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2001-2002 Annual Report

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Helping You Put Knowledge to Work

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County invites you to take an in-depth look at program accomplishments over the past year. By extending UNL’s resources to urban and rural Nebraskans, Cooperative Extension strengthens individuals, families, businesses and communities. Extension’s mission of “Helping You Put Knowledge to Work” provides educational outreach through multiple delivery methods (see next page). Lancaster County Extension fully utilizes the Internet to maximize its outreach. Lancaster County Extension also leverages its resources and those of the Lincoln community by collaborating with more than 260 agencies, organizations, businesses and schools.

Here are some recent examples of the impact extension’s programs make in our community:

- The BioNobials Land Application program.
- Pesticide Container Recycling program.
- Composting Education workshops have saved taxpayers an estimated $556,749 this year by keeping waste out of the landfill.
- Research shows that for every dollar invested in the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), there is a projected health care cost savings of $8.82.
- The Character Counts! character education program initiated in Nebraska by 4-H has been so successful that many schools have adopted, and are implementing, character education programs. Presently, the Nebraska Department of Education is promoting Character Counts! statewide.
- In the past year, 4-H programs reached 25,657 youth in Lancaster County—nearly half of the eligible youth.
- Our Web site, lancaster.unl.edu now has more than 3,000 pages of online resources and received nearly 1,900,000 hits last year!

We are pleased with Lancaster County Extension’s program accomplishments and are proud of our role in the community.

New in Extension in 2002

UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County is committed to being relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of Lincoln-area residents. Here are some new developments in Lancaster County Extension.

Translation Efforts

As the Lincoln-area population becomes increasingly diverse, Extension has begun to translate educational resources into other languages including Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic and Russian. Lancaster County Extension’s award-winning video, Removing Head Lice Safely, was translated into Spanish and Arabic this year.

New programs and partnerships are being forged to extend extension’s resources to these growing audiences. For example, a “Living with Diabetes” class was taught in Arabic by Boshra Rida, who worked at Extension as a Volunteer In Service to America (VISTA).

Environment of the Home

Additional program emphasis has been dedicated to consumer and family science/home environment issues. Educational efforts include indoor air quality, lead paint hazards, safety in the home and more.

Neighbors Working Together

Through monthly meetings, neighborhood workshops, leadership training, needs assessments and collaboration with other groups, the Neighbors Working Together program focuses on developing neighborhood leadership and community organization.

Egg Cam

Started as an offshoot of the 4-H School Enrichment Embryology program, Egg Cam provided Web surfers a live view as incubated eggs gave way to new baby chicks! In April 2002, after the launch of Egg Cam, the 4-H web site had 204,108 hits, compared to 1,013 hits in April 2001. During the fall months, Egg Web Cam took a look at different 4-H Household Pets projects such as gerbils, mice and fish. View Web Cam at lancaster.unl.edu.

Garbology

The Garbology unit of the 4-H School Enrichment program was updated for the 2002–03 school year to meet the National and Nebraska Learning Standards of Excellence. Garbology teaches second graders to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Food, Nutrition & Food Safety

- Nutrition, food safety and food preparation
- Stretching food dollars

Agriculture

- Farm management
- Crop & livestock production
- Rural living

Pest Management

- Insect pest identification
- Low-toxic solutions
- Wildlife educational resources

Strong Families

- Parenting/child care
- Marriage relationships
- Resource management

Environment of the Home

- Indoor air quality
- Home maintenance and safety
- Reduce, reuse, recycle

Leadership Development

- In families and youth
- In neighborhoods
- In organizations
Cooperative Extension carries out University of Nebraska’s land-grant mission by extending reliable, research-based information to the public for use in everyday life.

Lancaster County Extension utilizes multiple media avenues and new technologies to impact people in Lancaster County and beyond, 24 hours a day.

Reported Oct. 1–Sept. 30
NEP and view current and archived issues of T Wildlife. Visitors can also learn more about Lancaster County and sign up to receive free weekly updates and announcements via email. Hundreds of Web-site users have signed up to receive notifications.

