

EXTENSION NEWS

UNL Extension Staff Win Statewide Awards

In October, University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension in Lancaster County staff received two awards presented statewide by UNL Extension.

Extension Associate **Tracy Kulm** received the **Distinguished Managerial Professional** award. She was cited for her creative teaching style which encourages youth to develop leadership and social skills. Tracy coordinates the following areas of the Lancaster County 4-H Youth Development program:



(L–R) Tracy Kulm and Dean of UNL Extension Elbert C. Dickey

- 4-H Council—comprised of adults and youth
- 4-H Teen Council—a teen leadership organization
- Clover Kids—4-H'ers ages 5–7
- Club program—helps start new clubs, assists new and established 4-H leaders
- Family & Consumer Science project areas—including clothing, food, home environment, photography, engineering and general areas
- 4-H static exhibits at the Lancaster County Fair
- Several contests—including Bicycle Safety, Life Challenge, Presentations, Style Revue and Table Setting
- Clover College—four-days of hands-on workshops presented each June.

Extension Educator **Maureen Burson** contributed to the **Excellence in Team Programming** award which honored the Parents Forever and Kids Talk About Divorce extension team. Since 1999, 3,700 adults and more than 1,000 children have participated in this program. New state law mandates education for parents going through divorce or custody issues. UNL partners with professionals and agencies throughout Nebraska, including St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center in Lincoln, to most effectively provide statewide programming.

STRENGTHENING FAMILY TREASURES Daughter/Mother Camp

A retreat designed for 5th & 6th grade girls and their mothers (or grandmothers or other adult females)

**Friday, Feb. 20, 5 p.m. to
Saturday, Feb. 21, 5 p.m.**



Give the greatest gift to your daughter—your time! This camp is 2 days and 1 night of fun, educational and confidence-building activities. As middle school approaches, this is an opportunity to:

- Enhance effective communication including expressing emotions
 - Learn more about body image and sexuality
 - Explore techniques to handle peer pressure and stress
 - Discuss the importance of individual family values
- Cost includes meals,

snacks and lodging at Carol Joy Holling Center. Fee is \$120 per pair (4 people per room) or \$150 (2 people per room)—each room has two double beds. Carol Joy Holling is located at the end of Ranch Road off Highway 66 between Interstate 80 and Ashland.

Co-sponsored by UNL Extension, Sheridan Lutheran Church and Camp Carol Joy Holling. For more information or a registration form, go to <http://lancaster.unl.edu/family/guf.shtml> or call Extension Educator Maureen Burson at 441-7180.

Family Strengths Inventory[®]

Family members doing this exercise will be able to identify those areas they would like to work on together to improve and those areas of strength that will serve as the foundation for their growth and positive change together.

The qualities of strong families in America can be broken down into six general categories, as outlined below.

1. Put an “S” for Strength beside the qualities you feel your family has achieved.
2. Put a “G” beside those qualities that are an area of potential Growth.
3. Put an “NA” for Not Applicable beside those characteristics that do not apply to your family or are not a characteristic important to you.

Discuss your views on the strengths of your family. Remember that each family member will see the family somewhat differently from everyone else. These differences are not problems. Rather, these differences are strengths. You can all learn from each other by discussing how you see the strengths of your family and the areas of potential growth.

Look at what your family does best: Identify your strengths.

Celebrate! Even when things are difficult, recognize your family’s positive characteristics. Celebrate those strengths in a way that is meaningful to your family—maybe by going out to eat or doing a special activity together.

Identify the strengths that you as a family want to improve or increase.

Have fun making a plan and doing family activities that build on your family strengths.

Enjoyable Time Together

In our family . . .

