



TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



HEALTHY TEXAS
Y • O • U • T • H
AMBASSADORS

HEALTHY TEXAS YOUTH AMBASSADORS

*BUILDING HEALTHY YOUTH
TO BUILD A HEALTHY TEXAS*



ANNUAL REPORT

2022
2023

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.



A CALL TO ACTION

“The foundation of success in life is good health: that is the substratum fortune; it is also the basis of happiness. A person cannot accumulate a fortune very well when he is sick.” {PT Barnum}

Healthy Texas Youth Ambassador are doers, not watchers when it comes to education. Each year they are challenged to make a difference in their own health and the health of others in the community. Continually, they meet this challenge by identifying the issues affecting the community and developing a plan of action to address these issues. Armed with knowledge and resources related to various aspects of health, these ambassadors work in partnership with county Extension agents to creatively deliver health education related to physical, mental and emotional well-being of youth and adults. They use face-to-face delivery methods, social media, and personal conversations to help others understand the importance of and practice healthy behaviors.

To say Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors are passionate, determined, and professional is an understatement. They are always ready to answer the call to action when it comes to health education!

Together we are
Building Healthy Youth to Build a Healthy Texas

ABOUT OUR PROGRAM

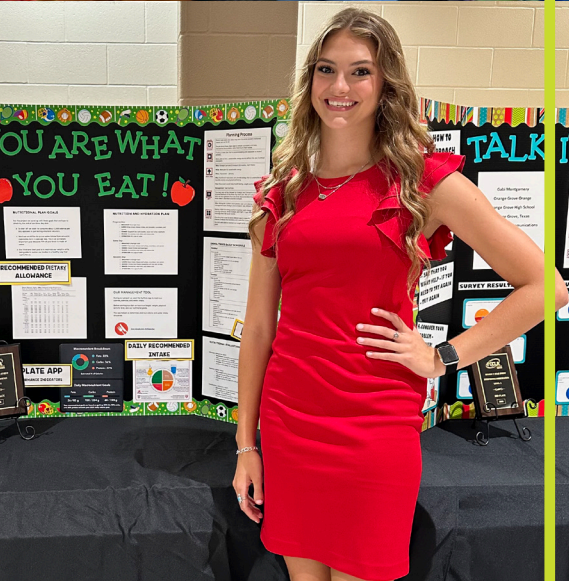
Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors are high school students who have a passion for health! Youth are trained to deliver health messages and education to peers, communities, and schools.

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.



In 2022 we enrolled 147 Ambassadors in 66 Counties across the state of Texas. Our Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors are dedicated, passionate, and making a difference in their communities!

