

SPOTLIGHT ON 4-H

Nebraska Extension 4-H Newsletter

May 2021

A Healthy You—Inside and Out - By Lauren Stohlmann

If your school days are behind you, you might remember the Presidential Physical Fitness Test. This nationwide assessment was given to public school students twice a year to measure their physical health. P.E. teachers tested their students' physical health using various exercises including a one-mile run, shuttle run, push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups, and various flexibility tests. The purpose of the Presidential Fitness Test was to encourage youth to make being active a part of their everyday life, and to be physically fit.

Now, imagine if schools had a mental health testing day. What might that look like? Can you measure mental health? More importantly, would it encourage youth to think differently about their mental health?

In a recent survey developed by National 4-H Council and conducted by Harris Poll, completed by youth ages 13 – 19, “teens today are more confident in their physical health than their mental health, with 81% saying mental health is a ‘significant issue for young people in the U.S.’” Additionally, nearly 80% of youth said, “Schools should support ‘mental health days’ to allow students to prioritize their health.”

While testing and measuring mental health might not be practical, there are many ways adults can en-

courage youth to make their mental health a priority in their lives. National 4-H and Nebraska 4-H have numerous resources to help 4-H leaders and parents navigate conversations around their youth's mental health.

The [National 4-H Healthy Living Guide](#) offers activities surrounding topics such as mindfulness, stress, anxiety, and resilience. Youth learn more about keeping their mental health a priority through yoga, journal writing, intentional goal setting, and more.

Below is a quick 15 minute activity from the guide that a 4-H leader could use to kick-off a meeting.

“Keeping It Positive: Affirmations”

Mental health is just as important as physical health. Boost a friend's self-esteem by writing simple, positive and encouraging notes.

1. Think about a quality you enjoy or appreciate in a friend. This is your positive affirmation.
2. Write your positive affirmation on a small piece of paper and share it with your friend.
3. That's it! You've helped spread some joy.

For more information on youth mental health, contact your local Extension Educator or visit [Nebraska 4-H - Healthy Living](#)



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Youth Activity Safety Policy

By Tanya Crawford

Nebraska 4-H offers a wide variety of involvement opportunities for adult volunteers. Some of these include helping with a one-time event or program, helping with a summer-long program, sharing a skill with a 4-H member, helping with an afterschool program, assisting with or leading a 4-H club, teaching a workshop, helping at the local county fair, coordinating a community service project, mentoring a new 4-H family, or serving on 4-H council. All individuals volunteering with Nebraska 4-H must complete the Youth Protection 4-H Volunteer Screening process.

Volunteer screening is done to assure a safe, positive, and nurturing environment for all youth involved with the 4-H Program and provide protection for the child, the volunteer, the educator, the 4-H Council, the Extension Board and Nebraska Extension

There are two types of screening options available for volunteers based on their level of participation, Direct and Indirect. It is also important to note, volunteer screening must be completed and approved prior to service.

A **Direct** Volunteer would be staff, club leaders, student workers, summer interns, teens and teachers, chaperones and any other adults and teen acting as direct supervisors or mentors to youth in a paid, unpaid or volunteer status as part of a Youth Activity.

An **Indirect** Volunteer would be any person who provides support services for Youth Activities such as teaching assistants, superintendents, judges, food service, set-up crews, maintenance and any other adult and teen providing indirect service as part of a Youth Activity.

| Who | How | Required | Required | Required | Required |
|---------------------------|--|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Direct Volunteer | Enroll through 4-H online | Criminal background check (every 5 years) | Sex Offender Registry | Activity Worker Guidelines | 4-H Code of Conduct |
| Indirect Volunteer | Contact Local Extension office for paperwork | | Sex Offender Registry | Activity Worker Guidelines | 4-H Code of Conduct |

There is a cost of \$5 for the Direct Volunteers to be screened and this can be paid on-line with a Credit or Debit Card.

