



Nebraska Extension Celebrates 25 Years of Nutrition School Enrichment Kits

By Alyssa Havlovic and Emily Gratopp, Extension Educators in Lancaster County

For a quarter of a century, Nebraska Extension's Nutrition School Enrichment Kits (SEK) program has helped Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) students build healthy habits for life. Since its launch in 2000, the program has reached more than 184,000 students in over 10,000 classrooms, teaching youth the importance of health, nutrition and physical activity.

What the Program Offers

Designed specifically for grades K–5, the SEK program aligns with national health standards and LPS health curriculum objectives. Each classroom kit equips teachers with five ready-to-use lessons and hands-on materials, including science experiments, interactive games, food models, activity sheets, audio files, posters, books, videos, puppets and more.

Each kit is a turnkey resource, giving teachers everything they need to deliver



Each classroom kit includes a lesson book and materials for hands-on learning, such as science experiments, interactive games, books and more. Pictured is Extension Educator Alyssa Havlovic (right) with a kindergarten kit and teacher.

the lessons with ease — from detailed lesson plans and engaging activity components to built-in evaluation tools — ensuring confident, effective and impactful instruction to exceed health standards.

Teachers consistently report the kits save planning time while giving them confidence

to teach complex topics like balanced eating, food safety and the role of physical activity in health. One LPS Kindergarten teacher said, “I love teaching my students using the Nutrition School Enrichment Kits. The students are actively engaged in learning all about nutrition and physical fitness. I like that



Extension staff often lead a hands-on activity in classrooms as part of the program. Pictured is former Extension Assistant Sam Isaacson leading kindergartners in making pudding cups.

the lesson plans are easy to use and the materials are all ready. Students are excited to learn and like to share what they are learning with their families.”

Teachers also have the option to invite a Nebraska Extension staff member into their classroom for a hands-on lesson on topics of healthy snacking, physical activity or handwashing — further enhancing the student learning experience.

How SEK Began

In 2000, LPS teachers and administrators partnered with Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County to bring more hands-on nutrition education into classrooms. Extension staff worked with registered dietitians to adapt and create age-appropriate activities using national, state and local resources.

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“It has been a pleasure for the Lincoln Public Schools to partner with Nebraska County Extension to provide a solid, robust and research-informed curriculum and instruction for our K–5 students in Health Education over the years. The School Enrichment Nutrition Kits and the Nebraska Extension Educators have been a tremendous resource for providing incredible nutrition education to over 18,000 students annually in LPS. We hope to continue this partnership and work in the years to come!”

—Dr. Matt Avey, Lincoln Public Schools Curriculum Specialist for K–12 Health and Physical Education



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One of the optional activities led by Extension staff is a handwashing lesson using glow lotion and a black light. Pictured is Alyssa Havlovic.

SEK PROGRAM

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The program first served Title I schools through support from SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education). Over the next decade, a combination of federal and local grants expanded access to non-Title I schools as well — 41 schools in total in Lincoln — ensuring that all students, regardless of income level, benefited from this exceptional health education approach. Alongside grant funding, Nebraska Extension dedicated an Extension



After a healthy snack activity, students take the recipe home so they can make the snack with their families. Pictured is Extension Assistant Hannah Schielke.

Educator position to lead the program, providing the coordination needed to strengthen, expand and sustain health education within schools.

In 2021, LPS adopted SEK as part of its core health curriculum, officially integrating the program into every K–5 classroom districtwide.

Impact on Students and Schools

SEK helps children live healthier lives by preventing chronic disease through the early establishment of healthy habits. Schools are one of the most powerful venues for this work. Research shows that school-based interventions combining nutrition education and physical activity improve children's dietary choices, activity levels and long-term health outcomes (Silva et al.,

2024; González-Jiménez et al., 2025). The SEK program does exactly that.

Through structured, hands-on lessons, students learn why food matters, how to plan balanced meals and snacks, how to read food labels, the importance of physical activity and safe food-handling practices. Annual evaluations confirm SEK's impact: students consistently increase their nutrition knowledge and report healthier behaviors — from more regular breakfast consumption to higher dairy intake — which aids in bone health, especially important during peak growth years — and safer food practices.

The program's success has allowed Nebraska Extension to grow the curriculum for statewide use and has caught the attention of other Extension programs nationwide as a model to start similar programs.

Looking Ahead

As Nebraska Extension celebrates the SEK program's 25-year milestone, federal funding for SNAP-Ed has recently been eliminated nationally and grant funding to support children's health and well-being is shifting. However, SEK's goal remains the same: to ensure every child learns the value of healthy eating and active living. By building these skills early, the SEK program is helping raise healthier children

and stronger communities, one classroom at a time.