1,225

**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!

5,793

**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.

89,799

**Individuals
Reached**

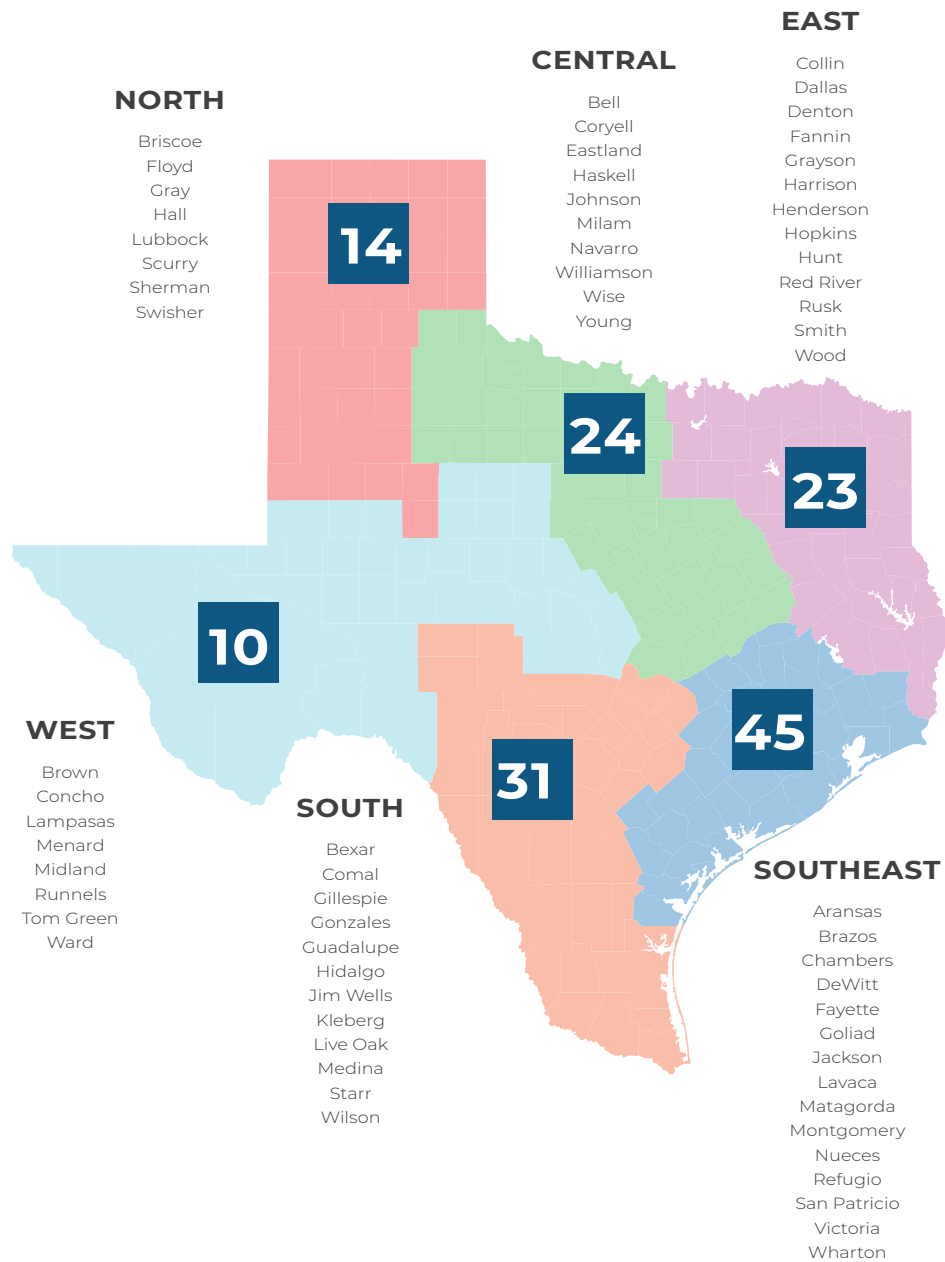
Both young and old are reached through the HTYA program. Our ambassadors are trained to deliver the most up-to-date, research based information to people of all ages, stages, and walks of life. The program enables them to appreciate others and value differences among people within their counties.

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 66 counties across the state.



REGIONAL IMPACT

Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors not only make an impact on their local communities, they are shaping health behaviors of others throughout their districts and regions.

Ambassadors will often partner with counties without an ambassador program to provide direct peer-to-peer education in neighboring counties.

NORTH DISTRICTS 01 & 02 14 Ambassadors 8 Counties 146 Programs 641 Hours Served	CENTRAL DISTRICTS 03 & 08 24 Ambassadors 10 Counties 215 Programs 1,040 Hours Served	EAST DISTRICTS 04 & 05 23 Ambassadors 13 Counties 119 Programs 493 Hours Served
WEST DISTRICTS 06 & 07 10 Ambassadors 8 Counties 133 Programs 608 Hours Served	SOUTH DISTRICTS 10 & 12 31 Ambassadors 12 Counties 336 Programs 1,578 Hours Served	SOUTHEAST DISTRICTS 09 & 11 45 Ambassadors 15 Counties 282 Programs 1,433 Hours Served

AMBASSADORS IN ACTION



A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.
John Maxwell

Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors are required to give 40 hours of service annually. More times than not, these hours are exceeded! The three ambassadors below have given far beyond the required hours because of their dedication to showing others the way to a healthier life!



JAY PENA

SOUTH REGION
STARR COUNTY
154.25 HOURS



EMALEE PARROTT

WEST REGION
BROWN COUNTY
125.5 HOURS



OFILIA GONZALEZ

WEST REGION
CONCHO COUNTY
112 HOURS

RAISING THE BAR

Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors work with local county Extension agents to develop unique, customized, and impactful programs. This approach is beneficial to residents because it fits and meets their programmatic needs. It also builds greater partnerships & networks to improve community health.

● LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Local partnerships are key to the program's success. They provide the necessary support & resources to engage communities in health education and improve the lives of their peers through service learning.

● UNIQUE PROGRAMS

This year's team of ambassadors have done a phenomenal job of thinking outside the box to meet the needs of their communities in unique ways.

