



Building Connections -- 1997: A Year in Review

"Extension's mission is to enable people to improve their lives and communities through learning partnerships that put knowledge to work."
-- *Strategic Directions of the Extension System, Aug. 1997*

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Message From the Director

During the past year, I asked several people, both within and outside the organization, to define or describe Extension. In other words, to articulate who we are and what we do in easy-to-understand terms. Seems a simple enough task for an organization that has been helping the people of Colorado solve problems for 84 years. Like society, however, Extension continues to change and evolve, and, to add to the challenge, the organization is complex and diverse. So were the responses to my question.

Some said Extension is "an organization that provides informal educational programs and information to improve quality of life." Others contend we are "an organization that provides information people can trust or knowledge you can use." Others said "Extension is about agriculture and 4-H." Another said simply, "Extension is about building partnerships." Of course, they're all correct. But of all the descriptions I heard, the words "building partnerships" seems to capture the essence of who we are and what we do. Our

84-year-old county/state/federal partnership is fundamental to our success and mission. In fact, it's the very foundation of our organization -- and is a testament to the impact our programs have when we collaborate with others to address our customers' critical needs and issues.

Partnerships, as defined by Webster's New World Dictionary, is "the relationship of partners; joint interest; association." Every day, Extension builds new partnerships, strengthens existing ones, and celebrates those past. Our partners are private citizens who call our offices to ask questions about literally hundreds of different topics. They're also the more than 95,000 Colorado youth involved in our 4-H programs, and the volunteers who help us extend our programs statewide. Our partners also include agriculturalists; local business owners; local, state and federal government agencies; schools; libraries; and community colleges and other institutions of higher learning.

Another very important partnership is the one we share here at Colorado State University with colleges, academic departments, agencies, and non-academic units. This unique partnership, which is the very fabric of the land-grant university, makes Colorado State University the people's university. It's what allows the university to serve you where you live, work and play. And it's the partnerships that allow Extension to help communities and the citizens who live there effectively address critical issues of social, environmental and economic importance.

Our commitment to meet the goals articulated in our *Extension 2000* initiative, launched in July 1996, has helped us build on existing partnerships and identify new ones to serve Colorado effectively by strengthening the structure and function of our organization and educational programs. As a result of CE 2000 and in response to critical issues articulated by our partners, in 1997, Extension developed and began to implement state program

plans in the following areas:

- environmental and natural resource management through sustainable and profitable agriculture,
- families and communities,
- growth, change, communities in economic transition,
- horticulture and the green industry,
- nutrition, food safety and health,
- small-acreage management, and
- youth development

It's important to note that the list of state program plans does not represent all of our work. While they provide guidance, there are many instances in which county, area and regional staff focus on issues that are unique and particularly relevant to the people they serve locally.

This report provides but a few examples of how Extension's partnerships are woven into program planning to serve the needs of the state's citizenry.

In the year ahead, we will continue to identify and develop partnerships with individuals, community organizations, businesses and our colleagues at Colorado State University to address the critical needs of Coloradans throughout the state. It's our responsibility and our privilege to do so.

-- Milan Rewerts, Director

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Partnerships: Foundation of Land-Grant Universities

"Partnerships" are the foundation of the land-grant university. The success of its teaching, research and extension connection is the envy of the world. The founders of this great partnership saw clearly the merits of a networked system to address national, regional, state and local needs. County, state and federal governments, farmers, ranchers and Consumers, urban and rural constituents, families and communities, youth and adults--they all participate, providing input for program priorities and receiving problem solving and educational assistance in return. Working side-by-side with citizens, land-grant university educators and researchers have built an excellent history of accountability--they have earned public trust and confidence.

Extension's role in this partnership is to deliver quality, relevant programs; to link the educational and research resources and activities of land-grant institutions, counties and the federal government to the people of Colorado. It engages a responsive network of scientists and educators who can anticipate and address critical needs and problems through a focus on areas where there is a research base and where they can make significant contributions. The program profiles in this report are just a sample of the impacts Extension is making throughout the state; they are evidence of a solid return on money invested.

Ron Meyer, Partnership Building on Colorado's Golden Plains

Ron Meyer, Colorado State University Extension Golden Plains Area agriculture and agronomy agent, uses partnerships to bring experts on many agricultural topics to farmers and ranchers on the plains of Colorado. Because of the collaborative knowledge shared in multi-party research, these partnerships are invaluable to Meyer, but more so to the public he helps.

"Our rural area has limited resources," Meyer points out. "We often need a team of professionals involved in research and education to accomplish our goals. Many projects are too big for just one agency to tackle. As a group, we can do the job better than one agency acting alone."

