



TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION

ATM  
HEALTHY SOUTH TEXAS

# 2019.2020 ANNUAL REPORT



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BUILDING HEALTHY  
YOUTH TO BUILD  
A HEALTHY TEXAS!

**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service**

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The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.



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# State Coordinator



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and Texas 4-H Youth Development values health. More importantly, improving the health of others is our key mission and goal. Although, a variety of methods are used to provide health education in our agency, the Healthy Texas Youth Ambassador program has proven to be one of the most successful means to teach others, especially young people. Peer education has shown to be successful for many years; it is for this reason that we annually recruit and train responsible young people who have a passion and motivation to live a healthy lifestyle. More importantly, these young people have a passion to help others live a healthy life as well.

## Julie Gardner, PhD

HEALTHY TEXAS YOUTH AMBASSADOR  
STATE COORDINATOR

In 2019-2020, the Healthy Texas Youth Ambassador deployed 121 ambassadors throughout the state in an effort to decrease chronic disease, improve safety practices, and be the voice of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. Throughout this report, the evidence is shown that these young people were beyond successful in their endeavors. The Healthy Texas Youth Ambassador program is setting an example for others to follow; an example that will be key to the health of future generations.



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# A Call to Action

“He who has HEALTH has hope, and he who has HOPE has everything.”  
Arab Proverb



## Youth across the state were challenged to be a role model for a healthy lifestyle...

The 2019-2020 Healthy Texas Youth Ambassador program began in summer 2019 with ambassadors planning and implementing health programs throughout our state. These programs impacted young people, and adults alike, through face-to-face interactions in schools, community settings, and 4-H programs. From healthy eating to improving mental health, Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors made a difference!

Fast forward to Spring 2020 when things began to look very differently in our world due to Covid-19. Although our world was faced with a pandemic and ambassadors had to refocus their efforts, they continued to realize that they are part of an amazing program that is changing health behaviors and lives across Texas! In fact, because health is the foundation of the program, ambassadors were able to learn more not only about Covid-19, but the role of global health.



Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors were charged with taking their knowledge of the components of health and finding a way to educate in a non-traditional manner. Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors worked with County Extension Agents to find creative ways to deliver health information related to physical, mental, and emotional well-being of youth and adults. Being resilient and determined, ambassadors took traditional face-to-face lesson plans and converted to a digital platform. Ambassadors also embraced social media platforms that are so popular with youth to convert their messages from social communication to health communication.

To say Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors are passionate, determined, and professional is an understatement. Covid-19 challenged our youth, but they met this challenge with a positive outlook and innovative thinking. Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors continue to be a role model for health whether they are standing in front of a live audience or a camera. They are dedicated to improving the health of Texas!

***Together we are***

*Building Healthy Youth to Build a Healthy Texas*



# About Our Program



## Our Mission

This program is designed for high school age youth who have a passion for health and wellness. Youth will be trained at the local & regional level to become youth health experts who can motivate others to make a change in their lifestyle so they can improve their health. More importantly, these ambassadors will assist local county extension agents with program efforts, project activities, and much more!

## Our Vision

During the summer, ambassadors will attend one of the Healthy Texas Summits. These Summits will lay the foundation for ambassadors to implement health, wellness, nutrition, and safety programs. Once training is complete, youth ambassadors will provide 40 hours of service to their community. Hours can be earned through peer-to-peer education, school programs, community programs, and service learning opportunities.

- TRAINED**  
to help improve the health of others
- KNOWLEDGEABLE**  
in healthy lifestyles
- CONFIDENT**  
in changing the health of others



Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors are high school students who have a passion for health! Youth are trained to deliver health messages and education to peers, communities, and schools.



# Outreach

In 2019 we enrolled 121 Ambassadors in 49 Counties across the state. They hit the ground running and worked hard all year to educate and motivate individuals in their community to make healthy lifestyle changes!

## Programs Completed

Ambassadors provided educational programs related to nutrition, health, and safety throughout their communities. Programs are conducted at local schools, churches, community centers, libraries, and any location where education is requested. Ambassadors partner with their county extension agents and local agencies to impact the health of their neighbors!

1,146

## Hours Served

Ambassadors must provide 40 hours in service to their communities. These hours are spent not only on program delivery, but research, professional development, and program planning. The hours provided by ambassadors allow county extension agents to extend their health outreach to all areas of the community.

