

Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative  
Winneshiek County Planning Team  
May 21, 2008  
Meeting Minutes

**PRESENT:** Jerry Aulwes; Ron Bullerman; Donella Darrington; Rick Edwards; Karen Foster; Kent Foster; Julie Metcalf Cull; Joann Hagen; Elizabeth Kane; Craig Kitchen; Georgie Klevar; Janet Lambert; Lyle Luzum; Sue Luzum; Ann Mansfield; Alma Meyer; Eric Nordschow; Marissa Nordschow; Janelle Pavlovec; Betty Ransom; Brenda Ranum; Randy Schissel; Randy Uhl; Kelly Gaul; Kaitlyn Vaske; Johnice Cross; Krista Vanden Brink.

**SHARING:** During introductions and sharing the following food and fitness related items were mentioned:

- Review of an outdoor Farmer's Market shelter in Eau Claire, Wis. to possibly emulate in Decorah
- Lack of a local mill for grains for making bread, etc.
- Start of a new wellness program at Winneshiek Medical Center
- Attendance of a medical school graduation in St. Louis at which the speaker addressed many issues that parallel those undertaken by the FFI
- Winona, Mn. working on a project similar to FFI
- Iowa Communications Network (ICN) program on obesity
- Great Places progress with trail and community/aquatic center in Decorah
- Mini Ag Grants provided to producers from throughout the county
- Year 1 FFI report has been submitted to W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- 10-school workshop on food and fitness
- A K-3 fitness day camp
- Promotion of Artesian Fresh water from aquifer near Chester
- New WMC administrator is interested in FFI
- Community garden with 30-plus people showing interest
- Recruitment of elderly into exercise class
- Encouraging seniors to eat more fruits and vegetables
- Iowa Department of Inspection and Appeals does not object to public institutions serving whole foods without inspection
- Grown Locally continues work in producing meat, fruits, vegetables, herbs, etc.
- Contact of Congressman Latham for possible funding for Trout Run Trail project
- Brenda Ranum invited to Italy with an ISU project to learn about local food systems there
- Regional Team members are going to Detroit to meet with other Kellogg communities

**VISION:** The FFI vision statement, which is open to change in the future, was briefly discussed. It reads, “*Northeast Iowa is a unique place where all residents and guests experience, celebrate and promote healthy locally grown food with abundant opportunities for physical activity and play EVERY DAY. Healthier people make stronger families and vibrant communities.*”

**REGIONAL TEAMS:** The following was reported by the Regional Teams:

- The Communications group is seeking to identify summer events and dates where FFI displays and banners might be used in our county
- The Inclusive Team has selected 4 teams based on Horizon and Basics program participants. The four are Waukon, Postville, Oelwein and Elma. The team is looking at ways to engage diverse communities.
- The Built Environment Team is doing a 5-county assessment of sites. All counties struggle for sites in winter
- Resource Development has approved funding \$13,520 to hire a grant writer and for travel expenses; \$20,800 to hire a youth coordinator; \$29,900 for Inclusive Team projects such as community outreach through Hispanic radio ads and Spanish, Hebrew and Russian translation

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL:** Brenda Ranum announced the W.K. Kellogg Foundation is likely to seek Requests for Proposals (RFP's) in November 2008 to begin the implementation phase of the project. She said this is not a competitive grant, but rather Kellogg will fund any of the nine selected community projects if the community meets Kellogg criteria. Such criteria focuses on policy change. Assistance is needed from Kellogg to more clearly define “what is policy.” Brenda added that “all indications are that we are on the right track” with the Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative.

**PUBLIC HEALTH:** Winneshiek County Public Health Nurse Krista Vandenbrink presented a PowerPoint and led discussion on linking the health of our community with local healthy food and active living.

Krista's information was based on “key informant interviews” conducted in the five-county project area in February. Public health nurses in the five FFI counties are to create a “baseline of health status” in each county.

A key question asked of the participants was “What are some of the major health issues or unmet needs that you see?” Responses included: Inactivity, obesity, diabetes, battle of diabetes and chronic disease, immobility, high cost of medical care, funding the uninsured, high deductibles for the self-employed, uninsured children, access to health care, lack of access to services, need for specialized care not available in the community (psych services, dermatology, ENT, rehab and alcohol abuse treatment.)

Other questions asked of the participants in the five counties included information on health concerns, availability of health providers, food security and strengths and

weaknesses of the health care provided in each of the 5 counties. Comments in discussion after the PowerPoint included:

- Surprise we had such challenging health-care issues in the region
- Lack of health care insurance and good food
- There are food security issues
- Our issues are a mirror of what's happening throughout the country – “that the system is fundamentally broken”
- We have a sick-care system rather than a health-care system
- Affordability of health food is an issue (it usually costs more and often too much for many)
- But food is still relatively inexpensive
- We should teach our children to grow and process food at an early age
- Gardening is also a great physical fitness activity & psychologically healthy
- We have no local food system so we have no way to bring food costs down locally
- Convincing people to change to eating healthier foods is a bigger challenge than the supply and demand part of the food system
- We need to Educate/Provide Opportunities/Inspire
- We should have a school garden with students' parents invited to a seasons-end meal
- More local foods are beginning to appear in local restaurants and grocery stores

Krista said the public health nurses now plan to communicate the survey results to their respective communities and they plan to develop a county data profile on health issues.