were made when needed along with educational programs during the spring.

- 8 persons attended participated in the knowledge based educational program
- 21 youth were taught how to grow vegetables in raised beds
- 22 homeowner visits throughout the spring and summer
- Email series on how to manage soils delivered to 245 families

Teaching the homeowners and youth how to grow and manage their own garden in sustaining their own produce along with putting in their own sweat to make sure they are doing it right and growing a product they can consume or share.



Evaluation Strategy

A retrospective post survey was given out to the group who attended the weekly Grow your own Garden program to 8 of the 8 persons who attended. The survey measured their understanding of what was taught as well as practices they would adopt.

RESULTS

Here are the evaluation results from the 8 attendees of Grow your own Garden in relation to Knowledge Gained & Adoption of practices.

- Soil testing prior to planting increased their knowledge from 12% fair to 75% excellent
- Letting plants tell what nutrients they are needing increased their knowledge from 25% fair to 63% excellent
- Correct vegetable varieties for Montague county increased their knowledge from 63% poor to 75% good
- Knowledge gained in understanding of soil pH and effects of nutrient uptake increased from 25% fair to 63% good
- Knowledge gained from letting good insects control bad insects increased from 50% poor to 75% excellent
- Adoption of vegetable varieties for Montague county showed that 50% probably or definitely would do from now on with 1 individual already has adopted
- The adoption of soil sampling showed that 50% definitely will test their soils with 20% said they will probably not
- Adoption of soil test in a jar showed that 38% have already adopted and 20% probably would try it out for showing soil types in their garden
- Companion planting adoption showed that 38% would probably try this out and 20% already have adopted

Summary

After providing educational programs and site visits, I have seen an increase in the amount of gardening they are completing. They are now using the knowledge gained and put to use some of the adoptions they are including from the education they received.

The continuation of sustainability will continue to drive the need for raising their own vegetables from their local gardens.

Future Programming

Texas A&M Agrilife Extension here in Montague County will continue to provide updated information and educational programs and site visits for homeowners. The need for healthy living continues to drive the need for healthy consumption.



For More Information:

**Justin
Hansard**

CEA-ANR
Montague County

940-894-2831

j-hansard@tamu.edu

RELEVANCE

The lack of basic financial knowledge and skills among youth is of concern to Texans and the nation. American high school students routinely fail tests that evaluate their financial knowledge and are ill-prepared to face important decisions about borrowing, saving, investing, and planning for their financial futures. According to a survey from the Hartford Financial Services Group students and parents agree that college students did not leave high school with the skills needed to deal with the financial challenges that lie ahead.

NUMBERS:

- **>24%** Students who are prepared for financial challenges.
- **20%** Parents feel their students are prepared for financial challenges.
- **76%** Youth desire more help preparing for the future.

Additionally:

Financial literacy also influences important decisions about education. Youth with no savings account are less likely to attend college and for those in college, financial stress and credit card debt have been tied to an increased likelihood of missing class and dropping out. There is a direct correlation between future earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment. Those with a bachelor's degree have significantly higher earnings and lower unemployment rates than those with only a high school diploma.

RESPONSE

The Montague County Family and Community Health Committee and the Montague County 4-H/Youth Area Committee have identified the It's Your Money Program as an educational approach to address the financial literacy concerns in the county.

TARGET AUDIENCE

- **It's Your Money:** This program was targeted towards the local public schools for 8th - 12th Grade participants.
- **Food Handlers:** Program provides education and I useable certificate for those working in the food industry, following Texas Food Code.
- **4-H Career Interviews:** This more eclectic program was targeted towards the interests of the current 4-H participants and their desired future careers.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATORS

- **Prairie Valley High School, Nocona Middle School, and Montague FCCLA** Implemented versions of the It's Your Money program.
- **Prairie Valley ISD** Implemented Food Handlers
- **Bowie Public Library** Public building provided meeting rooms.

VALUE

It's Your Money

This financial literacy program is designed to teach young adults about the basics of personal finance. The two-part program consists of financial education in the classroom and a Real-World Experience capstone activity where they will use their new skills to make real-life financial decisions without real-world consequences.

70%

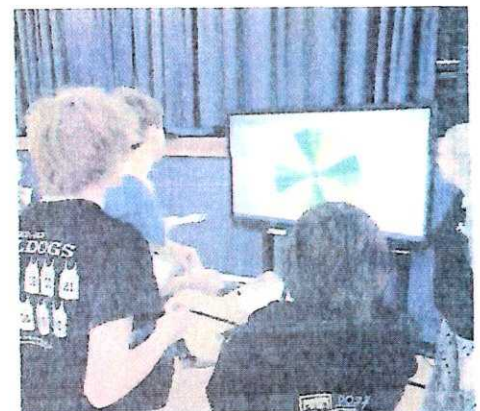
Current 18-24-year-olds have less than \$1,000 saved.