Sources:

- H. V. Lavelle, D. F. Mackay, J. P. Pell, *Systematic review and meta-analysis of school-based interventions to reduce body mass index*, *Journal of Public Health*, Volume 34, Issue 3, August 2012, pages 360–369, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/ldr116>
- González-Jiménez, E., González-Reyes, R., Martínez-García, R., & López-Bueno, R. (2025). *Effects of school-based nutrition and physical activity interventions on cardiometabolic health in children: A meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials*. *Applied Sciences*, 15(15), 8564. <https://doi.org/10.3390/app15158564>

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

By Alyssa Havlovic, MS, RDN, ACSM EP-C, Extension Educator in Lancaster County

You can enjoy this healthy recipe that fifth grade students in the local School Enrichment Kits program make in their classrooms! This hands-on experience helps them connect nutrition lessons to real-life choices by highlighting how foods rich in vitamins, minerals and protein support growth, energy and overall health — reinforcing the key messages of the SEK curriculum.

FRUIT & YOGURT PARFAIT

(Yield: 1 serving)

- 1 (6 ounce) container low-fat yogurt, fruit flavored or vanilla, divided**
- 1/4 cup mixed berries, fresh or frozen, thawed**
- 2 Tablespoons granola or plain, unsalted peanuts**

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Place half of the yogurt on the bottom of a glass or paper cup.
3. Place the mixed fruit on top of yogurt.
4. Add rest of the yogurt.
5. Top with granola cereal.

Note: Nutrition information will change if substitutions are used.

Nutrition Information: Serving Size (recipe makes 1 serving): Calories 190; Total Fat 3.5g; Saturated Fat 1g; Cholesterol 10mg; Sodium 115mg; Total Carbohydrates 32g; Fiber 1g; includes 11g Added Sugars; Protein 8g; Vitamin D 10%; Calcium 20%; Iron 6%; Potassium 8%

Nutrition Software Used: ESHA Food Processor



Photo by Craig Chandler, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

“This unit is a favorite every year with my first graders. They enjoy it and learn so much from it.”

“I continue to love to use the nutrition kit that is provided to teach my students about nutrition. The students enjoy all the activities that are included in the kit.”

“My students love this nutrition unit and I use the activities for the morning seat activity, for independent learning, as they come back in from lunch and at the scheduled nutrition time.”

“These were all great. Students had fun and so did I. It was a great way to learn about eating healthy.”

—Examples of feedback from LPS teachers

Celebrating the Season with American Persimmon

By Rachel Anderson, Extension Educator in Lancaster County

As the woodlands of the south-eastern United States shed their leaves and hunker down for winter, the sun-fleshed fruits of the female persimmon tree can still be seen glittering like jewels amongst the canopy's yellows, browns and greys. American persimmon, known botanically as *Diospyros virginiana*, features the last of the season's edible native fruits to ripen, still hanging on all the way into December. This autumnal timing — and long shelf life of the fruit — naturally lends persimmons a spot on many holiday tables, both as natural decoration and as the star ingredient of tasty puddings, breads and spreads. Their sweet, date-like flavor and smooth, jammy texture are a favorite among

many wild food enthusiasts, whether cooked or eaten fresh. And with smaller growing, big-fruited, self-fertile varieties like Prairie Star and Prairie Sun available on the market, it can be hard to say no to planting one (or a whole grove) within reach.



The wrinkled, 1-inch fruits of a female American persimmon can be found still clinging to the tree into December.

Love Gardening?

Become a Master Gardener: Jan. 16 Deadline; Trainings Begin February

Do you want to learn more about vegetable gardening & landscaping?

Do you have a passion for tree planting?

Do you enjoy volunteering and sharing your knowledge with others?



In exchange for 40 hours of training, Extension Master Gardener Volunteers (EMGVs) volunteer 40 hours of their time. EMGVs serve an important role extending the horticulture education and outreach from Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County. The 2026 training begins in February. Application deadline is Jan. 16.

For more information, call Mary Jane Frogge at 402-441-7180 or visit <https://mastergardener.unl.edu/become-ne-emgv-volunteer>.

EXTENSION Master Gardener Volunteer Spotlight

CAROL RUSTAD has been an Extension Master Gardener Volunteer for 21 years and has volunteered over 800 hours. Carol has mentored new volunteers, answered questions during the Backyard Farmer program, hosted potluck dinners and shared her knowledge of native wildflowers.

Why did you become an Extension Master Gardener Volunteer?

I wanted to learn more about gardening from the experts in horticulture. I felt it was important to learn from people who had PhDs in horticulture.

What is your favorite volunteer opportunity? Answering the phone at Backyard Farmer. In one hour, we each answer between 10 and 20 phone calls. It's so fun talking to people and getting different ideas about gardening, and also helping them find answers to their questions.

