

2015

## 2015 Extension Highlights

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# NEBLINE

NEBRASKA EXTENSION IN LANCASTER COUNTY

## 2015 Extension Highlights

**N**EBRASKA EXTENSION is your local connection to university research-based information. We extend knowledge, provide solutions and change lives. Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County is a partnership between the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lancaster County and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Here's a look at some of Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County's 2015 impacts.



Extension Educator Tyler Williams (pictured at right) helped organize UNL Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources' exhibit at Husker Harvest Days which focused on "Successfully Weathering Extremes." This year, he was the principal investigator or collaborator for four accepted agriculture-related grants totaling nearly \$258,000. Two of the grant projects will focus on climate education and communication efforts for agriculture over the next year.



The Nutrition Education Program (NEP) helps limited-resource families learn to prepare nutritious and safe foods while stretching their food dollars. Last year, NEP staff completed lessons with 426 enrolled adults (2,217 teaching contacts) and reached 7,692 youth (11,183 teaching contacts). This year marked the 15-year-milestone of Lincoln Public Schools using nutrition kits developed by NEP staff to enhance LPS nutrition curriculum objectives. To date, teachers using the kits have spent 33,498 hours teaching 74,691 students in 3,800 classrooms. Pictured is Extension Assistant Cally Blake leading Everett 1st graders in a healthy snack activity.



In 2015, Extension Educator Sarah Browning, Associate Mary Jane Frogge and Master Gardeners assisted residents and green industry professionals through over 12,000 contacts (phone calls, walk-in requests, email questions, site visits, program participants and listservs) and 116 hours of horticulture-related programming. For example, Master Gardener volunteers helped maintain the People's City Mission community garden, teaching residents how to care for and harvest garden crops.

Millions of people access <http://lancaster.unl.edu>, each year. The website contains thousands of pages of content and is updated daily.



Extension has extensive resources to help identify pests and recommends low-toxic control methods whenever possible. Extension Associate Soni Cochran assists thousands of area residents via phone calls, walk-in requests, email questions, publications, presentations, workshops and as a monthly guest on "Problems & Solutions," hosted by Cathy Blythe on KFOR radio. The pest and wildlife website received 1.6 million unique page views in 2015.



Extension Educator Alice Henneman teaches people how to make healthy food choices and safely prepare food. In November, she presented a free class, "Make-Ahead Freezer Meals" (pictured above) at Bryan Health which was attended by over 300 people. Alice coordinates and contributes to Extension's <http://food.unl.edu> statewide website which received over 2.6 million page views last year.



Nebraska Extension offers "Co-Parenting for Successful Kids" on-site and online classes to help separating and divorcing parents — the classes meet court-mandated requirements. Last year, 101 parents completed the classes offered in Lincoln and 330 Lancaster County parents took the class online. Pictured is Extension Educator Maureen Burson interacting with parents online.



Extension has presented a Fair Fun Day at the Lancaster County Fair since 1996. Child care groups with youth in grades K–4 are led on hands-on tours by teen volunteers. Extension Educator Lorene Bartos (pictured standing at right) has organized it for many years. This year, 293 youth from 12 child care groups took tours, learning about fair activities and agriculture. To date, nearly 5,000 youth have participated.



The 20th annual 4-H Clover College, held June 16–19, featured 55 hands-on workshops attended by 180 youth with a total 888 class registrations. More than 70 adult and teen volunteers taught or helped with the workshops. Pictured is Extension Associate Marty Cruickshank assisting with the Clover Kids Day Camp.

More impacts on next page!

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# A Year of Change & Growth



2015 has been a year of change in the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County office. In February, I began my role as Unit Leader

and County Department Head. I quickly realized the depth of staff talent and dedication, and the impact they make in our community. We celebrated with retiring staff and said goodbye to a combined 90 years of Extension experience.

Growth occurred as Nebraska Extension administration identified areas of focus. These areas will enable staff to more quickly and effectively help Nebraskans use research-based information to make informed decisions:

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

Extension administration also announced the formation of issue-based programming. This new structuring brings current and emerging issues to inter-disciplinary teams ready to ensure communities, businesses and people continue to thrive.

In March, our office collaborated with the Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Department, Board of Commissioners and the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design to host "My Town Lancaster County." As part of this three-day workshop, leaders from area towns spent a day at the Lancaster Extension Education Center for learning and sharing ideas. Extension Educators facilitated a session in which groups brainstormed improvement plans. The workshop culminated with a showcase of the towns' planned projects. What an amazing event!

We upgraded the audio-visual system and furnishings in our conference facilities which are used by Extension and nonprofit organizations. In 2015, approximately 4,700 hours of workshops and meetings were held.

We look forward to 2016 as we welcome new staff and continue to serve Nebraskans!

