Centra Program Highlights:

Dr. Anthony Camerino, Harris County CEA-Horticulture, gave an excellent presentation on Urban Volunteer Management in the second Centra program for urban initiative counties. He focused on some lessons learned from his experiences working with volunteers in different roles at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, the Florida Museum of Natural History at the University of Florida, Urban Horticulture Agent and Master Gardener Coordinator in Florida Extension and most recently in Harris County. He pointed out the differences in volunteer programs and the motivations for becoming a volunteer. He shared some keys to “refocusing” a “misdirected” program and the importance of reporting, evaluation and communication.

Building on some of the concepts in Anthony’s presentation, Dana Tarter, CEA-Nutrition and Health in Tarrant County, shared experiences learned from the Wellness in Texas Master Volunteer program she is currently piloting with other counties for statewide dissemination. This is an excellent example of statewide coordination, specialist involvement, and recruitment design for maximum involvement.

Lillianne Goedders, CEA-Urban Youth Development, Travis County talked about volunteers from another perspective. She encouraged us to “think outside the box” when it comes to community volunteers and make sue they know how they fit into the organizational structure. With AmeriCorps members and C.A.P.I.T.O.L. employees, she is able to support the program with fee for services.

All three presenters gave valuable information about working with urban volunteers, and the presentation can be seen at http://eit.tamu.edu/centra.html
Extension in the City Award

The second annual Extension in the City Award will be presented at the Agriculture Conference in College Station this January, 2008. Deadline for submission of nominations is **OCTOBER 1, 2007**. This year we will be honoring a state elected official that has been supportive of Extension urban programming. This is an excellent opportunity to “pat your legislator on the back” and thank him/her for knowing your program, participating when appropriate, and being a vocal supporter of Extension. The award is open to all 20 initiative counties. The form and guidelines are attached.

2007 National Urban Conference Proceedings Available

The proceedings of the 2007 Urban Extension pre-conference and main conference are now available on the conference web site. [http://extension.missouri.edu/urbanconf](http://extension.missouri.edu/urbanconf)

I encourage you to access these proceedings which reflect the outstanding sessions and presentations made during this national conference. The conference web site will be available for at least 2 years as a reference to support urban extension work now and in the future. The information from one workshop that was not presented is also included. #58 Continuing Our Journey: A Community-based Partnership to Provide Health Access to Native American Families in Kansas City, Missouri. Each presentation had a unique approach and each have something to share that can be adapted to strengthen Texas programming in urban initiative counties.
Spotlight

Dallas Area Coalition to Prevent Childhood Obesity

The Community Council of Greater Dallas and Children Medical Center Dallas formed the Dallas Area Coalition to Prevent Childhood Obesity. TCE is one of 88 organizations in the Coalition working to encourage physical activity and optimal nutrition for children through collaborative community, corporate and educational activities.

Shaping America’s Youth (S.A.Y) 21st Century Town Meeting’s 700 participants developed support for obesity prevention programs in the Dallas region as well as gathered data for a National Action Plan. As a follow-up to S.A.Y. the Dallas ENP Resource Committee, in partnership with Children’s Medical Center Dallas, hosted a community luncheon for approximately 130 people from 60 organizations and 5 legislative offices. The table discussions resulted in the “first-steps” for Dallas communities, businesses, schools, healthcare services and political leaders to take to improve child nutrition and physical activity.

Some of the projects currently being worked on by the Coalition include: Website Reference Sheet; Coalition Speakers Bureau; Community Resource Guide; Coalition Online Community and a Community Education Initiative.

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Youth Board Success Story

The Williamson County Youth Board is comprised of 13 members representing both the traditional 4-H and the Youth programs. The Board decided to market and promote a Myspace educational program at their middle school and the area elementary schools. The program “Myspace in Myplace” will be presented to the student body and they will share topics over the history, internet safety and statistics related to the use. A local policeman will share his/her experiences with internet and will add credibility to the program and its importance to the youth. The program is scheduled for the fall and spring semester and the students are excited about sharing this very important topic with their peers and parents.

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