

FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2024-APRIL 2024

EDITOR'S NOTE

The holidays were a time for celebration and indulgence, and it's not uncommon for people to gain weight during this time. In fact, a study by the National Institutes of Health found that the average American gains about five pounds between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. After the holidays, many people resolve to lose the weight they gained. This is why gyms are often packed in January. However, it is important to remember that losing weight takes time and effort. There is no quick fix. The best way to lose weight and keep it off is to make sustainable changes to your diet and exercise routine.

Lucky, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension offers an array of Healthy Programs. I will be offering a strengthening program called Strong People, Strong Bodies for 24-weeks, that will be held twice a week. Another program that will be implemented this quarter is Walk Across Texas, an eight-week program to encourage participants to walk more.

If you're looking to improve your overall health and well-being, there are a few things you can do to set yourself up for success.

First, it's important to be realistic about your goals. Don't try to change everything about your lifestyle at once, or you're more likely to get discouraged and give up. Start by setting small, achievable goals that you can build on over time.

For example, if you're not active at all, start by walking for 15 minutes a day. Once you've mastered that, you can gradually increase the duration and intensity of your workouts. Or, if you're eating unhealthy foods, start by cutting out one processed food or sugary drink at a time.

It's also important to make sure your goals are specific and measurable. This will help you track your progress and stay motivated. For example, instead of saying "I want to eat healthier," say "I want to eat five servings of fruits and vegetables every day." Or, instead of saying "I want to lose weight," say "I want to lose 10 pounds in three months."

Finally, it's important to have a plan for how you're going to achieve your goals. This includes identifying any obstacles that might stand in your way and coming up with strategies for overcoming them. For example, if you know you're most likely to snack when you're stressed, make sure to have healthy snacks on hand at all times. Or, if you know you're most likely to skip workouts in the morning, schedule them for later in the day when you're more likely to have time.

Remember, it's never too late to make healthy changes. The New Year is a great time to start, but you can make changes at any time of year. Just be patient, persistent, and kind to yourself, and you'll be well on your way to a healthier and happier you.

-Joanne Ureste Armijo
County Extension Agent-
Family & Community Health

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CONTACT



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UPCOMING PROGRAMS

FEBRUARY: HEART AWARENESS MONTH

February is American Heart Month, a time to raise awareness about heart disease and how to prevent it. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for **both** men and women in the United States, **but it is largely preventable.**

There are many things you can do to prevent heart disease, including:

- Eating a healthy diet. Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Choose lean protein sources, such as fish, chicken, and beans. Limit saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, and sodium.
- Exercising regularly. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise most days of the week.
- Maintaining a healthy weight. Being overweight or obese increases your risk of heart disease.
- Controlling your blood pressure and cholesterol. High blood pressure and high cholesterol can damage your heart and arteries.
- Quitting smoking. Smoking is a major risk factor for heart disease.

The Family Resources PAC Heart Strong Committee is partnering with their respective agencies to organize a Heart Strong Conference to educate individuals about heart disease. **Driscoll Health Plan & DHR** have agreed to sponsored the conference.



TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION | WALK ACROSS TEXAS

STRONG PEOPLE, STRONG BODIES & WALK ACROSS TEXAS

The 24-week program will begin on **February 12, 2024** at the [Extension Office](#), every Monday and Wednesday, starting at 10:00 a.m.

The programs are designed for mid-life and older adults and include progressive resistance training, balance training, cardio, and flexibility exercises.

Texas Regional Bank has sponsored the program and will provide shirts to the participants.

CHILD CARE CONFERENCE MARCH 30, 2024

Child care providers play a vital role in caring for America's children. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension-Hidalgo County host Multi-County Child Care Conferences at our Weslaco Center. (in English & Spanish) and provides four clock hours to child care providers and directors.

Superior Health Plan has sponsored the program and will provide refreshments to our participants.



PAST PROGRAMS

SEPTEMBER- DECEMBER

DANCE ACROSS TEXAS & STEP UP, SCALE DOWN

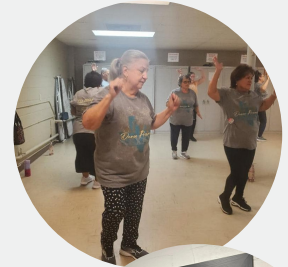
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension implemented two program during the holidays (October-November) to help people with their health journey.

