



**OKLAHOMA COUNTY
EXTENSION**

REPORT TO THE PUBLIC September 2023

OSU Extension Staff Receives Southern Region Award

A group of 30 Family & Consumer Sciences Educators across the state traveled to Providence, Rhode Island to take part in the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences conference.

During the conference, LaDonna Hines, Joshua Campbell and Julia Laughlin received 2nd Place Southern Region award for "Program Excellence Through Research". Hines, accepted the award for the team.

The purpose of this research project was to assess the practicality of a new NE OKC Farmer's Market which would improve community food access. The "Eastside Fresh Market" was the outcome of this project. The study was performed with the partnership of Lynn Institute for Healthcare Research.





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Fermenting Foods

Oklahoma County Master Wellness Volunteers learned all about fermenting foods during their September 22nd meeting. Taylor Conner, FCS Educator and MWV Advisor, explained the science of fermentation. Volunteers also learned about the benefits of fermented foods and gut health. Afterward, volunteers had hands-on experience in making their own sauerkraut to ferment at home.

Some of the volunteers will be assisting with an upcoming public workshop at the County office using their new knowledge of fermented foods.





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2023

Master Composter Class Begins



On September 13, the 2023 Master Composter class began. This six week course provides an indepth experience in composting at all scales from small backyard to large commercial composting.



Students learn the science behind the composting process and tour composting facilities across the Oklahoma City metro. Each week, students hear from compost experts including university faculty, community leaders, and compost business owners.



Throughout the course, participants engage in hands-on compost learning experiences and are challenged to complete a compost related service project in their community. Joshua Campbell is the advisor to the Master Composters.



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NEW Class of Master Gardeners Begins!

On September 3, a new class of Master Gardeners volunteers began their coursework as students in a 12 week horticulture and gardening course taught by OSU Educators and Specialists.

Classes will include vegetable gardening, turfgrass management, tree and shrub care, annual and perennial garden plants, pruning plant propagation, soil health, composting and much more. These volunteers will also work in gardens in our community as interns starting in the spring and continue to graduate as Certified Master Gardeners in the fall next year. Julia Laughlin is the advisor to the Master Gardeners.





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Youth Programming Gone Wild

The mission of Community Nutrition Education Programs (CNEP) is to educate and empower limited-resource Oklahomans to improve nutrition and physical activity behaviors. CNEP's vision is to improve the health of Oklahomans.



Healthy behaviors of children are associated with higher academic achievement. The CNEP Youth Program includes a variety of nutrition education offerings which focus on improving healthy behaviors of Oklahoma children. Our goal is to give our youth the best chance at academic success while also encouraging healthy habits they can use for the rest of their lives.

KIK It Up! is an afterschool and summer program for ages 6-15 years. Add a little bit of body text

CATCH, or the Coordinated Approach to Child Health, is a comprehensive nutrition curriculum for elementary students.

Teen Cuisine is a hands-on cooking program that teaches students in grades 8-12 important life skills for eating smart, which will stay with them as they grow into adults.



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4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

Cupcake Wars

September is a big month for 4-H youth as many compete in the state fair. It is an opportunity to put all their hard work to the test. Oklahoma County 4-H youth did an incredible job this year, and took home a lot of Blue Ribbons.

Our Intermediate Cupcake Wars team, Harper and Tinley, was no exception. They won the county competition, and then went on to compete for us at the state contest. Harper and Tinley did an excellent job, and took first place in their division!





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Strong Dads

OSU Extension acquired a contract with Oklahoma Human Services to implement fatherhood-specific services across the state. This past spring a \$9 million investment of TANF funding was given to increase men's involvement in family life.

The TANF funding supports the programming for OSU Extension Fatherhood program Strong Dads in 9 counties, which includes Oklahoma County.

Strong Dads is a free 12-week fatherhood workshop offered in English and Spanish. Weekly classes are offered through the National Fatherhood Initiative's 24:7 Dad program. These classes include topics such as life skills, parenting knowledge, relationship skills, economic stability, positive community networks, knowledge of the family court system, co-parenting relationship quality, and the importance of child support to fathers.

The program offers weekly transportation stipends, incentives, resources, and one on one coaching and support. Dads can connect with other dads, build friendships, and expand their network. We create a supportive community, offering a space to share experiences, learn from each other, and grow as fathers. This FREE workshop is for dads of all ages and stages or someone who portrays a father figure role.

The uniqueness of Strong Dads is we can also provide the workshops to different organizations in house.





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Meet our new Fatherhood Initiative Educators

Hello, I'm Aleshia. I have spent the past 11 years helping make a difference through familyhood programs, building stronger communities, networks of support, and resources.

Over the years I have worked with the programs Family Expectations and TRUE Dads and am no stranger to non-profit work. I am a passionate advocate for community change.

I now work as the Field Program Coordinator for Strong Dads, where I do community outreach, case management, and facilitate transformative workshops utilizing the 24:7 Dad Curriculum.

My aim is to empower dads to connect and become the fathers they aspire to be. I deeply believe in the power of change and am dedicated to improving lives through Strong Dads.

I'm committed to making a difference and fostering meaningful connections with the dads in our community while providing guidance and support.



Aleshia Maldonado



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Meet Kris Martens, Bilingual Educator

Hello! My name is Kris and I am one of the new field educators for the Strong Dads program. I teach the program in the Spanish language for non-English speakers.

I received my Bachelor's of Science Degree in K-12 Education and Spanish from Oklahoma State University.

After graduation, I started teaching in the public education sector and have taught for the past 16 years. I started studying Spanish when I was nine years old, when a brand new foreign language program was implemented in 1993 across all of the elementary schools in Enid, Oklahoma. I fell in love with the language and the Hispanic culture and continued to study and take Spanish classes. I have traveled abroad to various different Hispanic countries including México, Honduras, Puerto Rico, and Costa Rica. I was fortunate enough to host a tour to Costa Rica for my students and their parents in 2010.

I have a passion for working within the communities in which I've lived. I've been a mentor for Big Brothers and Big Sisters, a mentor for Lowe Family Young Scholars, and sponsored a club called Interact which is sponsored by Rotary International for high school students where I received the Paul Harris Fellow Award for my contributions within my community and internationally.





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Extension Staff:

LaDonna Hines - Extension Director

Lisa Hamblin - Family & Consumer
Sciences Educator

Taylor Conner - Family & Consumer
Sciences Educator

Julia Laughlin - Horticulture Educator

Josh Campbell - Urban Agriculture
& Natural Resources Educator

Cody Yount - 4-H Educator

Mindy McNeil - 4-H Educator

Lori Goodbary - CNEP Area
Coordinator

Danyelle Kuss, 4-H Youth Mental
Health Educator

Kris Martens, Strong Dads Educator

Aleshia Maldonado, Strong Dads
Educator

OSU Extension provides research-based resources you can use to improve your home, workplace, and community. We offer programs and services that are specifically designed to solve the problems that county residents face.

Please check out our website for the calendar of events <https://calendar.okstate.edu/oces/> to learn of new workshops or programs being offered.

You can follow us on Facebook for a glimpse into how your Oklahoma County Extension Educators and staff are serving you and the community.

Be sure to check out Oklahoma County OSU Extension's monthly podcast "The Urban Gardener" with Julia Laughlin, Horticulture Educator, and Joshua Campbell, Urban Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator.



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