



## In This Edition

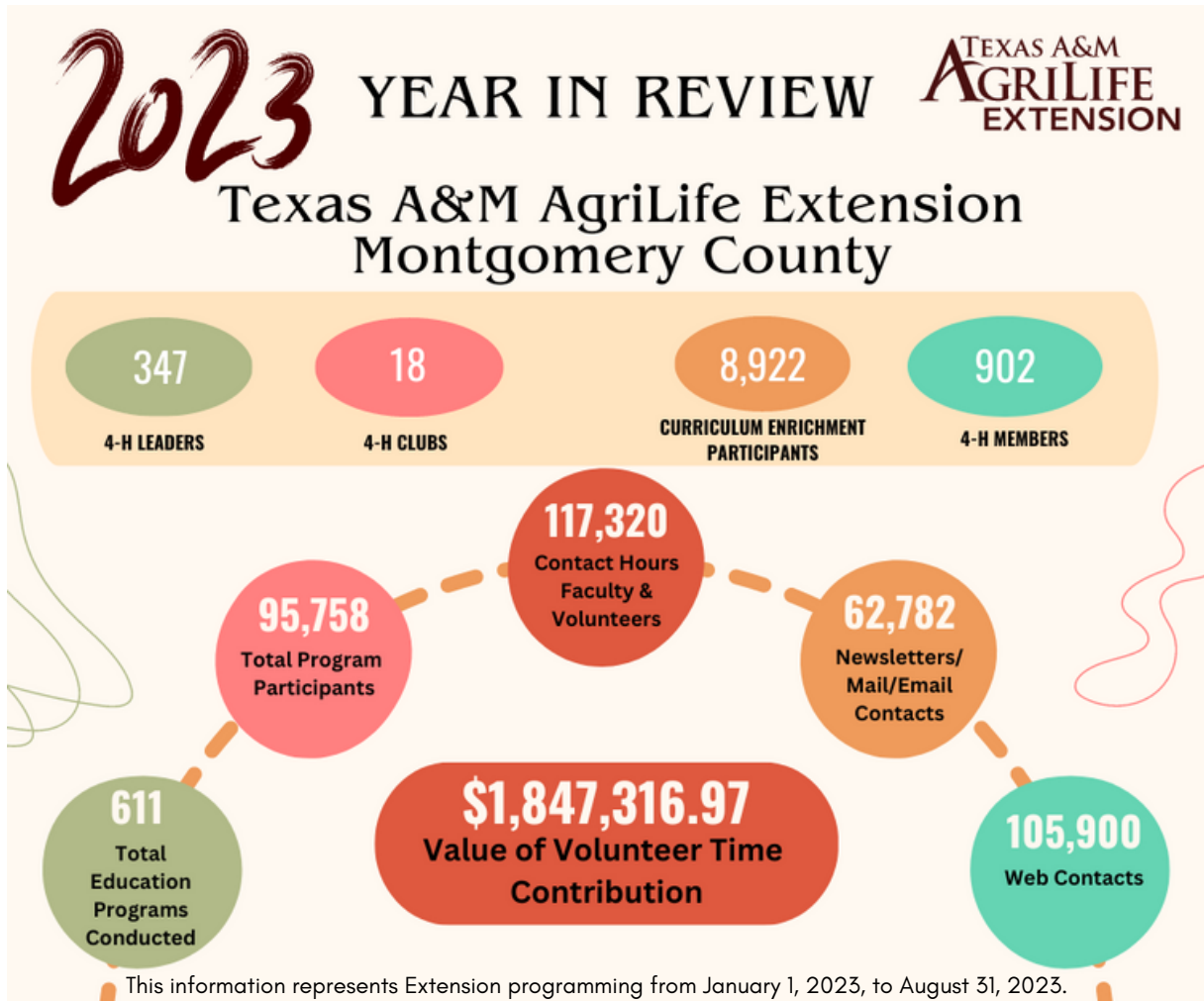
- Program Results
- Upcoming Events
- Recipe Roundup



## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

**By Caroline Cruz, Montgomery County Extension Agent -  
Family & Community Health**

Happy 2024! For this E-Newsletter, we want to welcome a new year and review 2023. This image reflects the entire Montgomery County AgriLife Extension departments - Family & Community Health, 4-H Youth Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Horticulture, and Better Living for Texans.



# 2023 Year At A Glance

## Family & Community Health - Montgomery County

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



37 educators and caregivers trained  
5 schools or daycare centers impacted  
222 hours of continuing education granted



### WALK ACROSS TEXAS

59,093 total miles logged  
326 total participants  
47 Teams formed



### MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

4 educational programs  
92 participants reached



### COMMUNITY HEALTH & SAFETY EDUCATION

Child Passenger Safety: 45 people educated, 34 car seats inspected, 20 new cars seats distributed  
Food Handlers: 5 training courses, 46 people certified



**35 FCH VOLUNTEERS GAVE 210 HOURS  
= \$6,678 VALUE TO THE COUNTY**

This information represents Extension programming from January 1, 2023, to August 31, 2023.



