



**OKLAHOMA COUNTY
EXTENSION**

REPORT TO THE PUBLIC February 2025

Extension Hosts Poverty Simulation

OSU Extension educators and volunteers hosted a poverty simulation at Rose State College. The simulation participants consisted of staff from Goodwill Central Oklahoma, Rose State College and Oklahoma JumpStart Coalition. Poverty is a reality for many individuals and families. Unless poverty has been experienced, it's difficult to understand. This simulation sensitizes participants to the struggles of many Oklahoma families.

During the simulation, participants role-played a month's time in the lives of low-income families. They had to make daily choices based on their specific situation.

The simulation promoted awareness and increased understanding with the goal to transform perspectives and inspire local change.

The main focus of this program is to shift the paradigm of poverty away from being seen as a personal failure and toward the understanding of poverty as a societal, structural collapse.





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4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

Jake FM Radio Interviews

This month, two Oklahoma County 4-H members were invited to speak on behalf of Oklahoma 4-H on Jake FM Radio. Dani McTague and Rexton Potter took this opportunity to highlight their service projects.

Dani's Dream collects art supplies and assembles bags of materials for underserved youth across the state. Meanwhile, the HUGS initiative is a county-wide effort aimed at providing hats, underwear, gloves, and socks to those in need.

Their interviews reached an estimated 200,000 listeners and viewers, raising visibility for the program and showcasing the impactful work being done by these youth leaders. In addition, this experience provided both Dani and Rexton a valuable opportunity to hone their public speaking skills, develop networking connections, and gain confidence as 4-H teen leaders.





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Cope-Able

A card game to help mental health talks feel natural

Youth Mental Health Specialist, Danyelle Kuss has been piloting an originally created program to middle schools across the state.

This engaging program, delivered through a 4-session curriculum, utilizes an interactive game format to educate students on the impact of various coping skills. By actively participating in the game, students gain a deeper understanding of how their choices affect their well-being.

Students end the program having created a personalized coping plan to begin increasing their use of healthy coping. So far, over 200 students have been reached.

Attendees at the LINK Family and Consumer Sciences Conference were also given the opportunity to experience the game and learn how it can be used in their classrooms. Participants were extension and classroom educators from across the state.



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Oklahoma Master Gardeners Gardening 101 Workshops

In February, The Oklahoma Master Gardeners organized and hosted a three-weekend gardening workshop titled Gardening 101. This workshop focused on garden soils, vegetable and flower gardening, landscaping, houseplants, lawn maintenance and other areas of home gardening. The sessions were designed to be similar to the year-long Master Gardener course, adapted to a weekend format, and available to those who cannot commit to the Master Gardener training.

The workshops were held at the Oklahoma County OSU Extension Conference Center, which allowed participants to view the display gardens. Instructors for the course included OSU Horticulture faculty, Horticulture Educators, and some experienced Master Gardeners. The 38 attendees received a soil sample analysis and 3 full days of education.



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Master Irrigator Program

The OSU Extension Master Irrigator Program is an advanced training initiative designed to equip producers with knowledge and skills in irrigation water management, system maintenance, energy conservation, and the economics of irrigated agriculture.

Andrew Fleet, Oklahoma County OSU Extension Water Conservation Educator, participated in this program and completed the training. The program combined classroom instruction, peer-to-peer discussions, and hands-on field demonstrations.

Instruction was provided by OSU Extension specialists, irrigation experts, economists, crop consultants, producers, and NRCS personnel from Oklahoma and neighboring states.

A key focus of the program is to promote the adoption of advanced water management technologies, including soil moisture sensors and crop growth model-based irrigation schedulers.

By integrating irrigation strategies, the Master Irrigator Program educates producers to conserve water, reduce costs, and enhance sustainable agricultural practices.





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Importance of Soil Health and Growing Herbs



On February 19th, Mason Huddleston, Urban Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator, presented a lecture to the Oklahoma Herb Society on soil health as it relates to growing herbs.



The presentation covered key topics such as general soil health, nutrient requirements for herbs, and the best herb varieties suited for Oklahoma's climate.

Although there was inclement weather the day of the workshop, the program was presented on zoom and well received. The participants gained valuable insights into optimizing soil conditions for successful herb gardening in the region.





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Diabetes & Wellness at Edmond Library

On February 26th, Taylor Conner, Family & Consumer Sciences Educator, launched a three-week program at the Edmond Library titled Live Well, Eat Well, Be Active with Diabetes (LEAD). Developed by nutrition state specialists at Oklahoma State University, this educational series equips participants with practical strategies for managing type 2 diabetes and reducing the risk for those who are pre-diabetic.

The program emphasizes balanced eating habits, including the use of the American Diabetes Association's Plate Method and carbohydrate counting. Through hands-on activities, participants practice assembling well-balanced meal plates by identifying non-starchy vegetables, starchy foods, proteins, fruits, and dairy. Additionally, the series highlights the critical role of physical activity in diabetes management, empowering attendees with knowledge and skills to support a healthier lifestyle.





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CO-PARENTING WORKSHOPS OFFERED IN SPANISH

Since 2014, state law requires that all divorcing parents with minor children must complete a co-parenting class before their divorce is final. Oklahoma County OSU Extension is one of the only agencies in the state offering the court-mandated Co-Parenting programs in English and Spanish.

Family and Consumer Sciences Educator, Lisa Hamblin teaches the Co-Parenting for Resilience English workshop twice a month and the Spanish class is offered monthly at OSU-OKC. Norelis Cox, a native speaker from Stillwater, teaches the Spanish course.

Since 2024, approximately 140 parents have attended the Spanish workshop and 415 attended the English class.

During the four-hour session, parents learn how to better communicate, be consistent with their children, and recognize signs of stress. They also learn the benefits of mediation and receive a workbook that includes a list of additional community resources.





OKLAHOMA COUNTY EXTENSION

Extension Staff:

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Danyelle Kuss - 4-H Youth Mental
Health Educator

Aleshia Maldonado - Strong Dads
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Kenny Garcia-Taveras - Strong Dads
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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, Mason Huddleston, Urban Ag & Natural Resources Educator and Andrew Fleet, Water Conservation Educator



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