*Karen Wobig*

**Karen Wobig**  
UNL Extension Educator & Unit Leader



At the 2015 Lancaster County Super Fair, nearly 700 4-H/FFA exhibitors showcased nearly 5,100 exhibits (including static exhibits, animals, contest entries and Clover Kids exhibits). Due to the outbreak of avian influenza, live birds couldn't be shown. Alternative 4-H poultry contests were created, including posters, presentations, poultry parts identification and quiz bowl. The contests were such a success some will be incorporated into future fairs. Pictured is the largest dog junior showmanship class in recent years.



Last year, 37 after-school and summer-site programs included 4-H projects and activities in their program. Pictured is Extension Assistant Teri Hlava leading youth in a plant science activity at the Family Service Youth Development Program at Campbell.



Nebraska Extension's 4-H youth development program emphasizes science, ag literacy, healthy lifestyles, career development and citizenship/leadership. In the past year, Lancaster County 4-H involved nearly:

- 1,017 club members
- 248 independent members
- 2,205 youth in after-school/summer programs which incorporated 4-H activities, and
- 20,582 youth in 4-H school enrichment programs.



Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County coordinates distribution and application of biosolids\* to agricultural cropland for the City of Lincoln. Since 1992, more than 725,000 tons of biosolids have been recycled, extending the life of the landfill an estimated five years. Pictured is Biosolids Coordinator Dave Smith.

\* Biosolids are organic solids separated from wastewater and biologically processed to make them safe to use as a fertilizer.



4-H school enrichment programs include: Garbology (2nd grade), Embryology (3rd grade), Ag Awareness Festival (4th grade), Earth Wellness Festival (5th grade) and the Nutrition Education Program (K-8th grades in qualifying schools). These curricula meet Nebraska Curriculum Standards. In Embryology, youth watch eggs hatch in classrooms. Last year, 3,766 students in 38 Lincoln Public Schools and 17 other Lancaster County schools participated in Embryology. Pictured is Extension Assistant Cole Meador presenting the initial Embryology lesson to Norwood Park 3rd graders.



2015 was the first year for ExtensionCorps, Nebraska Extension's AmeriCorps program. In Lancaster County, Liz Kneiff (left) and Hannah Dittmar (right) helped the Nutrition Education Program educate youth on how to lead healthy lifestyles. Their outreach included schools, after school programs, summer programs, 4-H Clover College, the Lancaster County Super Fair, and other various health fairs and community events. Collectively, Liz and Hannah invested over 1,400 hours during their service.



## Extension's Volunteers Worth Nearly Half Million Dollars!

In 2015, Extension benefited from an estimated 1,428 volunteers who helped extend the reach of Extension's programs, such as 4-H and Master Gardeners. The volunteers' estimated 24,126 total hours of service are worth nearly \$497,478 to our community!

\* Based on Independent Sector's estimate of Nebraska's value of a volunteer hour in 2014 as \$20.62.

## Benefit to People



"The Nutrition Education Program has had an impact on our students in great capacity. Even though they have heard about 'My Plate,' they are educated on other topics that relate to how college students can eat healthy and save money when buying groceries."

— **Nhi Thuy Dang**, Southeast Community College's "Learn to Dream Seminar" instructor



"Lincoln Animal Control has greatly appreciated the close working relationship with Extension we've maintained over the many years. I and other co-workers appreciate having access to resources at the local level to consult on issues that often require the expertise of other professionals."

— **Steve Beal**, Animal Control Division Manager, Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department



"Over the years, many Extension Educators have helped me with my farm operation. Tom Dorn helped with marketing and grain storage. Robert Klein's wind tunnel research in North Platte gave pesticide drift reduction tips. Lately, Extension has helped with cover crops, terraces and cleaning up streams."

— **Bill Landon**, farmer



"I count Lancaster County Extension as one of my valued and trusted resources. One of the best services Extension offers is the spring child care conference each year. I look forward to this training opportunity because I know these training hours meet my needs as a daycare provider and are not just useless hours of mandatory training."

— **Vickie Young**, owner of YoungKare, family childcare home



"4-H has impacted me in so many ways. Not only have I learned valuable life skills, but I've also gained experience in leadership and community service that I couldn't have found elsewhere."

— **Abby Babcock**, 4-H member



"Education and delivery of unbiased, fact-filled information is probably one of the greatest resources Extension has to offer. If we can take a young person, and motivate and inspire them to be a productive citizen, that's probably one of the best investments we can make. It costs over \$300 a day to house a youth at the Youth Services Center, and about \$30 per year per youth in 4-H. It's an easy choice for me as a county commissioner — pay now or pay later."

— **Larry Hudkins**, Lancaster County Commissioner and Vice-Chair of the Board of Commissioners