For more information on the 4-H Youth Policy contact your local Extension office or go to:

<https://4h.unl.edu/resources/volunteers-screening>



Citizenship Washington Focus in Action

By Angela Abts

Civic engagement involves youth learning about positive character traits, knowledge of the government, issues, public policy, and community service learning. One trip experience called CWF (Citizenship Washington Focus) is a capstone trip that youth attend during their high school career in Washington D.C. 4-Hers learn about citizenship and how they are a contributing member of society; travel to Washington, D.C. to see the U.S. government in action, and learn about the past through historical sites.

As most CWF groups prepare for the trip experience, there are several lessons from the “We the People” 4-H curriculum. One of the lessons is focused on mapping your community to look at the physical, cultural and economic aspects to help them identify community issues. This could include buildings (school, police, fire stations, banks, stores, churches, etc), parks or the people using the places as they identify their community’s strengths and challenges as they start to develop a community action plan for their service learning project (organized at the National 4-H Center).

After the completion of the CWF trip experience, the teens will return and implement their service learning project. There are three components to a service learning project: youth involvement; meaningful service; and reflection. Youth will be able to learn valuable skills as they plan, organize, and implement the project. They may see a need in a community that adults have not addressed before, and adults play a critical role in helping youth prioritize the community needs. A key component of service learning is reflection which occurs before, during, and following the project. They are able to reflect on the experience to discuss the “What”, “So What”, and “Now What”. Youth are able to make the connections of the service project and how it will influence lifelong learning.

Here are the five steps to implement a service learning project:

1. Assess and identify the need
2. Plan and prepare
3. Experience meaningful service
4. Analysis and evaluation
5. Celebration

Learning about service learning, citizenship and leadership happens all the time within 4-H activities especially before, during, and after the CWF trip experience. For more information about the CWF experience, please visit the following website: <https://4-h.org/parents/citizenship-washington-focus/>



Nebraska 4-H Achievement Application

By Kathy Burr

How can 4-Hers capture & reflect on all their new learned skills & experiences.... and win prizes and maybe even college scholarships & trips??? By filling out the annual Nebraska 4-H Achievement Application!

This application is a standard online form used for selecting 4-H county and state award winners, including delegates to National 4-H Congress and National 4-H Conference, as well as Nebraska 4-H Foundation scholarship award recipients. Some counties are using the system for other county 4-H project medals & awards. (It replaces the 4-H Career Portfolio).



Gathering facts & details of a youth's 4-H career (progression of personal growth & life skills learned along with leadership/community service/volunteer activities) can **reap in rewards!** The application helps tie 4-H accomplishments to other activities such as school, community, & church. This helps them create a "career spark" & develop their future plans.

The online application can be found at: <https://4h.unl.edu/achievement-application> It is easy to fill out using Word, Google Doc or as a pdf form. It is congruent with the expectations of college admissions, scholarship applications, and future employers (concise, accurate information that is reflective of your qualifications and achievements).

There are 2 versions- Junior (ages 8-14) and Senior (ages 15-18), shifting to a consistent age requirement for National 4-H Congress and Conference trips to eliminate confusion and inconsistencies.

A few **HINTS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION:**

- Applications must be completed and submitted electronically by the county and/or state deadline.
- Limit responses in the "My Experiences" section to a maximum of 3 pages for ages 8-14 and four pages for ages 15-18, single-spaced, 12-point font. A fifth page is allowed for state applicants.
- In the selection process, significant accomplishments in your **4-H experience, leadership, community involvement, and career spark** are given more consideration than the number of 4-H projects completed.
- Creativity is encouraged, use bullet lists, photos, infographics, etc. to help tell your 4-H story.
- Record ALL year long activities/events/contests on a calendar or special "4-H Activity" notebook so when it's time to type the 4-H Achievement Award Application, your information is readily available.
- Take lots of action pictures while starting, doing and finishing the 4-H projects/exhibits and while doing contests, events and community service.
- Only one application is required and permitted even if youth are applying for multiple awards and recognition at the state level.
- The application should be the 4-Her's accomplishments/words in the application but can be typed by adult until 4-Her is old enough to complete by self.
- Sit down and get an application "rough draft" done before school starts in the fall.
- **Celebrate!!!** Have a party or treat after application is finished each year!
- **Resources & Examples**

