

2019 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
- Cropping & Water Systems
- Food, Nutrition & Health
- 4-H Youth Development
- Learning Child
- Beef Systems
- Community Vitality

Extension helps people solve real-world problems



Disaster response and recovery resources — After this year’s flooding and blizzard events, Nebraska Extension responded to individual and community needs statewide relaying information to the public, collaborating with partner agencies and organizations, and identifying solutions to help Nebraskans. Pictured is Extension Associate Soni Cochran (far right) with Winslow, Nebraska residents and UNL students enrolled in a Community and Regional Planning course. Students documented the layout of Winslow to assist as the village considered relocating to higher ground.

Benefit to People



“This has been the most difficult job I’ve ever had, and the most fulfilling. The impact I’ve seen has been not only on the Linoma Beach site, where our progress

is daily and concrete, but also within myself. I have developed a newfound appreciation for the mechanisms of disaster relief and those who operate at these areas.”

—Ben Rhodes, who participated in the University of Nebraska–Lincoln student flood recovery serviceship program



Weather and crops — Extension Educator Tyler Williams (pictured at left) helps producers manage the impact weather and climate have on agricultural production. Due to this year’s weather events, his expertise was in high demand. Tyler co-authored one of the most-viewed news articles on UNL Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources’ CropWatch, “Nebraska’s Most Challenging 60 Days.” He was invited to present at 24 events to nearly 1,800 people. In addition, Tyler organized the Nebraska Climate Summit, where attendees learned from and engaged with experts in agriculture, human health, public policy and planning. 98% reported learning something new or making a new connection.



Early childhood trainings and resources — Last year, Extension Educator Jaci Foged (pictured far left) taught or coordinated 82 workshops for local child-care providers, including a training about Emergency Preparedness. In response to Nebraska’s flooding, Extension developed a program named Read For Resilience to support young children’s healing after a disaster and/or loss. Educators and specialists selected nine children’s books and developed accompanying storybook guides. Thanks to \$4,000 in donations, over 50 qualifying families received over 250 children’s books.



“The healthy cooking class [taught by the Nutrition Education Program] encouraged participants to eat healthy. It easily got them engaged and excited about healthy recipes and the cooking process. They became familiar with kitchen equipment and cooking technologies.”

—Lanetta Edison-Soe, Asian Community and Cultural Center Health Program Coordinator



ProHort Update — New this year, Extension Educator Sarah Browning offered a full-day workshop for nursery & green industry professionals, turf managers, public works employees, landscape managers, arborists and groundskeepers. Attendees learned how to create weather-ready landscapes, manage new insect pests, avoid tree risks and understand current turf fertilization recommendations. Participant evaluations indicated: 100% planned to change a tree management practice to improve tree health; 96% planned to use new practices to make the landscape they manage more weather resilient; 92% planned to use a new practice to positively identify insect pests.



Nutrition Education Program (NEP) — NEP provides nutrition education and food access resources through educational classes and policy, system and environmental (PSE) initiatives which help make the places people live, work and play healthier. Last year, NEP staff reached 142 families, 100 adults and 8,324 youth with direct education and 16,209 individuals with PSE approaches. Pictured is Extension Associate Dana Hardy (far left) at the Lincoln Public Schools’ McPhee Family Literacy Group. During the last class of the series, participants bring food to explore each others’ cultural cooking.



“The recycling activities helped me learn about the environment and how important it is to not throw garbage everywhere. It was fun to learn about something we don’t learn in school every day, and it helped me understand how I can make my own environment better.”

—Zaniya Osborne, Campbell Elementary Community Learning Center afterschool youth who participated in 4-H Trash to Treasure activities



“Frustrated over the difference of opinion as to the cause of my corn crop’s poor health by my crop advisers, I turned to Tyler Williams at the County

Extension office. He came out the same day and worked diligently until he correctly identified the problem.”

—Jerry Minchow, farmer

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Insect/pest programs — Extension Educator Jody Green offered several educational programs to a variety of audiences in the Lancaster community including bed bug prevention, attracting pollinators, identification of creatures in the garden, managing pests in multi-family housing and nature walks/programs for 4-H youth. Pictured is Jody (back center) showing youth tomato hornworm caterpillars at a 4-H Clover College insect-exploring workshop.



Domestic water and wastewater management program — Extension Associate Becky Schuerman (right front) serves as Extension's statewide water coordinator, whose duties include collaborating with other organizations, developing resources and teaching. Extension, through a funding agreement with the Nebraska Department of Environment & Energy, works closely with the Nebraska Onsite Wastewater Association, as well as the Nebraska Well Drillers Association, to provide professional development trainings across the state. Pictured is a hands-on training for installation of a mound septic system.

