

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 Polk County a better place to live. You'll be amazed at what we do.

Jeannie Tatro

Extension Council Chair

Jeanine Baldwin

County Extension Education Director

Healthy People

In 2007-2008, ISU Extension in Polk County took leadership to gather baseline Body Mass Index (BMI) data on first and fifth graders in Polk County. Knowing the health profile of the school children give guidance to decision leaders on what needs to be done to increase the health of our school children. Over 65% of the first and fifth graders in the county were included in the study. To learn more about the baseline funding visit www.healthypolk.org.

32,200 families received monthly school wellness newsletters for school year 2007-2008. The newsletter was provided electronically to schools and included in their existing newsletters sent home to parents. The newsletter provided important information on nutrition, physical activity and how parents could support both in their family time.

ISU Extension in Polk County provides nutrition education to more than 3,000 low income youth annually and works with 75 local teachers to enhance the quality of physical education classes for 16,000 students. ISU Extension is



also making a difference through the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP), which last year alone provided more than 300 families education on making positive nutrition choices. EFNEP also stresses the importance of physical activity and shares innovative ways to shop smarter and save money.

Polk 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.

Your representatives are:

Harold Hommes, Des Moines
Tim McCarthy, West Des Moines
Jaime Naig, Des Moines
Judith Pim, Bondurant
Evan Stadlman, Ankeny
Jeannie Tatro, Altoona
Patricia Tice, West Des Moines
Carol Zeigler, West Des Moines

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

- Growing 4-H Youth Development Programs
- Expanding Horticulture Education
- Rural/Urban Communication and Relationships
- Healthy Iowans
- Quality Child Care
- Afterschool Programming



We connect you to Iowa State University.

We are your local link to make connections for campus enrollment, continuing education, campus visits, campus exhibits, conferences, camps, and sporting events.

Healthy Environments



The 2007 Community Tree Steward class met six evenings at various locations around Polk County in May and June for the thirty some participants to learn proper tree identification and care. One of the volunteer opportunities available to graduates was to participate in the Des Moines Street Tree Inventory. Street trees are any trees located between the sidewalk and curb. Volunteers identified and rated the health of all the street trees within a certain area and the results were tabulated so that maintenance can be done by city crews as needed and budget allows.



Polk County Master Gardeners have a number of on-going projects which promote horticulture education sharing. Talks for the public are held at the Demonstration Garden in Urbandale, the Discovery Garden at the Iowa State Fair grounds and the Enabling Garden in Altoona. A tour of private home gardens is open one Saturday in June which also allows the public to gather ideas on ways to keep the environment (and themselves) healthy.

A "Home Landscape Design" class was developed and offered to the community in April 2007. Local landscape design firms participated in working with class participants in developing environmentally friendly designs for their own home.

Healthy Economies

Investing in quality child care is good business; every dollar invested yields an additional 66 cents for Iowa's economy. Sixty-seven percent of Iowa children up to age 12 need child care while their parents work. But research shows that 80 percent of Iowa's child care is of poor quality. To improve child care quality, ISU Extension offers local training, evaluation and consultation through programs such as the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale and New Staff Orientation. Nearly 100 central Iowa providers, who care for approximately 3,000 children, have earned at least one star.

We make an Impact



For the fifth year, ISU Extension in Polk County has provided food safety certification and education in cooperation with the Iowa Restaurant Association. 234 participants completed the eight hour training with 83% passing the certification exam. Restaurants, fast food businesses, grocery stores, schools and senior living programs came from 21 different counties for the training.

... and justice for all

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