Over 3,000 Web Pages of Content
The content-rich Web site is updated daily and consists of nearly 1,900,000! UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County’s Web site, lancaster.unl.edu, has grown substantially since 1998, from receiving approximately 110,000 total hits annually to nearly 1,900,000!

Visitors can easily navigate the site and find resources on 4-H and Youth Programs, Agriculture and Agreements, Environment and Natural Resources, Family Living, Food Safety and Nutrition, Gardening, and Housing Environment and Property.

“Over 3,000 total hits/year
lancaster.unl.edu

The 4-H Egg Web Cam was selected by the National Science Teachers Association as a resource for their “SciLinks,” an endeavor to connect textbooks to useful online content, and the site was listed as a “Kool Site of the Week” on the national radio program, “The Kim Komando Show.”

The Head Lice Resources You Can Trust portion of Lancaster County Extension’s Web site was also selected as a “SciLinks.”

The Food Web site continues to be rated “Among the Best” by the University Nutrition Navigator — a rating guide to Nutrition Web sites. UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County’s Web site, lancaster.unl.edu, has grown substantially since 1998, from receiving approximately 110,000 total hits annually to nearly 1,900,000!

Partnering with the Community
Through numerous partnerships and collaborations, Cooperative Extension leverages its resources and those of the community to reach larger audiences and maximize impact. In the past year, UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County has partnered with the following organizations, agencies, businesses and schools:

Many thanks to all the individuals and organizations who have contributed to the success of the Lancaster County Extension’s Web site.

LaDeane Jha (left) of Lancaster County Extension and Sandy Morrissey (right) of Lincoln Council on Alcohol and Drugs.
Increasing Outreach Through “Training the Trainer”

Lincoln Public School teachers learn how to use Nutrition Education Program activity kits during a teacher training.

UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County 2001–02 Honors and Awards

Silvia J. Balza — selected to present poster at National Extension Education Conference, and to co-sponsor symposium on parental education.

Maureen Burson — selected to present poster at the 2002 National Extension Education Conference, and to receive the 2002 National Extension Education Conference Outstanding Extension Education Award.

John E. Feeney — selected to present poster at the National Extension Education Conference, and to receive the 2002 National Extension Education Conference Outstanding Extension Education Award.

Chester C. J. Jeworski — selected to present poster at the National Extension Education Conference, and to receive the 2002 National Extension Education Conference Outstanding Extension Education Award.

4-H leaders and parents.

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4-H leaders and parents.
4-H is University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension’s youth development program and emphasizes learning by doing. Organized clubs are the foundation of 4-H, but it also has activities and camps open to all youth. 4-H and non-4-H. Over the years, 4-H has expanded its outreach through numerous School Enrichment programs. In the past year, 4-H reached 25,957 youth in Lancaster County (49 percent of the eligible youth).

Youth ages 5–19 can become 4-H members by:

- Joining a traditional club in which members complete several projects a year.
- Joining a nontraditional 4-H club which focuses on one particular project area.
- Becoming a member of more than one club.
- Becoming an independent member who works on projects individually.

4-H has more than 150 project areas available, including: bicycles, chess, child development, clothing, computers, electricity, entomology, flowers/gardening, foods, home environment, horses, household pets, livestock (beef, dairy, swine, sheep, goats, llamas), photography, rocketry, small engines and woodworking.

In addition to teaching practical skills, 4-H develops life skills such as thinking critically, solving problems, respecting self and communicating. For these reasons, many home schools in Lancaster County form their own 4-H clubs in order to take advantage of 4-H’s extensive resources.

Youth enjoy 4-H because they choose which projects they participate in and they receive personalized attention from their leaders and parents while working on projects. These adult/child mentoring relationships are crucial to the positive learning experiences youth gain in 4-H. Youth also have fun in 4-H and develop new friends.

Dusty Ehrlrich of the Ropes & Riggins club says, “What I like about 4-H is that you meet a lot of friendly people. I also really like to ride horses. When we first got Lightning, my horse, he didn’t know very much and wasn’t too tame. I had to work hard and have patience with him.” In 2002, Lancaster County had 110 active 4-H clubs.

