



COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT Connection

ISSUE 009 - SEPTEMBER 2024



HELLO NEW YEAR!

It's a brand new 4-H year! With a new year, a whole new set of possibilities arrive! Possibilities to work with new youth and new adults. Possibilities to continue to grow those youth you currently work with. It has an air of excitement and enchantment. However, as enchanting a new year feels, we cannot deny that this year feels a little different. Coming off of an insane summer, the burnout and overwhelming feelings are real. As much as I would love to sit here and tell you to go find some time to take a minute for yourself, we know that those luxuries are not always available at this time. So, how do we get past this hump and out of this pit of exhaustion, we take the wins where we can get them. You have new students excited about beginning their 4-H journey? Awesome! Hold on to that feeling. You have students excited for new leadership roles? Super! Foster those feelings. Life is about choices and perspective. In the hustle, we often only see one perspective, the negative. I challenge you this month, to embrace the other side. Look for those positive and rewarding things you can pull from each experience and let those fill your tank up. Keep doing the awesome things you all are doing!

Thankful for you!
Megan

COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT
CONNECTION

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Effective Communication Tools and Strategies for a Successful 4-H Year

Keeping 4-H clubs and families informed and engaged requires creative and effective communication. As county extension agents, you can utilize a variety of tools to ensure your messages reach everyone clearly and consistently. Here are some strategies using platforms beyond traditional websites, virtual meetings, and newsletters:

1. Social Media Engagement:

- Facebook and Instagram: Leverage these platforms to connect with members and families. Create a county 4-H Facebook page for sharing updates, photos, and event reminders. On Instagram, use Stories and Reels to highlight member achievements, provide quick project tips, or share behind-the-scenes glimpses of ongoing activities.
- Content Ideas: Host weekly "Ask a 4-H Leader" sessions on Facebook Live where members can pose questions about projects or upcoming events. Use Instagram polls to gather feedback on project interests or event ideas, making communication interactive.

2. Group Text Messaging:

- Services: Use group text messaging services like Remind, GroupMe, or WhatsApp to send out quick updates and reminders. These platforms are ideal for ensuring that important information—such as meeting changes or event deadlines—reaches everyone instantly.
- Best Practices: Keep messages short and focused. For example, "Don't forget! Photography project submissions are due Friday. Need help? Reply to this message for assistance."

3. Social Media Challenges:

- Engagement: Create fun and engaging social media challenges, such as a "4-H Project of the Week" where members post photos of their ongoing projects on Instagram or Facebook using a specific hashtag. Offer small rewards for participation to encourage engagement.
- Community Building: Encourage members to tag friends and share their progress, fostering a sense of community and peer support. This approach helps keep communication lively and interactive.

4. Phone Trees:

- Personal Touch: Revive the traditional phone tree, where key volunteers or older youth leaders are responsible for calling a small group of members to pass along important information. This method ensures that everyone gets the message and allows for a personal touch in communication.
- Implementation: Organize the phone tree at the beginning of the year, assigning roles and ensuring everyone understands their part. Use this method especially for urgent updates or to check in on members who may not be active on social media.

5. Flyers and Posters:

- Physical Outreach: Distribute printed flyers and posters in community centers, schools, and local businesses to announce upcoming 4-H events or workshops. These physical reminders are particularly effective in rural areas where internet access may be limited. Don't forget to send these to your local newspapers for printed ads!
- Creative Content: Design eye-catching materials with colorful graphics and concise information, ensuring they stand out and are easy to read. Include tear-off tabs with contact information or event details for easy reference.

Diversifying your communication methods with these tools, can help you reach your 4-H community in multiple ways, ensuring that important information is delivered effectively and engagingly. This multifaceted approach will help maintain strong connections and active participation throughout the year.

