

# SPOTLIGHT ON 4-H

Nebraska Extension 4-H Newsletter

February 2021

## Thrive with 4-H - By Chandra Giles

4-H has already proven itself in the Positive Youth Development field by providing protective factors which help youth to make wise choices as they grow and develop. What does thriving look like for youth from a Positive Youth Development perspective and how does 4-H help youth develop skills that will help them be resilient and thrive?

Dr. Mary Arnold of Oregon State University asked this question as she researched and developed the 4-H Thriving Model. The central focus is helping youth explore their interests and passions and find their "spark" through 4-H projects and activities. This spark is what lights them on fire and gives them motivation. They are able to find this spark through the Positive Youth Development programs that have an emphasis on belonging and emphasize developmental relationships with safe, caring, adults who will share power and challenge growth.

As this thriving atmosphere is created in 4-H programming, youth will be able to:

- Feel safe to explore and conquer new challenges.
- Develop a love for lifelong learning, they gain hope for their future.
- Become more generous.
- Demonstrate respect, honesty, responsibility, empathy, and helping.
- Express and manage emotions appropriately.
- Set and work toward goals.

What can you, as a 4-H volunteer leader, do to help youth thrive? These are just a few ideas of what youth need from you for thriving:

- Physical and psychological safety. Express caring, kindness, and respect for them. Listen to them. Provide a safe atmosphere for both success and failure.

- Provide opportunities for growth and mastery. As youth grow in subject content, intentionally include soft skill development as well. An example of this is teaching critical thinking skills while working on a Citizenship project. Mastery is also important for developing confidence. Challenge youth to learn more and do different things in each project year.
- Share power by providing opportunities for leadership. Power can be shared with even first year 4-Hers as you allow them leadership roles such as leading the 4-H Pledge or introducing a guest speaker. Older youth should be allowed more independent leadership opportunities, such as planning club meetings and teaching other 4-Hers.

All these things are done with the support of a caring adult leader who not only will provide youth with new opportunities, but will support them in growing through failure and success.

In the long term, thriving and resilient 4-H youth are more civically engaged, they have more academic or vocational success, and are more employable. These youth become resilient, not necessarily because of the 4-H project, but because of the 4-H youth development process. Notice that the key defining factor is a safe, caring adult who will: share power, allow success and failure, and will challenge growth.

More information and resources on Positive Youth Development and the 4-H Thriving Model can be found at <https://4-h.org/about/research/#!/youth-development> and <https://health.oregonstate.edu/thriving-model/training-materials-educators>



