

**SNAP-Ed Monthly Project Activities and Outcomes Report
FY 2017**



**BETTER LIVING
FOR TEXANS**
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Contractor: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Contract Number: 529-17-0002-00003
Reporting Period: October 1– December 31, 2017

Describe SNAP-Ed activities and outcomes during the current reporting period.

SNAP-Ed Program Summary:

- **Progress in achieving overarching goals:**

Objective 1: Health promotion to help the SNAP-Ed eligible target audience establish healthy eating habits and a physically active lifestyle.

The Better Living for Texans program started the fiscal year strong with adult programs continuing with established partnering agencies and youth programs established at schools and other youth agencies. In the months of October, November, and December, County Extension Agents and Better Living for Texans (BLT) Assistants conducted educational sessions on general nutrition, physical activity, gardening, food safety, food resource management. Direct educational contacts included program series taught from a combination of the eight evaluated program series BLT offers which includes participants completing a pre, post, follow-up and/or retrospective surveys. (Adult series: *A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!*; *Eat Smart, Live Strong*; *Step Up, Scale Down*; and *Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities*; youth series: *Balancing Food & Play*; and *Learn, Grow, Eat & GO!*; combined youth and adult series: *Walk Across Texas* and *Walk N Talk*)

In addition to these series, Dinner Tonight programs for adults teach healthy cooking skills and recipes in a single event with partnering agencies, local stores, and possibly local chefs. Ag Literacy Days were presented which offer day-long programs to elementary school-aged youth. These programs focus on agriculture, how food and other resources come from the field/ranch to stores, then to their homes. The MyPlate food groups were taught.

Objective 2: Reduce risk factors for chronic diseases among the SNAP-Ed eligible target audience such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.

All the single education programs and program series offered by BLT focused on healthier eating, consuming more fruits and vegetables, and the importance physical activity to help reduce the risk and/or onset of obesity and of chronic diseases. Several of our County Extension Agents offer *Dinner Tonight!* cooking programs that are available to for BLT audiences. These single-education programs feature preparation of healthy recipes prepared by agents, local chefs, and others from the community.

A diabetes program series, *Do Well, Be Well*, was taught. While it is not listed as an intervention program with our SNAP-Ed eligible audiences, when offered to them at no charge, a portion of the curriculum covering general nutrition, portion control, and the importance of physical activity are discussed with the participants.

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Objective 3: Increase collaboration of nutrition, physical activity, and wellness education across the state.

AgriLife Extension continued collaborations and partnerships both within the Texas A&M system and with external agencies/organizations. Two initiatives that continued in FY 2018 are the Healthy Texas (internal; collaborative effort within Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and with the Texas A&M Health Science Center) and the Univision San Antonio project (external). The Healthy Texas program, initially implemented in the South and Southeast Regions, kicked off in six East Region counties with plans to roll out the program in the North Region (Panhandle) this spring. The Healthy Texas program focuses healthier eating by increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, along with the importance of being physically active. The agents implemented *A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!, Step Up, Scale Down, and Growing and Nourishing Healthier Communities*, along with other single-educational programs such as *Dinner Tonight* and *Path to the Plate*.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's partnership with Univision San Antonio continued with nutrition focused segments. New for the spring will be gardening segments that feature a BLT *Growing and Nourishing Healthier Communities* gardening educator. The gardening segments will include general gardening information and tips from BLT's *Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities* gardening program series and will be aired on varying weekdays at noon. The gardening videos are being developed in Spanish and will be available in English for use in other gardening programs and events.

The more common collaborations across the state continued with BLT programs being held and presented to clientele associated with county/local agriculture organizations, child care facilities, senior adult/citizens centers, parks and recreation centers, schools of all age levels, faith-based groups, food banks and pantries, food stores, nonprofits, government agencies, human service agencies, workforce development groups, and worksites.

Objective 4: Increase consumption of fruits, vegetables, and other foods that comprise a healthy diet among the SNAP-Ed eligible population.

During the first quarter, the Fresh Start to a Healthier You! series continued to be presented. During each session, increasing fruit and vegetable consumption is emphasized. Recipes for each meal – breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks, feature fruits and vegetables.

Gardening programs either kicked off at schools across the state – Learn, Grow, Eat & GO! (LGEG) while the Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities (GNHC) programs continued from the summer as well as established fall seasonal vegetable plantings.

