Note: Highlighted areas can be localized or left as is.

LSU AgCenter Extension engage youth to celebrate Urban October

BATON ROUGE, La. — In Louisiana’s urban areas, LSU AgCenter extension agents are working to innovate, educate and improve lives. Throughout October, the LSU AgCenter Extension will celebrate Urban October, a worldwide campaign the United Nations launched to focus on the opportunities and challenges created by the fast rate of change in cities.

The theme of LSU AgCenter month-long campaign is **Engaging Youth to Create a Better Louisiana**.

Chiquita Briley, assistant Extension director overseeing urban programs, said this is the AgCenter’s first year participating in Urban October.

“In the coming years, the Extension team looks forward to collaborating with additional university and community partners to build on this foundation and cultivate local, state, national and global connections,” Briley said.

AgCenter programs like 4-H and nutrition and community health work with youth to help develop them into stronger leaders, better citizens and healthier individuals.

4-H focused on rural youth when it first formed, but today the youth organization reaches many urban youth across the state. Youth can participate in STEM projects, nutrition programs, civic opportunities, shooting sports and more.

[The Louisiana 4-H Citizenship Board which includes 4-H’er from across Louisiana, recently volunteered with the Baton Rouge Food Bank. The board members are then charged with going back to their communities and creating service opportunities for local 4-H members.

“By starting small, we can build up to achieve great things that could eventually change our world,” said Braden Benoit, board member and 4-H’er from XX parish.]

Nutrition and community health agents are working in urban areas to promote healthful lifestyles. School and community gardens dot urban landscapes. Nutrition classes engage families and encourage good diets and physical activity.

[An urban garden that sprung up with the help of a nutrition and community health agent in the Zion City area of Baton Rouge has community members excited about fresh fruits and vegetables for the neighborhood. But a motivation for the garden was giving youth a sense of purpose.

“We want the kids to come down so they can feel like they're being a part of something. When they put in the work, then they can see an end result,” Dominco Mack, a Zion City community member, said.]

These AgCenter efforts are engaging youth to create a better Louisiana.

“With youth from both urban, suburban, and rural areas learning and working together, possibilities are endless in how engaging youth can shape the future,” Briley said.

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