2018

2018 Extension Highlights

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Head Start Learning Gardens — New this year, staff from the Nutrition Education Program and Extension’s horticulture program collaborated to develop Learning Gardens at both Head Start locations in Lincoln. Extension Associate Mary Jane Frogge planned the gardens. Eight preschool teachers participated in weekly sessions, learning basic gardening taught by five Master Gardeners, as well as healthy living taught by Extension Educator Emily Grotopp. Teachers reported increased confidence in gardening and using the garden as a teaching tool. The vegetables were eaten by over 100 children and parents.

MyPI disaster preparedness program for teens — Lancaster County piloted Nebraska Extension’s My Youth Preparedness Initiative (MyPI) in 2018. Nine teens participated in 40 hours of training, and learned how to respond to disasters, use emergency response equipment and render first aid. The teens then helped 63 families create communication plans and disaster preparedness kits. Participants improved their knowledge on disaster preparedness and emergency response from 43% on the pre-test to 95% on the post-test.

Water and wastewater management program — Extension Educator Meghan Sittler served as Extension’s statewide coordinator whose duties included collaborating with other organizations, developing resources and teaching (pictured teaching an H2O Adventure workshop for youth). Extension, along with the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Nebraska On-site Wastewater Association and the Nebraska Well Drillers Association, provided professional development trainings to over 275 water well and onsite wastewater professionals at seven locations across Nebraska.

Nutrition Education Kit program — Nebraska Extension has developed kits for use in K-5 classrooms to help teachers instruct students about health, nutrition and physical activity. The kits include lessons and supplies for hands-on activities. Extension staff also present hands-on lessons in the classrooms. In the 2017-18 school year, the program reached 15,992 students at all 35 Lincoln Public Schools and 1 parochial school. Evaluations showed significant improvements of students’ nutrition knowledge in all grades. Pictured is Extension Educator Alyssa Havlovic leading 2nd graders at Roper Elementary in preparing a healthy snack.

Youth nutrition grants — In 2018, Extension Educator Kayla Colgrove co-managed two statewide programs funded by National 4-H Council grants: 4-H Food Smart Families and 4-H Healthy Habits. In Lancaster County, 6 staff members and 7 teen ambassadors delivered 17 programs to 448 K-12th grade students for at least 6 hours of education. In a statewide Healthy Habits survey, 83% of 1,823 youth participants and 91% of 48 teen ambassadors reported they had learned about healthy food choices. Pictured is Kayla Colgrove leading 4th graders at Malcolm Public Schools in a healthy breakfast activity.

Backyard Farmer — Extension Educators Jody Green (second from left) and Sarah Browning (far right) make frequent appearances on Nebraska Extension’s popular gardening TV show. In 2018, the show’s YouTube channel grew by 30% in number of views and watch time, for the first time reaching over 1 million total views in a season. Jody’s focus is urban entomology and Sarah’s is horticulture. Both serve local residents and industry professionals through trainings, educational resources and free in-office diagnostic services.

Early childhood trainings for child-care providers — Last year, Extension Educator Jaci Foge taught or coordinated 95 workshops for local child-care providers. Total attendance was 1,512, generating 280 in-service hours approved by the Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services. Quality child care is vital in Nebraska since 74% of 156,575 Nebraska youth ages 0-5 live in households where all available parents are currently working. Pictured is Jaci delivering Nebraska Extension’s newly developed program, Cultivating Healthy Intentional Mindful Educators (CHIME).

Weather and crops — Extension Educator Tyler Williams helps producers manage the impact weather and climate have on agricultural production, not only in Lancaster County but across the world. He organized and was a presenter at the third annual Successful Farmer Series. 46 individuals attended one or more of the 6 workshops covering 15 topics, including weather and crops. Attendees estimated a $16 per acre value gained by participating in the series. Tyler recently traveled to the Czech Republic to advise University researchers trying to implement no-till farming and crops. Attendees estimated a $16 per acre value gained by participating in the series. Tyler recently traveled to the Czech Republic to advise University researchers trying to implement no-till farming.
**Benefit to people**

"Dr. Jody Green from the Lancaster County Extension office has been a great help to our maintenance department. We often take in different insects and spiders for identification which helps us determine possible treatment options. Dr. Green spoke to a group of our tenants about bed bug prevention. She also gave a presentation at a maintenance conference at the Lincoln Housing Authority hosted.”