4,442

## Individuals Reached

Both young and old are reached through the HTYA program. Our ambassadors are trained to deliver the most up-to-date, research based information to people of all ages, stages, and walks of life. The program enables them to appreciate others and value differences among people within their counties.

64,284



# Service Area



Texas A&M AgriLife is a grassroots organization which uses a network of professionals to improve the lives of Texas. Serving all 254 counties, county educators seek out traditional and non-traditional means to educate youth and adults. These means often include the use of volunteers, both adult and youth. The Healthy Texas Youth Ambassador program is vital to our agency's mission of providing quality, relevant outreach and educational programs and services to the people of Texas.

Most importantly, the Healthy Texas Youth Ambassador program takes a peer education approach to achieving this mission which increases the knowledge gain and intended behavior change of the youth served by this program. The Healthy Texas Youth Ambassador program has youth educators in 49 counties across the state.



## North

Briscoe  
Deaf Smith  
Gray  
Hall  
Randall  
Sherman  
Swisher

15

## Central

Bell  
Erath  
Hamilton  
Hill  
Hood  
Leon  
Milam  
Wichita  
Williamson

14

## East

Cooke  
Denton  
Fannin  
Rockwall  
San Augustine  
Shelby  
Wood

21

5

## West

Crockett  
Fayette  
Tom Green

41

## South

Bastrop  
Bexar  
Comal  
Gillespie  
Gonzales  
Guadalupe  
Hidalgo  
Jim Wells  
Kleberg  
Medina  
Starr  
Wilson

25

## Southeast

Aransas  
DeWitt  
Harris  
Lavaca  
Nueces  
Refugio  
San Patricio

# Regional Program Leaders

Regional Program Leaders provide support to county educators in that they guide and direct programming efforts that impact the health of our state. In addition, the Regional Program Leaders provide a regional connection between county and state coordination of the Healthy Texas Youth Ambassador program; a connection which inspires the youth to go above and beyond serving others!



**Mandi Seaton**

**North Region | Districts 1 & 2**

"Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors in the North Region have been very engaged in the program through education, service and outreach. Ambassador's have had great success in reaching both youth and adults with a healthy living and eating message. They are a valuable resource to their communities as they deliver a healthy preventative message and improving the quality of life for all ages."

**15 Ambassadors | 7 Counties | 103 Programs | 365 Hours Served**



**Dana Tarter**

**Central Region | Districts 3 & 8**

"The Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors have been so helpful in extending our outreach in the Central Region. They have engaged with audiences of all ages. From Path to the Plate to 4-H foods and nutrition projects, their volunteer efforts continue to have a positive impact on the lives of others. This is an awesome opportunity for our youth to help in creating change for better health."

**14 Ambassadors | 9 Counties | 141 Programs | 729 Hours Served**



**Paula Butler**

**East Region | Districts 4 & 5**

"Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors have participated in focused programming across the region. They have provided health and wellness educational exhibits along with distracted driving programs for both youth and adult audiences. These efforts have helped to increase awareness and knowledge for all citizens and will continue to increase Extension outreach and program impact at the county and regional level."

**21 Ambassadors | 8 Counties | 130 Programs | 567 Hours Served**



## Stacy Drury

### West Region | Districts 6 & 7

"It is exciting to see the impacts of the HTYA program over this past year. The Ambassadors have grown in their leadership skills and confidence in delivering the healthy lifestyle messages. The real impact is seeing their passion for the project grow. They truly see the benefits of the message and the need for reaching their peers. They have grasped the impact they can make in helping others and have an urgency to do it."

**5 Ambassadors | 3 Counties | 76 Programs | 212 Hours Served**



## Jana Osbourn

### South Region | Districts 10 & 12

"Great things are happening in the South region and the Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors have played a huge role in that. These youth have a passion for improving the health and wellness of their communities and they are actively engaged in educating their peers and others through hands-on programming. This program truly is building a healthier Texas by building healthy youth."