Left: Project Learning Tree Teacher Workshop Center: Child Car Seat Check-Up Right: Walk Across Texas presentation at Commissioner's Court

# Nature for Health & Wellness

## Rooted in Health, Nurtured by Nature Health & Wellness Event!

November 4, 2023, our Nature for Health & Wellness Task Force successfully held our first ever Rooted in Health, Nurtured by Nature Health & Wellness Event at the W.G. Jones State Forest! 100 participants had the opportunity to meet agencies and organizations that have an interest in nature, health, wellness, and family health. Doctors from Lone Star Family Health Center provided "Walk With a Doc" along the trails, in addition to mini-nature and forest therapy walks provided by Recovery Untamed. Take some time in 2024 to be in nature - it's good for your health!



## Calling 3rd-5th Grade Teachers!

We have a new program called "Get Outside". This program is for students in 3rd, 4th, or 5th grade. We are looking for teachers who would like to implement this new program with your students. This is not an "add-on" to your packed schedule. This is a family activity for out-of-school time.

The 5-week program aims to help families boost their health, happiness, and time together by being more active in nature every day. We know there are so many benefits to getting kids outside and spending quality time with their families! In a BINGO card format, families check off and record a variety of suggested activities that they do together in the great outdoors—everything from making mud pies to hiking through the forest. All that happens outside of school. It's easy for you and your classroom to participate.

As your County Extension Agent, I have fun prizes for families who register and complete rows of activities, and I can organize classroom kick-off and wrap-up events and weekly check-ins.

This could be a great supplement to science curriculum. Teachers who participate will distribute the attached letter to parents along with BINGO cards and work with me to distribute prizes and information about the program on a weekly basis. Teachers who participate will receive nature-related thank-you gifts too! Contact us at 936-539-7825 or email [caroline.cruze@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:caroline.cruze@ag.tamu.edu) if you would like to participate!

# Check It Out!

## Early Childhood Educator Workshop Treemendous Teachers!

TEXAS A&M  
**AGRI LIFE**  
EXTENSION



CHILD CARE PROVIDERS | HEAD START & EC TEACHERS | DIRECTORS

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2024**

**8:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

**Montgomery County AgriLife Extension  
9020 Airport Road  
Conroe, TX 77303**



### REGISTRATION

**Fee:** \$45 per person by check or credit/debit card

(+plus processing fees if paying online with card)

**Deadline:** Jan. 26, 2024

Limited to 25 participants.

**Registration:** See QR Code  
<https://forms.office.com/r/hM APGd3rJA>

**Make Check/M.O. Payable to:**  
Mont. Cty Family & Consumer Sciences

**Mail or deliver payment to:**  
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension  
9020 Airport Road  
Attn: FCH  
Conroe, TX 77303

### Fee Includes:

**Clock Hours:** 4

**Trees & Me Printed Curriculum  
Training materials  
Refreshments**

Project Learning Tree's (PLT) *Trees & Me: Activities for Exploring Nature with Young Children* includes 12 activities and more than 250 learning experiences for families and teachers to connect children ages 1-6 to nature with a focus on trees. Educators will learn through fun, indoor and outdoor activities where toddlers and preschoolers explore nature through their senses, experience trees throughout the seasons, and connect with their community. Formal and informal educators are welcome.

During this fun, hands-on training you will:

- Practice modeling PLT activities and get tips for lesson planning specific to your educational setting.
- Learn new teaching skills and become comfortable teaching outdoors.
- Receive PLT's early childhood *Trees & Me* guide.
- Establish access to a professional network and support system.
- Earn continuing education credits.

PLT's Early Childhood Curriculum contains correlations for NAEYC, Head Start, NAAEE, Natural Start Alliance, NGSS, Common Core, and C3 Framework.

**Contact:** Caroline Cruz, County Extension Agent - Family & Community Health at 936-539-7825 or [caroline.cruz@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:caroline.cruz@ag.tamu.edu)

*Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.*

Individuals with disabilities who require accommodation to participate in this event are asked to contact the Extension Office 10 days before the event at 936-539-7825.