### In the Spotlight for February

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# Nebraska 4-H Month

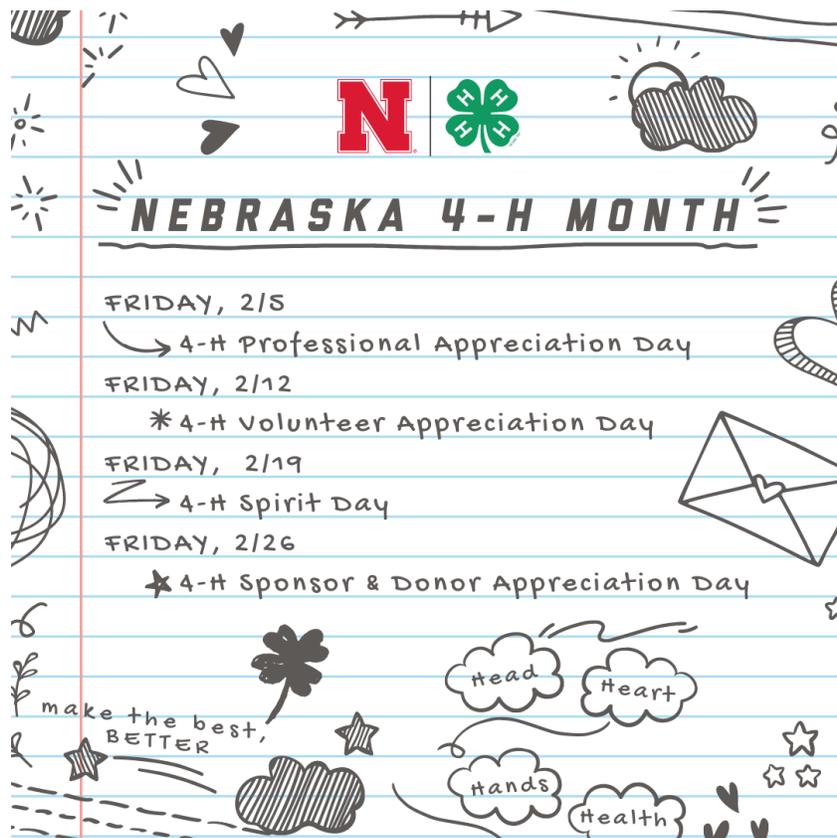
By Elena Stout

The 4-H program grows true leaders in our community through camps, clubs, school enrichment, afterschool, and special interest programs. It is through these educational experiences that 4-H prepares youth for successful futures by engaging them in programs that emphasize critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and so many other important life skills. While Nebraska 4-H programs are taking place all year long, February is traditionally known as Nebraska 4-H Month.

The global pandemic has made it difficult for us to get together with our clubs and take part in a lot of traditional 4-H events. But we can still celebrate 4-H and its impact on the lives of young people in our communities. Nebraska 4-H Month is a great opportunity to promote 4-H in your community. Below are some fun 4-H promoting activities that your club can get involved in to celebrate 4-H month safely:

- Encourage members to show off their 4-H pride by wearing club t-shirts to school.
- Challenge 4-H'ers to tell at least one of their friends about the 4-H program and encourage them to join the club.
- Get your club involved in a community service project. This could include sending handmade Valentine's Day cards to local nursing home residents, holding a winter coat drive, or making fleece blankets to donate to a local pet shelter.
- Send an announcement to a local newspaper about your club. Include what kinds of activities your club is doing, spotlight a 4-H'er, and information on how to become a member.

This past year has stirred up a lot of our long time 4-H traditions. Maybe you have started holding club meetings virtually, maybe you were not able to have a 4-H Achievement Banquet, and maybe your county fair looked a little different. Change can be frustrating, but let's make this year of change an opportunity to start a new tradition by getting your club members involved in Nebraska 4-H Month celebrations!



# Governor's Agricultural Excellence Award

By Kim Bearnese

If your 4-H club is looking for a way to fund a local service project in your community or county, here is a great place to check out. Every year the Nebraska 4-H Foundation rewards service projects from 4-H clubs all across the state. The application is easy. Here is what you need to know.

2021 Governor's Agricultural Excellence Award Application information:

The purpose of the Nebraska 4-H Foundation's Governor's Agricultural Excellence Awards, sponsored by the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA) is to recognize 4-H clubs for the work of the individuals in the club and the community service work of the entire club. The intent is to increase 4-Hers' awareness of agricultural careers and entice some of them toward such careers. This is an opportunity for 4-H to support our agricultural roots while we help 4-H members expand the career possibilities they are considering. Recognition is in the form of \$500 checks issued to the club's treasury to be used as described in the award application form completed by the club. Examples of fundable programs include: conference or workshops for others in the community, trips or tours for club members, community improvement projects in the club's hometown, campus visits, fairgrounds enhancements, intergenerational programs, and the development of youth councils. In order to be considered for the award, please tell us more about the project you have planned. Please keep answers to one page. Note: All funded projects are required to submit a summary of their project, preferably with pictures, to the Nebraska 4-H Foundation upon its completion (by November 30, 2021). The Governor's Agricultural Excellence Award application can be found at: [www.ne4hfoundation.org](http://www.ne4hfoundation.org). Look under the recognition tab at the top of the page. This is usually due March 1<sup>st</sup>.