Dates to Remember



DISTRICT 8 4-H EVENT DATES 2024-2025

As of 08/23/2024



EVENT	REGISTRATION DATES	EVENT DATE	LOCATION
Council Advisors			
Program Development Committee Meeting	September 5, 2024		Johnson County Extension Office, Cleburne
Holiday Classic	November 2-November 3, 2024		Bell County Expo Center
District 8 4-H Scholarship Workshop	October 22, 2024 via Zoom		
District Ag Product ID	October 7, 2024-October 25, 2024	November 7, 2024	Lakeview Baptist Church, Belton
District Livestock Skillathon	October 7, 2024-October 25, 2024	November 7, 2024	Lakeview Baptist Church, Belton
District Quiz Bowls (FCH, Livestock, Horse)	October 7, 2024-October 25, 2024	November 7, 2024	Lakeview Baptist Church, Belton
Shooting Sports Coach Training	October 7, 2024-October 25, 2024	November 9, 2024- November 10, 2024	Stephenville Research & Extension Center
District Leaders for Life Skillathon	October 21, 2024-November 1, 2024	November 19, 2024	Online
District 8 4-H Scholarship Workshop	December 12, 2024 via Zoom		
District Food Challenge District Food Show	November 4, 2024-November 15, 2024	December 5, 2024	Bell County Expo Center, Belton
Program Development Committee Meeting	January 2, 2025	Williamson County Extension Office, Georgetown	
District Dairy Judging Contest	December 9, 2024-December 20, 2024	January 19, 2025	Fort Worth Stock Show
District Horse Judging	March 10, 2025-March 28, 2025	April 12, 2025	Brazos Expo Center, Bryan
District Photography Contest	March 3, 2025-April 4, 2025	Online, will be announced virtually no later than April 25, 2025	
District Consumer Decision Making	March 31, 2025-April 11, 2025	April 24, 2025	Lakeview Baptist Church, Belton
District Roundup (Ed Pres, Public Speaking, Share-The-Fun)	March 31, 2025-April 11, 2025	April 26, 2025	West High School, West

EVENT	REGISTRATION DATES	EVENT DATE	LOCATION
District Fashion Show, Storyboard, Duds to Dazzle	March 31, 2025-April 11, 2025	April 28, 2025	Cleburne Conference Center, Cleburne
Multi-District Contests (Livestock, Meat, Soil)	April 7, 2025-April 17, 2025	May 3, 2025	College Station
District Rifle Match	March 31, 2025-April 17, 2025	May 3, 2025	Leon Co Gun Club, Oakwood
4-H Scholarship Interviews		April 25-27, 2025	TAMU, College Station
Program Development Committee Meeting	TBD [1st couple of weeks in May]		
Texas 4-H Roundup		June 2-5, 2025	TAMU, College Station
District Horse Show	May 5, 2025-May 16, 2025	TBD	Bell County Expo Center
District SURGE (Leadership Lab) & Officer Elections	May 5, 2025-May 16, 2025	June 24-26, 2025	Texas 4-H Center, Brownwood
District Council Officer Applications	May 5, 2025-May 16, 2025	June 24-26, 2025	Texas 4-H Center, Brownwood
Southeast District County Camp			Lakeview Methodist Conference Center, Palestine
District Record book Judging	June 9, 2025-June 30, 2025	July 10, 2025	
Texas 4-H Horse Show		July 19-25, 2025	Brazos County Expo
Texas 4-H Record book Judging	By 7/31		Virtual

*Tentative Dates and/or Locations

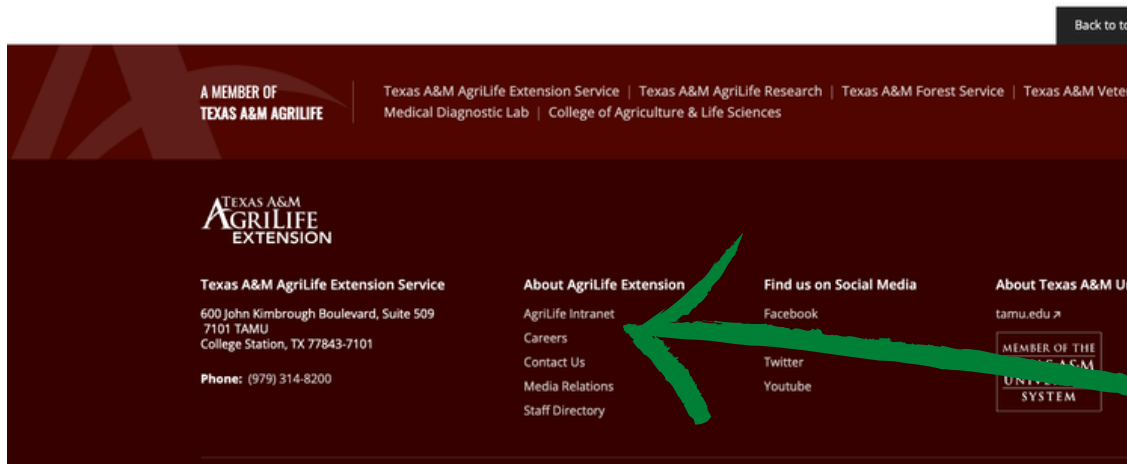
Don't forget these dates!