129

Local School-agers Participated in Hands-on Program this year in county.

39

Point increase in youth who will begin saving on a regular basis.



RESPONSE

It's Your Money:

Presented three times throughout the year to different groups and levels of learning.

Prairie Valley High School (Hands-On Event)

- 9th -12th Grades.
- 50 participants
- 78% White
- 13% (Asian, American Indian, Black, & Other)
- 8% Hispanic

Nocona Middle School (Hands-On Event)

- 8th Grade.
- 59 participants
- 20% Hispanic
- 64% White
- 7% African American

Montague El. FCCLA (Hands-on+ Program)

- 6th - 8th Grade.
- 20 participants
- 15% American Indian or Other

Food Handlers

Presented once throughout the year to the high school FCCLA classes.

Prairie Valley FCCLA Class

- 10th - 12th Grade
- 7 participants
- 14% Have worked in Food Service

Career Workshops

Interviews and hands-one activities to increase knowledge or career options.

Montague County 4-H Club

- 5th - 11th Grade
- 12 participants
- 3 Events



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Evaluation Strategy

It's Your Money and Food Handler programs utilized the developed pre and post survey instrument to measure knowledge gained. A total of 52 of 129 (40%) of It's Your Money participants completed the post survey; while all 7 (100%) of the Food Handlers participants completed the developed post survey.

Career Workshops used a informal survey instrument of speaking to participants and gaging their satisfaction through their thoughts following the event.

RESULTS

It's Your Money

- 44% increased understanding on how to track spending.
- 42% increased understanding on creating and following a future budget.
- 56% increase in plans to open a savings account.
- 82% Felt the hands-on event was beneficial to their understanding.
 - 37% Reevaluated their current career choice.
 - 62% Identified changes they would need to make to their preferred lifestyle to be able to stay in budget.

Food Handlers

- 53% increase in overall food safety knowledge in both classes.
- 85% of students received an 80% or better on their posttest. Showing increased understanding in:
 - Hand washing and personal hygiene concerns within the food industry
 - Cross-contamination
 - Temperature Danger Zone and TCS Foods.
- 57% of students were completely satisfied with the program.

Career Workshops

- 79% of attendees were completely satisfied with programming efforts.

Summary

The additional workshops held for the 4-H members covered job outlooks in visual and performance arts as well as the medical industry. Topics like education expectation, earning potential, and some hands-on experiences for what the career might be like as they explore. All youth were also encouraged to explore on their own through interviews, video searches, and college tours. While some might have expressed disbelief at the "living" aspects of adulthood, most could understand the importance of planning for the future.

"If we plan together, we can be comfortable in the future."
-Youth Participant to friend during the It's Your Money hands-on event

Future Programming

A concern raised by the recent TCF meeting was the need to help youth prepare for the workforce. The plan is to increase the plan to include:

- Additional opportunities to participate in It's Your Money.
- Add additional workshops on needed skills like resumes, interviewing, etc.
- Expand the career workshops to include local industry tours, career interviews, etc.



For More Information:

Melanie Stott

CEA - FCH
Montague County

940-894-2831

Melanie.stott@ag.tamu.edu

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RELEVANCE

Health concerns and chronic diseases are on the rise within the County.

With a near 2% increase in population within the county over the last year, concerns continue over health and wellness within the community. Considering that at least 7 of the top 10 leading causes of death in the U.S. and Texas are chronic diseases. With most chronic diseases can be prevented by eating a nutritious diet, being physically active, avoiding tobacco and excessive drinking, and getting regular health screenings.

NUMBERS: According to the 2024 Montague County State of Health Report,

- 18% - of adults report poor or fair health
- 58 - Cardiovascular Deaths "per 10,000 adults"
- 36% - of adults are obese (reporting a BMI over 30).
- 25% - of adults are inactive.

Adding concerns of heart disease, heart attack, heart failure, hypertension, cardiac dysrhythmia, and all strokes to the health in the county. As a response, AgriLife has developed healthy lifestyle programs that can address these issues with an evidence-based approach through education. With the hope that increased physical activity and improved eating habits that have been associated with a greater ability to manage the complications of certain chronic diseases and delay the onset of the disease in individuals at risk will also benefit the community overall.

RESPONSE

The Montague County Family and Community Health Committee has identified several programs as the educational approach to address the chronic health conditions and home preservation safety in the county.