If you could encourage someone else to volunteer, what would you say? If a person is a gardener, they meet people that have the same interests. It's so enjoyable to converse with people who have the same interests as you. I have met many of my best friends in the Master Gardener program.



GARDEN GUIDE THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

By Mary Jane Frogge, Extension Associate in Lancaster County

Winter is a good time to start reviewing your garden notes to help with next year's plans.

House plants with large leaves and smooth foliage such as philodendrons, dracaena and rubber plant, benefit if their leaves are wiped with a damp cloth to remove dust.

Place Christmas trees away from fireplaces, heat vents and anything else that could dry the needles. Keep your Christmas tree well watered from the time it is brought home until it is recycled.

Minimize traffic on a frozen lawn to reduce winter damage.

After the ground freezes, mulch small fruit plants such as strawberries. One inch of straw or leaves is ideal for strawberries.

Order seed catalogs now for garden planning in January. For variety, consider companies that specialize in old and rare varieties or wildflowers.

Clean power tools of all plant material and dirt. Store all tools in their proper place indoors, never outdoors where they will rust over the winter.

Remove all mummified fruit from fruit trees and rake up and destroy those on the ground. Also, rake and dispose of apple and cherry leaves. Good sanitation practices reduce insects and diseases the following season.

Be sure not to store apples or pears with vegetables. The fruits give off ethylene gas which speeds up the breakdown of vegetables and will cause them to develop off-flavors.

Check fruits, vegetables, corms and tubers that you have in storage. Sort out any that show signs of rot and dispose of them.

Winter is a good time to inspect trees and shrubs for bagworm capsules. Remove and destroy them to reduce next year's pest population.

A home weather station that includes a minimum-maximum thermometer, a rain gauge and a weather log is a good gift for a gardener.

Bring out the bird feeders and stock them with bird seed for the birds. Remember to provide fresh water for them too.

CHOOSING CHILD CARE: WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW

By Jaci Foged, Extension Educator in Lancaster County; and Holly (Hatton) Wilhite, Associate Professor and Early Childhood Extension Specialist

Early childhood typically refers to the period from birth to age 8. It is a magical stage of human development because growth happens at lightning speed. You blink and a child goes from being held in arms to running, from babbling to full sentences, from helplessness to an “I can do it!” attitude.

Choosing Childcare is Something That Should be Carefully Considered

- According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2023, 74.6% of children under age 6 in Nebraska had all available parents in the workforce. This means many children need care outside the home while families are at work.
- A child’s early relationships, environments and experiences in the first five years of life affect all aspects of their development moving forward.
- Science and research are clear: the first 1,000 days of life are the best time to build a healthy brain. The brain physically and functionally changes with experiences. This is known as “brain plasticity.”

Nebraska Extension’s Early Childhood Team has resources to support parents as they search for quality childcare. We recommend considering five key areas when choosing a program:

- **Relationships** — Warm, caring interactions; positive language; teachers engaged with children in play and learning.
- **Health & Safety** — Secure entrance; licensed program; staff trained in emergency preparedness.
- **Curriculum & Approaches to Learning** — Consistent routines; responsive environments; children actively engaged.
- **Learning Environment** — Child-sized furniture; pictures of families; age-appropriate materials; outdoor playtime.
- **Policies & Administration** — Compliance with regulations; positive discipline policy; parent advisory board; clear daily procedures (meals, potty training, etc.)

Nebraska Extension is aware of the childcare shortage, and we are incredibly concerned about it. That is why we are strong partners with the economic drivers in our communities who are working hard to expand access to high-quality childcare. We work closely

with Nebraska Children and Families Foundation and their Communities for Kids initiative, as well as the Six Regions. Extension is at the table, helping to ensure that as new childcare programs are created or expanded, they are supported with high-quality early childhood education from our team.

This is an incredibly complex issue — it takes strong local investment and coordination across many systems: business planning, building or remodeling, licensing, funding and more. No matter where a community is in that process, we encourage them to connect with local leaders at the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, First Five Nebraska or Communities for Kids, who are deeply engaged in addressing this challenge.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Nebraska Extension’s web resources about choosing quality childcare at <https://child.unl.edu/choosing-quality-childcare>
- First Five Nebraska’s website at <https://firstfive-nebraska.org>
- Nebraska Children and Families Foundation’s website at <https://nebraskachildren.org>
- Communities for Kids’ website at <https://communitiesforkids.org>

Commercial/Noncommercial Pesticide License

Applicators needing a new license and those with licenses expiring in April 2026 have several options to maintain their license.

2026 Traditional Classroom Training

In-person training classes are held from January through April. Training schedules will be available soon at <https://pested.unl.edu>. In-person trainings are a supplemental learning opportunity; they DO NOT replace pre-class studying of category manuals or flipbooks for test preparation. Study materials for all commercial categories must be purchased online at <https://pested.unl.edu>.