When an October blizzard devastated ranchers throughout Colorado, Meyer and representatives from other agencies partnering on a disaster committee provided assistance to ranchers. The team assessed losses and requested federal disaster funds. Luckily, Golden Plains Area counties weren't hit as hard as southern Colorado counties. Still, the team helped secure a disaster declaration from Gov. Roy Romer, which frees up low-interest loans to help off-set losses.

Although all the partnerships Meyer is involved in don't have such dramatic circumstances, they provide invaluable day-to-day operating information to the area's agricultural businesses. Meyer's collaborations in the last several years include projects

with the United States Department of Agriculture, area soil conservation districts, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, other Colorado State Extension offices, agri-businesses, and private ranchers and farmers.

Recent projects include measuring grazing production on Conservation Reserve Program grazing land. Many acres in Meyer's area are converted from farm land to grass land through the CRP program, which returns highly erodible farm land to grass, including many native species. That project, which involved the USDA and the Soil Conservation District office in Flagler, gave area ranchers concrete evidence that the CRP program provides high-quality grazing, even when compared to native grass land. Results are being distributed to farms and ranches regionally.

These kinds of partnerships not only help Colorado State Extension professionals glean all available information from a study, they help the public get as much reliable, unbiased information as possible.

"Any time we work with different agencies, a project's credibility increases because we're using all of the resources available to ensure valid, correct information," Meyer said. "Producers would rather get precise information from someone who's done the actual research. Other agencies see these same benefits and aren't afraid to partner up with us to use our experience and knowledge."

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Partnering with Agriculture...

Agriculture has been and continues to be a major part of Colorado's economy; 51 percent of Colorado's land base is agricultural. Meeting challenges to the industry--economic, social and environmental--requires ongoing partnerships that focus on research, development, production and marketing efforts. This integrated sustainable systems approach allows farmers to be profitable, provides Consumers with wholesome, safe food, contributes to the economic revitalization of rural communities and minimizes adverse impacts on the environment. Agricultural sustainability focuses on production systems that are capable of maintaining or enhancing productivity while providing benefits to society indefinitely. As a result of Extension's outreach efforts in agriculture, producers are provided educational programs and information that promote such practices as crop rotation, range monitoring, management of pesticides and fertilizers with priority on soil health and protection of water resources.

Collaboration For Best Management Practices Improves River Quality

Colorado State University Extension personnel are working in partnership with agricultural producers and government agencies to address Best Management Practices for land and irrigation water in the Arkansas River Valley and southeast Colorado. Because the Arkansas River is the most saline river of its size in the United States, this work is vital to improving the quality of the water in the Arkansas River and its groundwater basin and helping to maintain the agriculture economy of the area. These practices reduce farm costs through optimum farming inputs and minimum environmental impacts.

The Patterson Hollow Hydrologic Unit Area Water Quality Project--a partnership of Extension, the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Farm Service Agency with funding from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation--has provided direct farm financial assistance to area producers in the amount of \$830,365. Considering the farm owners' 50 percent contribution, more than \$1.6 million worth of BMPs have directly benefitted 35,000 acres in the area for 427 participating farms.

The BMPs of surge irrigation, reduced tillage, use of trash screens, concrete ditch, underground pipe, gated pipe and soil polymers have provided better control of irrigation water through reduced runoff, seepage, percolation and soil loss. Improved irrigation technology increased average net farm income by more than \$50 per acre, and use of polyacrylamide (PAM), a soil-stabilizing polymer, reduced erosion up to 99 percent while it increased infiltration and water-holding capacity of the soil.

Integrated Resource Management Brings Team Approach to Ranching

It isn't often that a program continues to gain momentum almost 20 years after it begins, but Integrated Resource Management is setting new standards. The program, implemented in 1981, focuses on improving production and business management of cattle and sheep

ranches in Colorado. For the last 15 years, IRM has channeled a variety of resources through research and application to Colorado ranchers.

The program is a partnership among Colorado State University Extension specialists and agents, the Agricultural Experiment Station and additional experts from Colorado State's colleges of animal science, veterinary medicine, range science and agricultural economics. In communities where the program is implemented, Extension agents get area ranchers, bankers and veterinarians involved.

What makes this program unique and successful, according to Jack Whittier, IRM committee member and Colorado State Extension cow/calf specialist, is the tremendous commitment from those involved. As the program enters a new five-year stage, it serves as a model for a new program--Integrated Livestock Management--formed under the umbrella of IRM's next five-year plan to incorporate the Y Cross Ranch, a gift to Colorado State and the University of Wyoming.

"We've done basic agriculture technology research on campus, and now we want to evaluate application in an entire county or area for wide-spread study," Whittier said. "We want to know if our scientists are on track with their research and if there is a legitimate application for the average rancher."