1. Describe project/activity that your club has planned. Include your goals and how you plan to achieve them.
2. How do you anticipate club members will benefit from the plan?
3. What is the budget for your project?

The Nebraska 4-H Foundation was created in 1959 for the purpose of soliciting and receiving contributions on behalf of Nebraska 4-H in order to enhance the Nebraska 4-H Youth Development Program.

With private support from individuals, businesses and organizations, the Nebraska 4-H Foundation is able to fund new 4-H programs and improve existing programs at the state level. The Foundation uses all contributions to benefit the educational efforts of the Nebraska 4-H Youth Development Program. Gifts to the Foundation support scholarships, state fair premium awards, adult leadership education, volunteer training, youth awards and recognition, project clinics, camps, counselor training, livestock, and non-livestock events and much more.

If you are interested in supporting 4-H, please visit the Nebraska 4-H Foundation website at [www.ne4hfoundation.org](http://www.ne4hfoundation.org). If you are interested in keeping up with alumni news, the 4-H Foundation would be glad to include you in our monthly alumni newsletter.



# Nebraska 4-H Gives Back

By Sarah Purcell

The “Nebraska 4-H Gives Back” program is a super opportunity for a Nebraska 4-H member or a team of 4-H members to make a meaningful contribution to their community. This award recognizes the impact that 4-H youth make in their communities and celebrates the spirit of service-learning, a pillar of the 4-H experience.

To achieve the “Nebraska 4-H Gives Back” honor, a 4-H member or team must complete a major service-learning project that benefits the community. Each 4-H member or team is responsible for the creation, coordination, and implementation of the project. The project must be of lasting value and large enough in size and/or scope to be worthy of “Nebraska 4-H Gives Back” recognition. Due to the nature of this project, 4-H members should plan on investing over 100 hours of service, and have the understanding that it may take up to 24 months to complete the project.

The project includes an initial proposal and final report that are both approved and reviewed in a two-step process. Proposals are developed and approved first by a local committee, like the 4-H Council; and then by the State 4-H Program Administrator prior to the start of the project.

Information that needs to be included in a proposal includes the following eight items. Detailed information on what is needed for each item is found at this website: <https://4h.unl.edu/ne4h-gives-back>.

1. Overview
2. Resources
3. Timeline
4. Time Log
5. Approvals and Permits (if necessary)
6. Letters of Support
7. Evaluation Plan
8. Documentation Plan



Upon completion of the service-learning project, a final report is created which will need to be reviewed and approved by the local committee, and then by the State 4-H Program Administrator. Recipients will receive individual certificates of recognition once their project is completed, and a \$100 award to be received by the team or individual recipient. This can be used to celebrate their accomplishments or fund a future 4-H project. The 4-H member or team gets to pick!

Recipients and their projects are showcased by Nebraska 4-H online. Visit this website: <https://4h.unl.edu/ne4h-gives-back-honorees> to see the accomplishments of our Nebraska 4-H members dating back to 2009.

Encourage your 4-H members to consider a project for “Nebraska 4-H Gives Back” this year. Help them develop their service-learning spirit!

# Gain A Fuller Project Experience By Avoiding the Entry Day Rush

By Emily Hemphill

We all know the feeling. It's the night before entry day, and we're scrambling to sew the last few seams on that dress, hustling to get a third launch on our rocket before dark, or running to the store for more ingredients because we accidentally burned our chocolate chip cookies (oops!).

Any 4-H'er will tell you: you're not the only one. Plenty of families wait until the last minute to get their county fair projects completed (or started). While that's fine, there is a better way.

Starting fair projects early in the winter or spring months allows youth and families to avoid the rush when July or August rolls around. It also allows for expanded learning opportunities. If youth are rushing to finish their project on time, they could lose out on valuable experiences that could take their project to the next level, or the next ribbon placing.

