• L&T staff report

Clay targets were whistling out of trap launchers and skeet targets went whizzing by heads Sunday in an event that tested the abilities of area shotgunners – of both rookies and veterans of the sport.

The Seward County 4-H Sharp Shooters hosted their first ever benefit shoot Sunday at the Liberal Gun Club trap range. The trap shooters are part of the Seward County 4-H Shooting Sports teams, which include BB gun and air rifle shooters and an archery team recently formed. The benefit shoot was to raise funds for various equipment needs for the teams.

“For our first ever event, it went really well,” said shooting sports coordinator Larry Phillips. “We mixed it up pretty well with having competitors shoot trap at 16 yards, then moving them over to the skeet range and letting them have a go at 25 targets there – with some doubles mixed in. Then we went back to the trap range and put the adults back to 27 yards for 25 more targets.”

Shooting sports instructor Greg Standard designed the competition to mix the two disciplines

(trap and skeet) to provide a more balanced contest that didn't give one an advantage over the other, according to Phillips.

"Folks who are really good at trap aren't always as proficient at skeet," Phillips said. "And vice-versa. Everyone seemed to like the format."

Winning first place – and $150 – in the men's adult division was Riley Harrison of Hooker, Okla. Greg Standard took second, earning $100, and Steven's County Ag-Extension Agent and shooting sports coordinator Josh Morris took third and $50 for his efforts. Charles Chaloupek of Liberal won four boxes of shells for taking fourth, and three boxes of shells went to David Harrison for fifth place, and Jim Stoddard won sixth and two boxes of shells.

In the women's adult division, Joy Beasley of Kismet won the first-place plaque and Liberal's Sarah Bayouth took home the first-place plaque in the women's junior division.

In the men's junior division, Harrison Eakes of Plains won the first-place plaque, second went to Ashton Harrison of Texhoma, Okla., and the third-place plaque went to Evan Bayouth of Liberal.

Fourth place and four boxes of shells went to Jacob Ricks of Liberal, and fifth place was won by Blake Chaloupek, who earned three boxes of shells, and sixth place and two boxes of shells went to Brandon Yorio of Liberal.

"I was really thrilled to see some of our Sharp Shooters win some prizes today," Phillips said. "Especially since this is our first year shooting trap. Some of them have only been doing this for about three months.

"They've really made a lot of progress, and I couldn't be more proud of them," he added.

Having support from the community was key to making the event possible and successful, according to Phillips.

“We had some individuals and companies step up and donate funds, which allowed us to provide nice payouts and beautiful plaques,” he said. “I can’t thank them enough – they truly understood what a program like this can do for the kids, and that’s what it’s all about.”

Individuals and companies sponsoring the event included: Liberal Gun Club, Roger Crossman, Amy Ricks, Lowell and Cindy Frerichs, Bill Larrabee, Liberal Gasket Mfg. Co., Southwest Kansas Rifle & Pistol Club, Ozzie Ridings, Kismet Reloading & Supply, Mayriad Machine Co., Gary Gudgel with Top Dead Center and Perfect Timing Automotive, Southwest Glass and several anonymous donors.