Recapping the Year

2018 Texas WIC Dietetic Interns

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children
Accomplishing Goals and Setting New Ones

The November/December issue of the Texas WIC News is traditionally devoted to looking back on the year. My recap of 2018 must begin with the successful rollout of TXIN! You all made it happen through hard work, participating in training, and providing valuable input resulting in the statewide implementation of TXIN. Well done!

The Texas WIC program accomplished other goals this year, such as relaunching TexasWIC.org, the production of new recipe videos, and the graduation of the 2018 dietetic interns. Projects that began in 2018 and will continue into 2019 include strengthening customer service across the state to provide consistent and timely communication about the program to ensure families remain with WIC until their children turn 5.

On pages 4-7 you can read about how the 2018 dietetic interns supported each other to reach their goals. The articles on pages 8-11 offer suggestions for dealing with holiday stress and tips for eating well to feel well.

Most of you are accustomed to receiving updates, helpful tips and the program’s accomplishments in the Texas WIC News which appears bi-monthly in your offices. These magazines provided twenty or so pages of nutrition education, counseling tips, outreach ideas, and a little silliness from Eaton Wright. This edition, however, will be the last one you receive through the mail.

In our effort to continually improve effectiveness and efficiency, Texas WIC will be changing the delivery of the information traditionally provided in Texas WIC News to an electronic version.

Starting January 1, 2019, Texas WIC News will merge with the weekly E3 Express newsletter to form the Texas WIC Express. The Texas WIC Express will be emailed every Monday and will contain the same updates and outreach tips currently in the E3 Express, but with additional information on nutrition education, clinic services, infant feeding, vendor management and other articles typically found in the Texas WIC News.

Page 18 of this issue highlights some of the biggest stories and proudest moments we’ve shared in this magazine throughout the years.

From all the staff at the State Agency, we thank you for making Texas WIC News a success. We look forward to continuing to partner with you through the Texas WIC Express on stories and topics that are pertinent to you as you support Texas families.

From the desk of Edgar Curtis — Texas WIC Director
in this issue

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People who work for Texas WIC are naturally friendly and supportive. So it’s no surprise that this year’s class of dietetic interns instantly bonded and started supporting each other the day they met in January 2018. That support lasted throughout their rotations, assignments and all aspects of the 8-month experience.

When the interns graduated in August and returned to their local clinics, their shared support continued. They cheered each other on while studying for the national registered dietitian exam, celebrated each other’s continued successes in helping WIC clients, and became friends for life. We invite you to meet the 2018 Texas WIC Dietetic Interns and read what they say about supporting each other through the most challenging and rewarding experience of their careers.

Angela Fritsch

“I was surprised at the bond you create with the other interns. We all come from such different backgrounds, but we went through this unique experience together.”

Angela is a 2006 graduate of Texas A&M and also an IBCLC. Angela’s first job with WIC was with the Bell County WIC Program in 2006. She moved to Austin in 2011 and has worked for the Austin Public Health WIC Program (LA 01) ever since. Besides her commitment to WIC, one of Angela’s passions is spending time with her family, including her adventurous 3-year-old son. Being a mom during an internship was especially demanding, so Angela appreciated all the help from fellow interns. “We were all there for each other for advice on rotations and just for moral support!” For anyone considering applying, Angela says to “go for it because it is definitely a once in a lifetime experience!”
“Although we work in different cities, we’ve shared similar experiences throughout the internship. This group was able to encourage, motivate and learn from one another. I’m proud to be a part of this class and know that everyone will do great things in the future.”

Jeromy is a 2012 University of Texas graduate, and has worked for the City of Dallas WIC Program (LA 07) since 2015. Jeromy enjoys church activities, sports, spending time with loved ones and learning new things. Indeed, he learned many new things during the internship. “I have a better understanding of helping clients make changes. It’s good to give information, but it’s important to connect with people.” Jeromy also learned about the diversity within the dietetics field and saw that dietitians can work in many settings. The most surprising thing for Jeromy was how quickly the internship passed. “The memory of my first day is still fresh.”

