

Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative
Winneshiek County Planning Team
Aug. 20, 2008
Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: Brenda Ranum, Ann Mansfield, Eric Nordschow, Dean Darling, Randy Uhl, Krista Vanden Brink, David Ranum, Donella Darrington, Rick Edwards, Betty Ransom, Karen Foster, Janelle Pavlovec, Craig Mosher, Alma Meyer, Johnice Cross, Liz Rog and Gordon Hunter.

INTRODUCTIONS: During introductions, participants were asked, “Thinking about the NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative Vision, name a key audience that we should take information to in the future.” Responses included: the general public, Luther students, business owners, producers, local media, consumers, retired adults, school children, the medical community, youths to parents, the general farming community, young parents, church congregations and food pantries.

FOOD SYSTEM WORKSHOP: Brenda Ranum told participants about the planned Aug. 27 event sponsored by the Northeast Iowa Food & Farm Coalition at the Dairy Center near Calmar. The event features speaker Don Dwyer, a consultant with 29 years of experience working in the greenhouse and horticulture industry. He will discuss “Developing an integrated food system in Northeast Iowa.”

Also speaking at the event are Mike Gooder and his wife, Rachel, who operate the Plantpeddler in Cresco.

Dwyer specializes in helping producers write business plans for their businesses.

PLANNING DEADLINE: Brenda announced that the W.K. Kellogg Foundation has extended the planning deadline from March 31, 2009 to Aug. 31, 2009. She said the extension came after requests from other Foundation projects throughout the nation. The local project did not seek an extension.

DETROIT NETWORKING CONFERENCE: Eric reported that 16 people recently attended a WKKF networking event in Detroit. He said many usable leads and ideas were obtained. Notes on the conference can be obtained by going to www.iowafoodandfitness.org and clicking on “Regional Team.”

REGIONAL TEAM SUMMARY:

- **Built Environment Committee** – Deneb Woods has been hired by RC&D to assist in the Safe Routes to School program. There are 17 school districts involved.
- **Youth Planning** – Lynette Anderson has been hired to work with youth. Policy advocacy has been discussed. Inventory of convenience stores and healthy food choices.
- **Community Health Assessment** – Applying for a Wellmark grant.

- School Engagement – Working on a school meeting with superintendents. Talking about a regional school group meeting each month to take information back to school wellness committees.
- Vision Deployment Matrix – Carolyn Corbin of Decorah, a former Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission staff member, has been hired to write the community action plan to complete the year-end report.
- Inclusive Team and Diversity Liaisons – Has targeted four communities (Postville, Elma, Oelwein and Elkader) in the region. Plant closings in several communities are an issue. Flooding in Elkader took out low income and elderly housing.
- Communication & Events Planning – A TAP member will meet Sept. 8-10 with a group to develop an action plan and communication plan. A hog roast is planned.

WEBCAST: “Northeast Iowa’s Theory of Change.” The FFI will use this model to describe and create a map for the Community Action Plan which will make Northeast Iowa 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.

An explicit theory of success allows an organization to continually test the impact of planned actions and assess whether these actions are having a net positive or negative effect on the initiative’s overall success.

Quality Relationships lead to Quality Thinking. Examples of Quality Thinking include:

- NIFF Coalition – broad range of people growing, selling and buying local foods
- Community garden in Decorah
- After school grants in Waukon and Postville
- Safe Routes to School

Quality Action includes:

- Waukon – established policies for community garden
- Volga – community garden started on a small city lot but now needing more space
- Decorah – may change location of the community garden
- NIFF Coalition followed policy of buying fruits and vegetables to the state level; change occurred so more local foods can be purchased by institutions
- City councils are address the issue of walkability
- State policy change created by Cattlemen’s Association regarding local food

Quality Action leads to Quality Results:

- Expansion of farmer’s markets in the region
- Expansion of food & fiber enterprises in the five-county region
- Buy Fresh, Buy Local directory moving toward sustainability
- Expansion of Oneota Food Coop
- Paving the bike trail from Cresco to Calmar
- Farmers market in every town in Howard County