Youth interested in joining 4-H can contact Tracy Kuhn at 441-7180 or visit the Web site at lancaster.unl.edu/4H.

4-H Council Provides Behind-the-Scenes Support

Lancaster County 4-H Council is responsible for determining long- and short-term goals and policy for Lancaster County 4-H. Composed of 15 elected members, including 10 adults and five youth, 4-H Council represents the interests of youth, parents and leaders.

4-H Council also raises funds by staffing food booths at the Lancaster County Fair. These funds help support 4-H programs and activities. Last year, 4-H Council sponsored year-round centennial activities, including 4-H Centennial Theme Night at Lincoln Saltdogs (see left). Members of 4-H Council are also quite active setting up, organizing and overseeing events at the Lancaster County Fair. Last year, members volunteered more than 500 hours for the fair.

“4-H teaches practical and character skills which youth will use throughout their lives.”

—Deb Arends, 4-H Council member and Lancaster County Extension Board member
Youth “Learning by Doing”

4-H Offers Many Opportunities for Personal Growth

4-H offers youth a variety of activities and opportunities which help teach youth decision-making skills and build self-confidence. The largest event of the 4-H year is the Lancaster County Fair (see story below). However, there are events throughout the year, such as the annual Speech Contest, Music Contest and Demonstration Contest. Karen Clinch says “Speech is a great experience for me, I used to be very quiet and shy, but now I’m able to go out in public and speak.”

4-H livestock exhibitors have several opportunities to participate in activities across the state, including progress shows, the District Horse Show, State Fair, and the Ak-Sar-Ben 4-H Livestock Exposition.

Non-4-H youth can participate in 4-H Clover College, the 4-H Lock-In and Nebraska 4-H summer camps. Clover College is a four-day series of workshops held each June. Last year saw 278 registrations — more than double the previous year’s.

Nuturing Leadership

Lancaster County 4-H also offers a variety of leadership possibilities. 4-H Council (see article opposite page) includes youth members. 4-H Teen Council helps with many 4-H activities such as Speech Contest and Fair Fun Day. They also plan, organize and lead a fifth and sixth grade overnight Lock-In. Teen Council member Ian Beck-Johnson says “I feel this has taught me how to become successful when it comes to helping people.”

Last year, more than $5,100 in 4-H scholarships was given to graduating seniors. Jami Rutt, recipient of $600 in 4-H scholarships, says the money helped a lot in helping pay tuition for her first semester in college.

County Fair Showcases Talents

The county fair marks the end of the activity year for 4-H members, who work the rest of the year on projects, many of which are exhibited. Winners at the county level go on to State Fair.

In addition to the usual 4-H/FFA activities which span all five days of the fair, the 2002 Lancaster County Fair had many new activities. 4-H Teen Council members did free face painting and gave temporary tattoos. A 4-H/FFA Prettiest Cow Contest garnered much attention. This was also the first year in which Theater Arts, Leather Craftsmanship and Barn Again projects could be exhibited.

At the 2002 Lancaster County Fair, 4,708 exhibits were showed — an increase of 611 4-H members.

4-H School Enrichment Programs Feature Hands-On Learning Activities

School Enrichment programs have been a part of Nebraska’s 4-H program since 1974. These programs include teacher guides, videos, books, posters, experiments, games and more. Extension staff develop the programs, train teachers on their use and go into the classrooms for hands-on activities with students.

UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County educates 17,988 youth in 58 schools with the following School Enrichment programs:

Garbology

Garbology is a curriculum and kit with hands-on activities which introduces second graders to solid waste management and the three R’s: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. This unit is a core (required) subject in the science curriculum at Lincoln Public Schools (LPS).

Vermicomposting

Second graders learn a new way to compost in Vermicomposting. About 1,000 red wigglers were given to each school. These five pounds of kitchen scraps a week. Their castings can then be added to potting or garden soil for other plantings.

