

THE AGGREGATE

Louisiana Association for Family and Consumer Sciences

President's Message-Jessica Randazzo



Fellow Colleagues,

It has been an honor to work alongside all of you this year as LEAFCS President, and I look forward to getting to know each of you better. This professional association gives us the unique opportunity to create something by agents for agents. Seeing so many of you step up during our "rebuilding year" has been so gratifying. You all work hard and deserve to have your efforts and accomplishments celebrated.

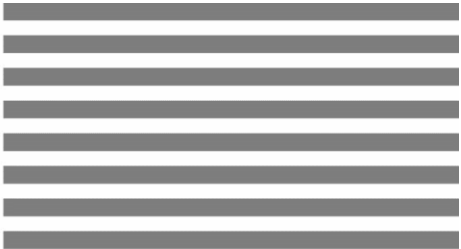
In these transformative times, our dedication to promoting health and well-being through community nutrition has never been more essential. The challenges we face, from addressing dietary disparities to fostering sustainable food systems, demand a united front of passionate individuals

who share a common goal: to create healthier, happier communities. As the President of LEAFCS, I am honored to lead an organization that stands at the forefront of this important mission.

LEAFCS is not just an association; it is a vibrant community of professionals who believe in the power of nutrition education and outreach to effect positive change. Our members are the driving force behind innovative programs, impactful research, and advocacy that makes a tangible difference in the lives of people we serve. By joining LEAFCS, you become a part of this dynamic network, connecting with like-minded individuals who share your passion and commitment. Membership with LEAFCS brings an array of benefits designed to empower you in your journey as a community nutrition professional:

- **Networking Opportunities:** Connect with professionals from diverse backgrounds, exchanging ideas and experiences that can elevate your work and expand your horizons.
- **Professional Development:** Access exclusive resources, workshops, and webinars that keep you updated on the latest trends, research, and best practices.
- **Recognition and Awards:** Showcase your accomplishments and be recognized for your dedication through LEAFCS awards and recognition programs.
- **Supportive Community:** Join a community that understands your challenges, celebrates your successes, and provides the encouragement you need to thrive.

I would like to congratulate all of our state, Southern Region, and national award winners and encourage all members to apply for awards. One of the major benefits of being a member is the recognition you receive when you showcase your hard work and achievements by applying for awards. Remember, to be eligible to



apply for awards, dues in the amount of \$120 must be paid to our Treasurer, Shakera Williams due in December 2023.

As the President of LEAFCS, I am honored to lead an organization that contains people who care about their communities. "In the end, it's not about what you have achieved for yourself, but how you have impacted the lives of others." Here's to a future filled with positive change, collaboration, and an unwavering commitment to bettering lives through community nutrition.

Sincerely,

Jessica Randazzo


LEAFCS President.



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2023-2024 Executive Board Members

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Vice President for Member Resources- Emelia Clement

Vice President for Public Affairs- Valerie Vincent

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Regional Director, Region 2- Layne Langley

Alternate Regional Director, Region 1- Ana-Alicia Gouge

Alternate Regional Director, Region 2- Claire Barbier

Louisiana Creed

As an Extension educator, my prime concern
is people.

I believe that it is my privilege to give
to the best of my ability.

It is my responsibility to develop myself
To be a better teacher and an understanding friend.

I accept the opportunity to help individuals,
families, and communities to develop
to their full potential.

And, my I always be willing to accept the
challenges of the times.

HYPE is Moving in Monroe!

Submitted By: Cathy Agan



Ouachita Parish ranks 44 out of 64 parishes for health outcomes according to the 2022 County Health Rankings. To help improve health outcomes, local parks and community centers had a need for more things to promote physical activity. There is a walking trail at Charles Johnson Park, but it was not appealing for children. There was also a need to include things that would encourage older kids and teens to be more physically active.



