Urban Program Director Comments

Professional Development Opportunities - When summer approaches, as Extension professionals, we are fortunate to have our professional association’s state and national meetings available for us to consider attending. With the changing environment we work in, it is very important that as educators we keep up with the subject matter and current research in issues that are critical for our clients. Extension is the source of unbiased research based education, which makes it imperative that we remain current and relevant in our areas of responsibilities.

Upcoming Conferences that I hope you have considered attending include:

July 28-31 Texas Extension Association of Family & Consumer Sciences—Amarillo

Aug. 2-6 Texas County Agricultural Agents Association—Amarillo

Aug. 4-6 Texas Extension Specialists’ Association—New Braunfels

Aug, 5-7 Texas Association of Extension 4-H Agents—Jefferson

Sept. 14-18 Galaxy III Conference—Indianapolis, Indiana

May 4-7, 2009 National Urban Conference—Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Conferences are one source of professional development, but don’t forget the journal of Extension as a source of the latest Extension research and programming ideas.
Texas AgriLife Extension Service Research

With such a large group of employees working on advanced degrees, AgriLife Extension is a source of relevant research based on agent or specialist issues. The research is focused on issues that are relevant to urban staff and audiences. The abstracts for the following research can be found on the urban website at: http://urbantaex.tamu.edu/docs/Abstract/abstracts.htm

Research Abstracts

Improving Organizational Effectiveness: Use Of Volunteers To Deliver Public Services, Susan G. Ballabina

Organizational and Individual Factors Related to Retention of County Extension Agents Employed by Texas Cooperative Extension, Galen D. Chandler

A Study to Determine if In-Depth Professional Development Provided to Extension Educators on Program Development Has an Effect on Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Extension Educational Programs, Darrell A. Dromgoole

Leadership Skills Possessed and Attitudes Toward Individual or Group-Centered Leadership as Perceived by Hispanic Women With Limited Resources in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, Elaine K. Fries

An Evaluation of Instructional Content, Activities, and Objectives in the Development of Leadership Knowledge and Skills of Participants in the Leadership Extension Program of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Dale A. Fritz

A Study And Evaluation Of Limited Resource Audiences Preferred Educational Methods For Learning Nutrition Education In The Coastal Bend, Rusty R. Hohlt

Variables Affecting Levels Of Hispanic Participation In Texas Extension Programs, Ruben J. Saldaña
Spotlight

Preventing Childhood Overweight
The FCS Committee in Nueces County collaborated with local school districts and the state CATCH (Coordinated Approach To Child Health) program trainers to teach school faculty grades K-5 to implement the CATCH program. Approximately 2,500 children and their families were reached by the schools. Nueces Extension conducted trainings and support activities for school faculty and support staff to reduce fat, encourage healthy food choices and physical activity, as well as to involve the family in supporting the CATCH message. A post evaluation “report card” was completed by 100% of the food service staff, coaches, parental involvement staff and 70% of the teachers to determine behavior changes. The results indicated that the CATCH program maximized classroom activity time and increased moderate to vigorous physical activity. The four schools that participated in Walk Across Texas involved 957 students and 15 adults who walked 14,351 miles.

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Plants in the Classroom
The Plants in the Classroom (PIC) is a “teach-the-teacher” program developed by the Fort Bend County Master Gardeners which incorporated the TAKS requirements for 5th grade science. Master Gardeners present the 3 hour hands-on training program to teachers in their school district on teacher work days. Science subjects included composting, vermiculture and nitrogen cycle. 77% of the teachers felt the training content and activities either met or exceeded expectations. One evaluation comment said the presentations were “Excellent, fast moving, lots of good information and knowledgeable presenters”. The teachers were very receptive to the “make and take” approach for the classroom training.

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