Producing and mailing a printed copy of the Travis County 4-H newsletter represented a significant expense in terms of both dollars and staff time. Additionally, once a newsletter was printed and mailed it was difficult to correct any errors found later or to notify clientele of changes that may have occurred regarding information provided in the newsletter. A more cost efficient method for distributing the 4-H news was needed.

In response to these issues, Cory Talley, CEA-4-H/Youth Development in Travis County started a 4-H blog to help reduce newsletter cost, expedite communication with 4-H’ers and volunteers, and attract new youth and volunteers.

Objectives:
- To obtain a more timely and effective means for notifying clientele of upcoming events/activities, dates and deadlines in the 4-H program (local, county, district, regional and state).
- To provide a means of notifying clientele of changes to dates or other event details.
- To create a single source for 4-H related information with the ability to reference past information distributed months or even a year or more ago.
- To recognize youth for their outstanding accomplishments.
- To allow local clubs and others the accessibility to promote their events and activities.

Impact Results:
- Clientele subscribing to the blog via the e-mail option receive updates any time a new post is added to the blog.
- Readers have the option to subscribe via a web browser based “feed” instead of the email subscription. Many choose this option to help reduce the amount of emails received.
- Clientele do not have to wait until the end of the month to receive the information via a paper newsletter.
- Clientele are able to respond more quickly to information as it is posted. For those with PDAs/Smartphones, they have accessibility to the 4-H news while on the go.
Spotlight

Empowering Foster Families. Foster care enables families to open their hearts and homes to children who cannot live with their parents due to family circumstances. Foster Families can make a positive, lifelong impact on children as they help them grow physically, spiritually, emotionally and intellectually. Methodist Children’s Home offers foster care and family preservation services through its Community Services Program. The foster families are required to complete pre-service training in order to become a licensed foster family. Dallas County Extension conducted a parenting program on Positive Discipline at a pre-service training held by the Methodist Children’s Home-Dallas Outreach. Ten participants (five married couples) attended the training. These parents increased awareness of the reasons for discipline children, learned about the strengths and weaknesses of different parenting styles, and positive disciplining techniques.

Contact: Wenhsing Cheng, CEA-FCS, Dallas

Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes. 63 City of Austin employees participated in the 9-week Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes lesson series on nutrition and self-care management for Type 2 diabetics.

Type 2 diabetics who completed the 9-lesson Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes series were evaluated with the following results achieved:

*57% of participates reported having no previous diabetes classes, only 20% reported following a meal plan from their doctor, indicating a critical need for diabetes education.
*99% of participants improved their ability to control diabetes after attending classes.
*100% reported having a doctor check their feet in the past 12 months, and 69% reported doing self-checks every day.
*62% of participants are now using physical activity as a way to manage blood glucose levels.
*88% reported having a dilated eye exam during the past 12 months (an important quality indicator being used by national accrediting agencies such as the Joint Commission of Accreditation of Hospitals).

Contact: Dolores Sandmann, CEA-Nutrition and Health, Travis County