Embryology

Through incubating and hatching baby chicks in the classroom, third graders study life-cycles. A core subject in the science program of the Lincoln Public Schools, Embryology meets the National and Nebraska Learning Standards of Excellence.

Blue Sky Below My Feet

Blue Sky Below My Feet links space technology to the everyday interests of fourth grade students. Youth learn about gravity, taste space food and communicate with NASA via the internet.

4-H Water Riches

With an emphasis on quantity and quality, 4-H Water Riches looks at the complexities of one of our most precious resources — water.

Character Counts!

In Nebraska, the Character Counts! character education program was initiated and coordinated by Cooperative Extension/4-H. From a pilot site in Lincoln at Belmont Elementary School, the program now reaches the majority of schools in Lancaster County.

Character Counts! has been so successful most Nebraska schools have adopted and are implementing character education programs.

This year, extension and other community partners sponsored the third annual Character Counts! Conference in York. Each year the conference gets bigger, and one participant this year — a school principal — noted it was the best $25 he had ever spent.
Cooperative Extension — Your Resource for Pesky Pest Problems

“In this [termite workshop] is a wonderful public service! It has given me peace of mind and confidence as a homeowner. Thank you! I will be recommending this class to other homeowners.”
— 2002 Termite Workshop attendee

Cultivating Smart Yard and Garden Practices

Gardens and other green spaces help make cities more enjoyable, liveable and sustainable. UNL Cooperative Extension plays a vital role in teaching communities how to identify pest problems and what low-toxic controls work best. Social workers from Lincoln Housing Authority, Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department, Lincoln Public Schools and League of Human Dignity have received assistance. One particularly challenging case in 2002 was a serious cockroach infestation in a substandard rental occupied by a foreign student and his family, including a pregnant wife and two children. A collaboration between Lancaster County Extension, the UNL Pesticide Safety Education Program, Lincoln Action Program and a local pest control professional resulted in a treatment with low-toxic baits, reducing pesticide exposure to the family.

Head Lice Resources You Can Trust

Lancaster County Extension has developed extensive head lice resources, including printed materials, photos and an award-winning video, “Removing Head Lice Safely.” Recently translated into Spanish and Arabic, more than 1,400 copies of the video have been sold. The video is the most requested video online, with more than 20 times per month on Lincoln Live.

Termites

In 2002, 45 Lancaster County Master Gardeners logged 2,076 volunteer hours serving the public. Master Gardeners answer horticulture calls during tour of the composting demonstration site at University Place tour of the composting demonstration site at University Place.

“Lancaster County Extension continues to implement ways to serve an increasingly diverse and growing community.”
— Sheila Kepler, Lancaster County Extension Board member

More than 177 people attended one of Cooperative Extension’s termite workshops presented in five Nebraska cities, including Lincoln. The video has been sold 5,411 times last year. Internet clients have received 13,855 hits last year. Not only is it used by homeowners and apartment dwellers, but it is used in pest education programs and to train community interns to lower hazards to children in poor families. One satisfied customer wrote, “You folks have done a heck of a job and are doing a real service for the public generally and more specifically for people like me … I can’t thank you enough for the info.”

Overall, Lancaster County Extension’s insect and pest Web pages received 691,169 hits last year. Staff entomologists responded to more than 2,500 phone calls, 750 walk-in identifications and 400 e-mail requests for information.

In 2002, horticulture staff:
• Presented 66 educational programs to groups and through other venues such as home and garden shows.
• Disseminated information through the media, such as “Garden Gossip,” a weekly column in the Lincoln Journal Star, Lincoln Live on KFOR radio; and Backyard Farmer on Nebraska ITV.
• Answered more than 6,500 telephone calls.
• Diagnosed problems via samples brought to the extension office or onsite.
• Continued adding educational resources to the gardening section of Lancaster County Extension’s Web site.

Lancaster County Extension also educates employees in the horticulture field through Co- commercial Horticulture Clinics and videos. This year, two videos were developed on irrigation scheduling and landscaping with small trees.