2026 Conference Options

Extension and industry-sponsored events also offer opportunities to renew a license. **Recertification only.**

- Jan. 7–27 | NE Extension Crop Production Clinics (00 General Standards, 01 Ag Plant, Demonstration/Research) <https://agronomy.unl.edu/cpc>

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Little Black Bugs, BIG BITE

By Kait Chapman, Extension Educator in Lancaster County

What Was Biting Me?

It happens every year — in the late summer and into fall, some are tormented by tiny black bugs with a nasty bite. The culprits? Minute pirate bugs, a common issue that many encounter around harvest time.

Unfortunately, with minute pirate bugs and their bites, not a lot can be done to prevent nor manage them.

Pirate bugs prey on other small insects, like aphids. When their food source disappears, however, they begin to wander and will bite people incidentally. The good news is, however, they don’t actually feed on blood nor can they transmit disease like we see with mosquitoes and ticks. The bugs are, simply put, more of a nuisance than anything else.



A minute pirate bug (highly magnified) on human skin. They can reach up to 1/8-inch in length.

Photo by UNL Entomology Department

What Can I Do About Them to Prepare for Next Year?

Repellent sprays like DEET do not deter minute pirate bugs, and insecticides used to control them are not practical. The best course of action is to wear long, dark-colored clothing when spending time outdoors where minute pirate bugs are abundant. Luckily, the problem is seasonal, and the bugs eventually go away on their own with the change in weather.

What You Need to Know About Having a Well Drilled

By Becky Schuerman, Domestic Water/Wastewater Extension Associate

Those residences that are not served by a public water or rural water system need a source of water for both consumption and daily needs. A private well, most often, fulfills those needs. While the cost of drilling a well is a lesser expense in the overall purchase or building of a home, it is a necessary expense to provide the residence with a useable water supply and it adds value to the property.

Reviewing Your Water Needs

Whether or not you have an existing residence or are building a new home, making a list of your known water needs is an important initial step. Questions to be considered and shared with the licensed water well contractor you hire are:

- How many people will be living in the household?
- Beyond the normal daily water usage needs, what seasonal uses do you foresee – ie. lawn and/or garden irrigation, washing cars, filling a swimming pool, creating an ice rink?
- Possible geothermal demands?
- Emergency needs such as fire protection or possible water storage in case of emergency?
- Do you have livestock?

Typically, domestic wells are designed to pump 10 or less gallons/minute. This is usually plenty for most home situations, but having a list of what will place a demand on the well is important knowledge to have.

Hiring a Contractor

To accomplish this, the next important step is to hire a Nebraska licensed Water Well Contractor. Never be afraid to ask the following questions, such as:

- Are they licensed in the State of Nebraska to drill wells and install pumps? This is a requirement in the State of Nebraska.

- Are they adequately insured and bonded? Currently, one of the requirements to attain a water well contractor's license in the State of Nebraska is a minimum of \$100,000 public liability and property damage insurance.
- Will they supply you a detailed explanation of the work/conditions of the bid/job contract? Details include, but are not limited to:
 - Estimated depth of the well;
 - Bore hole diameter;
 - What type and size of well casing will be used?
 - What type and length of well screen will be used?
 - Approximately how long will the well be developed and test pumped?
- Will they provide you with a copy of the well log, well registration and any other documents from installed water equipment?
- Will they register the well with the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment?
- Can they provide you with multiple references of past jobs they have done? If so, what is the overall reputation of the contractor being considered?

Don't hesitate to get multiple quotes when looking to hire a licensed water well contractor; it is really no different than shopping around for a home builder or a new car. Make sure you are comparing each contractor along the same criteria, this is where your list of water needs and getting a detailed bid comes into play. A qualified, licensed water well contractor:

- Should be able to tell you if quality water is fairly easy to come by or is scarce in your area;
- Should be familiar with the geology and the static water level/water table in your area;
- Should be familiar with how deep nearby domestic wells are drilled and well yields; and
- Should know if there are any contaminants of concern in your area.

Remember, the cheapest bid is not always the best one and references can be immensely helpful.

To Build a House or Drill a Well First, That is the Question

If you are building new, it is wise to drill your well first so that you don't have a home built and find out later that you aren't able to provide a good water supply. Once the well is drilled, you can then move forward with the location placement of your onsite wastewater system and the building of your home. This is not to say you shouldn't have an initial plan of where your well, onsite wastewater system and home will be placed, but know that plans may have to change to accommodate the location of a good water supply, proper construction and setback requirements.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- For a list of currently licensed Water Well Standards Contractors by county, consult the Water Well Standards and Contractors' Licensing Program website: https://deq-iis.ne.gov/zs/www/main_pro.php.
- For water topics, go to the UNL Water website: <https://water.unl.edu/article/drinking-water/nebguides>.