Healthy Young People Empowerment (HYPE) Coalition members followed the HYPE curriculum to learn about making positive change in the community. They used the HYPE method to identify a problem area of focus, collected and analyzed data, and determined a solution. They participated in a walk audit as well as a park audit while learning about healthy living. As a result of their research and knowledge gained, they identified more opportunities for fun physical activities in Monroe. They partnered with the City of Monroe to address their findings and created a proposal. The "Moving in Monroe" project aimed to positively impact children's health behaviors while encouraging parents to make healthful choices.

HYPE Coalition members along with LSU AgCenter agents wrote a funding proposal and received \$1,515.00 to install physical activity prompts and equipment in Monroe. This intervention focused on community members that visit City of Monroe parks and community centers. The project turned the existing walking trail at Charles Johnson Park into a "Silly Walking Track" to help encourage physical activity in children and families. Signs were installed that prompt children to be physically active and enjoy the walking track. Tether ball sets were provided for installation at five sites in Monroe to help keep older kids and teens physically active. AgCenter agents report that families have been enjoying the physical activity prompts and equipment.

The City of Monroe agreed to maintain the tether ball poles and replace balls as needed. Future plans are to work with the city to install a StoryWalk. The Ouachita HYPE coalition will continue to meet for the 2022-2023 school year and work on other community projects to promote healthy lifestyles.

AgCenter partners with community center to provide clean water, physical activity in Bogalusa

Submitted by: Valerie Vincent

A community center in Bogalusa has been facing challenges accessing safe drinking water. With the summer heat setting in, the LSU AgCenter wanted to ensure that visitors are staying both hydrated and active. Brilliant Mindz Community Center director Dana Walker worked with the [Bogalusa Strong](#) coalition, which is led by the AgCenter and Our Lady of Angels Hospital, to come up with a solution. Last week, the group unveiled a new hydration station and portable physical activity mats at the center.

“Since Brilliant Mindz rents the space and is not allowed to modify the center, the roll out physical activity mats and temporary hydration station were the perfect solution,” said Valerie Vincent, LSU AgCenter nutrition agent and Bogalusa Strong facilitator. Washington Parish, where Brilliant Mindz is located, has some of the worst health outcomes in the state. The center offers various health enrichment opportunities for residents including AgCenter nutrition lessons, fitness activities and a new community garden. The center even adopted a policy to only serve water at the center, says Vincent.

“The youth and adults have participated in nutrition lessons, a physical activity challenge and healthful family fun days,” said Christi Mitchell, LSU AgCenter SNAP-Ed nutrition educator. “This summer we’re launching a ‘rethink your drink’ challenge, so the new hydration station will support that. Other Bogalusa Strong partner sites are also participating in the summer challenge as well.” Mitchell hopes that teaching community members how to build healthy habits will help reduce generational reoccurrences of chronic diseases.

[Bogalusa Strong](#) is a collaborative coalition of community members, business owners, organizations, and elected officials working together to improve quality of life and health outcomes in Washington Parish.

“We are glad to be part of a coalition that works with us to keep the community healthy by offering so much to help enrich our lives,” said Walker. “We strive to be healthier and with Christi teaching our youth hopefully these lessons will stay with them throughout their lives and extend to family and community.”



Dana Walker (Brilliant Mindz), Valerie Vincent (LSU AgCenter), Christi Mitchell (LSU AgCenter), and Angela Lambert (Our Lady of Angels Hospital) unveil the new hydration station and portable fitness mats at a Bogalusa Strong coalition meeting.

AgCenter helps tackle hunger on the Northshore

Submitted by: Valerie Vincent

October is Tackling Hunger Action Month, and the LSU AgCenter is doing its part to help on the Northshore. The AgCenter and its community partners recently installed a “blessing box” — similar to a little free library but stocked with staple foods instead of books — in an area of Covington with a high rate of food-insecure households. The items in the blessing box supplement the fresh produce that is available to residents at a nearby community garden.



*Blessing Box SPS students
2022*

The AgCenter has worked with the Covington Mayor’s Council on Healthy Lifestyles Healthy Communities Coalition, the Northshore Foodbank, St. Paul’s School, Pine View Middle School and community member Ray Herndon on these efforts. “Food access came up as an area of concern for residents,” said LSU AgCenter agent Valerie Vincent.