Early Childhood Educator  
Workshop - Treemendous  
Teachers! - Registration



2024

# ACADEMY FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

## Lone Star College – Montgomery Campus

Lone Star College - The Academy for Lifelong Learning is a membership community that offers free and low-cost classes, events, and activities for adults aged 50 and older. Texas A&M Agrilife Extension is proud to offer the following classes with LSC - Montgomery

**Register for Lone Star College ALL Courses at:**  
<https://www.lonestar.edu/all> or call: 936-273-7446

JAN 23 - FEB 20  
TUESDAYS 10 AM-11:30 AM



### Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes

- Get the facts on Diabetes
- Meet others with the same concerns

FEB 8 - MAR 7  
THURSDAYS 2 PM-3:30 PM



### Do Well, Be Well with Hypertension

- Improve blood pressure management
- Learn skills needed to manage high blood pressure

Instructor  
Amy Davenport  
936-788-8348 or [amy.davenport@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:amy.davenport@ag.tamu.edu)

# CHILD SAFETY SEAT EVENT

ENSURE your children are BUCKLED UP correctly!



## FREE

### CAR SEAT & BOOSTER SEAT INSPECTIONS

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 8, 2024

4:00PM - 6:00PM

MAGNOLIA EVENT CENTER

11659 FM 1488

MAGNOLIA, TX

Don't forget to bring your child & know their weight & height. A limited number of replacement car seats will be available.

QUESTIONS? CALL AgriLife Extension Services Passenger  
Safety & KidSafe Initiative's at 254-492-8010



**ASEGURE QUE SUS NINOS ESTEN ABROCHADOS CORRECTAMENTE!**

**Inspeccion de asiento de auto y asiento de seguridad infantil. NO OLVIDE  
TRAER A SU HIJO Y CONOCER SU PESO Y ALTURA! HABRA DISPONIBLE UN  
NUMERO LIMITADO DE ASIENTOS DE AUTOMOVIL PARA NINOS DE REEMPLAZO.**

# CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY TECHNICIAN CERTIFICATION COURSE



## CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY TECHNICIAN CERTIFICATION COURSE

[CERT.SAFEKIDS.ORG](http://CERT.SAFEKIDS.ORG)

Statistics show most car seats are used incorrectly! Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST) Certification courses are 3 day interactive courses involving classroom instruction, written testing as well as indoor and outdoor hands-on activities. CPSTs engage caregivers in education and demonstration on how to properly secure their child in the car seat/booster and how to properly install the car seat/booster in their vehicle.

This course is especially useful to first responders, educators targeting expectant/new parents and general parenting, and community resource agencies who often have to contend with the tragic results of non-use and misuse of child safety seats.

\$95 fee is payable online to Safe Kids. Fee includes 2 years of certification and the training manual.



**February 6-8, 2024 8am- 6pm: Sponsored by Texas A&M AgriLife Passenger Safety & KidSafe Initiatives in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation Houston District.**

**Go to [cert.safekids.org](http://cert.safekids.org); Click on "Find a Course"; Search by State- Texas; Select Magnolia Course TX2024011279**

2024

# COMING SOON

## WALK ACROSS TEXAS!



WALK  
ACROSS TEXAS!  
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

## MARCH 4, 2024 - Challenge Kick-Off!

Join us for a fun, team-based, 8-week physical activity program for adults! Family, friends, or workplace!

The Walk Across Texas (WAT) program is an 8-week program designed to help Texans be more active using a team-based approach. Teams of up to 8 Members are encouraged to work together towards the goal of virtually traveling across Texas.

Your favorite physical activities are logged as 'miles walked' and contribute toward your team's mileage total. Walking, running, biking, dancing, gardening, swimming - these count, too!

Two Challenge Options:

1. **Community-Wide Challenge:** for anyone in our county
2. **County Employees:** for Montgomery County Employee teams only

**REGISTER: [HOWDYHEALTH.TAMU.EDU](https://www.howdyhealth.tamu.edu)**

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AND  
OUR WEBSITE FOR INFORMATION

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MONTCOFCH](https://www.facebook.com/montcofch)

## HealthTalk Express

COMING  
SOON

The HealthTalk Express programs provide health presentations in a 30-minute or less format to inform people about a specific health topic and empower them to take action. The goal is to help Texans know their health risks and motivate them to make choices to improve overall quality of life and reduce the likelihood of getting a chronic disease. These free sessions will begin in May. Stay tuned for more details!

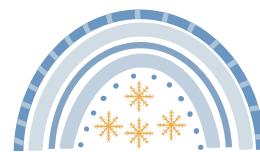
Potential Topics:

- Know More About Cancer & Screenings
- Love Your Heart - Heart Health
- Stress Less, Live Best
- Work Life Balance