—Shawn Saves, Lincoln Housing Authority Assistant Maintenance Superintendent

"Westminster Preschool has been fortunate to have the support of the UNL Extension early childhood development staff to supplement our classroom with new experiences. The leadership activities have also prepared for emergencies, letting us apply our new skills to help our community. I feel safer knowing that in an emergency, my family and I know how to react and help others.”

—Kolbe Villa, MyPI graduate

Through various service projects, I’ve learned the value of giving back to the community and we continue to do so. The leadership activities have also equipped me with important leadership skills I have lacked.”

—Crystal Xu, secretary of 4-H Teen Council

"I have passed along the significance of the 4-H movement to my family, and will continue to instill in them the drive and determination to succeed. I’ve also instilled this in my family and friends. Through various service projects, I’ve learned the value of giving back to the community and we continue to do so. The leadership activities have also equipped me with important leadership skills I have lacked.”

—Kolbe Villa, MyPI graduate

"The leadership activities have also prepared for emergencies, letting us apply our new skills to help our community. I feel safer knowing that in an emergency, my family and I know how to react and help others.”

—Crystal Xu, secretary of 4-H Teen Council

**Teaching, growing and making a difference**

Investing in our youth is an investment in our future! In 2018, growth continued in the Lancaster County 4-H program, with a 7% increase in numbers of youth reached. Tufts University research shows youth development programs, such as 4-H, reduce the likelihood of youth engaging in risk/problem behaviors such as underage drinking, bullying and vandalism. One study confirmed 4-H youth are leaders, achieve higher marks in school and contribute to self and society — all helping to strengthen the communities where they live.

This past summer, Lancaster County young adults were given opportunities to assist youth in 4-H programs. Six teens were hired to reach underserved youth through the “Teens as Teachers” (new in 2018) and “Food Smart Families” programs. They gained teaching and leadership experience.

New partnerships continue to leverage Extension’s reach to the community. This past year:

• Four partnerships were formed with Lancaster County cultural and literacy centers. As a result, 332 New Americans received critical knowledge of nutrition and healthy living in America.

• Another new partnership resulted in funding which will allow the Raising Healthy Nebraskans school enrichment nutrition program to serve three additional grade levels.

Extension continues to provide responsive, innovative and trusted information to make a difference in our community.

—Mary Wang

UNL Extension Educator & Unit Leader

**Teens as Teachers**

In 2018, Teens as Teachers was an opportunity to showcase the projects they’ve worked on throughout the year. Pictured are 4-H/FFA youth showing their swims projects.

**4-H at Lancaster County Super Fair**

The Lancaster County Super Fair is one of the state’s most prestigious fairs and covers over 5,400 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 are 4-H/FFA youth showing their swims projects.

**After-school programs**

Last year, 54 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 Trash to Treasure activity repurposing greeting cards. The Salvation Army of Lincoln’s after-school program.

**Extension’s volunteers worth nearly $700,000**

In 2018, Extension’s estimated 2,300 volunteers gave 29,234 total hours of service worth $684,076 to our community! Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County benefits from those volunteers who help extend the reach of programs such as 4-H, Master Gardeners and MyPI Disaster Preparedness Training. Pictured are adult and youth volunteers assisting with 4-H static exhibits at the Lancaster County Super Fair. In addition, many 4-H clubs and individual members give back to their community through service projects. Lancaster County 4-H’ers reported nearly 2,500 hours of community service.

*Based on Independent Sector’s estimate of Nebraska’s value of a volunteer hour in 2017 at $23.05*