

2018 Extension highlights

NEBRASKA EXTENSION is your local connection to university research-based information. Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County is a partnership between Lancaster County, University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We extend knowledge, provide solutions and change lives in these educational program areas:

- Community Environment
- Food, Nutrition & Health
- Cropping & Water Systems
- 4-H Youth Development
- Learning Child
- Beef Systems
- Community Vitality



Head Start Learning Gardens — New this year, staff from the Nutrition Education Program and Extension’s horticulture program collaborated to develop Learning Gardens at both Head Start locations in Lincoln. Extension Associate Mary Jane Frogge planned the gardens. Eight preschool teachers participated in weekly sessions, learning basic gardening taught by five Master Gardeners, as well as healthy living taught by Extension Educator Emily Gratopp. Teachers reported increased confidence in gardening and using the garden as a teaching tool. The vegetables were eaten by over 100 children and parents.



Backyard Farmer — Extension Educators Jody Green (second from left) and Sarah Browning (far right) make frequent appearances on Nebraska Extension’s popular gardening TV show. In 2018, the show’s YouTube channel grew by 30% in number of views and watch time, for the first time reaching over 1 million total views in a season. Jody’s focus is urban entomology and Sarah’s is horticulture. Both serve local residents and industry professionals through trainings, educational resources and free in-office diagnostic services.



Weather and crops — Extension Educator Tyler Williams helps producers manage the impact weather and climate have on agricultural production, not only in Lancaster County but across the world. He organized and was a presenter at the third annual Successful Farmer Series. 46 individuals attended one or more of the 6 workshops covering 15 topics, including weather and crops. Attendees estimated a \$16 per acre value gained by participating in the series. Tyler recently traveled to the Czech Republic to advise University researchers trying to implement no-till farming and cover crops as a way to reduce risk to ongoing drought.



MyPI disaster preparedness program for teens — Lancaster County piloted Nebraska Extension’s My Youth Preparedness Initiative (MyPI) in 2018. Nine teens participated in 40 hours of training, and learned how to respond to disasters, use emergency response equipment and render first aid. The teens then helped 63 families create communication plans and disaster preparedness kits. Participants improved their knowledge on disaster preparedness and emergency response from 43% on the pre-test to 95% on the post-test.



Early childhood trainings for child-care providers — Last year, Extension Educator Jaci Foged taught or coordinated 95 workshops for local child-care providers. Total attendance was 1,512, generating 280 in-service hours approved by the Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services. Quality child care is vital in Nebraska since 74% of 156,575 Nebraska youth ages 0–5 live in households where all available parents are currently working. Pictured is Jaci delivering Nebraska Extension’s newly developed program, Cultivating Healthy Intentional Mindful Educators (CHIME).



Water and wastewater management program — Extension Educator Meghan Sittler served as Extension’s statewide coordinator whose duties included collaborating with other organizations, developing resources and teaching (pictured teaching an H₂O Adventure workshop for youth). Extension, along with the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Nebraska On-site Wastewater Association and the Nebraska Well Drillers Association, provided professional development trainings to over 275 water well and onsite wastewater professionals at seven locations across Nebraska.



Nutrition Education Kit program — Nebraska Extension has developed kits for use in K–5 classrooms to help teachers instruct students about health, nutrition and physical activity. The kits include lessons and supplies for hands-on activities. Extension staff also present hands-on lessons in the classrooms. In the 2017–18 school year, the program reached 15,992 students at all 39 Lincoln Public Schools and 1 parochial school. Evaluations showed significant improvements of students’ nutrition knowledge in all grades. Pictured is Extension Educator Alyssa Havlovic leading 2nd graders at Roper Elementary in preparing a healthy snack.



Youth nutrition grants — In 2018, Extension Educator Kayla Colgrove co-managed two statewide programs funded by National 4-H Council grants: 4-H Food Smart Families and 4-H Healthy Habits. In Lancaster County, 6 staff members and 7 teen ambassadors delivered 17 programs to 448 K–12th grade students for at least 6 hours of education. In a statewide Healthy Habits survey, 83% of 1,823 youth participants and 91% of 48 teen ambassadors reported they had learned about healthy food choices. Pictured is Extension Educator Kayla Colgrove leading 4th graders at Malcolm Public Schools in a healthy breakfast activity.



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Benefit to people



Courtesy photo

“Dr. Jody Green from the Lancaster County Extension office has been a great help to our maintenance department. We often take in different insects and spiders for identification which then helps us determine possible treatment options. Dr. Green spoke to a group of our tenants about bed bug prevention. She also gave a presentation at a maintenance conference that the Lincoln Housing Authority hosted.”

—Shawn Servi, Lincoln Housing Authority Assistant Maintenance Superintendent



Courtesy photo

“Westminster Preschool has been fortunate to have the support of the UNL Extension early childhood development staff to supplement our classroom with new experiences.

These hands-on materials allowed us to put the learning and discovery process in the kids' hands! The tools provided were instrumental in helping kids gain knowledge and relate to the topic at hand. Students used the various STEM activities to help learning come alive.”

—Jen Burkey, Pre-K Teacher, Westminster Preschool



Soni Cochran

“I did MyPI to help myself and my family be better prepared for emergencies. One requirement for graduation was to help our families and six additional families train and prepare for emergencies, letting us apply our new skills to help our community. I feel safer knowing that in an emergency, my neighbors and I know how to react and help others.”

—Kolbe Villa, MyPI graduate



Tracy Anderson

“I'm extremely grateful to be a part of 4-H, an organization that has allowed me to work and grow alongside other youth under the mentorship of wonderful staff.