“With the wonderful community partners all working together, we were able to install another blessing box in this food desert to assist families with access to healthy food options. The blessing box installation between the garden and the school offers community members the opportunity to pick fresh produce and use the blessing box to find products such as brown rice, canned goods, dry beans, shelf stable milk and other products to help them build a healthy meal.” Blessing boxes can be found in many communities and provide a lifeline for families in need, Vincent said.

Constructing and installing the new one in Covington had the added benefit of bringing together many partners who have a passion for serving their community.

The Northshore Food Bank worked with Lowe’s of Covington to have all materials donated for the box, which Herndon built. He then delivered it to Gerald Ancar at St. Paul’s School. Ancar, who serves as the art department chair and a coach, worked with students William Cambre, Max Biggs and William Herndon to add artistic touches to the box. Once complete, Covington Public Works employees Jim O’Berry and Charlie Arthur worked with Herndon to get it installed.

“This was a great team effort, a terrific job by Coach Ancar and his St. Paul’s art class to make it look great, Lowe’s for having contributed the materials and Ginger Kunkle at Northshore Food Bank with the vision to place this resource so that anyone in need can access it day or night,” Herndon said.

Kunkle, Vincent and Mayor Mark Johnson stuffed the box with its initial food offerings. Seu Hee Ledet, principal of Pine View Middle School, adopted the box, and the school will keep the box filled in the future.

“We are excited about the efforts to make food more accessible, both through the Covington Community Garden and their new blessing box,” Kunkle said. “The community support for the box made connecting the dots to complete the project an easy process, from receiving donated supplies from Lowe’s to the time and talent put in by Ray Herndon and students at St. Paul’s.” The LSU AgCenter and its Healthy Communities program have numerous blessing box partnerships and projects across the state.



Stock the Box

West Feliciana Council on Aging Participate in Healthy Aging Series

Submitted by: Layne Langley

Layne Langley, LSU AgCenter Area Nutrition Agent, began delivering “Stay Independent: A Healthy Aging Series” to the clients of the West Feliciana Council on Aging (COA) in October. Stay Independent, a nutrition and wellness program, was developed by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and is being piloted by Flavors of Health Nutrition Agents at the LSU AgCenter. Stay Independent is for adults age 60+. Key behaviors placing older adults at risk are not eating three meals a day and limited intakes of protein and produce. And many older adults are not physically active which can increase their risk of sarcopenia, or age-related muscle wasting. Stay Independent provides these older adults with research-based nutrition and wellness information to help them reduce their nutritional risk and sarcopenia risk. Cheryl Franklin, West Feliciana COA Activity Director thought the series would be beneficial for her clients.



L-R: Hannah McQuirter, Mary Harris, and Carrie Cobb work together to makeover a meal during the Power Up with Protein session

Stay Independent is comprised of lessons to meet the needs of older adults including: Three Meals a Day, Feast on Fruits & Vegetables, Power Up with Protein, Exercise Your Independence, Cooking for One or Two, and Brain Health.

During the Three Meals a Day session, the COA clients learned the importance of eating regular meals. They

also identified serving sizes of the various MyPlate food groups. Those participating in the session also received several easy meal and snack recipes they can prepare at home. After the session, the clients assembled and tasted Whole Meal Salad. The Feast on Fruits & Vegetables session reminded the clients of the benefits of consuming fruits and vegetables. COA clients learned the dietary recommendations of fruits and vegetables for older adults. During the session, they received tips on different methods of preparing produce. The group also discussed fruit and vegetable options for those who have chewing issues. The session ended with the group preparing and sampling Asian Coleslaw.

In Exercise Your Independence session, the COA clients explored the importance of physical activity. The group discovered ways to stay active even when busy and discussed strategies to fitting physical activity into a busy schedule. During the session, the clients also participated in some physical activities. During Power Up with Protein, the



Looking to boost proteins, Rosa Williams and Burnice Vessel select foods they could add to any meal.