The Y Cross Ranch will be used to teach students how to train producers to implement the concepts, such as embryo transfer, that were developed through the IRM model. "We'd actually be putting some of our research into action in a systematic ranch environment," Whittier said. The ranch also would be used as training ground for graduate students to learn general ranch management practices in addition to focusing on their specialties, hence, the Integrated Livestock Management model.

During the next five years, IRM will use a \$250,000 grant secured from the Fund for Rural America to expand IRM's concepts to entire communities. A study in Sterling and Montrose will explore the impact and interaction of livestock production on rural communities cemented in animal agriculture. Some of the programs that will be implemented during this phase include evaluating the application of technology in agriculture such as embryo transfer and sex identified semen.

In addition to strong partnerships with programs involved in operating IRM, coordinators also have strong relationships and support from the Colorado Cattlemen's Association and Colorado Sheep Producers, as well as other statewide organizations.

Interdisciplinary Effort Extends Range Management Skills

Ranchers are stewards of complex natural resource systems that affect not only agriculture, but also the environment and human quality of life. Federal guidelines related to livestock grazing on public lands make it a necessity that range managers be able to address management practices. Conservation of resources on public lands and wise management of rangelands has become a public concern, and is essential to the profitability of the ranch manager and livestock producer. Colorado State University Extension studied the value of land monitoring for the ranch manager with the goal of protecting or restoring the condition of public rangeland. Included in the interdisciplinary effort were actions to help managers define personal values, develop ranch mission and vision statements, set management goals and develop monitoring strategies.

A four-year effort in Rio Blanco County combined the team efforts of Extension, Bureau of Land Management, Division of Wildlife, veterinarians, ranchers and environmentalists to develop management strategies. Various successes occurred on different ranches, including improved rotational schedules that relieved stress on pastures; development of alternative rotations and sample analyses to determine and alleviate high toxicity

problems associated with larkspur (which saved a single producer \$5,000); increased conception rates of cattle (up to 97 percent); and increased calf weaning rates (up to 15 pounds).

Rangeland research and educational collaborations between Extension in the Tri River Area, Bureau of Land Management, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and U.S. Forest Service resulted in practices adopted by the BLM and USFS that show increased livestock weaning rates, improved breeding rates, and improved rangeland health, which eventually could impact 3.6 million acres of area rangeland.

Teamwork Results in Marketing Success For Lamb Producers

Extension agents teamed up with lamb producers in Southeast Colorado to assist in a value-added effort to establish a natural lamb marketing enterprise. The U.S. Department of Agriculture approved a "natural" feeding program for Superior Farm lambs, which were marketed to a firm in Boston. The contract netted the producers 7 cents a pound over market price, and in the past year, local producers have supplied more than 4,000 lambs to the east coast firm. This price based on 4,000 lambs at 125 pounds each has resulted in \$35,000 of added value to Southeast area woolgrowers.

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Partnering with Business...

Extension's efforts to enhance rural development and build urban partnerships hinges on getting various institutions to work together and networking. Public agencies partnering with private industry and businesses, non-profit organizations and citizens usually result in win-win situations for all involved. Long term-impacts result from leadership development and capacity building within communities and economic multiplier effects result when vision and action have community and citizen involvement and support.

Extension/Business Team Provides Interdisciplinary Look at Estate Transfer

Farm and ranch families report that farm/ranch estate transfer is one of the most stressful issues they face. Currently one-third of Colorado farmers and ranchers are 60 years of age or older. If trends continue, in 30 years, one of three producers will leave production agriculture, and one of every 10 acres of Colorado ranches and farms will be lost to ag production. Through the Colorado State University Integrated Resource Management program, Extension and university faculty collaborated with estate and financial planning experts to create a program to assist Colorado agricultural families in asset planning.

A university/business team with expertise in agricultural and resource economics, animal sciences, family life, estate and financial planning, accounting, taxation and law brought an interdisciplinary approach to estate transfer education. The team of university specialists and private consultants provided information on creating partnerships, decision-making strategies, building family consensus, strategic planning, successful transfers, tax implications, gift options, wills and trusts and other estate planning topics. The IRM program has been in place in Colorado since 1981 as an integrated method of increasing agricultural productivity and profitability. Recently, there has been an effort to make IRM more holistic by introducing both long-range planning and interpersonal family dynamics into the curriculum. Based on a needs survey of livestock producers funded by the Agricultural Experiment Station, a program was developed to address the top 10 business and family issues of interest to the audience.

University Expertise Helps Support State's Growing Greenhouse Industry

Interest in greenhouse vegetables has begun to change the face of the Colorado greenhouse industry and Extension has made a concerted effort to service this growing industry. Colorado now is ranked number one in the nation in total acreage of greenhouse tomatoes, more than 86 acres.