“My fellow interns are such a supportive group. When things didn’t go as planned, we offered each other feedback and support. When things were great, we celebrated our successes. I am so proud of all that we accomplished and grateful to be in the class of 2018.”

Jasmine loves going to new places, trying new foods, and learning new things, so the internship program was the “perfect adventure, full of challenges and new experiences.” Jasmine, who graduated from Lamar University in 2012, works for the Galveston County Health District WIC Program (LA 11). Jasmine became more confident in her counseling skills during the internship. She learned to incorporate motivational interviewing so that WIC clients “are empowered to create their own path to success.” Now that she’s graduated, Jasmine has more time to cook, knit and watch the Houston Astros. “But I miss seeing my fellow interns and the internship team that got us here.”
Yanely Alonso

“One key to making it through the internship was the support I received from my fellow interns. We had a group chat where we asked each other questions and provided support to one another. Even a simple text message of ‘You got this!’ from another intern pushed me to keep going.”

Yanely earned a bachelor’s degree in Human Nutrition and Foods from the University of Houston in December 2015. Just over a year later, she began working for UT Health WIC (LA 17). During the internship, Yanely acquired a vast amount of information that helped her feel “much more prepared and knowledgeable in providing WIC clients with individualized care.” Since graduating, Yanely has more time to enjoy hobbies like hiking, running, and visiting art museums and coffee shops. But more importantly, Yanely now knows she can accomplish any goal she sets for herself.

Sarah Jernigan

“I think it’s so important to connect with someone during the internship. We were all going through the same experience, and it was great to talk with the other interns.”

Sarah started working for the City of Dallas WIC Program (LA 07) soon after she graduated from Texas Women’s University in 2014. Becoming a dietitian has been her goal since taking her first nutrition course. “I love working for WIC, and this internship was a stepping stone in reaching my goals.” Sarah’s favorite internship memory was presenting her pediatric case study to a group of 20 dietitians at Cook Children’s Hospital. At that point, Sarah realized she had grown as a nutrition professional. “I wasn't nervous; instead, I was excited to share the information I had researched to help these professionals provide evidence-based nutrition guidance.”
“The first time I met our internship group, I felt so honored to be selected with them. We come from different backgrounds and are spread out across the state, but we are unified by a passion to help WIC families. When you are surrounded by people of such high caliber, you want to collaborate with the group and support your fellow interns.”

Abi is with the Northeast Texas Public Health District (LA 39) in Canton. She attended Baylor as an undergraduate and earned a master’s degree from Texas Women’s University. As an intern, Abi worked with diverse dietitians in different settings and learned that “becoming a dietitian can open doors!” Abi is a runner, and she loves gardening, hiking, and anything else she can do outside. Caring for her two young daughters during the internship proved “humbling.” Abi’s husband, parents, in-laws and church family served as a wonderful support network that “came to the rescue over and over again.”

The interns get plenty of support from the registered dietitians who make up the Texas WIC Dietetic Internship staff. Melissa Mouton, MS, RDN, LD, the Internship Director, has years of valuable experience in clinical dietetics, academics, research, private practice and WIC, making her the perfect leader to guide the interns on their path. Ann Sullivan, MPH, RDN, LD, has worked with Texas WIC as a staff nutritionist and a contractor since 1993. Leslie Bagby, RDN, LD, CNSC, has worked with the internship program for over 19 years and shares her experience as a certified nutrition support dietitian. Together these three RDs guide and support interns in their journey to becoming Texas WIC registered dietitians!
‘Tis the Season to Conquer Holiday Stress

by Jennifer Rowe
Information Specialist III, PPMS Group

You’re probably familiar with the Norman Rockwell painting of the family gathered around the table as grandma – looking splendid in her clean white apron and brooch – presents the turkey to her guests. Several generations sit at the table. Everyone is happy! Smiles abound! We see the proud, handsome grandpa in his suit and tie, eager to carve the turkey. And grandma, who has no doubt been working on that bird all day, isn’t even breaking a sweat. We can all dream about having Rockwell-worthy family gatherings, but for now, let’s get real.