<input type="checkbox"/>	We have a number of common interests.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We like to have fun together.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We feel comfortable with each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We like to give each other a chance to do new things.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We enjoy hearing our grandparents’ stories about the past.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We enjoy simple, inexpensive family activities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We like to have a place we call “home.”
<input type="checkbox"/>	We feel strongly connected to each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hanging out together builds strong relationships.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We have lots of good times together.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We often laugh with each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Observing family rituals and customs is important to us.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We enjoy sharing our memories with each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We enjoy having unplanned, spontaneous activities together.
<input type="checkbox"/>	All things considered, we have adequate time for each other and we enjoy the time we share together.

Appreciation and Affection for Each Other

In our family . . .

<input type="checkbox"/>	We appreciate each other and let each other know this.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We enjoy helping each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We like keeping our promises to each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We like to show affection to each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We feel close to each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We like to be kind to each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We like to hug each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We enjoy being thoughtful of each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We wait for each other without complaining.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We give each other enough time to complete necessary tasks.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We are able to forgive each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We grow stronger because we love each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	All things considered, we have appreciation and affection for each other.

Communicating Effectively with Each Other

In our family . . .

<input type="checkbox"/>	We like to share our feelings with each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	It is easy to cue into each other’s feelings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We like talking openly with each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We listen to each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We respect each other’s point of view.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Talking through issues is important to us.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We give each other a chance to explain ourselves.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We enjoy our family discussions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We share jokes together.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Putdowns are rare.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sarcasm is not generally used.
<input type="checkbox"/>	All things considered, our communication is effective.

Valuing Each Other and Demonstrating Commitment

In our family . . .

<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsibilities are shared fairly.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Everyone gets a say in making decisions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Individuals are allowed to make their own choices.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We find it easy to trust each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We like to do things for each other that make us feel good about ourselves.

<input type="checkbox"/>	We have reasonable expectations of each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We allow each other to be ourselves.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We have a high regard for each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We respect the roles each of us plays in the family.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We find it easy to be honest with each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We accept that each of us has different ways of doing things.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We build each other’s self-esteem.
<input type="checkbox"/>	All things considered, we value each other and are committed to our well-being as a family.

Spiritual Well-Being

In our family . . .

<input type="checkbox"/>	We have a hopeful attitude toward life.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Our home feels like a sanctuary to all of us.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We have a strong sense of belonging.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We enjoy learning about our family history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We feel strong connections with our ancestors.
<input type="checkbox"/>	There is a feeling of safety and security.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We feel connected with nature and the world around us.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We feel a strong connection with the land.
<input type="checkbox"/>	There is a sense of peace among us.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We believe love is a powerful force that keeps us together.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We benefit in many ways from our belief in a higher being.
<input type="checkbox"/>	It is easy to share our spiritual values and beliefs with each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Our personal religious beliefs are compatible with each other’s.
<input type="checkbox"/>	All things considered, we have strong spiritual connections that enhance our well-being.

Managing Stress and Crisis Effectively

In our family . . .

<input type="checkbox"/>	A crisis has helped us to grow closer together.
<input type="checkbox"/>	It is easy to find solutions to our problems when we talk about them.
<input type="checkbox"/>	It is always important to change the things we can.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We can work together to solve very difficult family problems.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A crisis helps make our relationships strong.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We try not to worry too much because things usually work out OK.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We are able to face daily issues confidently.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We like to support each other.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Our friends are there when we need them.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A crisis makes us stick closer together.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We always find something good comes from a crisis.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We find it easy to make changes in our plans to meet changing circumstances.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We have the courage to take risks that will improve things for our family.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We feel it is important to accept the things we cannot change.
<input type="checkbox"/>	All things considered, we look at challenges as opportunities for growth.

Global Measures of the Family’s Strengths

In our family . . .

<input type="checkbox"/>	We love one another.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Life in our family is satisfying to us.
<input type="checkbox"/>	We are happy as a family.
<input type="checkbox"/>	All things considered, we are a strong family.

Source: University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension NebGuide G1881, “Creating a Strong Family: American Family Strengths Inventory” by John DeFrain and Nick Stinnett