

2011 Points of Pride



Franklin 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.

Franklin County Council members are:

Jack Clark, Chair
Merrill Ahrens, Vice-Chair
Marsha Miller, Secretary
Gary Stenzel, Treasurer
Darwin Arends
Carolyn Oleson
Ian Plagge
Jane Schmitt
Jodi Wohlford

County Extension Staff

Beverly Peters
County Extension Coordinator
Jackie Dohlman
County Youth Coordinator
Michelle Sackville
PROSPER Coordinator
Traci Kloetzer
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Families Program Assistant
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Get inside Extension and discover how we support healthy people, environments, and economies. Read about some of the ways ISU Extension and Outreach meets local needs, improves quality of life, and helps make Franklin County a better place to live. You'll be amazed at what we do.

Jack Clark
Extension Council Chair

Beverly Peters
County Extension Coordinator

Healthy People

PROSPER is in its 11th year in Franklin County. This past year the program expanded to include CAL school. A new school based program called Life Skills Training, aimed at helping youth make healthy lifestyle choices, was introduced, and is being taught to all 7th and 8th graders in the Hampton-Dumont and CAL schools. Strengthening Families is offered to all 6th graders and their parents every January – March. For every dollar invested in the PROSPER program, there is a savings of \$9.60.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a series of 4 classes to empower family caregivers of older adults to take better care of themselves. Tools learned help them reduce stress, improve care giving confidence, establish a balance in their lives, communicate their needs, make tough decision, and locate



helpful resources. Trained facilitator Jane Schmitt offers the program in Franklin County.

Healthy Environments

Weather and insects created diverse issues with trees. The wet weather of the past few years caused evergreens to die due to the lack of oxygen in the soil. The spread of the emerald ash borer presents a future threat of killing healthy ash trees. Planning for the future by planting a diversity of trees for windbreaks, erosion control, and wildlife habitat can help overcome future tree loss.

This year also saw more interest in growing our own food whether for personal use, farmers markets, or selling to schools and food establishments. This trend will continue.

Franklin County 6th and 7th grade 4-H members had a new opportunity in June to join campers from Cerro Gordo, Worth, Floyd and Mitchell at Cedar Springs Camp, near Floyd, Iowa for a one night camp focusing on the outdoor environment.

4-H members learned about outdoor environment through several activities at camp. Members participated in scavenger hunts to identify trees, insects and wildlife tracks, listened to wildlife specialists, and did community service by helping clear the camp grounds of overgrown brush. Campers also had fun on a water slide, tubing on the river, and cooking over a campfire.



Healthy Economies

Some senior citizens are having problems paying for healthy food. A new program was presented at Senior Centers in Franklin County of the changes in the food assistance program and increased income guidelines. Seniors were also encouraged to take part in the Senior Nutrition Program available through Farmers Markets. As a result, more seniors did take advantage of help to apply for the Food Assistance Program.

The "Getting Ahead" series is designed to increase understanding, learning, and practices of workplace essential soft skills. Brenda Schmitt, Iowa State University Extension Resource Management Specialist, presented a series of four programs for the business community at the Center One Chamber Office in Hampton. Topics included Time Management, Communication Skills, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, and Team Building. The programs were held from 12:00 to 1:30 pm and included lunch. Sponsors of the series were the Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce and the ISU Franklin County Extension Office.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

The Earned Income Tax Credit is the federal government's largest anti-poverty program reducing the tax burden and supplementing wages for those workers. With great commitment from volunteers and communities, ISU Extension and Outreach increased the amount of returns electronically filed by 44% from last year. More than \$128,533 worth of Earned Income Tax Credits were captured and \$34,000 saved in tax preparation fees were returned to the local economy. Members of the deaf and Hispanic communities were among those served. With an average income of less than \$14,500, those utilizing this free service can make the most of their money and find financial stability.

Besides providing free tax preparation and e-filing, VITA volunteers provided information on financial asset-building resources like budgeting workshops, free credit report reviews, Food Assistance Program, Rent Reimbursement Program, foreclosure assistance and small business workshops.

Given the current state of the economy, ISU Extension anticipates an even greater need during the 2012 tax season.



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Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating.

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