

Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative (NIFF)  
Fayette County Planning Team  
April 17, 2008 Minutes

The monthly meeting of the Fayette County Planning Team took place from 4:00pm – 6:00pm at the ISU Extension office in Fayette on April 17, 2008. Attendees as follows: Deb Kahler, Sheryl Struthers, Barbara Ashby, Martha Bartenhagen, Trudy Campbell, Christie Dennis, Gordon Murray-John, Gale Bishop, Joe Organist, Barb Schoenjahn, Dave Runyan, Alice Moeller, Donna Story, Sue Burrack, Scot Michelson, Paul Trafelet, Dan Burkhart, Ruth Schemmel, Brenda Ranum and Ann Mansfield.

Fresh vegetable snacks, goat sticks from Healthy Edge Meats, and cheese sticks were prepared and provided.

**Introductions** and sharing of news, comments etc. were made. A summary follows:

- Gave a presentation about our group at the West Union Lions Club in which he discussed safe routes to school and barriers to safe walking within the community with special attention to crossing Hwy 150 at or near the corner of Hwy 18 between town and Moore's Foods.
- Martha Stewart has been talking about "buy local"
- Read a story to children at the library about sugar bush and they had a tasting of local maple syrup.
- Wild Rose café and deli in Clermont strives to provide healthy meal alternatives and are likely to be using local foods in many of their offerings.
- Attended a meeting held by the Food & Farm Coalition discussing marketing of locally produced products
- Transplanted some of her apple trees and constructed barriers to keep the deer from damaging them.
- Shared information about our initiative with a Clayton County political group who were unaware.
- North Fayette Elementary Schools were looking for a new food service director and were focusing on a more nutritional diet.
- Working on a report and brochure about the Jensen Trail.
- Healthy Edge Meats will be grilling and selling goat at the Fayette Farmers Market – The market opens May 21.
- Food service staff at Starmont had as one of its goals to serve more local foods.
- Writing a physical education grant involving several area school districts focusing in "functional" fitness – physical fitness other than sports related activity.
- Growing vegetables and hopes to be involved in the farmers markets in both Fayette and West Union
- Talked about an article on how the world hunger crisis has been assisted by the globalized food market and suggested that the problem is not unique to third world countries – because of our reliance on global food markets, even the U.S. can very easily suffer from a deeper hunger crisis because we have outsourced our production of food.
- 2023 project in Elgin has a perspective on the quality of life issues and connecting the trail system between Elgin and Clermont.
- Working on his daughter's wedding reception (an event requiring physical as well as mental fitness)
- Reported on a visit to Starmont School
- County health officials were continuing to work on the baseline health assessment survey.
- Fox Produce had expanded its greenhouse space and was providing bedding plants for sale
- There was some group discussion regarding a possible presence by our group at the Fayette County Fair on July 24, during Wellness Day.

### **Summary of Regional Meeting**

Scot – asked for help from members to complete surveys of local parks with an inventory of park amenities. This includes a checklist and photos of each park and green space. The survey needs to be completed prior to May 15. Several people volunteered to help with the survey.

Gale - spoke about trail systems and displayed some local community maps with safe routes, walking trails etc. mapped out in an attractive format that could be used by the communities to promote their walking and biking infrastructure. He also talked about mapping the larger systems with connections to other states. UIU students have been working on these maps using GPS technology.

**1. Diversity Workshop** – At last month's Regional Meeting Deborah Walker and Rick Peinderhughes from the WKKF TAP team presented a 45 minute program on "Community Engagement from a Multicultural Perspective".

Interesting notes shared by regional team members were:

- Although we may not be as ethnically diverse in our county, we do share a good deal of diversity in age, experience, farm vs. town, and an "insider" vs. "outsider" culture.
- The tendency to view conflict as unsafe and therefore real issues may be set aside to in discussion to avoid being "impolite". We must understand that we need to present a safe environment to express differing opinions without feeling personally confronted – a condition of giving the benefit of the doubt to others that criticism of various viewpoints comes from a desire to genuinely spark real conversation rather than a personal attack.

- Change must be the result of a community asking for that change and cannot be imposed. The pace of change may be slower than we like but we must be patient.
- Immigration status may well be an issue of diversity affecting our region

**2. Work Group Reports:** - Scot reported on the built environment groups survey of existing park and green space facilities as above. Joe reported that the communications group worked on submitting a budget for promotional items, a display tool for exhibits, and completing a clear message to be used in our presentations and promotional literature.

Ann and Brenda Introduced a presentation of the short film “Celebrate What’s Right with the World”

Following the film group members gave thoughts about some of the things they thought were important about the film. Comments included:

- The film’s emphasis on “not best in the world, but best for the world” message.
- How just believing that something can be accomplished or that something positive does exist give you the strength to accomplish it or the ability to see the positive aspect.
- An idea that society needs to reject a zero sum game or winner take all mentality

Ann & Brenda presented the group with the working vision for our initiative that has been developed at the regional level:

*“NE Iowa is a unique place where all residents and guests experience, celebrate and promote healthy, locally grown food and abundant opportunities for physical activity and play EVERY DAY. Healthier people make stronger families and vibrant communities.”*

The group was asked to comment on and consider if they could see themselves in this statement. Comments included:

- Seeing NE Iowa as “unique” both in its landscape and culture
- Locally grown food is available and there is some structure in place to build from
- Capturing an idea that this is a shift in focus for all of us, not just residents but guests as well
- Language used gives a sense of “energy” (vibrant, celebrate, experience)
- Focuses on quality relationships connecting people to the land and opportunities for fitness but also connecting people to people building stronger communities.

Brenda introduced the hierarchy model proposed by WKKF used to work toward our goal and said we needed to present our goal to WKKF by Feb. We reviewed the steps we have taken so far – Receiving the Grant – organizing the county and regional teams – viewing the webcasts to assist in learning about ourselves, our communities and our region – establishing our core values = identity – creating a purpose that allows us to work toward our vision.

The creative tension model was used to illustrate how we do not want to use the tension between our present situation and our vision to be reduced by reacting to problems as they arise but instead to elevate the tension to create the essential “elements” necessary to work toward our vision. From our vision, we will move toward strategies in systems change and policy and the tactics we will use to work toward the vision. From the available tactics and activities we will then need to prioritize those we want to invest in.

Once the activities have been identified, we will then reach out to bring more people in to help in implementing and funding the activities we have identified.

Because we are a group of small counties, we have joined in this effort on a regional basis in an effort to be able to attract more outside interest because we can make a bigger impact on a larger population by banding together.

Brenda also stressed that one very important issue in choosing our activities is that they must be “sustainable”. Once the activities have been established they must be able to continue without being reliant on grant funding to operate. This is essential.

The next meeting was set for May 15<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm at the ISU extension in Fayette. Public Health will be sharing the results of the baseline health survey at that meeting.