Colorado State University has provided Extension education and research support to an industry that virtually eliminated worries of killing frosts and crop diseases. Extension faculty provide disease evaluation, insect scouting and horticultural education to the industry, and CSU provides a supply of graduating students as employees. In turn the

industry supports greenhouse vegetable production research by university faculty and graduate students at their facilities.

University/Business Venture Turns Crop Seeds to Gold

Colorado State University researchers began to investigate the feasibility of canola as a new crop for the San Luis Valley in 1986. After several years of demonstration fields and plot trials, the first commercial production of canola began in 1992. Growing from 350 acres in 1993 to 11,000 in 1995, the crop exceeded acreage and yield targets and achieved oil quality targets. A very successful crop produced 28.6 million pounds in 1995--the area boasts the highest canola yield in North America, with an economic value of \$3.5 million per year.

Duane Johnson, Extension's alternative Crops specialist, with Agricultural Experiment Station funding, continued researching ideas to help keep income from the profitable seed crop in the state. To improve profitability for farmers through commercialization of new products, he teamed up with Agro Management, a business that specializes in finding new uses for old Crops and developing new technologies for alternative Crops. Canola oil -- traditionally used in cooking -- underwent some processing adjustments to become a highly effective engine lubricant. When burned in an engine, canola oil smells like popcorn and drastically reduces automobile engine emissions.

California, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Michigan and New Zealand are in contract negotiations with Agro Management to use the oil in government vehicles. Fort Collins officials are considering a similar agreement. If canola motor oil replaced just 5 percent of the petroleum oil used today, the United States market for canola motor oil would be roughly 50 million gallons. To meet that demand, canola would require as much land as is now devoted to corn production.

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Partnering with Communities...

Colorado is a state comprised of communities in economic transition. Both large and small communities have begun to look seriously at alternative industries that maintain or improve their standard of living. This examination has become even more critical with the out-migration of families from metropolitan to rural areas. The economic health of both urban and rural communities depends on the creation of jobs and new sources of wealth. Extension educators have and will continue to play an important role helping people cope with critical local issues--issues that often focus attention on the interdependence among citizens and families in both urban and rural environments.

Inter-agency Partnership Helps Communities Face Economic Challenges

Small and rural communities continually face economic challenges. Business retention and expansion, tourism development, in- and out-migration, and the need to diversify agriculture and other income sources are a few of these challenges. Rural communities in six southwestern states are receiving an economic boost from the national Communities in Economic Transition initiative. This partnership among land-grant universities, citizen action teams, government agencies and local organizations, pilots projects that help rural communities establish and maintain a diverse economic base and promote local entrepreneurship to boost employment, income and public revenue figures.

The program has provided several counties in Colorado with economic assistance. For example, Extension staff in the Grand Junction area helped develop a "Community Kitchen" incubator program--to link value-added product development with workforce skill enhancement. The program is operated through the Western Colorado Business Development Corporation and helps women move from welfare to work while turning Grand Valley produce into a more valuable product. Each year, about 350,000 pounds of overripe peaches--more than 10 percent of the crop--are thrown away or ground back into the soil because of imperfections that prevent their sale. The women, trained as food processors, worked with local peach producers to turn this unsalable produce into canned and dried products. As a result, niche-market, special-label products were sold, food processor trainees gained job skills and the incubator kitchen has created entrepreneurial interest from vegetable growers, limited-resource audiences, small-business networks and other agencies.

Educational Collaborations Provide Hope To Thousands of Urban Families

Extension Consumer and family education agents working in Colorado's Front Range communities have been addressing the critical issue of strengthening Colorado families. They provide educational programming to nontraditional Extension audiences through relationship and partnership building with agencies, organizations, businesses and boards that reach metropolitan area families. These important connections have resulted in more

than 400 collaborative partnerships and educational opportunities for thousands of families and Consumers along the Front Range.

Parent-education programs designed to strengthen communication and family relationships have impacted 8,200 families and benefitted 14,000 children throughout the metropolitan area. Programs such as Partners in Parenting, Confident Parents/Confident Kids, Dare to be You and Building Strong Families have been presented in collaboration with day care centers such as Decatur Place and Warren Village, churches such as Calvary Temple, women's centers such as Denver's Mi Casa Resource Center and police and sheriff's departments, shelters, support centers, family resource networks, parent coalitions, district attorney's offices, victim's assistance programs and many other organizations. Working together, they are able to offer educational opportunities to assist young women and men, single parents, homeless families, and high-risk audiences with life-skill training, career exploration and planning for the future with confidence rather than despair.

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Partnering with Families...

Colorado families face challenges to achieve and maintain a quality life amidst concerns about individual and family safety, finances, relationships, and health care. Extension faculty have a commitment to strengthen Colorado's families through collaborative programs that improve family living skills, health and well-being, and decision-making abilities. A broad spectrum of people with interests in community issues bring diverse resources, skills and assets to create solutions and help empower at-risk families and transform their situations. Educational programs are localized to fit specific needs and problems while addressing concerns of citizens statewide.

Government Partnership Helps Limited-Resource Audiences Improve Health and Nutrition

Providing people with practical, usable skills and information as opposed to providing only food or food stamps is the most effective way to help them achieve good health and economic self-sufficiency. Well nourished, strong, productive families help ensure a continuing strong productive workforce. Colorado State University Extension delivers food and nutrition education programs to most Colorado counties through the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP) and the Extension Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), both funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Both focus on nutrition education for people with limited resources and both assist those audiences in getting the most nutrition for the lowest food cost.

Evaluations show that a high percentage of the participants adopt practices they learned in the lessons. Recent survey data indicated that EFNEP graduates are better able to use commodity foods, are better able to make informed decisions at the grocery store, are feeding their families more nutritiously and have reduced their food budget by an average of \$100 per month, allowing more disposable income.

Statewide comparisons of entry and exit questionnaires show that most FSNEP participants showed improvement in two or more nutrition practices, and one or more food resource management practices; 70 percent of the participants made large changes in eating habits; 71 percent eat more nutritiously, and 64 percent lowered their food budgets. Forty-two graduates in one county saved an average of \$91 a month on their food bills.

Collaborative Program Points The Way to Self-Sufficiency

Extension's Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in El Paso County is also collaborating in a multi-agency, interdisciplinary effort with Department of Social Services and Goodwill Industries to deliver services through "Project Success," a welfare reform demonstration project designed to help recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children become self-sufficient. Fifteen other human service agencies are also providing some support for these families. The program puts a strong emphasis on

budgeting and food purchasing to help families transition from food stamps to handling cash, as part of the Welfare Reform Act. About 300 families have successfully completed the program, and their graduation surveys show the following results--91 percent gained a high amount of nutrition information resulting in 86 percent who regularly eat a variety of foods, 69 percent who lowered their food expenditures, 86 percent who improved food shopping skills and 89 percent who reported that their families eat more nutritiously. Each graduate reported saving an average of \$146.60 on their monthly grocery bill.

Strengthening Families is Jacque Miller's Number-One Goal

An old African proverb says it takes an entire village to raise a child. And Jacque Miller, Colorado State University Extension Consumer and family agent in the San Luis Valley, believes it takes entire communities to strengthen families.

Miller partners with citizens, community groups and government agencies to help strengthen families in the San Luis Valley. Such programs as Dare to Be You, La Cocina Saludable and the Cooperative for Pro-Family Services touch on subjects as diverse as nutrition, parenting, literacy, self-esteem, problem-solving and decision-making. These are the fabric of the programs, which make families stronger and, in turn, empower entire communities to help citizens become more effective parents and employees.

"These partnerships are about fitting pieces together," Miller says. "It's like putting the pieces of a puzzle together, but the challenge is that the puzzle changes--it's fluid. When you begin a puzzle, there's a picture on the box showing what the puzzle will look like when it's finished. With a collaborative project, there's a vision and a passion that drives everyone, but it's not as clear as a picture on a box. That makes communication crucial."

When community concern about low literacy rates prompted community members to address the problem, Miller headed up a steering committee of local educators. Over the past year, the group established family centers in Alamosa, Monte Vista and San Luis. The Cooperative for Pro-Family Services that created the centers coordinates existing community services for working or single parents, foster parents, welfare recipients, migrants, teen mothers and learning-disabled parents. Services coordinated through the center include GED preparation, parenting education and English as a Second Language training.

"Adults with low reading levels, poor computer skills or limited math skills tap into these programs and resources to help them enhance their knowledge and ability and overcome barriers to their economic and professional goals," Miller said. Funding for the centers was provided through a State Strengthening Grant, received by Colorado State University's College of Applied Human Sciences. Pro-Family Services recently secured additional grant funding from the Colorado Department of Education for continued development of the centers.

"Although the centers are designed to address welfare reform, what's more important is that the centers are about family," Miller said. And, true to her word, family is the focus of other partnerships in which Miller is involved. Through Dare to be You, parents address such issues as self-esteem, communication, problem-solving and basic parenting skills, and through La Cocina Saludable, Miller partners with the federal government's Women, Infant and Children Program to help families lead a healthy lifestyle. Tailored for the area's Hispanic population, especially migrant workers, the program breaks through language barriers that often hinder proper nutrition habits and education by drawing on abuelas, elder Hispanic women who are highly regarded in the Hispanic culture, to teach healthy eating and food preparation.