Testing out a new recipe in April, for example, means a young baker will have plenty of time to make that recipe two, three, four or more times before making a final batch for the fair. The youth then has the opportunity to experiment: "What if I use butter instead of shortening?" "How can I get light and fluffy cookies instead of thin, flat ones?" "Does the type of pan I use have an effect on the finished product?"

That repetition and experimentation will give the 4-H'er a better experience at the fair for multiple reasons. First, they can perfect the finished product. Second, showcasing their best work instead of something they threw together at the last minute gives a sense of accomplishment and builds confidence. Third, they'll be able to write or tell a judge what they actually learned about the process instead of just, "I learned to bake cookies."

Starting early means it's easier to break the project down into manageable bits. Instead of building an entire bookshelf in one afternoon, use evenings, weekends or snow days to build up skills. First, spend some time picking out boards and learning about different types of wood. During your next work period, practice reading a plan and measuring. Then, learn about saw safety and practice making some cuts. Next time, assemble the shelf. Finally, take an afternoon or two to paint or stain the finished project.

The same holds true with animal projects, STEM projects, design, photography, public speaking... the list goes on. Focus on starting early to build skills through repetition and practice, and youth will reap the benefits.



# 2021 Special Agronomy Project

By Brandy VanDeWalle

The Nebraska Extension Special Agronomy Project gives 4-H members an opportunity to experience a crop that is grown, was grown, or has the potential to be grown in Nebraska. Youth participate by receiving seed and resources to grow the crop, research traits of the crop and determine the viability of that crop in the part of the state they live. The project allows 4-H members interested in agronomy to grow something fun, new, and different.

To kick-off the inaugural year of the special agronomy project, youth will explore teosinte. The plant looks and is very similar to corn, in fact it is believed to be the wild ancestor of today's corn!

The focus of the 2021 Special Agronomy Project is the Teosinte plant. Teosinte is the ancestor to today's corn, including dent, sweet, and popcorn. Native to Mexico and the surrounding area, this plant was adapted and changed by humans over time. There are both similarities and differences between them. Both plants have a tassel at the top. However, instead of a single stalk with a large ear, teosinte has multiple branches that produce many small spikes of trapezoidal seeds if the growing season is long enough.

**Youth should enroll for the Special Agronomy Project through 4-H Online.** Once enrolled in 4-H Online, youth are to call their local office to sign up for the project (order the seeds). By enrolling through 4-H Online, youth will have access to the folder with the educational materials including the growing newsletter & evaluation.

**Counties are responsible for ordering the seeds and advertising in their county. To order seeds:** Complete the form (<https://go.unl.edu/specialagronomy>) by **February 1<sup>st</sup>** how many youth you think will participate. Please double-check the number of youth enrolled through 4-H online prior to ordering seeds. To [double check orders, click here](#). We are ordering **bulk seed**. It is up to the county to order, package, and distribute seeds & materials to the youth from the county. The promotional items for this project (including a photo) are available <https://go.unl.edu/specialagronomy> or visit the website at <https://cropwatch.unl.edu/special-agronomy-project>.

The cost to enroll in the project should be around **\$0.50/youth**. I am aiming to have enough seeds for each youth to plant 2, 6' rows of teosinte. Please order accordingly.

This is the first year for this project. If you have suggestions or any questions about the project please contact Brandy VanDeWalle at [brandy.vandewalle@unl.edu](mailto:brandy.vandewalle@unl.edu) or Aaron Nygren at [nygren2@unl.edu](mailto:nygren2@unl.edu) Thanks!

Mature teosinte plant

**SPECIAL AGRONOMY PROJECT**

**ENROLL NOW!**

[cropwatch.unl.edu/special-agronomy-project](https://cropwatch.unl.edu/special-agronomy-project)

2021: Teosinte, ancestor of corn

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# Nebraska 4-H Virtual Resources at 4h.unl.edu

By Amy Topp

4h.unl.edu is a familiar website that many visit to explore resources that are available statewide in the 4-H program. The website is utilized to get the most up-to-date information about new events, opportunities, and resources that are available to youth.