TARGET AUDIENCE

- **Walk Across Texas** - This program was targeted towards adult participants challenged to walk 2-miles every day for 8-weeks.
- **Preserving the Harvest** - This 4-session program encourages research-based, safe techniques for storing food for one's family, using the skills for canning, dehydrating, and freezing.
- **Health Talk Express: Heart Strong** - This program was targeted to adult participants concerned about heart health.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATORS

- **The Carpenter Shop** - Non-Profit Senior and Community Center
- **Montague County Government** - Juvenile Probation, Veterans Office, and the County Judge's Office
- **United Presbyterian Church of Montague County**
- **Dean Prine** - Montague County Master Wellness Volunteer
- **Child Welfare Board and CASA**

VALUE

Walk Across Texas

This physical activity program encourages participants to work cooperatively while still setting goals for themselves to increase their personal physical activity. By setting this minimum goal of 2-miles a day for eight weeks, while building relationships, the hope is to also create a healthy habit of physical activity post the event as well.

36 %
21,598

Percentage of Obese Adults of the Montague County Population

11,837

Miles Walked

\$592,542

Economic Impact to Montague County



RESPONSE

Walk Across Texas

The eight-week program provides the opportunity to implement or increase the physical activity. There were two programs held during the fiscal year. The overall goal for participants is to create a habit of physical activity every day.

- 60 Total participants
- 32% Male
- Median Age = 47
- 12 Teams
- Total Miles Walked: 11,837.88

Preserving the Harvest

The four-session program provides information and hands on practice to increase food security and food safety in a home environment. Location was provided through the generosity of the local Presbyterian church in Bowie

- 20 Total Participants
- 1% Hispanic or Other
- Average Age = 47

Food Handlers

The program fulfills the requirements of the Texas Food Code in the local retail food establishments.

- 1 participant

Healthy Home

The four-session program was held in cooperation with the local CASA organization to assist with those working with CPS to build a healthier environment in the home for the children that live there.

- 6 participants (2 Adults, 4 Youth)



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Evaluation Strategy

Walk Across Texas: A wrap up survey was utilized for both events to measure knowledge gained and adoptions of best practices. A total of 23 of 60 (38%) participants completed the wrap up survey instrument. **Food Handlers:** utilized the developed pre and post survey instrument for all participants. **Preserving the Harvest:** utilized the developed survey instrument. 17 of 20 (85%) participants completed the post survey instrument.

RESULTS

Walk Across Texas (2 events)

- 91% (8-point increase) of participants noted their health to be Good, Very Good or Excellent.
- 48% (15-point increase) of took part in each moderate or vigorous intensity physical activity or exercise.
- 16% increase in miles walked.
- Impact:
 - Economic Total = \$592,542
 - Diabetes Savings = \$285,710

Preserving the Harvest (3 events)

- 88% (9-point increase) of participants felt their knowledge or skill with home food preservation was Good or Excellent following the workshops.
- 82% of participants felt they would make changes because of the workshops.
- Major Adoptions Identified:
 - Using tested recipes from a reliable source
 - Updating existing equipment
 - Get my dial gauge pressure canner tested

Food Handlers

Summary

Additional formal programing efforts also included a Healthy Heart program at the Nocona Senior Center during the month of February. We were able to cover several of the Health Talk Express programs over stroke, heart health, and stress. This provided diet and exercise ideas to implement in their lives.

Other education occurs informally as well with the Montague County Extension Facebook page. Topics shared included areas of food safety, the Dinner Tonight program, the Path to the Plate initiative, and our Health Hints topics.

"My stamina has improved, and it has been a great motivator. I plan to continue these good habits. Thank you WALK ACROSS TEXAS"

~Participant Testimonial

Future Programming

Continued implementation of the following programs:

- Walk Across Texas
- Preserving the Harvest

Additional programs for consideration as denoted by the FCS Committee.

- Dinner Tonight: Emergency Preparedness.
- Get Outside!
- Dinner Tonight: Heart Health
- Do Well Be Well with Hypertension



For More Information:

Melanie Stott

CEA - FCH
Montague County

940-894-2831

Melanie.stott@ag.tamu.edu

AGRILIFEEXTENSION.TAMU.EDU

RELEVANCE

Montague County has a growing population and 1,806 currently receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Additionally, 18% of children in the county are living in poverty leading to 50% of local schools to be considered eligible for the Better Living for Texans program due to over half of their enrolment being served through the free or reduced lunch program.

NUMBERS:

- 25% of Adults in Montague County are inactive.
 - 2% greater than State average
- 36% of Adults are considered obese.
 - 2% greater than State average
- 7.2 Food Desert Ranking for low-income sources for food security
- 18% of Adults report being in poor health.

