

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

## University Extension



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*Get inside Extension and discover how we support healthy people, healthy environments, and healthy economies. Read about some of the ways ISU Extension meets local needs, improves quality of life, and helps make Hamilton County a better place to live. You'll be amazed at what we do.*

Brett Ahrens

*Extension Council Chair*

James L. Patton

*Regional Extension Education Director*

### Healthy Communities: Developing Dynamic Leaders

Thirteen Hamilton County leaders participated in the Developing Dynamic Leaders Program. This program focused on maximizing the leadership strengths and skills of each participating individual. It also offered a combination of research-based instruction, proven leadership techniques, dynamic group interaction and a forum for innovative leadership ideas.

Program sponsorship came from Hamilton County ISU Extension, Hamilton County S.E.E.D., Webster City Area Development and the Enhance Hamilton County Foundation.



### Healthy Environments example

Two out of three Americans are overweight because they are eating more and moving less! Unhealthy eating and physical activity habits come with a price tag. One weight-related disease, hypertension, is on the rise. People want to make healthy choices but lack motivation and accurate information. The worksite wellness program **Eating Well Moving More** was provided as a pilot project for all of the Jewell Implement employees. Participants received a pre and post screening, bi-weekly newsletters, pedometers, strength bands, DASH diet and healthy eating guidelines.

The program helped employees make lifestyle changes in four areas that influence hypertension including weight, physical activity, diet and sodium intake. Employees completed the program as part of a pilot study in cooperation with ISU Extension, Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield and Farm Bureau insurance, showing improvement in blood pressure levels and healthy eating habits.



**Pictured, L-R:** (front) Judi Meyer, Gayle Olson, Richard Carlson. (back) Bob Walker, Brett Ahrens, Tim Blomgren, Alberta Voge, Don Heck, Dawn Holdgrafer

## Hamilton County Extension Council

Every Iowa county has an elected Extension Council that guides local educational programming by partnering with staff. From needs assessment through program implementation and evaluation of outcomes, the council represents the issues and people of the county.

We have identified these local issues as priority topics for current and future programming:

- Youth/Adult Relationships
- Agricultural Economic Development
- Parenting Education
- Community Economic Development
- Safe Environment for Kids
- Growing Iowa's Bioeconomy
- Financial Literacy
- Leadership Development
- Quality Childcare
- New Agricultural Enterprises
- Expanding Markets for Businesses



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## First Lego League (FLL)

The Hamilton County 4-H program is engaging in a new program First Lego League (FLL). They were recipients of a grant funded in part by Rockwell Collins of Cedar Rapids, to purchase their initial kit and registration fees for their first year involvement. The program will inspire youth, ages 9–14, to participate in science and technology. It has two parts: a robot game and a project. In the robot game teams design, build, program, and test autonomous robots that must perform a series of tasks, or missions. In the project, teams conduct research and create a technological or engineering solution to an aspect of the Challenge and present that solution.

They will learn problem solving and expand their creativity through real-world problems, by competing in a new scientific theme each year. The young people and their adult mentors will learn to work as a team, building, and programming, testing and investigating solutions to real-world problems. Participants will have the opportunity to compete with peers in high-energy tournaments and present their solutions to a panel of judges. The FLL program will provide a fun, creative, hands-on learning approach for the youth to experiment using robotics.

## Healthy People: Powerful Tools for Caregivers

Eighteen Hamilton County citizens are now better adult caregivers. *Powerful Tools for Caregivers*, an educational series designed to provide tools caregivers need to take care of themselves, was offered in Webster City and Jewell. Participants learned how to reduce stress, improve self-confidence, better communicate feelings, balance their life, increase ability to make tough decisions and locate helpful resources.

Local sponsors included Southfield Wellness Community, Iowa State University Extension, Hamilton County Public Health, the Webster City Ministerial Association, Elderbridge Area on Aging, Becker Funeral and Cremation Services, Family Pharmacy – Jewell, Stratford & Dayton, First American Bank Iowa, and Bethesda Lutheran Church.



Our “Dream Builders” will be working on “Smart Move” solutions in the coming weeks. Pictured above L-R: John Owens, Ty Eklund and Colin Heinrichs.

## Horticulture is Growing in Hamilton County

With a national increased interest in gardening, many county residents also picked up the spade for the first time and planted a garden. Yvonne Nilles, Consumer Horticulturist, helped to answer questions for many first-time gardeners; hot topics included tomatoes, and ranged from apples to zucchini.

The unusually wet weather also brought an increase in tree and plant disease questions from our area residents throughout the season.

Hamilton County Master Gardeners and Interns reported over 380 volunteer hours for 2008, and have been busy establishing community plantings and volunteer projects throughout the county.



**Pictured, L-R:** Judy Hartnett, Richard Carlson, Yvonne Nilles and Carol Main attended a landscape workshop held.