

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

University Extension

Boone residents adding activity to healthier life style

Boone County Extension is an active partner in improving the health of county residents. And active is a key word, when you consider the projects that have been completed since January 2006 when Extension facilitated the creation of a community coalition, Iowans Fit for Life (IFFL). Coalition members – Boone County Hospital Foundation, Boone County Extension, Boone Community Schools, the Boone Postmaster, the City Engineer, Public Health, Walmart and members of the community – are all about improving access to physical activity and access to fruits and vegetables.

During the summer of 2006, the coalition built a public track at the Boone Middle School – with funding coming from a \$10,000 Iowa Department of Public Health grant. The cooperation between IFFL agencies and citizens made it possible to achieve the grant's purpose of improving the health of Boone County citizens and the community as a whole. Once completed, elderly, parents with baby strollers, pets, joggers, walkers and many others found the track to be an ideal place to exercise. The City of Boone's Johnny Appleseed program improved the aesthetics of the area by planting 100's of trees nearby.

The coalition kicked off a "Safe Routes to School" project in 2008 with an additional \$20,000 in funding from Iowa Department of Transportation. Through this project, educational opportunities related to walking and biking to school are being improved and implemented. Those activities include a bike rodeo, walking school bus, Go the Distance day, National Walk to School Day, marketing and public forum and student BMI measurements. The second phase of this project, adding infrastructure to improve the safety of these routes is also being investigated.



“These projects offer Boone residents another option for outdoor activity. Many people use the track – to walk or run outside and not worry about traffic or how far they are getting from home, and they can easily record distance if they want.”

- Sara Behn, Boone County Hospital Foundation

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February 2008

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