Extension Volunteers
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Master Gardeners
The Nebraska Master Gardener program has been part of Extension since 1976. Master Gardeners receive horticulture training by Extension staff and, in return, they share their knowledge with the community through volunteer activities. In Lancaster County last year, Master Gardeners:

• answered phone calls and helped with walk-in questions at the Extension office during the growing season,
• taught composting workshops and demonstrations,
• answered questions and helped maintain gardens at Lincoln Children’s Zoo, Sunken Gardens and People’s City Mission,
• helped with 4-H exhibits at the Lancaster County Fair and Nebraska State Fair, and
• presented the session “Do the Rot Thing” at Earth Wellness Festival.

Extension Associate Mary Fyocke, who coordinates the Lancaster County Master Gardener program, says, “Master Gardeners are devoted to education and helping others. We are able to provide quality horticulture education programs because of their time and effort volunteering to Extension.”

Volunteer Attorneys
Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County offers monthly Guardian/Conservator education classes which fulfill Guardian/Conservator education requirements set by the Nebraska Probate Code. These classes are co-taught by volunteer attorneys through the Nebraska State Bar Association who answer general legal questions.

In 2014, 318 guardians/conservators participated in one of the 12 classes presented in Lancaster County.

Extension Educator Maureen Burson who presents the classes in Lancaster County says, “These attorneys are a vital part of the partnership which teaches guardians and conservators how to keep vulnerable Nebraskans safe and secure.”

Benefits of Volunteering

Perhaps the first and biggest benefit people get from volunteering is the satisfaction of incorporating service into their lives and making a difference in their community and country.

The intangible benefits alone — such as pride, satisfaction and accomplishment — are worthwhile reasons to serve. In addition, when we share our time and talents with:
• solve problems,
• strengthen communities,
• improve lives,
• connect to others, and
• transform our own lives.

Last year, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) released “Volunteering as a Pathway to Employment,” research which found unemployed individuals who volunteer over the next year have 27 percent higher odds of being employed at the end of the year than non-volunteers. Among rural volunteers and volunteers without a high school diploma, the likelihood increases by 55 and 51 percent, respectively.

Research presented by CNCS in a report titled “The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research,” has established a strong relationship between volunteering and health; those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer.

Source: CNCS’s website at www.nationalservice.gov.

Applications Open for 4-H Camp Staff

The two 4-H Camps in Nebraska are currently accepting applications for summer staff. The camps offer outstanding opportunities for young adults to learn leadership skills, gain valuable experience for future careers and make lasting memories. Need not be in 4-H to apply.

• Summer Program Staff (ages 18 and above) — Seasonal, paid, full time staff who live at camp mid-May to August who are responsible for daily programming and teaching groups of all ages. Must be available mid-May through mid-August. Application deadline is Feb. 1.

• Junior/Senior Counselors (ages 15 and above) — Cabin supervisors who volunteer and select which weeks they can work throughout the summer. Provide valuable leadership to a group of campers by day and assist with cabin supervision at night. Must complete Counselor Leadership Training at one of the sites. Application deadline is May 1.

More information and applications are online at http://4h.unl.edu/camp.