The first program was redesigned to "Dance Across Texas." The program began on October 11, 2023 with a total of 31 participants. The primary purpose of this program was to increase their steps to burn calories in hopes of moving to a healthier weight. As a group, the participants were able to walk **5,029.18 miles**. We would like to thank **All State-Tijerina Agency** for sponsoring the Dance Across Texas Program. All the participants received a program shirt.

Afterwards, the participants had the opportunity to stay for the "Step Up, Scale Down" program. Each week, we offered a different lesson on healthy living and encouraged participants to apply what they learned in their everyday lives. Topics included calorie intake and expenditure, food labels, nutrition, hydration, healthy snacking, and health numbers. As a group, they lost **67.1 pounds**.

By offering a free dancing class and a cooking program, the participants health improved. They learned the importance of physical exercise and how to eat healthy, even during the busy holiday season. The dancing class was a great way to get people moving and burning calories. Dancing is a fun and effective way to exercise, and it is something that people of all ages and fitness levels can enjoy. The cooking program was also a valuable resource for people who wanted to learn how to eat healthier. The program taught people how to read food labels and understand what they are eating. It also taught people how to serve in portion control. This is an important skill to learn, especially during the holidays when there is often an abundance of food around.

Overall, the programs were a great way to help people stay healthy during the holidays. Thank you **All-State Tijerina Agency**.



"Got my blood results, blood pressure & A1c has improved, if I continue to lose weight and lower my A1c my doctor said I can be off medications!"



-Julia Jimenez

MASTER CLOTHING VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



Every Tuesday, 34 active volunteers meet to learn sewing skills.

This past quarter, they made and donated mastectomy pillows and seat belt cushions to Texas Oncology.

They have also participated in craft sales. Throughout the year, the MCV vendors sold their items, profiting a total of \$2,010, which helps to fund their retirement. **Thank you Farmers Market at Firemen's Park & Barbara Storz for allowing the MCVs to sell at your respective Farmer's Market.**



(CONTINUED PAST EVENTS)

CHILD CARE CONFERENCE

The Multi-Childcare Conference was a huge success! Cameron and Hidalgo Counties led a concurrent childcare conference with English and Spanish sessions. The conference provided four clock hours and was attended by 102 participants. Joanne and Lilian organized the conference and invited the guest speakers. Dr. Andrea Valdez invited Commissioner Fuentes, Hidalgo County Precinct 1. Tina Muñoz was the Master of Ceremony for the English session. Two Master Clothing Volunteers set up their shop. **South Texas Literacy** donated 200 books to early childhood providers. Community partners included **Superior HealthPlan**, Texas Tropical Behavioral Center, Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities, **Behavioral Health Solutions**, Easterseals Rio Grande Valley, South Texas Literacy Coalition, Master Clothing Volunteers, and Precinct 1.

Thank you **Superior Health Plan** for sponsoring the refreshments & **South Texas Literacy** for the books! A huge thanks to **Bea Sanchez, BHS** for presenting at the conference.



CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY

Child safety seat checkups often find that four out of five children are not properly restrained in age- and size-appropriate child safety seats or safety belt systems in the back seat of the vehicle. This is the most effective way to protect your child in a crash. There are many compatibility problems between child safety seats and motor vehicles.

I assisted **DHR Health Women's Hospital** and **Behavioral Health Solutions** car seat events during Child Passenger Safety Week. **Janet Welch-DHR & Bea Sanchez-BHS** held a successful event. Together we ensured children left the event safe.

STRAWBERRY OATMEAL COOKIE BALLS

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of Medjool dates pitted
- 4 medium ripe strawberries
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup old fashioned rolled oats dry
- 3/4 cup whole almonds
- 1/4 cup unsweetened coconut flakes



Instructions:

1. Use a food processor to blend the dates, strawberries, vanilla extract, oats, and almonds together.
2. Process until the almonds are in pieces but not completely ground.
3. Spoon out mixture** and roll into a small ball, place on a plate and refrigerate for 1 hour.
4. Clean food processor and add coconut flakes. Process until broken down into small pieces.
5. Pour out coconut onto a clean plate and roll chilled balls over coconut, topping well.
6. Store in a sealed container in the refrigerator for up to 5 days. You can also store in individual wrap or plastic bag.
7. **use 1 Tbsp. measuring spoon to scoop out mixture from processor before rolling.

