



Colorado State University  
Extension



# CSUE 4-H STEM AmeriCorps Program Success Story

Chelsea Lewis wants to be a teacher one day so the CSU Extension 4-H STEM AmeriCorps Program seemed a natural fit. Although she thought she would serve elementary school aged youth, she soon learned there was a greater need for STEM-related programming for middle school aged youth in Otero County. Chelsea's STEM program met afterschool three times a week. Youth enrolled ranged in age from 12 to 14 years old.

STEM-related topics like weather, body systems, and robotics—the class favorite—were taught. Chelsea gave youth informal instruction in robotics and they worked together to build and program their own robot as a team.

## A TYPICAL DAY

Chelsea gathers the day's supplies while at her local Extension office, drives to Rocky Ford Middle School and quietly begins setting-up her classroom. As soon as the bell rings, youth excitedly rush in to learn about what they will be doing. Chelsea starts by asking questions related to the topic of the day and then moves to a STEM-related activity. Youth wrap-up by filling out an exit ticket that highlights what they've learned that day. When they covered weather, Chelsea had youth forecast the weather for the following day and gave a prize to whoever was closest.

## OUTCOMES

Chelsea's program, although small in size, has a large impact. Youth who had not met the school's science requirement were given the opportunity to successfully complete the CSU Extension 4-H STEM AmeriCorps Program to recapture science credit. Chelsea worked closely with Rocky Ford Middle School to ensure her curriculum met the school board's requirements. Some of the youth who had not received a passing grade in their

science class nor utilized the opportunity to make-up the credit by attending summer school did receive credit for successfully completing Chelsea's STEM program.

Education plays an important role in Chelsea's life. She feels it important create a safe environment where youth can explore, learn, and grow. She built a rapport with the youth in her program by asking how they're doing not only in their classes but in their day-to-day lives as well. Chelsea is often referred to as their favorite teacher.

The CSU Extension 4-H STEM AmeriCorps Program, led by Chelsea, has helped each youth discover a new found appreciation for science, technology, engineering, and math. Youth reported an interest in learning more about STEM. Youth also discovered they can work successfully with others, that learning can be fun, and that school is important.

## NEXT STEPS

Chelsea, a freshman enrolled in community college, aspires to educate others. In addition to her service in the AmeriCorps program, Chelsea is enrolled in a two-year leadership program at her local community college. As part of this program, she is required to complete 120 hours of community service and an internship geared to assist in her career path. Chelsea will be able to use her service as an AmeriCorps member to satisfy the internship component of the leadership program.

Chelsea looks forward to continuing her service and to having an impact on more youth in her community. Although her STEM program started small, Chelsea has already grown the next program to 18 youth—including 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

## Chelsea Lewis Otero County



*"I learned that what I am doing with these students means something more to them than just another class. I feel very glad to have impacted their lives."*

-Chelsea  
CSUE 4-H STEM AmeriCorps Member



*"I learned a lot of stuff...my favorite is tornados. I learned how to make one and where to take shelter in case of one."*

-Jacob  
CSUE 4-H STEM AmeriCorps Youth