

Making a Difference



2020 Stephens County- BLT Youth In-depth Plan Summary

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Relevance

The high prevalence of childhood obesity in Texas is cause for concern because it is linked to negative health consequences for children and their families. Schools are uniquely positioned to have a positive impact on children's knowledge and behaviors associated with obesity. For example, vegetable exposure plus school gardening has been shown to improve consumption of fruits and vegetables. Adding more frequent and more vigorous physical activities during school has been shown to improve student fitness and weight. The home environment is also an important influence on a child's eating and healthy activity behaviors. The greater the frequency of vegetables consumption and physical activity by parents, the greater the consumption of these foods and exercise by their children. With child obesity rates among low-income children in Texas ranging from 10% to over 20%, engaging schools and families in prevention efforts is critical. Stephens County continues to rank poorly in Texas for health outcomes and in 2017 was 28%. This ranking represents the health of a county and one of the factors included in this ranking is obesity rates.

Response

To target this high prevalence of childhood obesity, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Stephens County partnered with Breckenridge Independent School District to implement the Learn, Grow, Eat & Go! (LGEG) curriculum in the five third grade classes at North Elementary school. A LGEG Task force was formed in 2020 when the program was first implemented and includes the school principal, the five third grade teachers, parents & Stephens County Commissioners.

The 2020 program year was unlike any other as Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service along with other agencies, organizations, families and individuals responded to a different work, school and home environment due to the global response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID19) pandemic. With its network across the state, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service was able to respond at the local, regional and state level with virtual educational efforts designed to reach individuals and families with resources and education to help them continue with aspects of their daily life related to health, safety, agriculture and youth development. Although our educational activities, outcomes and impacts may look different for 2020, we continue our efforts **to help Texans better their lives.**

The Learn, Grow, Eat, Go! Curriculum emphasizes science, math, language art/ reading, social studies and health through effective learning activities. The LGEG curriculum was designed to engage children and their families in school gardens, vegetable tastings, classroom activities and at home Facebook recipe demonstrations which includes:

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- 8 visits of in-class, TEKS aligned, lessons
- 4 school raised bed gardens; built, planted & maintained by students
- Classroom vegetable tastings and recipe demonstrations
- Student Recipe creations from garden harvest
- Prepared and posted 2 Facebook recorded video posts on May 8th & May 14th; recipe demonstration of Spinach Strawberry Salad & My Plate Pizza

Volunteers were recruited and utilized to help implement the program. The Stephens County Commissioners, teachers & parents assisted with the school gardens, food demonstrations, and curriculum activities.

Results

102 third grade students age 8-10 years old attended five or more of these sessions, and 100% completed pre-evaluation.

In response to the Learn Grow Eat Go series of Facebook recorded video post on the recipe demonstration of Spinach Strawberry Salad there was a total of 1,200 Views and total engagements (like, comments, shares, clicks) were 267.

In response to the Learn Grow Eat Go series of Facebook recorded video post on the recipe demonstration of My Plate Pizza there was a total of 1,600 Views and total engagements (like, comments, shares, clicks) were 337.

Acknowledgements

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Stephens County would like to recognize Breckenridge Independent School District, H&H Garden, Stephens County Commissioners and North Elementary school aids for providing support to the LGEG program.

Interpretation and Future Programming

The North gardens will be moved to the South Elementary campus the following year due to the North Elementary campus being closed. LGEG will continue to be implemented in the Breckenridge South Elementary School to all 3rd grader students for continuous years due to success of the program.

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VALUE

Better Living for Texans



These nutrition programs teach low-income audiences to prepare nutritious meals, stretch their food resources, improve their food-safety practices, and participate in regular physical activity. This not only improves the quality of life and reduces the risk of chronic disease for participants, but also lowers public health care costs.

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