Although it’s great to strive for perfection during the holidays, keep in mind you are putting an unnecessary burden on yourself. If your layer cake comes out lopsided or your wine glasses have spots on them, no worries! No holiday was ever ruined by a lopsided cake or spotty glasses. And hey, think of the funny stories you and your family can share about ‘The Great Lopsided Cake of 2018.’ Plus, you won’t see the spots on the glasses once they have a drink in them, so relax and have a drink. Here are a few ideas for reducing stress when it comes to feeding the masses during the holidays:

• **Assign tasks to family members.** Even the youngest family member can help out, plus it’s fun to work together! Dole out the chores for everything from putting out napkins and silverware, to helping fill the water glasses.

• **Ask guests to bring a dish to share.** It is perfectly acceptable to ask your guests to bring a side dish, dinner rolls or even a bottle of wine. Your guests will feel like they’ve done something to contribute to the meal.

• **Make cleaning up a group event.** Some families have a “those who cook do not clean” rule, meaning the cooking and cleaning duties are divvied up so
one person is not responsible for everything. Parents can oversee their kids as they clear the table and load the dishwasher. Learning chores at a young age helps kids turn into responsible adults.

Money is another burden weighing us down. Everywhere we look there are ads screaming “SPEND! SPEND! SPEND!” Making poor financial decisions during the holidays can cause stress the rest of the year. In 2017, the average American household spent 5% more during the holidays – roughly $1,054 – than the previous year. The majority used credit cards and more than half said it would take at least three months to pay off their holiday debt. Do not allow yourself fall into that trap! Here are a few ways to keep your spending in check:

- **Make a list and stick to it.** Don’t allow a flashy ad or pushy salesperson persuade you to buy gifts you didn’t intend to buy.
- **Shop with cash.** Leave your credit cards at home when you shop. Take only the amount of cash you’ve budgeted for your holiday spending. When you are out of money, you are finished shopping. If you must pay with a credit card, pay off your balance as soon as possible to avoid carrying the debt.
- **Do your homework.** Check prices online and in sales ads to find the best deal for the items on your list. Some stores will not only match their competitor’s prices, but also give you an additional 10% off.
- **Homemade gifts come from the heart!** If you feel the need to give gifts to everyone you know, consider making goodie bags filled with homemade treats. Cookies, brownies, and snack mix make great gifts during the holidays.

Let’s face it, shopping for presents, cleaning the house for guests, and planning the perfect family meal can take a toll on your health. Make time to relax and remember these four words: *Be kind to yourself.* If you need a break, take a break. If you feel overwhelmed, ask for help. Consider these suggestions for taking care of yourself this holiday season:

- **Get enough sleep.** You aren’t a robot! You need to recharge your system and sleep is the key to staying healthy. Getting 7-8 hours of sleep on a regular basis is ideal. And keep in mind a quick 10- to 30-minute power nap can do wonders to improve your mood and fight fatigue.
- **Make good choices.** It’s easy to overindulge due to the abundance of lovely sugary treats, but pace yourself. Have a cookie or two, but balance them out by adding extra fruits and veggies to your diet. And if you drink alcohol, be sure to do so in moderation.
- **Treat yourself.** Getting a massage, taking a hot bath, or treating yourself to a manicure or pedicure during the frantic holiday season will help you relax. It’s perfectly fine to take a breather and allow yourself some “me time” when you are caught in the whirlwind of holiday activities.
- **Volunteer.** Doing a kind deed for someone else will boost your spirits. Whether it’s making a donation to your favorite organization, volunteering to wrap gifts, or delivering meals to families in need, your time will be well spent. Studies have shown that altruistic deeds lead to emotional well-being.

Rather than allowing stress to turn your *Bah-Ha-Ha* into *Bah-Humbug* this season, take a moment to be thankful for all you have. Remember to treat yourself with kindness during the holidays and you’ll have great memories that will last a lifetime!