Team Supports Parents Through Anger Management

Child abuse has become a problem of epidemic proportions. Nationally, more than 2.9 million reports are made annually; in Colorado, more than 34,000 investigations of child abuse were made last year. Preventing child abuse is second on the list of priorities for Coloradans. Research has shown that parents who abuse their children have been found to be less knowledgeable about parenting and child development, to have unrealistic expectations of their children and to use discipline techniques that are inappropriate for their children's level of development. When parents don't know how to react to a child's behavior or when they react primarily in anger, they are at greater risk of abusive behavior. More than \$402 million is spent annually in Colorado due to the failure to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Colorado State Extension agents in Douglas, El Paso, Larimer, Lincoln, Morgan and Routt counties along with Bob Fetsch, Extension human development specialist, have presented the research-based program, RETHINK--Anger Management for Parents--for several years. Partnering with parents to provide an educational program that combines parenting- skills development with child-development knowledge and anger-management skills, helps produce more competent parents and healthy children by reducing anger and violence levels in the home. Working together, educators assist parents in improved communications skills and increased knowledge that foster supportive family relationships. The program has indicated significant results from participants: 95 percent of those who took the weekly classes made positive behavioral changes; 95 percent increased knowledge of parenting and child development; 84 percent reduced anger levels; 77 percent reported better communication techniques; 77 percent reduced their violence levels; and 64 percent increased anger management skills.

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Partnering with Schools...

Colorado State University Extension has formed partnerships with Colorado schools to offer educational programs as part of the school day or after-school activities. These partnerships have been advantageous to the schools to allow them to enrich the classroom by accessing university resources for their community. The school/Extension relationship has reached 30,000 youth through programs in 28 counties. The nature of the program is guided by the needs of the local community. Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program is recognized by schools as a quality resource for information on nutrition, sciences, horticulture, agriculture and youth development.

"Earth Garden" Program Focuses On Collaboration in the Classroom

In several metropolitan area school districts, elementary school children learn the science and behavior of growing plants in a Extension developed project called "Earth Gardens." The Earth Garden Program is a collaborative effort involving Extension, the Colorado Foundation for Agriculture, Colorado Greenhouse Growers Association, Garden Centers of Colorado, Westminster Area Community Action Awareness Team, Colorado Service Center for Environmental Education, Metro Child Care, Metro Area School Districts, Future Farmers of America and Master Gardeners from Adams, Boulder and Jefferson counties. The year-round curriculum, developed by Extension agents in Adams and Boulder counties, focuses during the winter on in-class activities; during the spring months, students move outdoors to work on landscaping and planting community Gardens.

The Valley High School FFA Chapter grows 10,000 bedding plants for the students to transplant. Master Gardeners work with elementary school teachers and "pay back" volunteer time by providing subject matter expertise for the curriculum. More than 30 classrooms in the metro area are using the program to help youth learn about nature and the basic science related to plant growth. The children also get involved in hands-on 4-H Gardening projects through classroom experiments, planning and planting Gardens, and landscaping their schools. Enthusiasm from teachers has been widespread and they especially appreciate the assistance from Extension Master Gardeners. By-products of this program are the children's increased self-esteem and pride in school grounds, as well as an increased ability to work with others.

4-H Forms Partnerships With Colorado Schools

Extension programs offered through schools include a wide variety of subject matter and team efforts to meet localized needs. Examples of enrichment programs include all-terrain vehicle and riding mower safety clinics; educational programs on modern agriculture, food production and pest management through "Ag in the Classroom" and "Day in the Life of a Farmer;" science enrichment through "Bugs and Grub," SERIES (Science Experiences and Resources for Informal Educational Settings), SPACES, Mud and Muck, and chick embryology; and Gardening through soil science, plant production, mini greenhouses,

irrigation and other horticulture programs; and health through food pyramid and nutrition programs. Through the Denver Urban Resources Partnership, about 13,000 minority youth and adults are involved in natural resource, environmental education and Gardening programs through 91 community projects.

Food Service Workers Provide Link to Healthier Students

Rural and single-unit schools constitute 63 percent of public schools in Colorado. These schools traditionally function on tight budgets with limited food service personnel. Few area school lunch programs have the ability to analyze their menus. Typically, they function without computers or nutrient analysis software. Rather, they meet U.S. Department of Agriculture school lunch program requirements by using the meal pattern approach. With limitations on resources, nutrition education and personnel, it is difficult for these schools to meet the new USDA Healthy School Meals nutrient guidelines.