Pesticide License

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- Jan. 12–15 | NE Turf Conference (00 General Standards, 04 Ornamental & Turf)
- Feb. 18–20 | NE State Pest Control Association Conference (00 General Standards, 08 Structural/Health Related, 08w Wood Destroying Organisms, 11 Fumigation, 14 Wildlife Damage Control.)
- Feb. 23–26 | NE Aviation Trades Association Convention (00 General Standards, 01 Ag Plant, 07 Right-of-Way, 09 Public Health, 12 Aerial)

Testing-Only Options

Closed-book exams are given by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture. Preregistration is not required and there is no cost. For test-only dates, times and locations, visit https://go.unl.edu/nda_testing_only.

NDA computer-based testing is provided through the Pearson-Vue company. For a list of testing sites, categories, dates and registration information, visit <https://go.unl.edu/pearson-vuetesting>. Cost is \$55/exam. (For applicators with multiple categories on their license, each category is charged the full testing fee.)

2026 Nebraska Custom Rates Survey

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln's Center for Agricultural Profitability is seeking input from Nebraska farm service providers for the 2026 Nebraska Custom Rates Survey. If you provide custom services — whether it's planting, harvesting, spraying, hauling or other custom operations — your participation is vital. The data you share becomes part of the biennial Nebraska Custom Rates Report, a trusted resource that farmers, ranchers and service providers across the state use to set fair rates and make informed decisions.

Why Participate?

- Ensure your operation's rates are represented.

- Contribute to one of the most widely used decision-making resources in Nebraska agriculture.
- Help create a clearer picture of Nebraska's custom-service economy.

Sign up at <https://go.unl.edu/cr26> to receive the online survey by email or to request a paper copy to be sent about mid-November. Survey responses are requested by the end of January. The more responses received, the more valuable and accurate the report will be.

For questions or more information, contact: Glennis McClure, Extension Educator at gmcclure3@unl.edu or 402-472-0661.



HEART OF 4-H VOLUNTEER AWARD

Recognizing Outstanding Volunteer Service

Joy Harvey

is receiving Lancaster County 4-H's November "Heart of 4-H Award." She is organizational leader of the 4-H Makers Club, which she started 7 years ago. The club focuses on STEM-related learning, as well as participating in community service such as decorating lunch bags for Meals on Wheels. Joy has taught a workshop at 4-H Clover College, teaching how to make paper circuits that light up.



"I enjoy watching the members grow in the leadership and speaking skills," she said. "Our members started when they were in the primary grades and now they are in middle school. Several of them are involved in their school's robotics club. Last year, they gave a presentation during the robotics competition, and it was fun to see kids who used to be too shy to introduce themselves at a 4-H meeting speak in front of judges. Their years of practicing this skill through 4-H was evident."

Brett Jurgens

is receiving Lancaster County 4-H's December "Heart of 4-H Award." At a young age, he helped his mother teach photography workshops, and at age 14, became a counselor at the Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center. For over 20 years, he has judged 4-H photography at the Lancaster County Super Fair, as well as other county fairs. He has also presented several photography workshops and help sessions. In 2023, he became a superintendent of 4-H Photography at the Lancaster County Super Fair.



"I love the friendships made in 4-H," Brett said. "My best friend lives in another state. If we had not worked together at the Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center, we would never have met. I think 4-H really teaches compassion for others and great work ethic. Whether at a 4-H event or other volunteer events, I look to other 4-H volunteers because they know how to work hard."

State 4-H Shooting Sports Results

Several 4-H shooting sports statewide competitions happen throughout the year including archery, BB gun, air rifle, shotgun, air pistol and smallbore pistol. Below are the results from competitions where youth from Lancaster County placed in the top ten. Complete results are at <https://4h.unl.edu/shooting-sports>.

4-H Indoor Archery

The 2025 Nebraska State 4-H Indoor Archery Championships were held Jan. 25 at the Aurora Cooperative Pavilion at Fonner Park in Grand Island.

- **Basic Bow (BB) Youth:** Wesley Nalley (2nd), Alexa Smith (8th)
- **Basic Bow (BB) Young Adult:** Keaden Perkins (2nd)
- **Freestyle (FS) Young Adult:** Talin Abney-Cook (3rd), Chase Thomas (10th)
- **Freestyle Limited Recurve (FSL/R) Young Adult:** Ayla Salistean (2nd), Suzy Hanley (3rd)



Talin Abney-Cook earned 1st place in the Outdoor 600 Target: Freestyle Young Adult.

4-H Outdoor Archery

The 2025 Nebraska State 4-H Outdoor Archery Championships were held Sept. 20-21 at the Heartland Public Shooting Park in Grand Island.