This year, a teaching curriculum, The Ethics and Profitability of Landscaping: Beyond Excess Flowers, was developed for real estate and land appraiser professionals to promote ethical and sustainable landscapes.

Managing Yard Waste

Lancaster County Extension conducted 18 hands-on composting presentations throughout Lincoln to teach citizens how to successfully compost yard waste in their own backyards. More than 575 residents attended these presentations. An estimated 3,000 residents participate in an informal, self-guided tour of the composting demonstration site at University Place Park, 50th and Colby Streets.

Lancaster County Extension also educates the public on the benefits of mulching grass clippings through a “Bag-Now-More” campaign.

The City of Lincoln Recycling Office estimates these educational programs will extend the life of the Bluff Road landfill by three to five years over the next 25 years.

Master Gardeners Field Calls from Public

The Master Gardener Training Program is a volunteer program where people are given training by University of Nebraska personnel and then in return provide 40 hours of volunteer time to educational extension programs such as: Answering horticulture phone calls; Presenting educational programs at workshops; Assisting in 4-H and other youth programs; Establishing and maintaining community beautification projects.

Extension Associate Mary Jane Fogod coordinates the Master Gardener program for Lancaster County Extension.

The City of Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department offer support to the Master Gardener trainings and in return, Master Gardeners provide educational information at public gardens.

In 2002, 45 Lancaster County Master Gardeners logged 2,076 volunteer hours and had 10,995 direct clientele contacts.

Collaborating with Social Workers

Social workers may be confronted with pest problems in helping their clients, but may not have the training to help. Extension Educator Barb Ogg has taught several social workers about managing lice. “Phthirapterist Dr. Robert C. Dalgleish remarked, “You have done an exemplary job of describing pediculosis in accurate terms and the Web site was accessed 51,252 times last year. Internet clients have received 13,855 hits last year. Not only is it used by homeowners and apartment dwellers, but it is used in pest education programs and to train community interns to lower hazards to children in poor families. One satisfied customer wrote, “You folks have done a heck of a job and are doing a real service for the public generally and more specifically for people like me … I can’t thank you enough for the info.”

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Food Programs: Helping Every Time You Eat!

“...I just want to say how much I LOVE your Web site! I have learned SOOOOOOOOOOOOOO much from your thorough articles. They are long enough to be greatly informative yet short enough for anyone not to lose interest.”

—Food Web site user

Limited-Income Residents Stay Healthy Through Nutrition Education Program

Nutrition Education Program (NEP) partners with 161 agencies, classrooms and coalitions to teach budgeting food dollars, saving money through meal planning, saving time by fixing quick and easy meals, keeping food safe to eat, feeding infants and children and preparing nutritious snacks.

Malmunition and food security are real issues in Lincoln. In 2003, 17,841 people accessed food through the Emergency Food Pantries System and 2,087,031 pounds of food were distributed by the Food Bank — a 10 percent increase over the previous year. Limited-income adults may participate in NEP classes or receive individualized lessons, including meal planning with Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and commodity foods. One woman took pride in learning how to make homemade pizza. She stretched her food dollar $10 a month by preparing pizza four times, rather than purchasing it. Another continued on next page

Agricultural Programs Support Nebraska’s Premiere Industry

Lancaster County has 1,540 commercial farms covering 42,000 acres — farm products bring in more than $82 million annually. UNL Cooperative Extension helps farmers make agricultural profitability and sustainability a priority issue. Lancaster County Extension Educator Tom Dorn fills this goal through numerous workshops and meetings, educational resources, person-to-person contacts and a Web site. The Agriculture and Acreage Web site, which has won a national award, is constantly updated and expanded. Last year, “Answers to Frequently Asked Questions” and a Farm Management section were added. One recent Web user commented, “Great Web site. Has great links. This is the first place I head for when looking for information about agriculture.”

Dorn also manages the Pesticide Container Recycling program for Lancaster County and surrounding counties. Pesticide containers are collected and then recycled into parking lot tire bumber, fence posts, traffic line markers and more. In Lancaster County last year, more than 6,250 pesticide containers were collected. In the past seven years, 60 tons of plastic have been diverted from area landfills.