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

Keep yourself current and motivated by utilizing the tools that Texas A&M AgriLife has to offer! Check those out below!

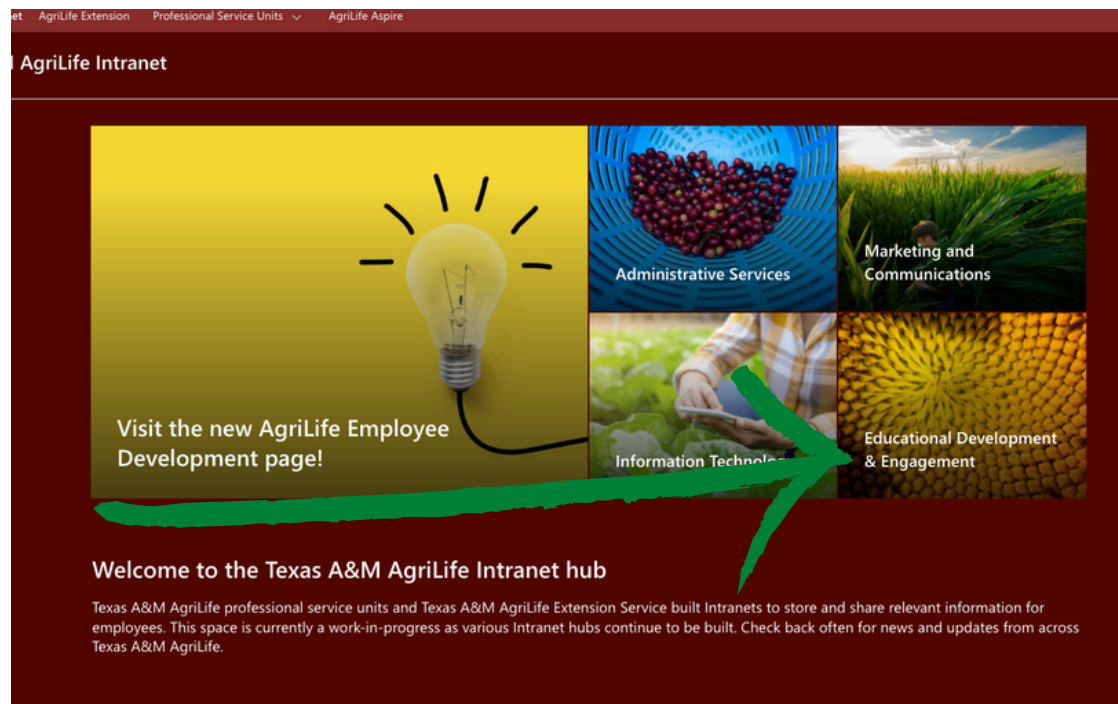


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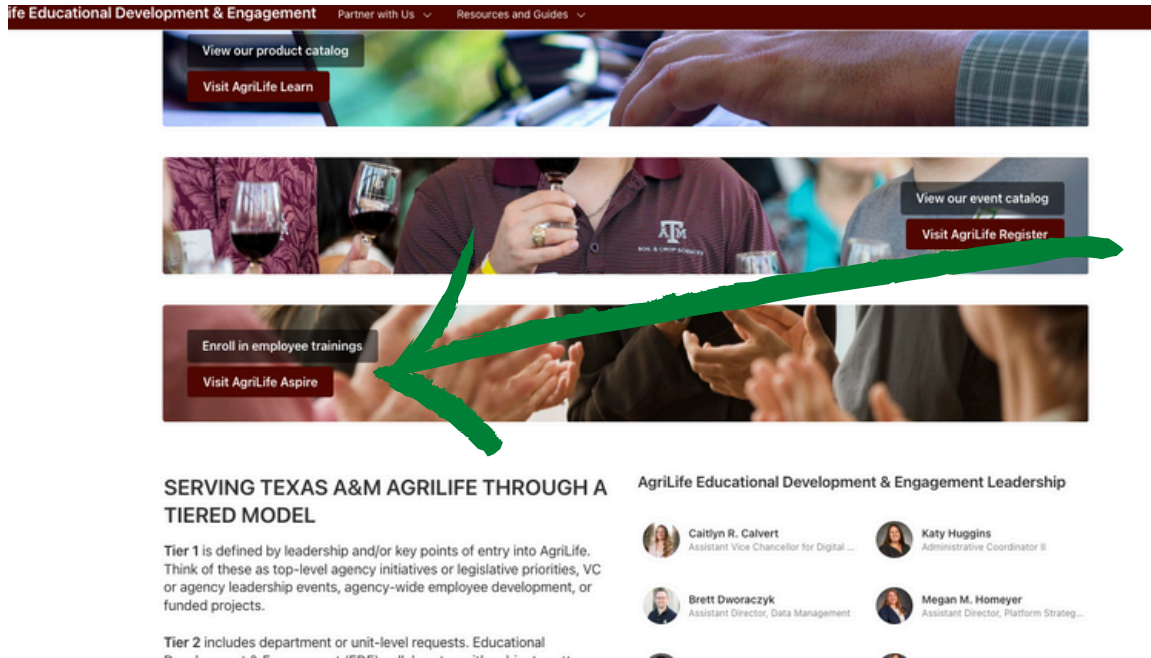
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Employee
Development &
Engagement



