

**NOMINATION FOR
Chapter Diversity Recognition-Team**

Epsilon Sigma Phi, Alpha Zeta Chapter – Texas

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(Optional)

Nominee’s Name: Dr. Sonja Stueart-Davis
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Year Initiated into ESP: 2000

Team Members	Title	ESP Member
Dr. Sonja Davis	County Extension Agent – Family & Consumer Sciences	Yes
Dr. Allen Malone	County Extension Agent – Agriculture & Natural Resources	Yes
Sheryl Nolen	County Extension Agent – 4-H & Youth Development	Yes
Tonya McKenzie	County Extension Agent – Family & Consumer Sciences	No
Marcus Glenn	Extension Agent – 4-H & Youth Development	No
Ricky Mahaley	Extension Agent – 4-H & Youth Development	No

Program Development:

Agents from Harris County submitted a \$10,000 proposal titled, “Urban Ag: From the Farm to the City” to the Texas Department of Agriculture in support of the Urban Programs Grant. The Program was developed to expose students from four Houston Independent School District Elementary schools to the various aspects of agriculture and its contributions to the food and clothing industry. Agents and teachers conducted the program and reached approximately three hundred and sixty five students through classroom lessons, experiential activities, and educational tours designed to expose them to horticulture and gardening, nutrition, entomology, livestock, commodities and poultry science.

Program Accomplishments:

4-H Club Chartering and Membership: Three 4-H Clubs were chartered, Reynolds Rangers, Lyons Elementary, and Codwell 4-H, while students from Pleasantville Elementary joined a local club. A total of 80 students became members of 4-H. The following are projects that the students participated in through the grant project.

Egg to Chick: Approximately 365 4th graders participated in the Egg to Chick Project. The program guided students through the poultry life cycle and allowed them to examine embryos and observe beating heart beats. Students witnessed how many days it took for the eggs to hatch. The schools welcomed their new family members when the eggs hatched.

Horticulture/Junior Master Gardener: Agents and teachers worked with the students to teach Cylinder Gardening as a method of gardening. Students gained knowledge and skills in plant growth and development, entomology, environmental stewardship, ecology, soils, water, food and nutrition.

Food and Nutrition Classes: Students learned about MyPlate and the importance of eating the recommended servings from each food group to maintain good health. Agents, teachers and volunteers taught students to read and modify recipes to make them healthier, how to cook, food safety and kitchen safety and the role of vitamins and nutrients to the body. The importance of physical activity was stressed.

Harris County Kid’s Day Ag Awareness Day: Program exposed fourth graders to various aspects of agricultural science. The program was hosted by Harris County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Cooperative

Extension Program agents and various partners. While attending the event, students experienced the following educational activities/exhibits:

- Southwest Mobile Dairy Classroom demonstrated milking a cow and described how milk is processed into different food products.
- Horticulture-Texas A&M AgriLife Extension agents and Master Gardeners demonstrated how plants become foods. The students learned how plants play an important role in our food supply and toured the vegetable and herb gardens.
- Poultry-Texas Department of Agriculture demonstrated the incubation process for eggs and had birds and eggs on hand for student to observe to view the candling process.
- Water- Extension 4-H staff and volunteers taught students the importance of conserving water, the most wasted essential element on Earth. Students learned ways to conserve water in their homes and schools.
- The Market-students saw the final products of vegetables and meat and how the products are packaged and made available to grocery stores. Examples were ketchup, salsa, spaghetti sauce and other vegetable products.
- Nutrition-FCS Agents shared information on MyPlate to help students adopt a healthy lifestyle by learning the required food portions from the five food groups and nutrients that various foods supply to the body.

Results:

Students completed a pretest and post test to determine knowledge gained. With the knowledge gained from participating in the program, students have become aware of agriculture and how it impacts their lives daily from the food they eat, water they drink, and clothing that they wear. Results from the evaluation indicate the following:

- 90.8% indicated that farmers and ranchers work hard to provide a safe and affordable food supply.
- 91.4% indicated that fruits and vegetables are an important part of a healthy and balanced diet.
- 67.1% indicated that if farmers didn't raise animals or crops they wouldn't be able to eat foods such as pizza or hamburgers.
- 82.5% indicated that cotton comes from a plant.
- 73.6% indicated that their body gets water by eating foods with water in it and by drinking water.
- 74.7% indicated that photosynthesis is the process plants use to make food.
- 75.7% agreed that once in an incubator, it takes 3 weeks for a chicken egg to hatch.
- 64.7% indicated that it is important to conserve water, because there is a limited supply.
- 86.6% indicated that plants need sun, soil, fertilizer and water to grow.

Through participation in the program students and their families understand that agriculture is life and without it, we can't survive. The knowledge gained will empower students and their families to live healthier lives and become responsible stewards of our natural resources. The students, teachers and parents were so excited and look forward to participating in 4-H and future partnerships.

Individual School Activities:

Community Service

- 20 students and parents from Codwell Elementary attended the County Food and Nutrition Project Training.
- 2 students from Lyons Elementary placed 1st in their Food Show Contest (Fruit and Vegetable and Dairy)
- 2 Food Challenge Teams from Codwell placed 1st and 2nd in the County Food Challenge Contest and advanced to District Food Challenge where they placed 1st and 2nd.
- Lyons 4-H Club conducted a community service project during the schools Health Fair. The students set up a display on MyPlate and prepared a food demo. As parents visited the exhibit, students passed out trailmix and explained how the ingredients fit into MyPlate. Parents enjoyed the session and wanted the students to their kids the importance of eating vegetables other parts of MyPlate.

Support Statement (approximately 75 words):

The Harris County staff embraces and values partnerships that positively impact youth. The partnership with TDA and Houston Independent School District planted a seed in the 4th graders lives. The seed will continue to grow by exposing and engaging them in 4-H projects that will possibly create future agriculture professionals. The agriculture, 4-H and FCS agents are all passionate about helping individuals and families improve their quality of life by delivering quality educational programs.