

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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