

Regional Diversity/Multicultural Recognition  
Nominated by Alpha Zeta Chapter  
Dawn Watson  
County Extension Agents - FCS  
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**EDUCATION:**

1996 M.Ed., Education, Sul Ross State University

**PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS:**

2003 County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Deaf Smith County, TX  
2002 County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Donley County, TX

**PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

**Professional Organizations:**

2003-2006 Member, Alpha Zeta Chapter, Epsilon Sigma Phi  
2003-2006 Member, National and Texas Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences  
2003-2006 Member, TAE4-HA

**Leadership Positions:**

2005 Texas District 1 TEA-FCS Associate Director  
2004-2006 Program Committee Chair for TAE4-HA  
2004-2006 Committee member for District 1 Fish N Fun  
2004-2007 District 1 Representative for State BLT Advisory Committee  
2005-2008 Committee member Texas Cooperative Extension State Diversity Team

**PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

**Mental Health and Mental Retardation Group (MHMR)** - The subject matter that Dawn teaches at the MHMR center is as diverse as the group. Food safety was an area of critical concern and one that has been addressed through a kitchen simulation where clients were involved in finding the “dangers” in the kitchen. The group has been involved in learning about the food groups and basic meal planning and food preparation. Other lessons with clients have included health and hygiene, job interview skills, and craft projects to help clients have activities to do in their spare time instead of television watching.

**Involving the Migrant Community** - The Deaf Smith county population involves a significant migrant community composed of approximately 6,100 people, which is roughly one-third of the Deaf Smith county population. These individuals are in the county to work primarily in field agriculture, packing plants, feedlots, and in the dairies. In her short time in Deaf Smith county, Dawn has begun to build a positive relationship with this community to enable Extension to provide education to improve health, safety, and quality of life. Food Protection Management has been one vehicle that has enabled Extension to get a foot in the door. The president of the Deaf Smith Migrant Council was in one of the classes. Dawn was able to interpret the possibilities for Extension education that were available to the migrant community. From there, she was invited to attend a big December meeting of the migrant families. She was asked to present information on the Food Guide Pyramid (in English and Spanish) in addition to other nutrition information. Dawn was well received by the families in the community (in spite of her limited Spanish), which led to additional program opportunities. Follow-up efforts included helping families find both economical and healthy recipes in Spanish and a “Heart Healthy Spanish Cooking” class.

**Knitting Makes a Comeback!** - Dawn has introduced knitting through classes with people ranging in age from eight to 80. Both males and females have been involved and the project has crossed ethnic and economic groups. The classes offer opportunities for information on health, well-being, personal economics, and textiles to be taught. In addition, the social opportunity is a key asset for some of the participants. This has been an avenue to introducing Extension to new clientele, with approximately 75 percent of the class members participating in an Extension event for the first time.

**Impact on Local Business** - Food establishments are an important part of any community and are owned and managed by a variety of individuals, many without much training in the area of food safety. For many food service managers, this can be an expensive requirement, especially if they have to travel to a major city for training. Dawn has offered food protection management classes in Deaf Smith county on a regular basis to provide the opportunity for food service managers to receive training and take the certification test locally. Business owners, managers, and wait staff of both genders and several ethnic backgrounds have participated in the classes.

**The Texas Partnership** - The Texas Partnership for Farm and Ranch Health and Safety was a coalition of women in Deaf Smith County with an interest in farm and ranch health and safety. One of the primary projects of the Partnership is to conduct the Progressive Farmer Farm Safety Day Camp each year. Dawn's leadership and direction has enabled this group to provide a high quality educational event that reaches a significant part of the diverse youth population in the county. With Deaf Smith County being the largest agriculture producing county in the state, the Partnership strives to help those involved directly with agriculture with their health and safety concerns as well as helping those that are indirectly involved or the consumers of agriculture understand the importance of agriculture to their well-being and economy.

#### **Healthy Citizens are a Priority**

**Modeling the Cure** - This breast health educational event involved 27 county citizens in hearing breast cancer survival stories, updates on breast cancer prevention and treatment from a doctor, and opportunities to have questions answered by health care professionals. Half of the participants in the event were Hispanic. As a result of the program, 100 percent of the participants planned to receive an annual mammogram after age 40, receive an annual clinical breast exam, and practice breast self-exam.

**Do Well, Be Well With Diabetes** - The diabetes education series, Do Well, Be Well, was an important health outreach in a high Hispanic population. Managing diabetes can have a major impact on future health problems and reducing health care costs. Twenty-eight people, including 12 Hispanic individuals and 5 males, completed the 6 week series.

**Better Living For Texans Food Stamp Education** - Food stamp nutrition education is important in all Texas counties. Dawn has been effective in providing this education through two very diverse groups. A new group this year has been the Texas Workforce Commission, reaching approximately 15 people per month, with 95% being Hispanic and 85% under the age of 24. The other primary group is Panhandle Community Services, reaching a 95% Hispanic, over age 35 group with once per month nutrition education.

#### **SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SUPPORT:**

Dawn's individual efforts to include a diverse population in her Extension programming has resulted in a variety of programs. Her concern about the health and welfare of her county population is evident in her work with Mental Health and Retardation, food stamp audiences and many other socio-economic and limited resource audiences. Dawn has succeeded in generating support for those programs to improve the life skills of her county's population.