The mission of University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension 4-H is to empower youth to reach their full potential working and learning in partnerships with caring adults. 2007 marked the beginning of a new strategic plan for Nebraska 4-H that targets four specific outcome areas for our work: Science, Engineering and Technology, Health Lifestyles, Career Development and the development of Life Skills. To assess the success of Nebraska 4-H in reaching these outcomes, a mixed methods study was conducted during 2007. Approximately 500 youth from across the state contributed their responses. The results and participant comments shared in this report illustrate the impact Nebraska 4-H is making in the lives of young people.

**SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY**

Daily advancement in science, engineering and technology (SET) create an increasing demand for quality SET educational experiences that will prepare youth for post-secondary education and potential careers in related fields. 4-H in Nebraska has made a commitment to provide youth opportunities that will foster their interests and support their exploration of majors and careers in SET. Through 4-H, youth in Nebraska can experience robotics in after-school programs, create GIS maps of Nebraska and participate in many other SET based projects offered through our program.

- **“At my robotics camp I learned about blue-tooth, pseudo-code and how to make a robot work.”**

Half of 4-H members surveyed reported that they are engaged in a SET related club or experience. Additionally:
- **50%** agree that a career in science would be exciting,
- **85% of youth** expressed an awareness that advancements in SET would change their projects in the next five years, and
- **75%** agreed they applied SET to their 4-H projects and shared examples, such as creating electronic records of their livestock projects, building and launching rockets and classifying insects for entomology displays.

**“Understanding technology is important to everyday life.”**
Helping youth strengthen their nutritional and physical well being is a priority of Nebraska 4-H. Nebraska 4-H staff and volunteers are incorporating lessons on physical and emotional health and safety in many 4-H experiences including an emphasis on the value of healthy relationships. Responses to the survey show that 98% of youth agree they have a responsibility to be a good neighbor and 9 out of 10 have at least one friend in 4-H and they know an adult in 4-H they feel comfortable asking for help.

“I’ve made a lot of great friends in 4-H.”

The subject matter skills taught in 4-H are a foundation for a positive youth development experience. By participating in club projects and activities youth are able to connect their interests to future careers and build skills necessary for pursuing those experiences. An overwhelming 96% of participants surveyed could identify careers related to their projects and 88% recognized ways their projects could evolve into a business. Additionally, in a survey completed by a sample of Nebraska 4-H seniors, it was reported that 97% will pursue post-secondary education.

“4-H helped me establish my career goals, and showed me how to obtain them.”

“Through my 4-H projects I have learned specific skills I will use in my future job.”

“Ten years in 4-H has showed me how to turn something I love into a source of income.”

Life skill development continues to be a primary emphasis in many 4-H programs. Specifically, Nebraska 4-H is focused on helping youth develop decision making and communication skills as well as engaging youth in community service and leadership roles.

• 4-Hers report multiple opportunities to serve their community and 9 out of 10 agree they are able to make a difference through their efforts.

• 83% report the opportunity to serve in a leadership role through 4-H.

4-H Public speaking opportunities also allow youth to develop life skills that will serve them in future employment interviews, professional presentations and social occasions. In this survey 85% agree they felt comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas and 94% willingly listen to the thoughts and ideas of others creating a full circle communication network.

“I gained a lot of confidence from giving 4-H demonstrations and serving in leadership roles in my club and county.”