**41 Ambassadors | 14 Counties | 458 Programs | 1,605 Hours Served**



## Erika Bochat

### Southeast Region | Districts 9 & 11

"No doubt, the HTYA Program has been an overwhelming success for the counties here in the Southeast Region. Through continued training and support from their local county Extension offices and the state office, Ambassadors are enhancing their own learning about living a healthy, happy lifestyle and also enriching the lives of those around them as we all work together to Help Texans Better Their Lives"

**25 Ambassadors | 8 Counties | 238 Programs | 964 Hours Served**

# HTYA:

## Building a Healthier Texas by Building Healthy Youth!



### *John Maxwell*

"The single biggest way to impact an organization is to focus on leadership development. There is almost no limit to the potential of an organization that recruits good people, raises them up as leaders and continually develops them."

# Ambassadors in Action

John Maxwell is credited as saying, "The single biggest way to impact an organization is to focus on leadership development. There is almost no limit to the potential of an organization that recruits good people, raises them up as leaders and continually develops them." This is what the Healthy Texas Youth Ambassador Program strives to do. Our ambassadors are constantly seeking opportunities to both educate themselves and share that knowledge with others in their communities.

The spring of 2020 brought new challenges of its own, but that didn't stand in their way. Ambassadors were quick to rise to the challenge and modified existing programs to deliver them virtually and stay engaged within their communities. Covid-19 forced Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors to move beyond their comfort zone and learn new platforms for health education delivery. The pandemic also provided ambassadors the opportunity to work with their County Extension Agents to explore local health issues and re-focus on issues closest to their community.

During Covid-19, Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors TOOK ACTION and continue to do so!



## Peer Education

County Extension Agents like Holly Black extend the knowledge of Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors through local training related to topics like Connecting Agriculture to Health. Localized training allows ambassadors to deliver community specific learning experiences to address health issues closest to them.



## Community Education

Partnerships with HEB and other like-minded businesses have provided unique opportunities for Ambassadors to go into the community and meet the people where they are. These community education endeavors have allowed ambassadors to educate the general population on healthy eating and about where food comes from. Consumers learn how agriculture production results in food in the grocery store; most importantly, they learn how this safe and nutritious food can improve their health.



## Virtual Education

The focus of the Comal County HTYA team this year was to provide education on healthy snacks. They led Healthy Snack videos and published them on YouTube along with educational videos on how to properly use different small kitchen appliances. Throughout the year they participated in a variety of other activities and events provided by Texas A&M





# Teach • Educate • Lead



## Luke Bludau



a Healthy Texas Youth Ambassador in Lavaca County, Southeast Region, District 11, reported that he took a one-on-one approach to convince a friend to give up vaping. It took him more than a month, but he was persistent. He texted his friend often to share information and educate them about the dangers involved with vaping.

## Alison Grothues



of Medina County, South Region, District 10, partnered with the Path to the Plate program and took a hands-on approach by going into her local HEB store and setting up a booth to educate local shoppers about food production. She and her team invited participants to spin a wheel with questions and then engaged customers in a conversation about the topic they landed on. They shared nutrition information and talked to the customers about what happens to their food before it ends up in stores.

## Abbigail Miller



a second year ambassador from Milam County, Central Region, District 8, was one of many that had to think outside the box to share her knowledge. During her school's "All Kids Healthy Week" she originally had planned to present an educational program on vaping, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic those plans were put on hold. She quickly regrouped and changed her focus to healthy practices to do at home during the pandemic. She used Facebook as her social media platform to share her information. She released an introductory video to generate interest and then created flyers to post each day on her school's page. During the week she discussed: proper handwashing technique, use and removal of gloves, social distancing, and healthy eating. She reported as many as 1,000 interactions on some posts.



# Future Goals

The Healthy Texas Youth Ambassador program will continue to serve the people of Texas. Specifically, program goals include:



**Improve the health of others through peer and community education delivered at the local level.**



**Discover local health issues and methods to address these issues through partnership with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.**



**Empower youth to become leaders in health at the local, state, and national level.**



# Thank You

Youth are our future. This statement is common, but what is not common is the approach that youth are our future health educators. They are the one's who will impact chronic disease and illness in the future; providing preventative education to decrease the risk of disease. The Healthy Texas Youth Ambassador program not only makes an impact on the health of their local communities and schools, but has the potential to impact the health of Texas. The youth are improving their knowledge and sharing that knowledge with others in an effort to decrease the burden of disease for future generations.