OUTDOOR 600 TARGET TOURNAMENT

- **Freestyle (FS) Young Adult:** Talin Abney-Cook (1st)
- **Olympic Recurve (OR) Young Adult:** Suzy Hanley (3rd)
- **Basic Bow (BB) Youth:** Adelaide Metcalf (3rd)

3-D TOURNAMENT

- **Olympic Recurve (OR) Young Adult:** Suzy Hanley (3rd)
- **Freestyle (FS) Young Adult:** Talin Abney-Cook (4th)
- **Basic Bow (BB) Youth:** Adelaide Metcalf (5th)



Adelaide Metcalf (left) earned 5th place in the Outdoor 3-D Tournament Basic Bow Youth.

4-H Shotgun

The 2025 Nebraska State 4-H Shotgun Championships were held Sept. 13-14 at the Heartland Public Shooting Park in Grand Island.

- **Trap Novice:** Easton Byrne (4th)
- **Trap Intermediate:** Owen Savicky (1st), Declan Renner (2nd), Brody Wilson (3rd), Drake Plautz (5th)
- **Trap Advanced:** Joshua Wiemer (1st)
- **Skeet Novice:** Easton Byrne (1st)
- **Skeet Intermediate:** Owen Savicky (1st), Drake Plautz (9th)
- **Skeet Advanced:** Elijah Smith (1st)
- **Sporting Clays Novice:** Easton Byrne (3rd)
- **Sporting Clays Intermediate:** Drake Plautz (1st), Owen Savicky (3rd), Declan Renner (10th)
- **Sporting Clays Advanced:** Elijah Smith (2nd)
- **Overall Novice:** Easton Byrne (1st)
- **Overall Intermediate:** Owen Savicky (1st), Drake Plautz (2nd)
- **Overall Advanced:** Elijah Smith (2nd)



Easton Byrne earned 1st place overall novice in the Shotgun Championships.

4-H Specialty Clubs Invite New Members

Several Lancaster County specialty 4-H clubs are looking for new 4-H members.

4-H TEEN COUNCIL —

Attention youth in 7th–12th grade! Want to make new friends, take part in community service projects and enjoy activities so fun you won't even realize you're building leadership skills? Meetings are held the second Sunday of each month, September through April, at 3 p.m. at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln. Contact Tracy Anderson at tracy.anderson@unl.edu or 402-441-7180.

4 ON THE FLOOR DOG CLUB —

for youth ages 9–18. Will resume on Monday, Jan. 5 at the Sandhills Global Event Center – 4-H office located in the South Hall. Meetings will be held every other Monday at 6:15 p.m. Contact club leader John Croghan at 402-957-3651 by Dec. 25.

RABBITS R US — focuses on rabbits, as well as a variety of other projects. Open to all youth ages 8–18. Usually meets monthly. Contact club leader Sarah Lanik-Frain at 402-570-9994.

CLOVER KIDS CLUB — for youth ages 5–7. The club meets once a month, October through July, on Mondays, 6–7:15 p.m. at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln. Contact club leader Kristin Geisert at kristin.geisert@unl.edu or 402-441-7180.

LINCOLN SHOOTING STARS

— open to all youth ages 8–18. Beginners can start with the BB gun or archery project. As members progress, additional opportunities for participation include air rifle, air pistol, .22 pistol, shotgun, muzzleloader and/or hunting skills. Club meetings are Wednesday evenings 5:30–7 p.m. at the Nebraska Game & Parks Turpin Outdoor Education Center, 4703 N. 44th St., Lincoln. For more information, email lincolnshootingstars4h@gmail.com or call club leader Rachel Carlson at 402-560-1843.



4-H Announcements FOR 4-H'ERS AND VOLUNTEERS

The 4-H e-newsletter at <https://go.unl.edu/lan4hnews> has up-to-date information about upcoming 4-H opportunities.



PAPER BASKET WORKSHOP, NOV. 15 —

4-H youth ages 8 and up are invited to attend a Paper Basket Workshop to engineer and construct a woven paper basket using recycled newspapers and wire on Saturday, Nov. 15 from 9–11 a.m. at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln. No cost to attend. Learn paper weaving techniques to make a home décor basket. Adults are encouraged to attend to help, especially if their child is 8 or 9 years old. Register by Monday, Nov. 10 by calling Kristin Geisert at 402-441-7180 or emailing kristin.geisert@unl.edu. Bring a wire cutter for cutting wire. All other supplies will be provided.