References:

Did you know the foods you eat every day can affect your body’s ability to fight infections and diseases? The immune system is what your body uses to fight off foreign invaders, like bacteria and viruses, that can make you sick. Your diet actually impacts how well your immune system works, so if you have a poor diet you may be more likely to get certain illnesses or infections than someone with a nutrient-rich diet.

With cooler weather in the fall and winter months, it’s important to build up your immune system to protect you from things like the common cold and the flu. There’s no need to buy any fancy supplements; many of the foods you consume as part of a healthy and balanced diet contain key nutrients that keep your immune system strong so you can fight off sickness!

The nutrients on the following chart play an important role in boosting your immune system to keep you healthy.
In addition, there are many other nutrients such as vitamins B6 and B12, vitamin D, iron, selenium, copper, folate and probiotics that may have an impact on your immune system and protect you from certain diseases and illnesses.

Things to remember:

- **Prevention is the key when it comes to illness.** It’s better to eat well to avoid getting sick than to wait until after you are already sick.
- **Eat a rainbow of fruits and vegetables.** They offer many of the immune-boosting nutrients you need; plus, different colors have different antioxidants that protect your cells from damage.
- **Get protein from lean meats, poultry, seafood, beans, nuts and seeds.** On average, men (19-70 years old) need at least 56 grams of protein per day, while women (19-70 years old) need at least 46 grams of protein per day.

- **Staying active, practicing proper handwashing, and getting enough sleep** are also important for a strong immune system.

References:

I am so proud to be a part of the Bell County Public Health District WIC Program and to have been on a team with the four ladies listed below. I doubt there are many places where you could find such a diverse group of compassionate and dedicated teammates as we have within our Texas agencies.

**Rosalinda De Los Santos** retired from WIC in July 2018 after 26 well-earned years with LA 31. Rosalinda was hired as a clerk in 1992. She was the foundation of our Killeen clinic during her time with us and especially over the last year as she served as the clinic site leader. She is one of the most dedicated, hardworking, caring and wonderful persons within our agency. We will miss Rosalinda and are thankful for the 26 years of truly excellent service she provided our community. We also celebrate her new journey and look forward to sharing many happy memories with her.

**Silveria Tschoerner** retired in March 2018 after over 32 years with WIC. She joined our LA 31 team in 1985 as a clerk in the Temple WIC office. She was a compassionate and knowledgeable part of our staff and saw the changes WIC experienced over the years. She will be spending more time with her children and grandchildren in retirement. We will miss Silveria (aka the Cat Lady) and are thankful for the 32 years of excellent and compassionate care to our WIC families. Silveria’s beautiful smile, caring words, warm heart, wonderful laugh, Rice Krispy Treats and cat decorations will be missed!

**Rose Torres** retired in December 2017 after almost 25 years with WIC. She joined our team in 1993 as a nurse and was the Site Leader for the Copperas Cove office since 2010. She was known for her care and compassion for all our clients and staff. She will be spending more time with her children and grandchildren in retirement. We will miss Rose and her beautiful smile, caring words and funny stories!

**Margaret Salazar** retired in December 2017 after more than 29 years with WIC. She was a clerk in the Temple location since 1988 and got to know many families over the years. She will miss all her WIC friends and teammates but looks forward to retirement with her husband, children and grandchildren. We will miss Margaret and are thankful for 29 years of excellent and compassionate care to our WIC families. Her smile has truly blessed many WIC families and staff along the way and it will be greatly missed!
Angela Quillin retired from the Angelina County and Cities Health District after 33 years of service, including 22 years as WIC Director. Her recent successful back surgery and her desire to spend more time with her 10 grandchildren motivated her to make the change. She was a member of Texas Association of Local WIC Directors (TALWD) and she always considered this to be the reason for her success at WIC. The Health District held a community-wide reception in April in honor of her retirement, but Angela continued to work part-time to ensure a smooth transition. She plans to remain in her lifetime home of Lufkin and will be volunteering with St. Patrick Catholic Church.

Pat Koym retired from WIC in August 2018 after more than two decades of work in the public health arena, the last several being with the WIC formula team in the Infant Feeding Branch. Pat plans to spend more time kicking back and relaxing, cleaning house, getting involved in church activities, and spending more time with her children, grandchildren and grand-doggy in California. We wish Pat all the happiness in the world.

