

EXTENSION NEWS

Teri Hlava Joins 4-H Staff



Teri Hlava in the 4-H resource room.

Teri Hlava has joined the UNL Extension in Lancaster County 4-H staff. She will work in 4-H School Enrichment and after-school areas.

Teri will coordinate the Garbology 4-H School Enrichment program for second graders, as well as deliver classroom presentations. Garbology is a curriculum and kit with hands-on activities which introduces students to solid waste management and the three R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle).

Teri will assist 4-H staff member Marty Cruickshack with the Embryology 4-H School Enrichment program. Through incubating and hatching baby chicks in the classroom, third graders study life-cycles.

In a new role for the Lancaster County 4-H program, Teri will lead efforts to explore and develop partnerships with Lincoln's Community Learning Centers (CLC) after-school programs. 4-H could provide resources and expertise customized to each CLC's needs.

Teri is a certified teacher for grades K-12, primarily specialized in special education. A native of Nebraska, Teri originated in northwest Nebraska, living and working in both small and larger communities. She has taught in Lincoln and southeast Nebraska for the past 15 years.

Her multi-varied experience and broad expertise working with youth and communities is a welcome asset to Extension.

Jan Blair Joins NEP Team



Jan Blair (top left) reviews with Elliott second graders what they learned during their nutrition unit.

Jan Blair has joined the UNL Extension Nutrition Education Program (NEP) in Lancaster County team on a temporary basis. She will coordinate the NEP 4-H School Enrichment program for kindergarten, second and third grades, as well as deliver presentations in classrooms.

Jan retired this past year after 18 years with Lincoln Public Schools. Most recently she taught at McPhee and West Lincoln schools. She holds degrees in elementary and special education. She is a former 4-H leader (teaching 4-H food-related projects) and 4-H member. Jan enjoys cooking and reading.

Students and teachers appreciate the positive energy and creativity which Jan brings to the classroom.

Top 10 Ways to Improve Your Neighborhood Right Now

Helen Mitrofanova
UNL Extension Educator

You can improve the quality of life in your neighborhood by adopting the following ideas for increased safety and civic interactions.

1. Turn your porch lights on! Crime is likely to decline in well lighted neighborhoods. Thieves, vandals and prowlers are deterred by lighted areas. Turning on porch lights is a simple way to start this process. A motion sensor light or solar light is a good idea for the driveway area.

2. Walk around the block. Neighbors benefit when citizens walk about more, particularly in the evening hours. Take a walk every night with a friend or your dog. It is good for your health and good for your neighborhood. You will become familiar with the houses in your block and their people.

3. Drive slowly in the neighborhood. Regular slow driving by multiple neighbors will decrease speeding in your neighborhood as well as less people will use your streets as a speedway.

4. Pick up litter near your home, even if you did not put it there. People are less likely to litter where they do not already see litter. You can stop the growth of trash in your neighborhood by taking away the existing litter. Neighborhoods where its residents are keeping the area neat and clean are less likely to have crime because it shows the residents take care of the community where they live.

5. Take away the opportunity for crime. Lock your car and never leave valuables, even for a few minutes, in the car where would-be

thieves might see them. Make your front porch visible and make sure your home looks like someone lives there. Trim bushes or trees on your property; it will eliminate hiding places for thieves and burglars.

6. Make a list of the names and phone numbers of the neighbors on your block. If you do not know the names and phone numbers of your neighbors you can not call them about a concern or let them know about a neighborhood problem. It is a great project for a neighborhood association to develop a neighborhood directory with names and addresses of its residents. People will have a more vested interest in the neighborhood when they know their neighbors.

7. Make a list of landlords in your area as well. This information is available by contacting Lancaster County Assessor/Register of Deeds office, 555 South 10 Street, Lincoln, NE 68508, 441-7463 or e-mail: assessor@lancaster.ne.gov. As owners of property, landlords should be concerned about the condition of the neighborhood in which their property is located. Prosperous neighborhoods with great reputations will increase the value of property.

8. Meet the youth living on your block and greet them by name. Find out which kids belong where. This ensures each adult is better able to help in an emergency and is better prepared to discuss problems immediately as they arise. This simple approach may even increase youth participation in neighborhood activities (youth programs, neighborhood association activities, neighborhood clean-ups, neighborhood watch, etc.).

9. Report crime promptly.

Neighbors sometimes do not report criminal activity because they do not want to bother the police. They believe there is not much an officer can (or will) do about a reported problem anyway. Whether the issue is graffiti, petty vandalism or something much more serious, police cannot act without first hearing about the problem from citizens.

10. Report nuisances and other non-criminal problems promptly. Call the regular police non-emergency number, 441-6000, preferably while the disturbance is occurring. If you wish to discuss a chronic problem at a specific address in your neighborhood, you may wish to talk to the police captain who is responsible for the police services in your area. To find out whom to contact, go to <http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/police/teams/teammap.htm>

11. Help your neighborhood association. Find out which neighborhood association you belong to <http://www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/city/urban/comdev/neighbor/index.htm> and try to attend local neighborhood association meetings. You will be better informed of the issues facing the neighborhood and how you can get involved. More over, you will have an opportunity to shape, guide and participate in the future of your neighborhood. If your neighborhood does not have a neighborhood association, learn how to form one <http://www.lancaster.unl.edu/community/resources.htm>

12. Just like this "Top 10" list, do not stop at 10 items.

This article is based on information developed by Campbell DeLong, Resources, Inc. 1999-2000.

Community CROPS Seeks Beginning Farmers and Gardeners

Community CROPS: Combining, Resources, Opportunities & People for Sustainability is a grassroots non-profit organization, working with area gardeners and farmers to grow and market agriculture products.

Urban Farmer Project

Community CROPS is recruiting beginning farmers to join their Urban Farmer Project. They are looking for refugees, immigrants and low-income people who would like to begin farming in the Lincoln area.

CROPS has a place at a community farm site for participants to grow produce. The farm site on the edge of Lincoln has quarter-acre plots available for a modest fee. Training on organic methods by experienced farmers is offered at various workshops and during one-on-one sessions throughout the growing season, using interpreters whenever necessary. In addition, many tools and pieces of equipment are available to be used at the farm.

During 2005, CROPS worked closely with a refugee Kurdish farmer from Iraq. Khalaf had farmed in his home country, but had been unable to return to farming after



Vegetables for sale at the Haymarket Farmers' Market by a Community CROPS Urban Farmer Project participant.

moving to the United States due to language barriers and a lack of land. With the help of interpreters, CROPS staff taught Khalaf about growing crops for market in Nebraska, provided him with land and helped him begin marketing his produce. He successfully sold vegetables to area grocery stores, restaurants and a stand at the Haymarket Farmers' Market, and is looking forward to 2006.

Community Gardens

Community CROPS has four community gardens spread

throughout Lincoln:

Land, water and plants are provided free. If you would like to help develop a garden in your neighborhood or would like to have a plot at one of our gardens, contact CROPS.

Community Supported Agriculture

CROPS will be selling fresh, organically-grown produce at area farmers' markets and through a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project. Consumers pay a fixed amount of money to a farmer at the beginning of the season and receive a weekly bag of fresh, produce during the growing season.

We will be making sign-up information available soon, after we determine the share costs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you or someone you know would like to sign up for the Urban Farmer Project or for any of the other projects run by CROPS, visit the Web site at <http://www.communitycrops.org> or call Ingrid Kirst, Community CROPS Director at 730-2532.