PARTICIPATE IN THE LINCOLN VETERANS PARADE, NOV. 16 —

The Lincoln Veterans Parade will be held Sunday, Nov. 16, 2 p.m. in downtown Lincoln, and all Lancaster County 4-H'ers are invited to participate! Clubs, individual members, volunteers and friends are welcome. Have fun handing out candy and beads. Participation in this event counts toward community service and can be added as an activity to promote 4-H on Diamond Clover applications. Please

wear 4-H clothing or other attire, if possible. If you have questions or are interested, contact Five Star 4-H'ers club co-leader Tammy Sheldon at tammy.j.sheldon@gmail.com or text 402-730-4529.

ARCHERY CONTEST, NOV. 22; REGISTER BY NOV. 10 —

Lancaster County 4-H is offering an Archery Contest on Saturday, Nov. 22, 8:00 a.m. at the Nebraska Outdoor Education Center, 4703 N. 44th St., Lincoln. Register by Monday, Nov. 10 at <https://go.unl.edu/archerycontest2026>. To participate, youth must be ages 8–18 (by January 1 of the current year) and actively enrolled in the 4-H shooting sports project under the direct supervision of a certified 4-H shooting sports instructor. Participants exhibiting unsafe practices may be disqualified from the contest at the discretion of the superintendent. The contest will consist of 12 ends of 5 arrows on an NFAA Indoor 40 cm target. Scoring X, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 from the center out. Archers will be classified according to age division and bow style. This is a 2026 Lancaster County Super Fair contest held before the fair. If you have questions, contact Kate Pulec at kpulec3@unl.edu or 402-441-7180.

LET'S GET ARTSY! WORKSHOP,

DEC. 6 — 4-H youth ages 8 and up are invited to a "Let's Get Artsy!" workshop on Saturday, Dec. 6, 9–11 a.m. at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln. Youth will learn the art of origami paper folding to make a colorful sculpture and the best paper airplane! All items created may be exhibited at the Super Fair. Guest instructor will be Karen Wedding, Extension staff. No cost to attend. Register by Monday, Nov. 24 by contacting Kristin Geisert at 402-441-7180 or kristin.geisert@unl.edu. All supplies will be provided.

PILLOW SEWING WORKSHOP,

JAN. 17 — 4-H youth ages 8 and up are invited to learn beginning sewing skills while constructing a pillow at the Pillow Party sewing workshop on Saturday, Jan. 17, 9 a.m. until about noon at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln. No registration fee. Must register by Monday, Jan. 5 by contacting Kristin at 402-441-7180 or kristin.geisert@unl.edu. This early date is needed to order pillow forms. Bring your sewing machine, basic sewing equipment (scissors, pins, measuring tape), etc. Also bring 3/4 yard each of 2 coordinating/contrasting woven fabrics, pre-washed, 100% cotton (NO PLAIDS, NO KNITS, NO FLANNEL fabrics) and matching thread. Pillow forms will be provided. A few office sewing machines are available for use upon request. Parents/adults are needed to attend to help their 4-H'er(s).

4-H Awards & Scholarship Forms Due Jan. 3

Many Lancaster County 4-H award forms and college scholarship applications are due Jan. 3. Forms are available at <https://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/clubs/awards>. Recipients will be announced at Lancaster County 4-H Achievement Celebration on Thursday, Feb. 12, 2026. Families and club leaders are encouraged to submit photos related to award application accomplishments to <https://go.unl.edu/Lan4HPic> by Jan. 3. These photos may be used in the multimedia presentation at Achievement Celebration.

AWARDS

- Lancaster County 4-H Community Service Awards — based on number of hours of community service through 4-H.
- Lancaster County 4-H Council Leadership Awards — youth in grades 10–12 who show outstanding qualities in servant leadership.
- Lancaster County Outstanding 4-H Member Award(s) — individuals 14 years of age or older who have excelled in their involvement with 4-H.
- Lancaster County Meritorious Service to 4-H Award — individuals or organizations who have exhibited consistent and strong support of 4-H.
- Nebraska 4-H Achievement Application — two versions: junior for ages 8–14 (county only) and senior for ages 15–18 (county and state). The senior application is utilized to select delegates for National 4-H Conference and 4-H Congress, as well as Nebraska 4-H Foundation scholarships.

- Nebraska 4-H Diamond Clover Program — encourages 4-H'ers ages 8–18 to engage in a variety of programs, projects and activities. Youth can progress from Level 1–6.
- Nebraska 4-H Dog Achievement Program — encourages 4-H dog handlers ages 8–18 to engage in a variety of dog-related opportunities. Youth may progress from Level 1–4.
- Nebraska 4-H Gives Back — a 4-H member or team completes a major service-learning project (over 100 hours of service).
- Nebraska 4-H Club of Excellence — meet criteria outlined by the state 4-H office.