Yvonne Martinez retired from Texas WIC in February 2018. Yvonne served as a Nutrition Education Specialist in the Nutrition Education Branch. She was a huge asset to the team due to her previous years of experience as a WIC clinical monitor and as a Nutrition Education Coordinator for the Austin Public Health WIC Program. Yvonne contributed to many projects at the state WIC office, including overseeing the Improving the Participant Experience grants and helping to spearhead WIC cooking videos. Yvonne had a ‘can do’ attitude and was always willing to jump in to help make any project better. Yvonne will enjoy spending more time with her grandchildren, but we greatly miss her!
LA 20 — Regence Health Network, Plainview Retiree
SUBMITTED BY BARBARA KHALEEQ, MS, RD | DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Angie Buck, WIC Certification Specialist (WCS) who worked for WIC for 42 years, retired in July 2018. She began working with Regence Health Network’s (RHN’s) WIC program in 1976 as a Nutrition Assistant. She transferred to WIC after working one year in RHN’s medical clinics. Angie became a WCS when the agency participated in the pilot for the WCS program. She also completed the training to become a Formula Certified WCS. She was the face of WIC in Floyd and Crosby counties for many years. Angie plans to travel and spend time with her grandchildren in retirement.

LA 21 — Wichita County Public Health District Retiree
SUBMITTED BY JANNA KAELIN | WIC PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

MaryAnn Merriex, LVN/CA started with LA 21 (Wichita Falls-Wichita County Public Health District) in March 1987. She retired in December 2017. During her 30-plus years, she saw WIC go from issuing benefits manually to the current EBT System. Mary Ann certified multiple generations of families during her time with the WIC Program.

LA 46 — Brazoria County Health Department, Angleton
SUBMITTED BY LEE ANN MC DANIEL, MA, RD, LD | WIC DIRECTOR

Claudia Gernand, Breastfeeding Peer Counselor, is recognized for becoming an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) in December 2017. Claudia has been with Brazoria County WIC since May 2014. She has three beautiful sons who were all breastfed well beyond a year. Claudia's IBCLC designation makes her an even more valuable asset at WIC.

Lee Ann McDaniel, WIC Director, retired from WIC in October 2018. Lee Ann began working for Brazoria County WIC as a Nutritionist in June 1988. She also worked for WIC LAs in Longview, Stafford and Pearland before returning to Brazoria County WIC as Director in October 2000. Significant WIC mentors included Susan Bennett and Bonnie Horton. Lee Ann says, "I have truly loved working with WIC families and WIC employees!"
Local Agency 2018 Activities

LA 07 — Dallas Provides Lactation Services at Two New Locations

Submitted by Dani Cagle, IBCLC | Breastfeeding Coordinator

The City of Dallas WIC program is proud to announce the expansion of our Lactation Care Center services to other areas of our community. We want to provide skilled IBCLC support in locations that are convenient for WIC and non-WIC mothers in need. In addition to the original Lactation Care Center (LCC) – Central location, we now offer consultations in the northern and southern parts of our county. Conveniently co-located with two of our largest WIC clinics and open two days per week, these new expansion sites have already helped many mothers in need.

When a new mom has a breastfeeding concern that is outside the peer counselor’s scope of practice, it is important that we meet her needs in a timely manner that does not add to her burden. In years past, we had heard from clients that the travel distance from their WIC clinic or home to LCC – Central was just too far. We are very happy to provide the much needed support to these mothers and babies in the convenience of their own neighborhoods.

Dallas North

Dallas South
LA 70 — Small Changes Can Produce the Biggest Impact!

Submitted by Angie Kear, LVN | Chambers County WIC Director

The Winnie WIC Clinic waiting room was not very welcoming. "We received the Improving the Participant Experience Grant in 2017, and made the decision to focus on making the waiting room more child-friendly," said Chambers County WIC Director Angie Kear.