Colorado State University Extension educators in Kit Carson and Yuma counties worked with a team to provide basic nutrition and healthy food preparation education to food service personnel and to complete nutrient analysis on currently used school lunch menus in two area schools. Through pre and post testing, the food-service attendees demonstrated an increase in awareness and knowledge of nutrition/food service issues. Nutrient analysis of menus was completed prior to training. As a result, the targeted schools are modifying recipes to decrease fat content, increase fruits and vegetables and make changes in food purchasing and food preparation methods to reach nutrient goals.

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Partnering with the University...

The mission of land-grant universities has been to offer accessible higher education, to conduct research for the nation, and to provide public service to citizens in every state. Extension's role and connection within the higher education system helps to provide the public with access to knowledge that can improve their daily lives. Extension faculty facilitate outreach partnerships across the institution to respond to local needs, assist in the translation and application of research, make connections between communities and resources, and deliver programs to support lifelong learning and problem-solving at the community level. Public higher education continues to prove an invaluable investment--one that yields two, three or more dollars for every state dollar spent.

DeLaine Brown: Connecting Kids to Her Alma Mater

Every time DeLaine Brown, Colorado State University Extension director in Moffat County, answers the phone, she's providing a resource to those folks in her county that see her as the door to the university. She constantly makes the connections needed to provide her county residents with answers, resources and expertise. Through the hundreds of weekly phone calls she gets, or every time she runs into a county resident at the grocery store, she's regarded as the "local connection" to Colorado State.

So when a complex question was asked three years ago in a late-night conversation with members of a 4-H group she was chaperoning, Brown knew she might get an answer from the university to the question--"What am I going to do with my life?"

That age-old question about the future came up among girls attending the annual State 4-H Conference in Fort Collins. The girls said they weren't even sure how they could apply their general interests and talents to getting a college degree or a job. The next morning over breakfast, the local boys at the conference said they had similar concerns.

Brown's answer came in the form of a program to help Moffat County 4-H members get into the college or university of their choice. The result is an extraordinarily successful college-preparation program that has benefited 4-H members from Moffat County, as well as Colorado State University. Brown is well qualified to understand the concerns of young men and women in Craig. She was born and raised in that community and was a 4-H member. Brown attended Colorado State, where she earned her bachelor's degree in Consumer education.

Brown initiated the first step of the college-preparation program in 1996 when she brought seven high-school students from Craig to visit her alma mater. Before the visit, Brown helped the freshman to senior high school students decide what they wanted to know about the university. The group had met with Brown every month, and those meetings included talks about college and other career options.

Brown said she helps answer student questions such as, "If I have an interest in math and agriculture, where does that take me?" Agricultural economics might be a good choice, but if she can't answer a question, students look to their answers in Fort Collins. During campus visits, which now are conducted every two years, students meet with Colorado State faculty and department heads, tour specific areas of interest and attend classes. The students are required to meet by themselves with faculty and department heads. The visit to Colorado State is "a wonderful opportunity," Brown emphasized. "The university's staff make our young people feel special, and they get timely, first-hand information."

Extension Connects Rural Schools to University Through Science Outreach

A collaboration between area rural schools and Extension has worked to bring the university a little closer to the students in the southeast part of the state. Colorado State University's physics department brings its show right down to the kids' level with the Little Shop of Physics. The road-show features more than 80 hands-on experiments that use everyday objects to illustrate the basic principles of science. Demonstrations include levitating a bowling ball with air, using a cordless drill to generate electricity and creating sound effects with irrigation pipe. Brian Jones, physics lab coordinator and director of the "Little Shop" said the goal of reaching into rural schools is to expose youth to the basic concepts of physics and science in an engaging and interesting way. Graduate students present the experiments and then the team works with teachers to develop classroom materials that augment the learning. This type of university outreach activity coupled with 4-H school programs and science curricula, enable Extension agents to connect with the local community.

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4-H / Youth	Agriculture	Family/Consumer	Horticulture	Natural Resources	Nutrition Resources	County Offices	Home
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[1997 Annual Report](#)

Partnering with Youth...

Challenges facing Colorado's young people today are greater than ever before. Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program helps youth grow in life skills such as decision making and responsibility, self-esteem, and social and leadership skills. Youth participate in career exploration and gain important knowledge in areas such as nutrition, environmental responsibility and the sciences. The mission of Colorado State Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program is to help young people develop to their fullest potential and become self-directing, productive, contributing members of society through quality interaction with adults who demonstrate care and concern.

Nancy Zuschlag Channels Energy into Partnerships for Youth

Thanks to Nancy Zuschlag's efforts to partner with other organizations, Denver-area inner-city children learn about environmental responsibility and stewardship through new and established programs that inspire a genuine interest and excitement about science. Zuschlag is the Extension natural resources agent and program director for natural resources and environmental education in Jefferson County and the Denver metro area.