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Objective 5: Increase ongoing physical activity among the SNAP-Ed eligible population in accordance with the recommended Physical Activity Guidelines.

The BLT programs focused on increasing physical activity along with a nutrition message that continue to be implemented across the state are *Balancing Food and Play*, *Step Up, Scale Down*, and *Walk Across Texas* and/or *Walk N Talk*. While each of these programs offer varying number of sessions, they continue to be requested and well received.

- **Number of new projects implemented by identified primary approach (specify approach - Direct, Indirect, Social Marketing, Policy, Systems, or Environmental Change):**

During the first quarter, the revised BLT website was launched, <https://blt.tamu.edu>. (Social Marketing)

- **Number of ongoing projects identified by primary approach (specify approach: Direct, Indirect, Social Marketing, Policy, Systems, or Environmental Change):**

In the first quarter, County Extension Agents and BLT assistants/educators continue to provide direct educational programs to SNAP-Ed eligible youth and adult audiences. Agents and BLT assistants continued to maintain/create BLT related county websites and Facebook pages. (Direct, Indirect, Social Marketing, Systems Change)

To better tell our story, the BLT Regional Program Managers continued to work directly with county agents and BLT assistants to develop success stories that can be used to highlight at local, regional, state, and when appropriate national levels via print media, television, and other social media outlets. (Social Marketing)

BLT produced monthly newsletters in both English and Spanish for county educators to use or adapt as needed for their local audience(s). Each month a seasonal or current nutrition topic are often highlighted and accompanied with two recipes. October's newsletter was titled, *Eat Wisely on Game-day*, featured tips on eating healthy at football tailgates and gatherings. November's newsletter featured article covered how to properly and safely cook a turkey. December's focused on tips to end the year that encouraged healthier holiday-season, followed by starting the new year with a healthy routine that included choosing healthier foods and being physically active. (Indirect)

County agents and BLT educators served on School Health Advisory Councils (SHAC) within the counties and communities they serve. Due to this involvement, the opportunity to implement the *Learn, Grow, Eat & GO!*, *Balancing Food and Play*, and *Walk Across Texas/Walk N Talk* programs were implemented. (Systems and Environmental Changes).

Note: Because we do not have a single social marketing campaign strictly for BLT, we did not include that data on the EARS report.

- **Partnership activities:**

For a detailed list of partnerships, please see our EARS report which lists the number of various locations where BLT programs are conducted. Our partnerships with community centers, churches, senior adult/citizen service centers, food banks/pantries, public and designated low-income housing, Head Start programs, school districts, and other

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agencies allow the BLT educators to continue to make positive impacts through programs that teach general nutrition, the importance of physical activity, and gardening.

- **Staff/partner trainings:**

The BLT State Office held the 2017 Better Living for Texans Educators' Conference, November 13 – 15, 2017, at the Texas 4-H Conference Center, Lake Brownwood, TX, for all the full and part-time BLT funded staff. Topics covered by the State Program Director, Regional Program Managers, County Extension Agents, and partnering agencies included marketing and building partnerships, programming resources, organizational skills, reaching goals and expectations, BLT State Office update, program sharing, county audits and reporting, social marketing, creating social market videos, team building activities, implementing physical activity into programs. Seventy BLT assistants, business office staff, and State Office staff attended.

In December, the research-based training developed by Cornell University, *Navigating for Success*, was held in College Station. The BLT and EFNEP State offices partnered together to present this training for all newly hired educators and those wanting a refresher on the training. This program teaches educators techniques of how to successfully engage adult and youth low-income audiences.

- **Conference presentations and/or other journal publications:**

None to report.

- **Major achievements (not already addressed):**

The gardening curricula continued to gain interest in schools, youth agencies, and adults in underserved communities. The *Step Up, Scale Down* program was offered around the holidays to encourage participants make healthy choices around leading into the holidays and at the start of the new year.

- **Major setbacks, if any:**

None identified.

- **Overall assessment:**

The new fiscal year is off to a great start. BLT educators continued to identify new program partners while maintaining established partnerships for program delivery.

Please remember to submit your EARS Report along with the monthly summary.

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Better Living for Texans

Students from the Ramiro Barrera Elementary School kick off the Learn, Grow, Eat & GO! program by planting seeds to be transplanted in to the garden later in the year. (Starr County)