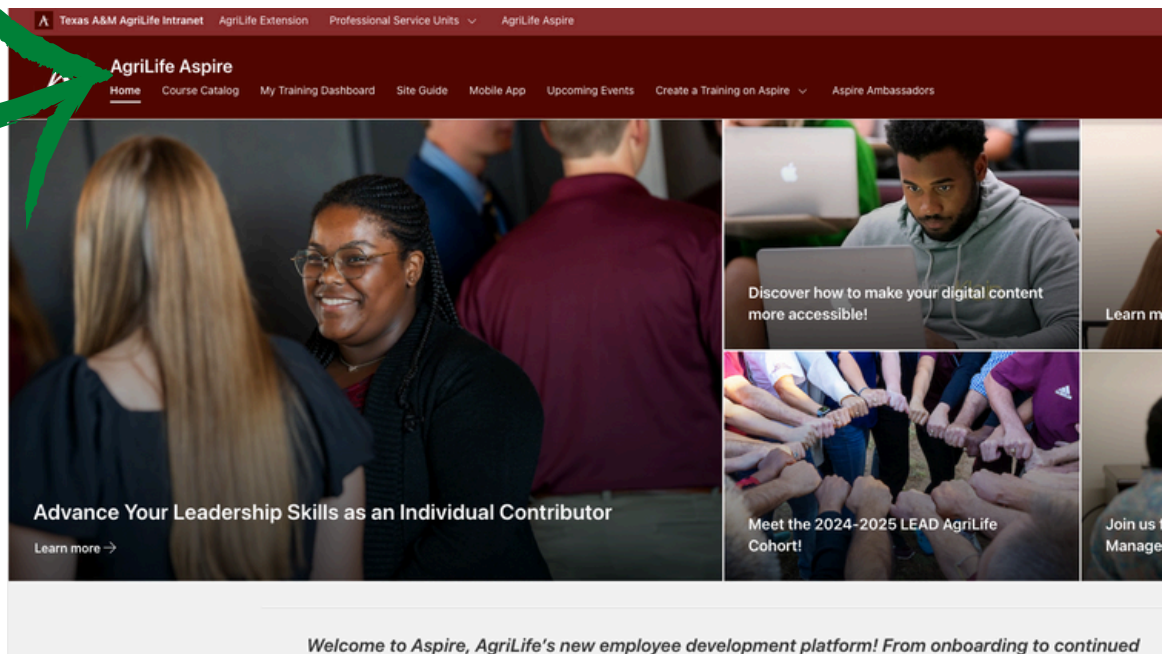
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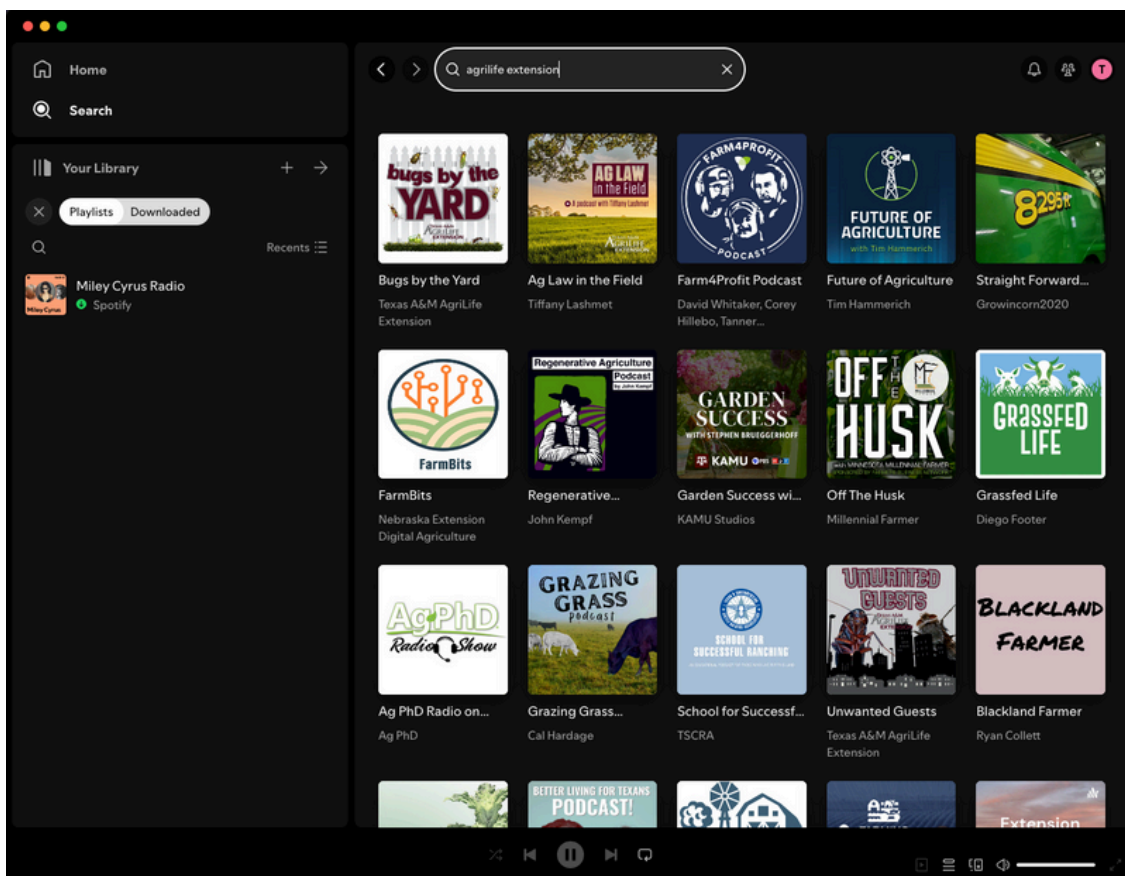
Click on
AgriLife Aspire

See all the very
helpful
trainings that
are offered!



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

In case you are more of a “on-the-go” professional development person, there are so many subject matter specific podcasts available. For those who are unsure of what podcast to choose (or why to choose one-hint-they are just like a talk radio show you can take with you), I would just search the subject you are interested in, and start with the one that catches your eye. You can always change to another one!



WHO TO CALL....

District 8 Resources



Heidi Nivens

- Office Manager
- Handles all things HR
- Supports Jay Kingston



Sydney Russell

- 4-H Support Staff
- Handles all resource check out
- Gold Star certs & pins



Jo Kirby

- Support Staff for Brent Batchelor
- Support Staff for Jennifer Spencer



Susan Keith

- Support Staff for Sonja Swiger
- Support Staff for Jason Johnson
- Support Staff for Chase Brooks



District 8 4-H

Making the best better

RESOURCE OF THE MONTH

DISTRICT RESOURCES



Scan for
District
Resources



There are many resources housed at the district office to assist you in your programming efforts. Email or call Sydney to check those out!



District 8 4-H
Making the best better

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