<https://4h.unl.edu/achievement-application>

Senior example - https://4h.unl.edu/documents/NE4H-Sr-Achievement-Application_Example-2.pdf

Junior example - https://4h.unl.edu/documents/NE4H-Jr-Achievement-Application_Example.pdf

Nebraska Animal Science

By Rhonda Herrick

What 4-H project area is the most popular among 4-H'ers? If you guessed animal science, you guessed what is popular with Nebraska youth as well. Animal Science includes horses, sheep, beef and dairy cattle, swine, goats, poultry, rabbit, veterinary science, and cats and dogs.

4-H youth gain many benefits from participating in animal projects. Youth gain skills such as accepting responsibility, making decisions, organizing their work, ability to relate to others, maintaining records, and setting and achieving goals. These skills not only benefit youth in the present, but also in future careers.

How do we help our young people to engage and take part in all that animal science projects have to offer? The first step is to help them to build basic knowledge in their area of interest. We can do that in various ways. Club meetings are a great place to start.

Ideas for Club Meetings might be:

- Invite a speaker to come to your club meeting and talk about their career in animal science.
- Split 4-H members into groups related to their area of interest. Have each of them share about their project.
- Introduce your members to the Livestock Quiz Bowl and have a fun friendly quiz bowl contest amongst members.
- Set up a livestock skillathon using very basic equipment for members to take part in.
- Talk about rations and have members create their own ration using snack items.
- Have members form teams and give a demonstration about a basic topic related to animal science.
- Begin with the basics and have youth identify animal parts for different species.
- Borrow from your local Extension Office the animal learning kits and use one of the activities from the kit.



Nebraska 4-H also has a great resource to learn basic terminology written by Karna Dam, Nebraska Extension Educator. A series of crossword puzzles related to topics such as Beef and Dairy Cattle, Feeds and Nutrition, Health and Well Being, Horse, Meat and Dairy Goat, Poultry, Rabbit, Sheep and Swine can be used at a club meeting or as a take home resource for youth.

Check them out here at: [Livestock Lingo | Nebraska Extension \(unl.edu\)](https://www.livestocklingo.com/)

Giving youth opportunities to learn and grow will help set them up for success with their animal science projects. The knowledge they gain and the skills they learn will last them a lifetime.

Clover Kid Online Resources

By Leanne Manning

Are you looking for a special lesson or project for your 4-H Clover Kids? 4-H Clover Kids is the officially recognized program in Nebraska for children under the age of 8. The program is designed to provide 5 to 7 year-olds a variety of educational and recreational experiences in a non-competitive environment. Clover Kids provide an excellent opportunity for youth to achieve his/her highest potential because early life experiences affect future development.

The primary goal is to promote the child's stages of development - intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally.

- Develop Self-Esteem
- Decision-Making Skills (making positive choices)
- Comprehensive Skills (learning how to learn; positive attitudes toward learning)
- Mastering Physical Skills (enjoying constructive and creative play)
- Social-Interaction Skills (getting along with others)
- Diversity Skills (acceptance of others; exploring family and community relationships)

Children possessing these life skills are less likely to have problems with drug use, school failure, delinquency, and depression as they move into their teenage years and then into adulthood.

Nebraska Extension is working to update several Clover Kids resources that could meet that need. Beginning in mid-spring 2021, newly revised lessons will start to appear on the website located at <https://child.unl.edu/4-h-clover-kids-program>. Topics currently under revision include: chickens, rabbits, bottle lambs, a space for me, aerospace, bicycle, counting coins, exploring nature, flowers, birding, an insect's life, food science and recipes, hand washing, removing stains from clothing, theater arts, the magic of color, and many more. These lessons will be designed so they are easy to take and use at a moment's notice when you wish to enrich the educational experiences of the Clover Kids in your 4-H program. There will also be lessons which can be extended and used in day camp formats.