COA clients were taught the importance of eating protein. Those participating learned to identify protein-rich foods. They were also informed of the protein recommendations for older adults.



Mary Parker sorts through food models to place food models in the five MyPlate food groups while Glenda Bibbins and Brenda Williams work together to do the same.

COA clients identified strategies to overcome barriers to cooking for one or two in the Cooking for One or Two session. They reviewed the MyPlate and were reminded to use it to help with meal planning. They also practiced cutting recipes into halves and thirds and increased their awareness of safe food preparation. Save Your Brain was the last session in this series. The COA clients learned food's role in brain preservation. The participants completed a Save Your Brain Quiz.

This self-assessment tool was used to determine their brain health score and identify areas of improvement. During the session, the participants realized the best ways to help prevent cognitive decline is to eat right and move more. The clients discovered that keeping their

minds strong gives them the chance to live longer and stay independent.



Laura King and Samuel Franklin sort through food models to create fruit and vegetable meals they typically enjoy.

Nutrition in the garden

Submitted By: Brittany Newsome



Flavors of Health Nutrition Agent, Brittney Newsome and 4-H Agent, Bethany Corona held a series of nutrition & gardening activities during the months of June and July at the Harvest of Hope Community Garden in Rayville, LA. Youth ages 6-14 learned about plant parts, how nutrients support growth, MyPlate, Kitchen Conversions, and how to identify Go, Slow, & Whoa Foods. The youth group also spent time weeding the garden beds, cooking vegetables that were picked (eggplant pizza, salsa, bell pepper nachos, jalapeno cheese grits, chicken and rice with tomatoes and salsa), participated in garden yoga, and took a trip to the grocery store where they completed the MyPlate Grocery Challenge.

Nutrition Bingo

Submitted By: Emelia Clement

Since children who acquire healthy food habits are more likely to continue healthy behavior into adulthood, providing nutrition education to youth is an important strategy to improve health outcomes. In response to the problem of chronic disease prevalence in Orleans Parish,

FCS Nutrition Agent in Orleans Parish, Dr. Emelia Clement, partnered with Alice Harte Charter School to provide a series of interactive nutrition lessons to elementary school youth to improve knowledge and skills in choosing healthy food options. During the MyPlate lesson the students were engaged with a healthy portions' bingo game, to learn about the different foods in the MyPlate food groups, portion sizes and health benefits. Most students were able to identify at least three foods in each food group and name one health benefit each food provides.



Alice Harte youth identify MyPlate foods and portion sizes by playing nutrition bingo.

LSU AgCenter invites Central Louisiana to

A “Healthy You at the Zoo” submitted By: Cindy Upton

The Alexandria Zoo and FCS Central Region joined in a collaborative effort to bring health-supporting community resources and activities to the Alexandria Zoo, while beginning to address the disparities to admission. Zoos across the United States are acknowledging the disparities to zoo patronage and recognizing that many zoos are in areas with incomes below the federal poverty level. There is a growing movement among zoos to create programs expanding community access.



SNAP-Ed participated in a community resource fair, “Healthy You at the Zoo,” led by Central Region Flavors of Health. Fifteen

community agencies

participated providing wellness screenings, public health information, as well as information for other wellness resources. This event was held in conjunction with the ribbon cutting for the SNAP-Ed grant funded StoryWalk which was awarded the Zoo. SNAP-Ed included opportunities to engage younger children with painted sidewalk activity stencils and a “Silly Story Walk” in the Zoo playground area. In the first steps towards addressing disparate access and in support of the event, the

Friends of the Alexandria Zoo sponsored the popular train ride making it free to all visitors. The Rapides Parish Libraries offer family zoo passes available for check out. This was promoted to the public through “Healthy You at the Zoo” publicity and outreach opportunities. SNAP-Ed and the Alexandria Zoo have planned programming that will offered during designated no-cost entrance times.