Photos by Vicki Jedlicka unless otherwise noted



Extension garden — The Nutrition Education Program (NEP) team installed a Growing Together Nebraska garden at the Lancaster County Extension office. Funding was provided by a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—Education (SNAP—Ed) grant to increase healthy food access by growing and donating fresh produce to individuals and families experiencing food insecurity. Extension Master Gardeners and horticulture staff provided expertise and hands-on assistance. 355 total pounds of produce were harvested and donated to two local food pantries. Nutrition education, recipes and produce samples were offered to food recipients.



food.unl.edu — Extension Educator Kayla Colgrove coordinates and contributes to Extension's statewide website, which received over 2.4 million pageviews last year. The website provides educational resources and recipes to help and inspire people to make healthy food choices, safely prepare food and increase physical activity. This year, Kayla worked with Extension's Food Website team and UNL IANR (Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources) Media to implement a major redesign.

Extension's Volunteers Worth Over \$800,000



In 2019, Extension's estimated 2,998 volunteers gave 33,323 total hours of service worth \$800,085* to our community! Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County benefits from these volunteers who help extend the reach of programs such as 4-H and Master Gardeners. In addition, many 4-H clubs and individual members give back to their community through service projects. Lancaster County 4-H'ers reported over 2,000 hours of community service. Pictured above are Master Gardeners answering horticulture questions from the public.

*Based on Independent Sector's estimate of Nebraska's value of a volunteer hour in 2018 as \$24.01.



Pictured are two- and three-generation 4-H families who helped with static exhibits at this year's Lancaster County Super Fair.

Resilience Makes Nebraska Strong

While Lancaster County may have avoided wide-spread disaster with the flooding and its aftermath experienced by many other counties in Nebraska, we have shared support and resources to our neighbors. The educational programming provided by Extension staff enables counties to better withstand these nature-related catastrophes. Accolades, however, are to be given to Nebraska residents for their ability to withstand adversity and come out on the other side stronger and better prepared for future happenings.

Resilience is the measure of the amount of disturbance a system can withstand before it collapses. Nebraskans bounce back from natural disasters time and time again. Resiliency is important for families and sustainability in our agriculture, landscapes and natural resources.

Working together, sharing expertise and planning for the future enable our cities, counties and state to continue to prosper and grow. This makes "Nebraska Strong!"

Karen Wobig

Extension Educator & Unit Leader



4-H Youth Development

35,312 Youth Engaged in 4-H Programs

including clubs, school enrichment, afterschools/out-of-schools and camps

4-H, America's largest youth development program, empowers young people with the skills to lead for a lifetime. Youth develop confidence, independence, resilience and compassion. Nebraska Extension 4-H emphasizes: science, citizenship, leadership, agricultural literacy, career development, college readiness and healthy lifestyles. Adult mentors provide guidance and encouragement.

4-H prepares youth for successful futures



4-H clubs — With 70 clubs ranging from 5 to 92 youth members, clubs are an important part of the Lancaster County 4-H program. 4-H clubs are led by adult volunteers, 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 a Clover Kids 4-H Club meeting in which youth learned computer coding concepts by resequencing the chicken dance.



4-H at Lancaster County Super Fair — At the 2019 Super Fair, over 780 4-H/FFA exhibitors showcased over 5,000 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 is sheep showmanship. In showmanship classes, exhibitors are judged on their ability to present their animal and enhance its best characteristics.



4-H school enrichment programs — Lancaster County 4-H presents several programs in local schools, including: Garbology (Kindergarten), Embryology (3rd grade), Ag Literacy Festival (4th grade), Earth Wellness Festival (5th grade) and Nutrition Kits (K-5th grades). These programs meet Lincoln Public Schools, Nebraska or national education standards. Pictured is Extension Educator Alyssa Havlovic leading a healthy snack activity at a Rousseau 1st grade classroom as part of the nutrition kit program. In the 2018-19 school year, nutrition education was provided to 41 schools, 800 classrooms and 16,700 students.



Afterschool programs — 4-H delivered 54 afterschool/out-of-school time programs focusing on hands-on STEM programs such as Trash to Treasure, coding and electronic circuits. In 2019, Lancaster County 4-H updated Trash to Treasure afterschool learning opportunities in partnership with the City of Lincoln Solid Waste Management Division. This program teaches youth the positive impact they can make on the environment through reducing, reusing and recycling. Pictured is Extension Educator Tracy Anderson (upper right) and 4-H intern Shemsa Ndahiro (upper left) teaching youth at The Salvation Army about electricity using circuit boards and laptops.