In a joint effort with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension coordinates waste pesticide product collections across the state. More than 12,400 pounds of pesticides and PCB’s were collected in Lancaster County at waste pesticide product collections such as this one at Waverry Coop. Picture is Extension Educator Tom Dorn.

Two messages are emphasized in all of UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County’s food programs — the importance of nutrition as well as food safety.

Some educational programs highlight a particular aspect of these messages, but Extension Educator Alice Henneman has found it more effective to blend nutrition and food safety information with how-to tips that people can use every time they eat.

The Great Taste of Good Nutrition

Eating a healthy diet helps promote good health and reduces risk for chronic diseases such as heart disease, certain types of cancer, diabetes, stroke and osteoporosis — the leading causes of death and disability among Americans. Lancaster County Extension’s programs help people select and prepare healthy, enjoyable foods.

“Nutrition and Osteoporosis,” developed last year, was used again this year as a workshop for worksites and community groups. The materials were also put on the Internet — the Power Point lesson was downloaded 5,846 times this year.

Handling Food Safety

Food safety in a farm-to-table issue. Lancaster County Extension is the lead agency in Lancaster County for educating consumers about food safety. Many consumers call the extension office with home food safety concerns. In partnership with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department, Extension Educator Alice Henneman blends nutrition and food safety information with how-to tips people can use every time they eat.

Several activities were initiated to promote food safety. A food safety packet was distributed to 125 companies and more than 300 offices of city/county employees. Food safety information was distributed to about 2,000 UNL students who rented refrigerators. A food safety quiz activity was offered at 33 senior sites in conjunction with the Area Agency on Aging. A handwashing poster was developed for schools, WIC clinics, Head Start, grocery stores, nursing homes, Lincoln/Lancaster offices and many other locations.

Lancaster County Extension also partners with community organizations in providing ServSafe training to commercial food service establishments on food safety procedures.

Blending It All Together

In food preparation, nutrition decisions and food safety procedures go hand in hand. Lancaster County Extension Educator Alice Henneman was quoted and provided information for an Oxygen magazine article “Stop Overeating After Dark,” July 2002. Tension blends nutrition, food safety and food preparation information in user-friendly ways. It is this approach that helps earn the Food Web site its “Among the Best” rating from Tufts University Nutrition Navigator. Tufts notes, “Regardless of the topic, the authors sneak in food safety information whenever appropriate.”

Lancaster County Extension’s Food Web site, lancasterunl. edu/food, offers a variety of materials to help people select and prepare healthy food. The Web site has also been featured in the Washington Post (“Five Things We Will Do in 2002.” Jan. 3, ‘03) and Before Your Pregnancy by Amy Ogle, M.S., R.D. and Lisa Mazullo, M.D., (2002).

Food Reflections, an e-mail newsletter, is sent to more than 6,800 health professionals, educators and consumers. It is listed in a new USDA publication, “Eating Smart: A Nutrition Resource List for Consumers.”

“Cook It Quick” was created for both onsite presentations and for access via the Internet. Materials emphasize quick, nutritious food preparation and food safety. “Fast Meals Using Few Ingredients” (based on Cook It Quick) was part of Bryan/CHI’s “Your Health” series and attended by approximately 350 people. Cook It Quick Web pages receive 8,000 hits per month.

Nutrition Education Program (NEP) partners with 161 agencies, classrooms and coalitions to teach budgeting food dollars, saving money through meal planning, saving time by fixing quick and easy meals, keeping food safe to eat, feeding infants and children and preparing nutritious snacks.

Malmunition and food security are real issues in Lincoln. In 2003, 17,841 people accessed food through the Emergency Food Pantries System and 2,087,031 pounds of food were distributed by the Food Bank — a 10 percent increase over the previous year. Limited-income adults may participate in NEP classes or receive individualized lessons, including meal planning with Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and commodity foods. One woman took pride in learning how to make homemade pizza. She stretched her food dollar $10 a month by preparing pizza four times, rather than purchasing it. Another continued on next page.
Leadership and community development, as well as fostering family strengths, are the cornerstones of most Cooperative Extension programs. Extension also has programs specific to these areas. Extension partners with a variety of community agencies to present workshops such as Strengthening Families, Resource Management and Basic Investing. Real World — Real Decisions, Parents Forever (for divorcing parents) and other Family Strengths programs.