Research suggests that SNAP recipients and other limited resource audiences consume diets that are not in agreement with current dietary recommendations, potentially increasing their risk for the development of chronic disease. A few major factors that have a strong potential to negatively impact health include:

- Food insecurity
- Obesity,
- Lack of access to healthy foods

By developing healthy habits individuals and families can decrease their health risks and gain a better satisfaction with life.

RESPONSE

The Montague County Family and Community Health Committee met four times through the year and identified several programs as an educational approach to address the issues of increasing physical activity and assisting with client choice to increase fruit and vegetable intake within the county.

TARGET AUDIENCE

- The adult program series, newsletters, and handouts are targeted towards the adults connected through the food pantries and senior centers.
- The youth program series is targeted towards the school-age youth within the county-eligible independent school districts.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATORS

- Nocona Food Pantry – A Hand Up, Bowie Food Pantry – Bowie Mission, Montague Food Pantry – Christ Can, Nocona Senior Center – The Carpenter’s Shop, Montague Independent School District, Bowie Public Library, Bowie Senior Center, Bowie Non-Profit Board, Bowie Presbyterian Church, local 4-H clubs, KNTX, Bowie News, Nocona News.

VALUE

Better Living for Texans:
 Walk and Talk

This physical activity program allows participants to discover a variety of low-impact activities that they can implement daily to increase their physical activity levels. Additionally, the educational portion provides them an opportunity to try new vegetables and fruits without the concern of cost to their budget.

18%

County adults that feel they are in fair or poor health

25%

County Adults are physically Inactive

1,402

Miles walked over the course of two programs



RESPONSE

Walk and Talk – Fall and Spring

Two eight-week programs focused on healthy living and increasing fruits and vegetable.

- 9 Total Adult Participants
- 11% American Indian
- Average Age: 69

Be Well Live Well

Five-week program for adults 55+ covering tips for increased health

- 10 Participants
- 10% Male

Healthy Carbohydrates

Four-week program covering the importance to healthy carbohydrates in a life.

- 5 Adult Participants
- Average Age: 73

Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities

Eight-week program in cooperation with Agriculture agent to increase individual growth of a garden.

- 8 Participants
- 13% Male
- 13% Hispanic

Balancing Food & Play

Eight-session program with local school encouraging youth to increase fruit and vegetables intake and get 60 minutes of physical activity each day.

- 56 Youth Participants
- 9% Hispanic
- 5% American Indian

Color Me Healthy

Eight-session program with a local school to try new things and get physical activity.

- 45 Youth Participants
- 9% Hispanic



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Evaluation Strategy

All programs used the established pre and post evaluations. A total of five surveys were used for the adult programs and two surveys were used for the youth programs. A total of 32 of 39 (82%) adult participants completed the five post survey instruments. All 101 youth participants completed the post survey instrument connected to their program.

RESULTS

Over the year of programming some highlights from program post surveys include:

- 32 Adult Graduates
 - 100% of Gardening participants felt that they could now grow vegetables or fruits for their family with confidence.
 - 40% of adults (20-point increase) fill at least half of their plate with fruits and vegetables.
 - 80% of adults (40-point increase) often or always plan their meals
 - Miles walked during Walk & Talk: 1,402 (23% increase)
 - Adults identified and enacted the following changes to their lifestyle for increased health
 - Decrease their intake of sweetened drinks
 - Read the nutrition facts label
 - Increase in Physical Activity.
 - Adjust snacks to a fruit or vegetable at home.
- 101 Youth Graduates
 - 12-point increase to 80% of Balancing Food and Play youth had 2 hours or less of screen time.
 - All participants of Color Me Healthy demonstrated that they were more willing to:
 - Taste fruits and vegetables
 - Increase personal physical activity.

Summary

Additional informal educational efforts are conducted using a monthly newsletter that is distributed through the three food pantries with about 330 copies shared each month. As well as online using the Montague Better Living for Texans Facebook page covering upcoming programs, tips for healthy living, and recipes that individuals and families can try to supplement their current choices. The importance of individual healthy choice is a major factor for the county participants.

"Walk and Talk made me more aware of how much exercise I was getting and helped me with watching what I eat."

Future Programming

For upcoming years, the following needs have been identified:

- Increase participation in Walk and Talk through school participation.
- Continue programming efforts with current audiences, adjust programs to add new options and review needs of clientele
- Increase programming efforts through new audiences.



For More Information:
Melanie Stott
EEA - FCH
Montague County
940-894-2831
Melanie.stott@ag.tamu.edu

AGRILIFEEXTENSION.TAMU.EDU