

Nebraska 4-H receives national entrepreneurship education award

Nebraska 4-H recently received a national award recognizing its leadership and advocacy for entrepreneurship education, and specifically its Entrepreneurship Investigation curriculum, that is used nationally and translated for use in other countries.

Nebraska 4-H received the Cathy Ashmore Leadership and Advocacy Award at the 27th Annual Entrepreneurship Education Forum.

Nebraska 4-H's entrepreneurship curriculum is used nationally and in a variety of settings beyond 4-H clubs or traditional classrooms, including home schools, clubs, camps and community-based organizations, according to Gregg Christensen, a Nebraska Department of Education career education specialist. The 4-H curriculum materials, he said, also are currently being translated into Spanish for use in Costa Rica.

Nebraska 4-H also developed a LEAP into Careers activity guide for upper elementary age youth that includes entrepreneurship as a career focus and the Community Connections web-based resource that helps Nebraska communities engage their youth in the creation of entrepreneurship-friendly communities.

This national award recognizes an

individual or organization each year for demonstrating sustained and outstanding national and international leadership and advocacy for entrepreneurship education. The award is named for the founder and executive director of the Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education.

"We will continue to put our efforts into making the entrepreneurship curriculum developed through the University of Nebraska 4-H the best that it can be," said Nancy Eberle, a consultant for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension 4-H. Eberle said it was an honor to accept the award on behalf of their Entrepreneurship Team and on behalf of its partners that include the Nebraska Department of Education, HomeTown Competitiveness, the Nebraska Entrepreneurship Task Force, the Krieger Foundation, the Gallup Organization and Nebraska Farm Bureau.

"The rewards for youth who have participated in this 4-H curriculum will be seen in years ahead as these youth start new businesses and put their entrepreneurial skills to work on behalf of our state," said Elizabeth Birmstihl, associate dean-Cooperative Extension Division at UNL.

"Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education are critical to growing our economy, retaining and attracting back our

young people, as well as creating a 'line of succession' for current businesses," Christensen said.

The Nebraska Department of Education began partnering with other state agencies, public and private postsecondary institutions and the business community to focus on entrepreneurship in 2005 with the Nebraska Entrepreneurship Task Force. Since then, Nebraska 4-H has been an important partner in the statewide effort to enhance and expand entrepreneurship education, Christensen said, describing their efforts as groundbreaking, cutting-edge and with a focus on quality curriculum that is used by local leaders and schools.

The award recognizes:

- Passion for entrepreneurship education
- Outstanding leadership and guidance in entrepreneurship education
- Advocacy for entrepreneurship education
- Contributions to entrepreneurship education over a sustained period of time
- Making a very real difference for students and entrepreneurship programs
- Perseverance in overcoming obstacles and challenges to offering quality entrepreneurship education opportunities for youth and adults.