The Zoo staff expressed surprise at the robust interest in the health resources, as it not typical of a zoo event. Over 1600 Central Louisiana residents visited the zoo the day of “Healthy You at the Zoo.” As a result, LSU AgCenter and the Alexandria Zoo have decided to mark this as an annual event. Interview responses to “Healthy You at the Zoo” and the StoryWalk ribbon cutting indicated significant engagement and interest in future events.



Tooke Library PSE's

Submitted By: Elizabeth Martin, Abigail McAlister, Grace Peterson

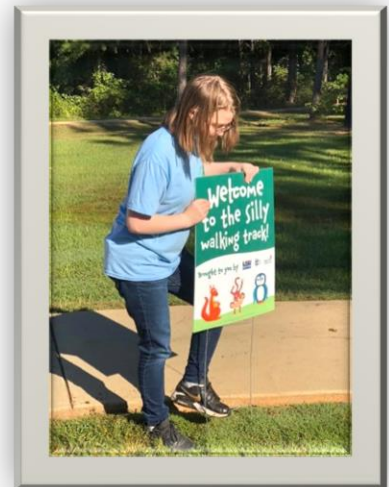
Collaboration is key in extension. That is just what Elizabeth Martin, Abigail McAlister, and Grace Peterson did to create PSEs at the Tooke Library in Bossier parish. The Tooke Library branch is located in a rural part of Bossier parish but serves as a second home to the tight-knit community. Patrons spend their days at the library participating in sewing and book clubs, nutrition lessons, and the youth summer reading program.



Elizabeth, Abigail, and Grace met with the librarians and branch manager to plan PSE projects with the library. On the morning of October 1, 2022, the FCS team arrived with physical activity stencils, wellness path signs, silly walking track signs, and a Storywalk ready to be installed. Library staff, community volunteers, and Bossier parish 4-H agents and youth spent the Saturday morning painting and installing the signs.

Physical activity stencils were painted on the walking path and around the library's playground. The signs and Storywalk were installed on the walking path. As a result, nutrition lessons have continued at the library including topics such as cooking with herbs and spices, eating a heart healthy diet, and saving money at the grocery store. Patrons are eagerly awaiting new topics and have requested a grocery store tour. At the last nutrition lesson, participants also reported that they have revitalized their walking club that was discontinued during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Tooke Library also participates in the "Taste of Herbs and Spices" program.

This project is a great example of how collaboration throughout FCS programming can be successful. These EFNEP, SNAP-Ed, and Flavors of Health agents are working together to bring PSEs to Bossier parish and beyond!



Orleans Coalition in Action

Submitted By: Dr. Emelia Clement

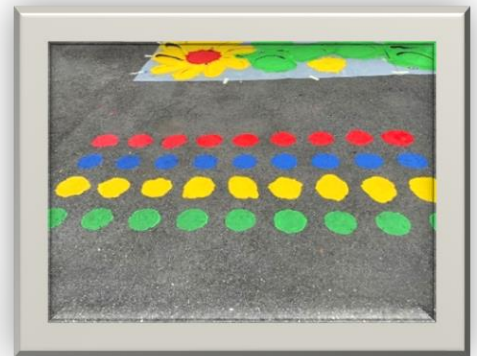
The New Orleans Health Department reported inadequate physical activity level among high school students in their Healthy Lifestyle report. Physical inactivity increases the risk for obesity and obesity-related health complications, therefore, there is an urgent need for physical environment enhancements to foster more play among students. To achieve this goal SNAP-Ed Agent Dr. Emelia Clement working with the Food Access Working Group (FAWG) coalition, collaborated with other LSU AgCenter extension faculty (4-H & EFNEP) in Orleans Parish to access manpower and resources to paint playground stencils at Benjamin Franklin Elementary School.

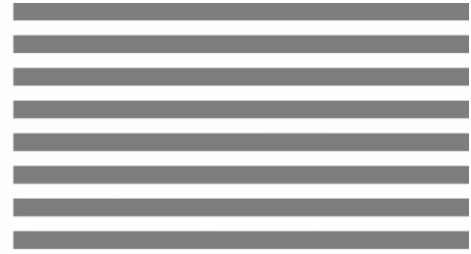


Elisabet, Shawn and Haley at work painting the stencils.

