

## Making a Difference - The County Fair Way

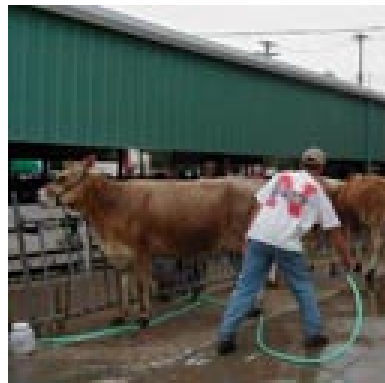
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Join in the fun and excitement of the Lancaster County Fair at the Lancaster Event Center located at 84<sup>th</sup> and Havelock in Lincoln, July 31 through August 5. Lancaster County has a new home for its fair and new opportunities for participants and the community.

Making a difference in the life of youth is the goal of extension and the 4-H program. There are many opportunities available for youth throughout their lives. One of these opportunities is participating in the county fair. How does involvement by extension staff, parents, and volunteers help make this difference? Developing assets, character, and life skills in youth can be a challenge in today's society. Working with youth and volunteers is the opportunity to develop and share skills.

The following factors have been identified by the Search Institute as affecting the lives of young people. The 40 developmental assets include 8 types of assets all kids need. These assets are external and internal. The 8 types are

1. Support - experiencing people and places that are accepting and loving.
2. Empowerment - knowing they are valued



and valuable.

3. Boundaries & Expectations - understanding the limits and possibilities.
4. Constructive Use of Time - Being involved in enriching and structured activities.
5. Commitment to Learning - Believing education is

important and engaging.

6. Positive Values - Caring for others and holding high standards for self.

7. Social Competencies - Developing skills and relationships for life.

8. Positive Identity - Believing in their personal power, purpose and potential.

Through the 4-H program,



county fair opportunities are provided for youth to develop assets. How does involvement in county fair really make a difference? A survey of 4-H Alumni in Northeast Nebraska posed the question "Does participation in county fairs really make a difference in the lives of 4-H'ers?" Many positive responses

- winning and losing graciously; and
- honesty.

Think back to your days as a youth—What made a difference in your life?— was it a teacher, your parents, a 4-H or youth



group leader, or an opportunity someone encouraged you to take part in. It may have been a combination of all of these plus a few others. Can you remember the first time you achieved a goal, whether large or small that you had put your whole self into finishing? What was learned during this experi-

use in planing and preparing the demonstration. Presentation skills were developed when it was time to practice and give the demonstration at club meetings, practice demonstration days, the county fair and maybe even the state fair. What a fun learning experience! Sharing the skills you have learned with others, later in life, leading and presenting become easy tasks because of the opportunity to



develop these skills as a youth.

Exhibiting helps teach the best ways to win and lose. There is always something to be learned whether the ribbon received was purple, blue, red, or white.

Socializing and meeting new friends is on the top of the list of many youth during the county fair. It is the time of year when youth from throughout the county meet in the same place to share tales, renew friendships, and yes, develop skills. County fair does make a difference. Participation adds assets and develops life long skills that are needed for well-rounded, healthy youth. We need to continue to provide these positive experiences for our youth.

County fair has a different meaning for each of us. It is a busy time filled with long days, hard work, fun, learning, volunteering, and being a winner. A winner is someone who learns through their experiences. Whether young or old, experience or inexperienced, we all learn from visiting and/or participating in county fair activities. See you there!!!



were received. Some of these were:

- the development of strong character traits like responsibility;
- learning leadership skills such as management skills;
- working as a family;
- setting and accomplishing project goals;

ence? What assets did you develop or what new strength did you gain?

4-H demonstrations bring back many memories. The decision-making process was used in deciding the topic. Organizational skills were put to

### In this issue...

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#### Horticulture

—page 2



#### Environmental Focus

—page 3



#### Farm Views

—page 4



#### Acreage Insights

—page 5



#### Food & Fitness

—page 6



#### Family Living

—page 7



#### 4-H & Youth

—pages 8-9



#### Community Focus

—page 10

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