New this year is a strong partnership with the Community Learning Centers (CLC’s) as part of the Neighborhood Working Together Project (see article at right). Leadership, teamwork and a better understanding of self and others are developed through Real Colors Matrix and Myers Briggs Temperament Inventory (MBTI) workshops delivered by Extension Educator LaDeane Jha. In addition to direct outreach in these issues, extension provides staff development and training to educators, government officials, agency workers and community groups, both locally and regionally.

Environment of the Home

Extension Educator Lorene Bartos has been a longtime expert in household hints, shopping smart and recycling. Her column “Housewise” runs Sundays in the Lincoln Journal Star.

In response to increased community concerns about home environment and safety, UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County is placing additional program emphasis in this area. Expanded educational efforts include indoor air quality, lead paint hazards, safety in the home and more. In the past year, Bartos disseminated information in conjunction with National Safety Month (June), Indoor Air Quality Month (October) and other similar topics through her column, Lancaster County Extension’s Web site and other outreach methods.

Ten-Year-Old Biosolids Program Saves $4 million

UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County coordinates distribution and application of biosolids to agricultural crops and the City of Lincoln’s Wastewater and Solid Waste Division.

Biosolids are organic solids that are separated from wastewater and biologically processed to make them safe for land application. Lancaster County Extension and use of the latest technologies in precision agriculture to ensure biosolids are applied in an environmentally sound manner. GPS/KTS technology, which is an important aspect of the record-keeping database and monitoring system, helps make this a state-of-the-art program nationally.

The past year, more than 35 tons of biosolids were delivered and applied to 32 fields and 1,169 acres. Studies on farmer’s fields have shown that the nutrient value of biosolids is worth at least $25 per acre for the first two years’ crop. The applied biosolids were worth more than $500,000 to Lancaster County farmers. Since 1992, when the City of Lincoln’s Biosolids Land Application program began, more than 320,000 tons of biosolids have been distributed to crop fields. This has saved taxpayers $4 million by keeping this recyclable waste out of the landfill. Over the entire life of the Bluff Road landfill, recycling biosolids could add a total of 2-1/2 years to the landfill.

Extension Technologist Dave Smith takes soil samples to determine the amount of biosolids to apply per field.

Nurturing Education Program

Continued from preceding page

A woman struggled to get her children to eat a good variety of foods. After receiving the fruit and vegetable lessons, she fixed the recipes for her children. She was impressed how much they ate and that they would actually eat vegetables. These are two of 1,492 adults responsible for feeding 5,360 NEP family members.

More than 2,200 students in 105 classroom participated in NEP School Enrichment Program. Lancaster County NEP staff developed hands-on activities to supplement the first, fourth, and fifth grade health curriculums. As a result, teachers taught 10 hours of nutrition in the classroom.

In addition, 101 senior citizens participated in an average of four lessons each. One tip seniors learn is they can cut down on sodium by using NEP master mix instead of canned soups for casseroles.

NEP programs have proven successful. Research shows that for every dollar invested in NEP, there is a projected health care cost savings of $8.82.

Volunteers Contribute to Extension’s Success

*Independent Sector values volunteer time at $16.05/hour.

UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County provides a framework for people to volunteer their time and talents to the community. Extension trains and supports, as well as coordinates the efforts of a variety of volunteers: 4-H leaders and superintendents, Master Gardeners, NEP volunteers, Character Counts’ volunteers, and other community and Family Education (FCE) Club members often volunteer in community-related projects. Last year, Lancaster County Extension programs benefitted from 1,600 NEP family members, 20,756 hours of time for a total value of $495,633.32 Thanks to all these volunteers who help make extension’s programs successful!