This project brought together school administration including the Principal Nichelle Logan Jones, community partners and LSU AgCenter Extension faculty, to work for the good of Orleans Parish youth. Credit goes to Bet Trujillo (EFNEP), Shawn Verbeten (EFNEP, Jefferson Parish), Emelia Clement (SNAP-Ed), Haley Holeyton (FAWG) and her team of volunteers, for the actual painting of the playground stencils.

Partnerships work!!





Green Thumb Club forms at Bains Lower Elementary in West Feliciana Parish

By: Layne Langley

Pre-K and kindergarten students at Bains Lower Elementary in St. Francisville, West Feliciana Parish began the school year learning garden rules and becoming members of the Green Thumb Club. Layne Langley teaches monthly nutrition and school garden classes during Play 60 (PE). She and Lanya Mayer, Play 60 Coach, also guide the youth in planting and caring for the garden.



Students in Mrs. Moreau's class learn about the MyPlate while placing food cards on the correct food groups

Kindergarten students each month learn about a different food group of the MyPlate through lessons led by Langley and activities that reinforce the food groups.

Pre-K students are learning what it means to be smart from the inside out. They are learning from lovable organ characters called the OrganWise Guys. The OrganWise Guys favorites have been Hardy Heart and Sid & Kid the Kidney Brothers.

Each Pre-K and kindergarten class has had a hand in planting. Their 10 raised beds have been filled with radish, carrot, and turnip seeds as well as cauliflower and cabbage transplants donated by the Feliciana Master Gardeners. Youth were also excited to plant colorful flowers in one of the raised beds. With much anticipation, the students have been watering the seeds and transplants waiting for the vegetables to be ready to harvest.



Planting these tiny carrot seeds (left to right) are Kam'ron Stewart, Delilah Bailey, Amelia Moe, and Ada Lane Estep.



Micah McCune, Kendrick Stewart, and Harper Wallock work together to harvest these radishes.

In early December, youth began harvesting and sampling radish. The students were eager to try something they planted and have been caring for. After sampling the radish, the students were polled to see if they liked the taste. Surprisingly, most of the students liked the radish.



Students in Mrs. Yantis' class show off the cucumbers they harvested during their very first nutrition and school garden class of the school year.

Due to the extended days of very cold temps, all the cauliflower and cabbage were killed. We have been waiting patiently to replant but have had no luck thus far due the rain in our area. Our plans are to make ABC soup with the veggies from the garden for all the students to sample.



Students in Mrs. Yantis' class pose under the lemon cucumber plant. Special thanks to Nancy Roppolo with Ins & Outs for donating the seeds for the school garden. Lanya Mayer, Play 60 Coach stands in the back of the class



Students in Mrs. Nelson's class proudly show off the radish they grew and harvested.

LEAFCS Conference 2023

The Louisiana Extension Association of Family and Consumer Science (LEAFCS) met June 7-9, 2023, at the Hilton Garden Inn in Lafayette to celebrate our many accomplishments, under the theme “Rooted in Health”. The first day, June 7, was for preparation for the conference and attendees to arrival for the conference. On the main conference day, June 8, the group was addressed by Extension Leadership within the LSU AgCenter, participated in the General Business Meeting, and had the chance to engage in several professional development opportunities in the afternoon. The highlight of the day was the awards banquet in the evening to show appreciation for every LEAFCS member, especially the award winners. The conference was brought to a full circle on the third day with a tour of Guidry’s Catfish and Processing Inc in Breaux Bridge. It was a fun-filled and refreshing conference, meeting new members, and catching up with the seasoned agents.



Dr. Eubanks giving a talk on Family & Consumer Science Trends in Louisiana



Cecilia Stevens addressing, VP Professional Development addressing the group at the General meeting.



Layne Langley (far left) with new LEAFCS members during the General meeting.



LEAFCS members touring Guidry's Catfish and Processing Inc