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS for graduating high school seniors

- 4-H Council — up to twelve \$700 scholarships.
- 4-H Teen Council — up to five \$300 scholarships.
- Lincoln Center Kiwanis — one \$1,000 scholarship.
- Dick Fleming Leadership & Communication Scholarship — one \$250 scholarship to a 4-H'er who has excelled in leadership and communication through 4-H.
- Lane Community 4-H Scholarship — one \$200 scholarship to a 4-H'er attending Raymond Central High School.
- Nebraska 4-H Foundation Scholarships — several statewide 4-H scholarships (applications are via the 4-H Achievement Application).
- Nebraska Association of Fair Managers Martha & Don Romeo Scholarship — two \$500 scholarships (note: deadline is Nov. 30).

Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County
444 Cherrycreek Road, Ste. A, Lincoln, NE 68528
402-441-7180 • lancaster.unl.edu

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Homeschool Youth Science Day

Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County will present a Homeschool Youth Science Day on Tuesday, Nov. 4, 9 a.m.–12 p.m. OR 1–4 p.m. at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln. Open to all homeschooled youth, grades K–6th (most lessons are geared towards 3rd–5th graders). Youth will focus on lessons involving science, technology,

engineering and math (STEM) activities. Fee is \$10 per youth. Please pay in advance by either calling 402-441-7180 with a credit/debit card (small fee) or mailing/delivering a check or cash to Lancaster County Extension, 444 Cherrycreek Rd, Suite A, Lincoln, NE 68528. Register online at <https://go.unl.edu/homeschool-science-25> by Monday, Oct. 27. Please choose either the morning or afternoon session on the registration form.

Outgoing 4-H Council Members

The October 4-H Council meeting marked the final meeting for three outgoing 4-H Council members.

Adult member:

- Phil Wharton served 6 years.

Youth members:

- Carley Parrott served 2 years.
- Ruby Dean served 3 years.

Lancaster County 4-H thanks them for their leadership!



Phil Wharton



Carley Parrott



Ruby Dean



EXTENSION CALENDAR

All events held at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln, unless otherwise noted.

October

- 23 4-H Horse Awards Night 6:30 p.m.
 29 4-H Leader & Volunteer Collaboration 9 a.m.

November

- 4 4-H Youth Science Day for Homeschooled Youth 9–11:30 a.m. OR 1–4 p.m.
 4 4-H Council Meeting 6 p.m.
 6 4-H Horse VIPs Committee Meeting (virtual) 6 p.m.
 9 4-H Teen Council Meeting 3 p.m.
 11 Extension Office Closed for Veterans Day Holiday
 13 Nebraska 4-H Volunteer Road Show (virtual) 5:30–7:30 p.m.
 14 Extension Board Meeting 8 a.m.
 15 4-H Paper Basket Making Workshop 9 a.m.
 20 Pesticide Applicator Neb. Dept. of Ag “Walk-In” Testing Session . . . 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
 23 4-H Archery Contest, NE Game & Parks Turpin Outdoor Education Center, 4703 N. 44th St. 8 a.m.
 27–28 Extension Office Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

December

- 6 4-H Let’s Get Artsy Workshop 9–11 a.m.
 11 Pesticide Applicator Neb. Dept. of Ag “Walk-In” Testing Session . . . 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
 12 Extension Board Meeting 8 a.m.
 14 4-H Teen Council Meeting 3 p.m.
 25 Extension Office Closed for Christmas Holiday

EXTENSION NEWS

New 4-H Support Staff

Olivia Lentfer recently joined Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County as an Office Associate. She will support the 4-H youth development program and assist with daily front desk operations. Growing up in Firth, Olivia was actively involved in 4-H and FFA, showing swine at county, state and national levels. She has worked with marketing, hospitality and financial institutions, as well as a child development center. She was also an intern at the Sandhills Global Event Center when it hosted the National High School Finals Rodeo in 2021.



Olivia Lentfer

Ag Society Annual Election & Meeting

The Lancaster County Agricultural Society (which acts as the Fair Board) will hold its Annual Meeting and Board election on Tuesday, Dec. 2 at Sandhills Global Event Center, 4100 N. 84th St., Lincoln, in the Ag Society Hall.

Voting will take place 5:30–6:30 p.m. for three positions on the Lancaster County Agricultural Society Board (three-year terms). Any registered voter in Lancaster County may vote. Please bring valid photo ID. The Ag Society Annual Meeting, starting at 6:45 p.m., is an opportunity for the public to learn more about the Super Fair and

Sandhills Global Event Center, as well as hear the election results. Any Lancaster County resident interested in running for a position on the board must submit a short biography with a photo at Sandhills Global Event Center office by Monday, Nov. 17 in order to be placed on the ballot.

For more information, visit <https://sandhillsglobaleventcenter.org> and click on “About” or contact Ag Society Board President Kendra Ronnau by leaving a message at 402-441-6545, option 0.