An example of an opportunity found on the website by navigating through the Imagine Science link is the Biomedical Engineering Camp. This camp is a virtual, self-paced camp that is being offered in partnership with Imagine Science! Imagine Science is an unprecedented partnership between four leading national youth organizations to bridge the STEM gap by igniting the imagination of historically underrepresented youth. This camp targets youth grades 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> who are wanting to explore engineering in a way that can be used to assist the medical field. Also, youth have the opportunity to participate in a Biomedical Career Day where they will learn from staff at University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Another tab includes opportunities for virtual and at-home learning. Here you will find a variety of live virtually-guided opportunities, on-demand and self-paced experiences, and activity guides. These resources are perfect for school classrooms, after school programs, clubs, home school co-ops, and families looking for supplemental learning experiences. Recordings of prior sessions can be found here so you can watch when it works with your schedule.

Living Room Learning is a specific example of the virtual learning. It is intended for grades 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> and is based on hands-on virtually guided activities. Each session focuses on a new activity that can be done with materials found at home. Youth are able to learn about healthy living, science, technology, engineering, math and more.

A third opportunity is Career Chat Live that offers online career exploration. This program is designed for youth grades 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> interested in exploring different careers through this virtual experience. Each of the career chats focus on a new set of careers where youth will get to meet workforce professionals that are in a career field and engage in conversation with them. If interested, youth can complete the request form located under the Career Chat Live session and you will be sent the information needed to be a part of the live Zoom.

The final opportunity being highlighted is the Virtual Field Trips. These field trips focus on science, technology, and careers by offering facility tours, educational experiences, and resources for teachers. This is a great resource for youth in grades 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>.

For more information on all of these resources go to <https://4h.unl.edu/>





## **Expanding College Visit Options Through Virtual Experiences**

**By Rachel Ibach**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) has provided engaging virtual options to prospective students who are unable to visit campus or attend an event in-person. During the spring, virtual visits will continue and spring events on campus will also be accessible to virtual attendees.

Thanks to our personalized virtual campus visit options there is no need to wait to find out where you fit in CASNR! During your virtual visit, the CASNR recruitment team will guide you in understanding the unique services CASNR offers to its students including guaranteed job offer programs, in-depth career development and preparation, and student services designed to help you be successful in and out of the classroom. You will explore how we provide a well-rounded, hands-on learning experience to students through undergraduate research, student involvement, individualized advising, and faculty-led study abroad trips to prepare you to make a difference in the world.

Virtual campus visits include a one-on-one academic appointment with a specialist in the degree program you are interested in. During your academic appointment you will get a detailed look at coursework, research projects, student clubs, internships, and more that you could participate in if you were a student in that major.

To schedule a virtual campus visit with CASNR, contact Karen Francis at [kfrancis3@unl.edu](mailto:kfrancis3@unl.edu) or 402-472-2942.

If you are looking for a more general introduction to CASNR and our majors, the Experience the Power of Red Visit Day may be the perfect fit for you. At this event you'll learn how CASNR prepares students for careers in everything from animals to plants, soil to climate, golf to business, mechanization to leadership, and food to forensic science. We want you to succeed and we know that this is the place where you can find the one-to-one connections to help you do that. You will meet faculty, staff, and current students to learn first-hand what life at Nebraska is really like. You will get to explore campus and get a true sense of the CASNR experience. We are planning for an in-person event following social distancing and University safety guidelines, but this event can also be attended virtually.

Experience the Power of Red will be held on February 25th, 2020. For more information contact Sue Ellen Pegg at [spegg2@unl.edu](mailto:spegg2@unl.edu) or 402-472-0615.

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