



2019 Junior Master Gardener National Leader Training *Panel Participants*

Program Evaluation

*Dr. Kathryn Orvis- Asst. Professor-Extension Education-Purdue University; West Lafayette, IN
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Dr. Orvis is recognized as a national leader in teaching, as well as instructional youth gardening and biotechnology education. Known for teaching science using plants, Dr. Orvis focuses on plant science in the context of Agriculture at both the university through and PK-12 levels, and across multiple educational settings. She brings her expertise and efforts in youth programming, teaching, horticulture, plant science, and biotechnology together into her focus area—using plants to educate youth about Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).

County Extension Program Implementation and Sustainability

*Arvitta Scott – 4-H and Youth Development, 4-H Coordinator-Gregg County; Longview, TX
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Arvitta is a county Extension Agent for 4-H & Youth Development. She is passionate about making a difference in the lives of people, particularly youth. As a strong advocate of youth development in leadership; healthy living; and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, she works with a number of underserved youth, adult volunteers, and community partners to ensure that our youth are having fun while learning and that they become great leaders.

School District Program Implementation and Sustainability

*Lisa Marie Dunn- Coordinator of GT/Advanced Academics- United ISD; Laredo, TX
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Lisa Dunn is a Texas A&M University Graduate-Class of '97 earning a BA in Political Science with a Minor in English and she completed her MA in English and Curriculum and Instruction from Texas A&M International University. Lisa holds an EC-12 Principal Certificate, a Classroom Teacher Certificate in Secondary English and is a South Texas Writing Project Teacher Consultant. Currently, she is the Coordinator of GT/Advanced Academics for United ISD. Lisa, as a United ISD administrator, has been instrumental in taking the district lead in collaborating with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Webb County to implement the Healthy South Texas program within United ISD. Outside of work, Lisa serves as an Integrative Institute of Nutrition Certified Health Coach, a Urban Agriculture Garden Group member in the City of Laredo, a Bio-energetic Wellness Practitioner and a Beauty Counter Consultant. Lisa is the mom of two sons and enjoys attending theater productions, live music, great conversations, Paleo cooking and being a baseball mom.

***Julia Jarrell – Nutrition Education Manager-Houston ISD; Houston, TX**

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Julia graduated from the University of Houston with a bachelor degree in Human Food and Nutrition and is a Registered Dietitian in Houston, Texas. Julia is the Nutrition Education Manager overseeing food literacy for Houston ISD. She is passionate about teaching nutrition in ways that involve gardening, cooking demonstrations, Farm to My Plate, and encouraging children to understand local fresh foods.

***Sara Rodriguez - Educator-Houston ISD; Houston, TX**

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Sara Y. Rodriguez is a second year science lab teacher at Shearn Elementary. She is currently implementing, and supporting the LGEG curricula, and was one of the first teachers that piloted this program. Sara graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso with a Bachelor's Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies. Her teaching philosophy: "I know hands-on learning activities make a significant difference in my young scholars' educational success. I am committed to engage the imaginations, and minds of my students; through fun, and challenging hands-on science activities."

Course Curriculum Integration: Middle, Elementary, Early Childhood

***Melinda Dillon- Educator-Elysian Fields Middle School; Elysian Fields, TX**

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Melinda is an 8th grade science teacher at Elysian Fields Middle School. In her 20 years of teaching, Melinda has taught 6th grade science for 6 years and 8th grade science for the past 14 years. Melinda enjoys spending as much time as she can outside with her husband and daughter and believes that kids that are allowed to dig in the dirt grow into better adults.

***T.J. Tiller- Educator-Elysian Fields Middle School; Elysian Fields, TX**

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T.J. is a history teacher at Elysian Fields Middle School. He graduated from Texas A&M University in 2008 with a degree in Agriculture Development. Currently in his 10th year of teaching, T.J. has taught high school history and middle school history, as well as, coached. In his free time, he enjoys watching the Aggies in any sport with his family.

***Julie Hamilton- Educator- College Station ISD Head Start; College Station, TX**
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Julie graduated from Texas A&M University with a degree in Kinesiology in 1991. She is certified to teach all levels of Physical Education and Health as well as Elementary Education and Early Childhood. Julie has been in education a total of 27 years (6 years teaching Physical Education, 17 years teaching Preschool, and 4 years as a Mother's Day Out/Preschool director). Currently, Julie teaches Head Start in College Station ISD, serves on the board for the Texas Baptist Weekday Education Association, and presents to preschool teachers across the state of Texas. She loves working with Head Start children and has a passion for early childhood.

***Lisa Nelson- Educator- Early Childhood Consultant; College Station, TX**
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Lisa Nelson, B.S. R.D.H. is a graduate of Texas A&M University Health Science System, Baylor College of Dentistry and spent her thirty year career working in private practices, serving as a clinical instructor at Blinn College and as an administrator with College Station ISD's Early Childhood Services. Having a primary focus and passion for the health, safety and nutrition for children and families within the Head Start program, Lisa has worked to educate teachers and families of the importance for access to quality health care and education and to provide opportunities for the healthy growth and development of young children affected by poverty. Currently, Lisa enjoys training Head Start agencies as a national consultant for Essential Elements, LLC and working on the Early Childhood LGEG pilot with the Junior Master Gardening Program. She is also a Registered Trainer for Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System, and Child Care Health Consultant with Healthy Child Care Texas.

Funding Implementation and Sustainability through Federal Programs

***Renda Nelson-State Program Dir.-Better Living for Texans; AgriLife Extension, College Station, TX**
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Renda serves as the State Program Director for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service – Better Living for Texans/SNAP-Ed program. In her role, she offers state wide leadership by coordinating program implementation and evaluation while maintaining the program under federal and state guidelines in 205 of the 254 Texas counties. Renda earned her Masters of Science in Education from the University of Kansas.