# What's Going On?

hello  
WINTER



DATE	EVENT	INFO
Jan. 23 Tuesday	Academy of Lifelong Learning Classes - Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes Series Lone Star College - Montgomery, Time: 10:00 am - 11:30 am Classes: 1/23, 1/30, 2/6, 2/13, 2/20	Register for Lone Star College ALL Course at: <a href="https://www.lonestar.edu/all">https://www.lonestar.edu/all</a> or call 936-273-7446
Feb. 1 Thursday	Mental Health First Aid Training Montgomery County AgriLife Extension Office Time: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm	Register for this class: <a href="https://rb.gy/ddp9b0">https://rb.gy/ddp9b0</a> Limited to 30 people
Feb. 6, 7, 8 Tues - Thur.	Child Passenger Safety Technician Certification Course 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM Magnolia Event Center, 11659 FM 1488, Magnolia	Go to <a href="http://cert.safekids.org">cert.safekids.org</a> ; Click on "Find a Course"; Search by State- Texas; Select Magnolia CourseTX2024011279
Feb. 8 Thursday	Academy of Lifelong Learning Classes - Do Well, Be Well with Hypertension Series Lone Star College - Montgomery, Time: 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm Classes: 2/8, 2/15, 2/22, 2/29, 3/7	Register for Lone Star College ALL Course at: <a href="https://www.lonestar.edu/all">https://www.lonestar.edu/all</a> or call 936-273-7446
Feb. 8 Thursday	<b>Free</b> Child Car Seat and Booster Seat Inspection 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM Magnolia Event Center, 11659 FM 1488, Magnolia	Questions? Call AgriLife Extension Services PassengerSafety & KidSafe Initiative's at 254-492-8010
Feb. 10 Saturday	Early Childhood Educator Workshop Treemendous Teachers. <i>Trees and Me</i> Early Childhood curriculum from Project Learning Tree Time: 8:00 am - 12:00 pm Montgomery County AgriLife Extension Office	Register at <a href="https://forms.office.com/r/hMAPGd3rJA">https://forms.office.com/r/hMAPGd3rJA</a> Limited to 25 people Clock Hours: 4; Fee: \$45 per person
Feb. 19 Monday	President's Day Holiday	Extension Office Closed
March 4 Monday	Walk Across Texas! County-Wide Challenge Begins! Get your teams of up to 8 people ready and registered on Howdy Health! Let's Walk it out!	<a href="https://howdyhealth.tamu.edu/programs/walk-across-texas/">https://howdyhealth.tamu.edu/programs/walk-across-texas/</a>

# Recipe Round-Up

TEXAS A&M  
**AGRI LIFE**  
EXTENSION

## What's Cooking?

JANUARY 2023

### OLD-FASHIONED BEEF STEW

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 pound beef stewing meat trimmed and cut into one inch cubes
- 5 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 2 Tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 cup red wine
- 3 1/2 cups beef broth homemade or low-sodium canned
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 medium onion peeled and chopped
- 5 medium carrots peeled and cut into 1/4 inch rounds
- 2 large baking potatoes peeled and cut into 3/4 inch cubes
- 2 teaspoons salt



#### DIRECTIONS

1. Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.
2. Combine the flour and pepper in a bowl, add the beef and toss to coat well. Heat 3 teaspoons of the oil in a large pot. Add the beef a few pieces at a time; do not overcrowd. Cook, turning the pieces until beef is browned on all sides, about 5 minutes per batch; add more oil as needed between batches.
3. Wash the counter and utensils that touched the raw meat. Wash hands with soap and water after handling raw meat.
4. Remove the beef from the pot and add the vinegar and wine. Cook over medium-high heat, scraping the pan with a wooden spoon to loosen any browned bits. Add the beef, beef broth, and bay leaf. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a slow simmer.
5. Cover the pot and cook, skimming broth from time to time, until the beef is tender, about 1 1/2 hours.
6. While the beef is cooking, scrub the onion, carrots, and potatoes with a clean vegetable brush under cold running water. Prepare vegetables as directed in the ingredients.
7. Add the onions and carrots to the pot and simmer, covered, for 10 minutes. Add the potatoes and simmer until vegetables are tender, about 30 minutes more. Add broth or water if the stew is dry. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
8. Serve immediately.

#### NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION PER SERVING:

Calories: 160; Total Fat: 1g; Saturated Fat: 0g; Cholesterol: 32mg;  
Sodium: 150mg; Total Carbohydrate: 32g; Dietary Fiber: 9g; Protein: 8g.

**SERVES: 4**

**RECIPE SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING EXTENSION**

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# Stay Connected

There are many ways you can reach us. Call us at the number below, follow us on social media, visit our website. Are you a community organization, non-profit, or agency that aligns with the mission and values of AgriLife Extension? If so, let us know if we could consider partnering with you on news, events, or classes!



*Extension - the "best kept secret" in Montgomery County! Tell your friends!*

*Agriculture & Natural Resources  
Family & Community Health  
4-H & Youth Development  
Horticulture  
Better Living for Texans*



LOCATED ACROSS FROM THE LONE STAR CONVENTION CENTER



936.539.7825



@TexasA&MAgriLife  
ExtensionMontgomeryCounty



9020 Airport Rd,  
Conroe, TX 77303



<https://montgomery.agrilife.org>



@MontCoFCH



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

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