<https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu/>

OUTREACH PROGRAM: ADDING FRUIT & VEGGIES INTO YOUR DIET

The McAllen Public Library requested my presence to speak about the advantages of increasing fruit and vegetable intake as part of a healthy lifestyle. I provided a demonstration of

of healthy food preparation, along with my colleague, Melissa de Leon.





4-H CONSUMER DECISION MAKING HIDALGO COUNTY CONTEST

CLOTHING & TEXTILE WORKSHOPS: STORYBOARD, FASHION SHOW, & DUDS TO DAZZLE

Thank you to **Sandy Riojas, FR PAC President**, for helping at the Consumer Decision Making Contest by judging Oral & Reasoning.

I led a 4-H Digital Storyboard Workshop at Cuellar Middle School in Weslaco, Texas. Guiding the students through the process of sketching designs and utilizing Canva to bring their storyboards to life! I also, hosted a Fashion Show & Duds to Dazzle Workshop at the Extension Office on December 2, 2023. Kids explored the world of fashion with lessons on buying tips, outfit selection, fabric care, fiber knowledge, pattern making, and sewing safety.



UPCOMING EVENTS

STRONG PEOPLE, STRONG BODIES
Every Monday & Wednesday 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Join us for strength training classes! These classes are designed for mid-life and older adults and include progressive resistance training, balance training, and flexibility exercises. Classes are twice a week.

PROGRAM BEGINS: FEBRUARY 12, 2024
LOCATION: 410 N. 13TH AVE., EDINBURG TX 78541

WHY CHOOSE OUR CLASS:

- Suitable for Beginner
- Enhance Flexibility and Strength
- Calm Your Mind
- Improve Posture and Balance

Reserve your spot now, class size is limited!
Registration Link: <https://hidalgo.agrilife.org/strong-people-strong-bodies/>
Questions: Call 956-383-1026 or e-mail Joanne.Ureste@ag.tamu.edu

HEART STRONG CONFERENCE
MCALLEN PUBLIC LIBRARY AUDITORIUM
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2024 9:30 AM

First 100 people receive a bag of food & a keepsake souvenir!
Join us for FREE Health Screenings, Health Talks, & Door Prizes throughout the conference

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2024
HEALTH FAIR 9:30 A.M. TO 10:30 A.M.
EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

10:15 a.m. Heartfelt Breathing: Nurturing Your Heart with Mindful Breathing Practices
10:30 a.m. Empowering Your Heart: Taking Charge of Diabetes to Prevent Heart Disease "Dusty" Luna, Endocrinologist
11:00 a.m. Food Demo: Cook for a Healthy Heart
11:15 a.m. Your Heart's Silent Cry: Understanding the Signs and Symptoms of Heart Disease by DHR Cardiologist

DR. EDUARDO "DUSTY" LUNA, ENDOCRINOLOGIST
DHR CARDIOLOGIST

REGISTER NOW

<https://hidalgo.agrilife.org/heart-strong/>
956-383-1026

Childcare Conference
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service/ Research Center
2401 Business Hwy 83 E, Weslaco, TX 78596
March 30, 2024; 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
4 Clock Hours

Educational Topics:

- Emergency Preparedness
- Child Abuse & Maltreatment
- Child Care Provider Well-being
- Food Safety in the Classroom

\$35
Early Bird Special Before March 1, 2024

Register here Contact Us 956-383-1026

Registration Link: <https://hidalgo.agrilife.org/child-care-provider-conference/>

THANK YOU

Driscoll Health Plan

superior healthplan

BOOT BARN

TEXAS REGIONAL BANK
The people you know.

Allstate
XAVIER & DIANA PENA AGENCIES

Allstate
Tijerina Insurance Agency

CONTACT