Through various service projects, I've learned the value in giving back to the community and want to continue to do so. The leadership activities have also equipped me with important leadership skills I have lacked.”

—Crystal Xu, secretary of 4-H Teen Council



“My wife and I use Extension programs like the Successful Farmer Series and the Ag Land Management workshop to better understand — and keep up-to-date on — what is going on.

We also call the Extension office for help on insect and weed problems for crops and pastures, as well as trees.”

—Burdette Piening, farmer



Dana Hardy

“I learned many healthy and delicious recipes from the nutrition classes. Now the meals in my family are low-sodium and low-fat — and the sugar consumption is also cut down. I share what I learned with my friends. Dana [Extension Associate] is professional and friendly, and she always made our classes fun.”

—Xiaoqing Bai, Nutrition Education Program graduate through Asian Community & Cultural Center

Teaching, growing and making a difference

Investing in our youth is an investment in our future! In 2018, growth continued in the Lancaster County 4-H program, with a 7% increase in numbers of youth reached. Tufts University research shows youth development programs, such as 4-H, reduce the likelihood of youth engaging in risk/problem behaviors such as underage drinking, bullying and vandalism. One study confirmed 4-H youth are leaders, achieve higher marks in school and contribute to self and society — all helping to strengthen the communities where they live.

This past summer, Lancaster County young adults were given opportunities to assist with implementing 4-H programs. Six teens were hired to reach underserved youth through the “Teens as Teachers” (new in 2018) and



“Food Smart Families” programs. They gained teaching and leadership experience.

New partnerships continue to leverage Extension's reach to the community. This past year:

- Four partnerships were formed with Lancaster County cultural and literacy centers. As a result, 332 New Americans received critical knowledge of nutrition and healthy living in America.
- Another new partnership resulted in funding which will allow the Raising Healthy Nebraskans school enrichment nutrition program to serve three additional grade levels.

Extension continues to provide responsive, innovative and trusted information to make a difference in our community.

Karen Wobig

UNL Extension Educator & Unit Leader



Tracy Anderson

“Teens as Teachers” intern Jovonna Alatraste leads youth at a summer-site in a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) activity.



Dana Hardy

New American families from Lincoln Public School's Saturday Migrant Group learn healthy cooking and oven skills.



4-H Youth Development

36,520 youth engaged in 4-H programs

Including clubs, school enrichment, after-school/summer sites and camps

Participating in the 4-H positive youth development program provides youth an opportunity to grow their “Youth Voice.” When youth have a voice in community efforts, research has shown there is a decrease in traditional problem behaviors which helps the community and youth (for example, the likelihood of using drugs and alcohol, dropping out of school and criminal behavior lessens). In addition, youth who are involved in the community tend to have higher academic performance. (Crooks, C. V., Chiodo, D., & Thomas, D., Hughes 2010)

4-H prepares youth for successful futures



Courtesy photo

4-H clubs — With 53 clubs ranging from 5 to 105 youth members, clubs are an important part of the Lancaster County 4-H program. 4-H clubs are led by adult volunteers, often hold regular meetings, elect youth officers, recite the 4-H pledge, learn together and do community-service projects. Many club members participate in contests and fair events. Pictured is an Amazing Treasures club meeting.



4-H at Lancaster County Super Fair — At the 2018 Super Fair, over 750 4-H/FFA exhibitors showcased over 5,400 exhibits (including static exhibits, animals, contest entries and Clover Kids exhibits). The Super Fair provides 4-H youth an opportunity to showcase the projects they've worked on throughout the year. Pictured are 4-H/FFA youth showing their swine projects.



4-H Clover College — Now in its 22nd year, Clover College is 4 days of hands-on workshops. This year, 170 youth attended 59 workshops with a total 960 class registrations. Nearly 70 volunteer instructors were involved. Pictured is the Tunnel Adventure workshop, where youth learned about healthy soil and its components.



After-school programs — Last year, 54 after-school and summer-site programs included 4-H projects and activities in their program. Pictured is Extension Assistant Teri Hlava leading youth in a Trash to Treasure activity repurposing greeting cards at The Salvation Army of Lincoln's after-school program.



4-H school enrichment programs — Lancaster County 4-H presents several programs in local schools, including: Garbology (2nd grade), Embryology (3rd grade), Ag Literacy Festival (4th grade), Earth Wellness Festival (5th grade), Nutrition Education Program (K-5th grades in qualifying Lincoln Public Schools) and Growing Healthy Kids (K-5th grades in the rest of LPS schools). These curricula meet Nebraska Curriculum Standards. In Embryology, youth watch chicks hatch in classrooms. Last year, 4,000 students in 40 Lincoln Public Schools and 16 other Lancaster County schools participated in Embryology. Pictured is Extension Associate Cole Meador candling eggs so Huntington 3rd graders can see the silhouette of the chick embryos.

Extension's volunteers worth nearly \$700,000



In 2018, Extension's estimated 2,300 volunteers gave 29,234 total hours of service worth \$684,076* to our community! Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County benefits from these volunteers who help extend the reach of programs such as 4-H, Master Gardeners and MyPI Disaster Preparedness Training. Pictured are adult and youth volunteers assisting with 4-H static exhibits at the Lancaster County Super Fair. In addition, many 4-H clubs and individual members give back to their community through service projects. Lancaster County 4-H'ers reported nearly 2,500 hours of community service.

*Based on Independent Sector's estimate of Nebraska's value of a volunteer hour in 2017 as \$23.40