"Anita Torres and I picked a theme, painted the room to be bright and inviting, and ordered new toys and furniture." The theme was also carried down the hallway to the participant restroom. The project took approximately one month to complete.

"This was a very inexpensive change that has resulted in a great improvement. We worked together and accomplished this as a team — and we are only a team of two!" said Angie.

"The participants have all commented on how much they enjoy the change and one even asked us to redo her child’s room. I have noticed that the children do not want to leave a lot of time, and have even cried and begged to stay," said Angie.

The clinic plans to do more upgrades in the future.

LA 29 — Katy Clinic Breastfeeding Celebration

Submitted by Brooke Tresch, RD | WIC Nutritionist

The KatyWIC Clinic had our annual Breastfeeding Celebration on August 24, 2018. There were 16 attendees at the Spanish session and 49 attendees at the English session. We had refreshments, a speaker, raffles and games for clients at each session.
LA 30 — Port Arthur Health Department
Submitted by Christina "Brandy" Patterson, MS, RDN, LD | WIC Director

LA 30 was a site for The Global Big Latch On event on August 3, 2018. This was the first year the Port Arthur Health Department took part in this event. We set up at the local park and pavilion across from the health department. We invited all of our pregnant and breastfeeding WIC moms to this event. Our local Nurse Family Partnership also invited 120 of their clients. We had 20 local businesses and 100 community members come out to participate. We started the day with "Mommy and Me" yoga and ended with a countdown to the official latch-on and a group photo of our breastfeeding moms from our community.

LA 31 — Fort Hood WIC Clinic Relocates
Submitted by Nikki Morrow, BS, IBCLC, RLC | WIC Director

LA 31 experienced an unexpected and quick relocation of our Fort Hood WIC Clinic in June 2017. We temporarily co-habitated with one of our other locations in Killeen until our new space on base was available. Construction was finally completed and we were able to reopen on base in August 2018. Fort Hood remodeled an old army hospital and grouped several military family services in the same building, including WIC.

We are excited to be back on the base for the outreach opportunities it provides. We are located across the street from the new Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center so it’s easy for our new moms to come into our clinic after doctor’s visits. It has been a long time coming, and the space we have been provided by Fort Hood is excellent. I also want to thank Darlene Irwin with the City of Dallas WIC Program. She had extra desks that needed a home and a large blue mural we were able to utilize for the clinic. It has given us the opportunity to create a better space for our staff and our clients. The atmosphere of the clinic is very inviting and we love serving our families in such a positive and welcoming environment that adds to their experience at WIC!
Texas WIC News in Review

Texas WIC News was first published as a black and white newsletter in the early 1990s. The first full-color issue was published in May 2006. The WIC Wellness Works insert first appeared in the October/November 2005 issue.

Since the January/February 2006 issue, the Texas WIC News has been a bimonthly publication with over 3,000 subscribers.

Here are some of the stories featured in the Texas WIC News throughout the years. Be sure to look for Texas WIC Express in January.

- **Oct/Nov 2005:** Expansion of EBT
- **May/June 2008:** EBT Is Rolling Out All Over Texas

- **Jan/Feb 2009:** Fruits and Vegetables Are a Healthy Addition to the New Food Package
- **July/Aug 2009:** New WIC Food Package
- **July/Aug 2014:** USDA Publishes Final WIC Food Package Rules

- **Sept/Oct 2011:** TXIN to Replace WIN System
- **Nov/Dec 2013:** TXIN Talk Takes to the Road
- **May/June 2018:** TXIN: The Final Countdown
• Jan/Feb 2006: Katrina and Rita – WIC Agencies Weather the Storms
• July/Aug 2008: The Lessons Rita Taught New Moms
• Nov/Dec 2008: State Agency and Local Agencies Respond to Hurricanes
• May/June 2018: Disaster Planning: You Never Know When it Might Strike
• July/Aug 2018: Triumphs Through Tragedy: Breastfeeding Through Harvey
Texas WIC News is also available on the Texas WIC website!
http://www.dshs.texas.gov/wichd/gi/wicnews.shtm

Just a few of the many Texas WIC News covers over the years.