The efforts are grounded in Eagle's Nest and Owl's Roost, an environmental discovery 4-H program started more than 25 years ago for third and fourth grade students in the Jefferson County School District. The program teaches such social skills as decision making, leadership, responsibility and team work, while showing kids how they can make a difference in the environment. After completing the six-week camp, 90 percent of the students say they are committed to helping care for the environment. And interns, often former program participants, use their experiences as a spring-board to land their first job out of high school or while in college.

"This program not only gives children the opportunity to experience nature first-hand and learn that they make a difference, it also helps get entire communities involved in urban and rural environmental education," Zuschlag said. "Through the years, this program has involved more than 11,300 children. As a result, nearly 20,000 Denver-area parents are involved and learning about Colorado's natural resources through their children. We're also able to provide employment and mentoring experiences for students and teachers."

A host of other natural resource and 4-H-based partnerships are active in the Denver area. Among them is the Denver Urban Resources Partnership, which has an impact on the entire Denver metro community. DURP incorporates the efforts of 10 federal, state and local natural resource agencies, including Extension in Jefferson and Denver counties. Through educational coalitions and funding for projects, the program helps citizens make positive changes in their urban environment while learning about the state's rural foundation.

An environmental summer camp, a partnership that also includes the Aurora police and

fire departments and the Nuñez Foundation, is another DURP project that teaches about 40 inner-city kids responsible outdoor behavior and fishing skills. In addition to learning about natural resource conservation at the camp, the youth also develop social skills such as teamwork, cooperation and listening. Until they participated in the camps, many of the kids hadn't traveled outside the Denver area.

"These partnerships show that a spirit of cooperation between agencies can provide a model for the community," Zuschlag said. "Environmental and natural resource education benefits from partnerships through shared understanding and a wider network of perspectives. Federal, state and local agencies and community groups in partnerships work to enhance their collective expertise, empowering adults and youth to complete projects that have far reaching and positive community-building outcomes."

4-H Youth Development Program Connects with Youth

Colorado residents value their children and want to provide programs that will create positive futures for them. Community and family structures have become inadequate to help young people acquire all the knowledge, attitudes, skills and values they need to become positive, productive members of society. The Extension 4-H Youth Development Program has a long history of helping youth acquire these life skills. The 4-H Program is committed to deliver high-quality programs to Colorado youth and to help kids develop self esteem, social and leadership skills, career interests and sound knowledge in areas such as nutrition, environmental responsibility and the sciences.

Last year, more than 101,000 Colorado youth ages 5 to 19 participated in projects and activities through organized clubs, individual studies, after-school and school enrichment programs. Enrollments show a steady increase in participation and keep pace with population growth in Colorado by reaching a larger portion of the eligible population. Success is partially attributed to the diversity of the programs and to focusing programs on life skill development. Programs are directed to the real needs of youth and society by empowering youth to address issues and problems in their local communities. Contributing to the success of the 4-H program is the work of volunteers--10,455 adults and older youth dedicated time and knowledge to 4-H in 1997.

4-H Reaches Youth in Low-Income Housing Project

When the Fort Morgan School District documented a need in the late 1980s for after-school programs for elementary students, the Extension 4-H Youth Development Program began providing a one-day a week program for youth. The program has been on-going for eight years and recently expanded to target low-income youth who can't or don't participate in after-school programs and often end up home alone after school.

In cooperation with apartment managers at Gateway, the area's primary low-income housing complex, 4-H began a drop-in program to reach these youth with positive educational activities and community service projects. As many as 100 children have turned out for the weekly programs. The program efforts at Gateway have expanded to include a family adventure club offered in the evenings and a five-week daily summer program that serves 113 youth in this small community. Recent survey results from the children in the after-school programs indicated 94 percent felt good about helping their community, 93 percent learned better decision-making skills and 90 percent benefitted from working as a group. Adult volunteers indicated an improvement in attitudes among the "higher-risk" youth from participation in 4-H programs.

Extension Team Creates Workforce Preparation Tool

A program developed by 4-H/youth agents from Mesa, Eagle, Grand and Delta counties with assistance from Jan Carroll, Extension workforce preparation specialist, is aimed at

helping young people get a job. The "Tools for Your Future" notebook contains brief, easy-to-read sections that offer advice for youth on topics like filling out job, college or scholarship applications; resume writing and interviewing.

The team wanted to focus on helping 4-H members understand the importance of record-keeping and to document their accomplishments in sports, academics and other activities. The record-keeping skills kids learn through 4-H projects can be extremely valuable as they apply for jobs or for college. The project began as a result of the Extension 2000 challenge to create regional teams to develop new programs that provided client-oriented services with an impact. The resource is targeted mainly to young adults getting ready to enter the workforce or prepare for college. But the notebook also is designed to help 8- to 13-year-olds learn how to compile their accomplishments and experiences.

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