

4-H Teaches Science and Life Skills in

4-H is University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension's youth development program. In the past year, 4-H reached 22,994 youth in Lancaster County (44 percent of the eligible youth).



"4-H scholarships give high school students an incentive to stick with 4-H throughout high school. I am grateful now that I stayed in 4-H until senior year because of all the skills that I have received from the program."

—Rebecca Fiala, 4-H Council and Teen Council member

4-H Clubs and Projects Emphasize Learning By Doing

Youth ages 5–19 can become 4-H members by joining one or more 4-H clubs or becoming an independent member who works on projects individually. Some clubs complete several projects a year and some focus on one particular project area.

4-H has more than 150 project areas available, including: bicycles, chess, child development, clothing, computers, electricity, entomology, flowers/gardening, foods, home environment, horses, household pets, livestock (beef, dairy, swine, sheep, goats, llamas), photography, rocketry, small engines and woodworking.

In addition to teaching practical skills, 4-H develops life skills such as thinking



The Checkmates chess club sponsored their first statewide tournaments this year.

critically, solving problems, respecting self and communicating.

Youth enjoy 4-H because they choose which projects they participate in and they receive personalized attention from their leaders and parents while working on projects. These adult/child mentoring relationships are crucial to the positive learning experiences

youth gain in 4-H. Youth also have fun in 4-H and develop new friends.

In 2003, Lancaster County had 99 active 4-H clubs. Independent membership was up 23 percent.

Youth interested in joining 4-H can contact Tracy Kulm at 441-7180 or visit the Web site at lancaster.unl.edu/4H.

Spotlight on a 4-H Club: Pet Pals

The members of Pet Pals 4-H Club share an interest in learning more about the health and well-being of their small pets. The club holds meetings 8 to 10 times a year. A typical meeting is attended by 5 to 12 of its 22 members, with many parents and siblings joining them.

Sheri Ramirez and Shirley Condon are co-leaders. Meetings follow an agenda of old and new business, announcements, the evening's activity, treats provided by a family and scheduling the next meeting date. Often 4-H'ers bring their pets to show.

Meeting activities range from guest speakers to community service projects. Past speakers have included a chinchilla breeder, a graduate student from Wesleyan with rats from the Rat Olympics, a researcher who studies bees (he brought a box of bumblebees!), a specialty pet food manufacturer and representatives from animal rescue organizations. One meeting was held at a pet store where club members were given a tour and tips on animal care.

This year's community service projects included organizing the club's annual petting zoo at the Lincoln Children's Museum, staffing a game booth at the Kiwanis Karnival and deco-



Members of the 4-H Pet Pals Club organize a yearly petting zoo at the Children's Museum.

rating a tree at the Heritage League's "Holiday of Trees."

Club members also brought pets and answered questions at the 4-H Kick Off. The club donated money from its treasury for special ribbons awarded at the Lancaster County Fair 4-H Household Pet Show.

This year, club members exhibited a total of 10 animals and three educational posters at the Lancaster County Fair 4-H Household Pet Show and Quiz Bowl. All animals earned purple ribbons, in addition to six rosettes and a Grand Champion trophy.

For 4-H'ers, however, the best rewards are learning about taking responsibility for the health and care of their pets, and receiving unconditional love from their pets in return.



"4-H teaches responsibility and citizenship. Clubs actively involve youth in service projects so 4-H'ers have opportunities to give back to the community."

—Keith Dey, 4-H Council president

About 4-H Council



Paula Peterson (left) was one of many 4-H Council members who assisted at this year's 4-H Kick Off.

Lancaster County 4-H Council is responsible for determining long- and short-term goals and policy for Lancaster County 4-H. They also raises funds by staffing a snack booth at the Lancaster County Fair. These funds help support 4-H programs and activities.

The 2003 4-H Council members were:

- Keith Dey (pres.)
- Emily Veburg (vice-pres.)
- Karen Rutt (treas.)
- Connie Lemke (sec.)
- Deb Arends
- Kathleen Arends
- Rebecca Fiala
- Cindy Fiala
- Jolene Fujan
- Monica Fujan
- Jean Pedersen
- Nicole Pedersen
- Paula Peterson
- Denise Schachenmeyer
- Gene Veburg

Opportunities for Personal Growth and Leadership

4-H offers youth a variety of activities and opportunities which help teach youth decision-making skills and build self-confidence.

Record keeping of projects teaches 4-H'ers record keeping, writing and responsibility.

Youth learn public speaking in the **Speech and Demonstration Contests**. Ian Badeer says, "By participating in the Speech Contest, I learned the ability to write and deliver a speech properly. These speaking abilities will help me the rest of my life."

Livestock exhibitors have several opportunities to participate in activities across the state, including **progress shows**, the

District Horse Show, State Fair and the Ak-Sar-Ben 4-H Livestock Expo.

Fifty-one 4-H'ers currently participate in **Citizen Washington Focus (CWF)**, which organizes an educational trip to Washington D.C. every three years. This year, CWF members raised \$60,000 through various fundraisers for their June 2005 trip.

4-H Council includes youth members (see left). **4-H Teen Council** members assist with many 4-H activities such as Speech Contest and Fair Fun Day. They also plan, organize and lead a 5th and 6th grade overnight Lock-In.

This year, more than \$6,100 in **4-H scholarships** was given to graduating seniors.



4-H Teen Council hosted many activities at the 2003 Lancaster County Fair, including the Ice Cream Social.

Open to All Youth



Many activities are open to 4-H and non-4-H youth. **Clover College** is a four-day series of workshops held each June. The annual overnight **5th & 6th Grade Lock-In** is held in January. More than 35 **4-H Camps** are offered each summer at the three Nebraska 4-H camp facilities.



The Lancaster County Fair has one of the largest county fair horse shows in the state.

County Fair Showcases Projects

The County Fair marks the end of the activity year for 4-H members, who work the rest of the year on projects, many of which are exhibited. Winners at the county level go on to State Fair.

At the 2003 Lancaster County Fair, 3,866 exhibits were showcased by 632 4-H members.

This fair marked the start of a new, local Future Agriculturist Incentive and Rewards (F.A.I.R.) program funded, in part, by Alumni Showmanship contests.

New this year was a potato bar sponsored by 4-H Council.