● COMMUNITY GARDENS

Many counties implemented a community garden this year. Our ambassadors worked together to plant, grow, and harvest fresh produce start to finish.

● HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Our ambassadors educate their communities on more than just eating right. They provide a variety of programs to teach their peers about all aspects of health.



Health and Safety in Ecuador

2023 HTYA International Trip

In the summer of 2023 our Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors were given the opportunity to visit Ecuador and learn about health and safety standards in a foreign country. The main focus was food and nutrition, as we took a hands-on approach to learning how food in Ecuador travels from the farm to the plate. Ambassadors were involved in the process start to finish from harvesting potatoes and cacao beans to putting the garnish on a traditional Ecuadorian meal and everything in between! We even made sure to stop and do a little sight-seeing and learn about the cultural history of the six distinct regions as we made our way from the highlands through the rainforest and down the coast.

Here's what our ambassadors had to say about
this once in a lifetime experience!



KINLEE GARDNER **HARVESTING POTATOES BY HAND**

The fields are situated on the side of the mountain. The small fields and steep slopes require that most things be done by hand instead of using a tractor. The farms are primarily managed by women who tend to the crops themselves with little to no help from men or machinery.



CECELIA FRITZE **OPEN AIR MARKET IN CUENCA**

The biggest health and safety practice that I noticed during our time in Ecuador was the way in which raw meats were stored. I especially noticed this when we went to the meat and produce market in Cuenca. Cuts of meat were not in a fridge or freezer making them susceptible to bacteria.



NICHOLE DAY **PREPARING A TRADITIONAL ECUADORIAN MEAL**

One of the most interesting things to me was the state of the food when purchased. Most food available in Ecuador was fresh; either just harvested or close to it. There were very few preserved and/or processed options in their stores and markets.



PAYTON BRANHAM **SALT AND SEASONING**

I was surprised by the lack of salt and other seasonings in many dishes. This showed me the drastic difference in food preparation between America and Ecuador. It also made me consider the negative effects of extra sodium and preservative in our food prepared in the United States.



PEYTON WIREBAUGH **ROASTING CUY OVER AN OPEN FIRE**

One of the most eye-opening experiences was trying cuy and llama. One of the major factors that affect a person's diet is the accessibility of food around them. People will eat what is available to them, even if it is a cute and fuzzy animal.



KINSLEY MCPHERSON **FILTERING WATER AT CAJAS NATIONAL PARK**

There is water everywhere that gives life to all kinds of vegetation, however it was not potable. We couldn't drink the water from the tap because it carried diseases that our immune system was not used to. I carried a bottle with a filtration system so that I would always have fresh water.



SOUTH TEXAS ROADTRIP

The Healthy South Texas Roadtrip was a collaborative effort among several South Texas counties. Ambassadors from Aransas, San Patricio, Neuces, Goliad, Refugio, DeWitt, Calhoun, Jackson, Gonzales, Wharton, Victoria, Lavaca and Kelberg-Kenedy traveled together across the South region to learn more about agriculture and health in their part of the state.

AGRICULTURE

Exploration

On the Road Trip Experience youth explored a pecan house, a dairy farm, a meat packing plant, mariculture and floriculture and other diverse industries in our counties.

HEALTH

Exploration

Youth were further engaged in Physical Activity through yoga, kayaking, a high ropes course, & nature hikes. Plus they explored careers by visiting the Pharmacy School & Kinesiology Dept at TAMU Kingsville.

COMMUNITY

Exploration

Youth gave their hands to larger service in community service activities such as, park cleanups, food distribution at the food pantry, and beach cleanups.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

This year we spotlight four unique programs provided by our Healthy Texas Youth Ambassador team. These are just a few examples of the high quality, engaging programs these youth provide within their communities and county.



CPR TRAINING

A community partnership program with LaVaca County, Cal-Maine Foods and local paramedics. Youth were given the opportunity to complete their CPR certification.



FSNS RESEARCH LAB

Youth in Bexar County were given a continuing education opportunity to tour a food safety and research laboratory. They learned about food borne illness and food safety preparation.



COMMUNITY GARDENS

Many HTYA teams organized, planted, maintained, and harvested community gardens this year. Youth led programs teaching the importance of nutrition to health.



HEALTH FAIR

Coryell County ambassadors hosted a health fair to educate city employees on fun ways to stay active. A local officer volunteered to blend our smoothie using the bike.

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 ones 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.