Check it out today!



Citizenship in 4-H

By Colleen Pallas

How can your 4-Header make a difference and discover the needs of your local community and beyond? Good citizens make whatever they do better by working together to make positive differences to the society in which they live. Participating in the Citizenship Project is the opportunity, right and responsibility to contribute to shaping the world around you and provide service to others by:

- Exploring your relationships with others: family, peers, state, nation and world.
- Getting involved! Be an active, responsible citizen.
- Taking action to help others.
- Showing social responsibility and respect, and respond to the needs, rights and responsibilities of others.

Here are some fun Citizenship activities you can do in your club or as a family by the Project that your youth is enrolled in.

STARTING OUT – Beginner Level

- Get to know the other people in your club and what they like to do for fun.
- Interview a neighbor and identify the similarities and differences between you.
- Create and carry out a plan to help someone outside your family.
- Discover the history of your school or community. Tour your city courthouse or the state capitol.
- Help pick up trash at a park.

LEARNING MORE – Intermediate Level

- Find out the names of your local or state representatives and the committees on which they serve.
- Interview your principal and find out what you and your 4-H club can do to improve the school grounds.
- Collect samples of club bylaws and constitutions; compare and contrast them.
- Observe a community board meeting.
- Create and carry out a plan to help someone in your community.

EXPANDING HORIZONS – Advanced Level

- Volunteer to be a tutor or mentor in your school.
- Investigate the departments in your county government and find out what they do.
- Interview someone from your local Chamber of Commerce or economic development agency to learn about the goals for your community.
- Identify a cause important to you and determine how to make a difference.
- Map out area resources available to youth and families.

Here are other opportunities to explore citizenship:

- Say the Pledge of Allegiance and 4-H Pledge at 4-H Club Meetings.
- Ask your local nursing home residents how they would like to celebrate the next holiday and involve others to carry out the plan.
- Develop a family tree identifying places relatives lived and traditions.
- Observe a community board meeting.
- Youth take leadership roles in their 4-H club and apply that experience to other areas.
- Create a team to raise funds and participate in a benefit for a cause you support.
- Sign up to attend Citizenship Washington Focus.



4-H CITIZENSHIP



CASNR's New Degree Program: Regional and Community Forestry

By Rachel Ibach

One-hundred years after the forestry department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln was closed, the Nebraska Forest Service and the School of Natural Resources received U.S. Forest Service funds to begin developing a new undergraduate program to prepare a future generation of students to study forestry concerns in our communities. If you want to solve natural resource challenges, like the emerald ash borer and climate change, to build livable, vibrant, and resilient communities, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's new Regional and Community Forestry degree program in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources might be the place for you.

In this program, you will get resume-building experience climbing trees, measuring tree performance, and learning proper chain saw techniques. You will build a strong background in your knowledge of tree biology and grow your strategic thinking to excel at managing our urban forests. Our coursework contains built in ways to teach you how to effectively communicate your work about forestry-related issues in written and verbal outlets to a general audience. Semester-long projects each spring and fall give students experience creating webpages about tree-related topics for use by both professionals and homeowners. When you graduate, you will be prepared to make an impact on our environment, be a leader of modern tree care, and embody everything it means to be a Tree Husker.

With jobs sprouting up across the country, a degree in Regional and Community Forestry provides the skills and hands-on experience required of professionals in this industry. We work closely with our partners in the Nebraska Forest Service, Arbor Day Foundation, and Bartlett Tree Experts to ensure you have opportunities to set yourself apart from the competition through hands-on work experiences. These internships allow you to explore different areas of forestry, make connections with future employers, and experience a professional work environment. With a degree in Regional and Community Forestry students can land full-time positions as arborists, city foresters, urban or regional forest managers, vegetation strategy specialists, and many other opportunities in the tree industry.

If you are interested in this program or would like to schedule a campus visit, please contact Rachel Ibach at ribach2@unl.edu or 402-472-4445 for more information!

4-H! YOUR FIRST CLASS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA!