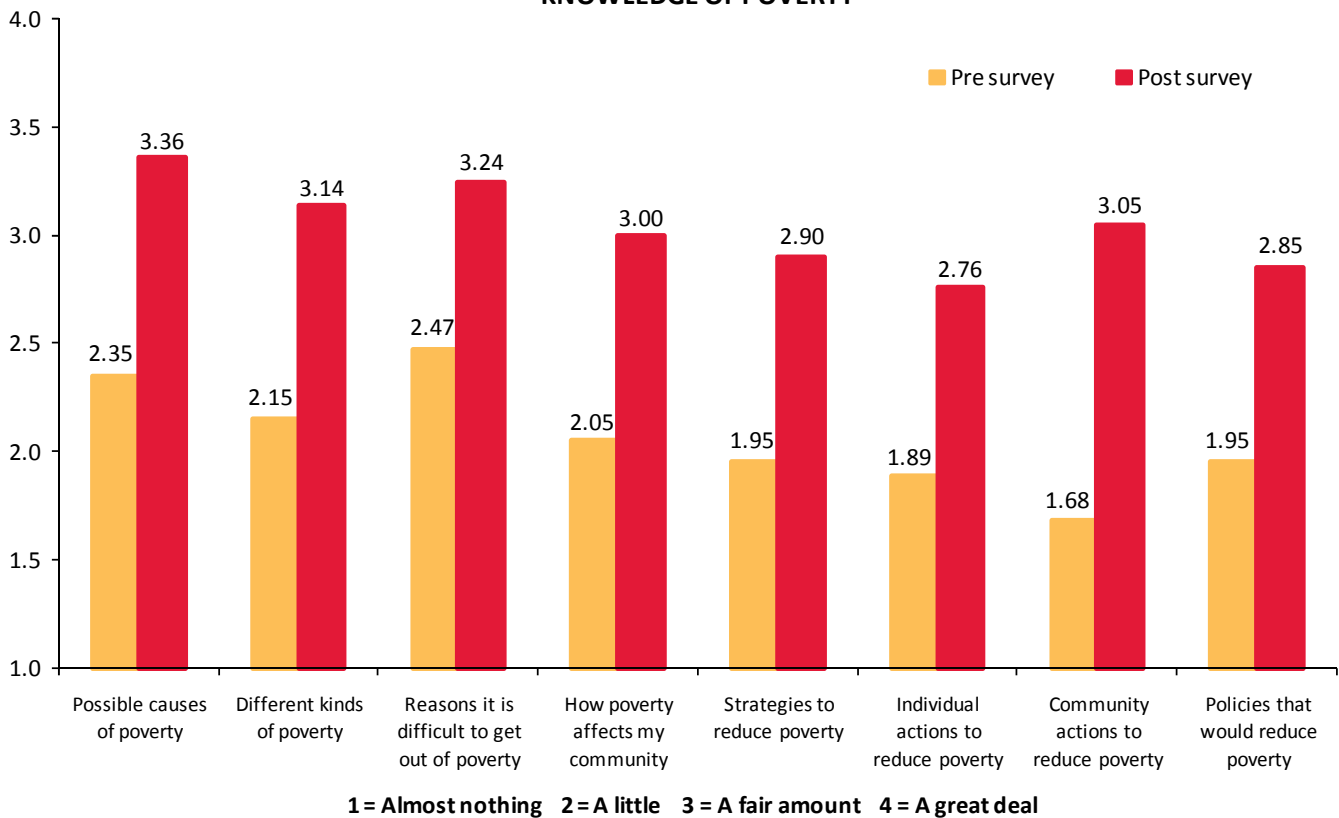


STUDY CIRCLES MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN BRIGHTON

Study Circles were the first phase of Brighton’s Horizons program. Led by trained local facilitators, small groups discussed demographic characteristics of the poor in the community, causes of poverty, and community-based solutions. After five two-hour conversations, an action forum was held to share poverty reduction strategies with members of all the local study circle groups.

Participants completed surveys to assess knowledge and attitudes toward poverty before and after the Study Circle experience. Brighton participants increased their knowledge about poverty, how it affects the community, and ways to reduce poverty. For example, participants—on average-- knew “a little” about strategies to reduce poverty before Study Circles, but reported knowing “a fair amount” after the five sessions. Survey results can be used in on-going Horizons discussions about ways to reduce poverty and build a thriving community.

**BRIGHTON [N=22]
COMPARISON BEFORE AND AFTER AVERAGE RATINGS
KNOWLEDGE OF POVERTY**



The Study Circles had a very positive effect on participants' attitudes. **86.3%** said they agreed that "we can make a positive difference in our community" and **77.3%** agreed that "we can work to help reduce poverty in our community." This "can do" spirit will move the Horizons project forward. In fact, actions are underway. At the conclusion of the Study Circle discussions, **54.5%** had already taken individual actions to reduce poverty. An informational welcome brochure was selected for short-term implementation. The other ideas will be revisited during the next two phases of Horizons -- LeadershipPlenty® and Visioning.

AN OUTCOME OF STUDY CIRCLES

The Communications Committee of the Brighton Horizons project has accomplished its first goal, an informational welcome brochure. Designed to connect Brighton area residents with the opportunities and services that will help them prosper, the brochures include information on the following categories: Assistance & Resources, Area Businesses, Community Organizations, Dining & Carry-Out, Area Churches, Recreation & Entertainment, Government, and Utilities. The seven-person committee of volunteers did all the design, content and assembly work. The first version of the brochure has been made available to the community at local businesses, including a licensed day care provider, the bank, gas stations and a retail location, and at city hall. A second version will be produced as the need arises, allowing for additions and corrections that are sure to come as more people get involved.



Horizons is an 18-month program carried out by Iowa State University Extension with funding from the Northwest Area Foundation.

To learn more about the Horizons program visit www.extension.iastate.edu/horizons/ or contact Ruth Freeman, Horizons Director, rofreema@iastate.edu; 515-386-3611.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
University Extension

www.extension.iastate.edu/horizons



... and justice for all

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Many materials can be made available in alternative formats for ADA clients. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964. Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating.