



AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

May/June 2003

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NEIGHBOR-TO-NEIGHBOR

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CARM'S COMMENTS: Carmen Schacht

The Neighbor-to-Neighbor Program is a volunteer activity that matches people who have experienced a disability with a newly disabled person. In the years I have been in AgrAbility, I have found many opportunities to be a good neighbor to several people. I have a passion for people with disabilities and it doesn't matter to me if you have a completely different disability than I do. I feel that with all of us working together, we can help each other overcome the challenges that a newly acquired disability may bring. You can teach me how you have done a task and I can help you learn more about the things that I have had difficulty with. There may be several moments when we will remember that so and so had a good idea.

When I think of matching people for the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program there are

things that come to mind that will make someone a good match, other than the fact that you may have a different disability than I do. There are similarities in problems we encounter. Also, we might both enjoy getting on the computer, reading a good book, cooking, being outside with nature or with the farm animals, or just enjoy other people like I do. Part of this experience has come from the wonderful group of people I have come to know through the Freewheeler's Friends and Family group. We have people with MS, Muscular Dystrophy, quadriplegia, neuropathy, polio, severe depression and arthritis. The spouses join us and we look forward to getting together and learning many things from each other and have become like a big, happy family.

If there is anyone who passed up the opportunity to become familiar with the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program, I'm sure Marcy would be glad to hear from you. We can never have too many people helping one another have an easier life through our experiences. (CS)

NEIGHBOR-TO-NEIGHBOR: Marcy Thomas

How does the Neighbor-to-Neighbor (N-N) program work? The N-N program matches veteran consumers, people who have already "been there," with individuals

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who have been recently disabled or are new to the AgrAbility program. The role of a N-N volunteer is to offer friendship and support to these individuals.

How are people matched? Matches are typically made between people who share similar interests, not just similar disabilities. New consumers can choose whether they would prefer to be matched with an individual or with a couple.

How do matches meet? Because AgrAbility serves the entire state of Iowa, matches may or may not live near each other. The interaction between Neighbors is usually done by phone or by e-mail, once or twice a month. If both sides of the match are comfortable with the idea of meeting, they may choose to meet in person. AgrAbility staff can arrange and attend meetings to help both partners get acquainted, if desired.

How can I become a N-N volunteer? Your primary role as a N-N volunteer is to provide a listening ear for your match. All volunteers must successfully complete an application process and participate in informational meetings before they are matched. Update sessions will also be offered periodically. Contact Program Specialist, Marcy Thomas (515-294-8522) for details.

How can I receive N-N support? Very often, people who have recently experienced a disability just need to talk with someone who has already gone through a similar experience. If you are interested in receiving N-N support, contact an AgrAbility staff member for more information. You will be asked to fill out an application form and an interest checklist.

BRINGING IN BACKYARD CROPS: Tara Nielson

America's number one outdoor leisure activity is gardening. According to Diane Relf, Horticulture Extension Specialist from Virginia Polytech, gardening can be very therapeutic as well as a rewarding hobby. Even gardeners who have lost physical ability can continue to garden with proper modification of the site.

The Buehler Enabling Garden at the Chicago Botanic Garden is a wonderful example of gardens that are accessible for all ages and abilities. The gardens feature raised beds, hanging baskets that are made to lower and raise, vertical wall gardens, water features, and much more. Chicago's Botanic Garden is an excellent place to visit or contact for ideas when creating your own raised garden.

Having the right tools is important for any endeavor. Gardenscapetools.com recommends long-handled tools made of plastic or aluminum, which require less strength to maneuver than tools made of a heavier metal. Wearing gloves can also improve tool grasp.

For more information on gardening for all abilities visit the following Web sites:

www.reimangardens.iastate.edu

www.chicagobotanic.org/therapy/HortTherapyArticle.html

www.gardenscapetools.com/pages/enablingtools.htm

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

A series of workshops on developing manure management plans, sponsored by ISU Extension, will be held through the end of the year. Workshops will be conducted in

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17 counties in northwest Iowa. A \$25 fee will include lunch and all necessary manure plan forms. For more information contact Kris Kohl at (712) 732-5056, or the Iowa Pork Industry Center website:

www.extension.iastate.edu/ipic

For those participating in the direct and counter-cyclical, Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance or the conservation reserve program or apply for commodity loans and loan deficiency payments must report their acreage to the FSA by June 30. For more information contact your county Farm Bureau office or FSA.

AGRABILITY FRIENDS AND FAMILY

There are no planned activities for the month of June or July. Look for the August events to appear in the July newsletter.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

"I can't imagine a person becoming a success who doesn't give this game of life everything he's got." – Walter Cronkite

IOWA AGRABILITY - A joint effort of ISU Extension and the Farm Family Rehabilitation Management (FaRM) Program of Easter Seals Iowa. The program can help farm family members with a disability stay in farming.

This newsletter from the Iowa AgrAbility Project will be sent monthly to AgrAbility families and other interested individuals. Please send comments and suggestions to:

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