

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

University Extension

4-H provides afterschool care to Council Bluffs Hispanic community

The Hispanic population of Council Bluffs is growing rapidly. *Centro Latino* provides evening care for children of parents attending night classes to learn English. The classes meet two times a week, year around, in space donated by Broadway Methodist Church in downtown Council Bluffs. Still, *Centro Latino* has been hard pressed to pay expenses and provide supplies for the children.

Iowa 4-H foundation sponsored a \$4,000 afterschool grant to assist in providing some of the needed services at *Centro Latino*. Mary Kouris and Rachel Summy, 4-H program assistants for Iowa State University Extension, West Pottawattamie County, also assisted by presenting information on “Growing in the Garden” and “Healthy Choices for Healthy Bodies.”



Thirty-two youth were served by ISU Extension at the Center. In addition, four *Centro Latino* staff members were introduced to 4-H curricula and the 4-H Positive Youth Development philosophy. In all, Extension delivered 96 hours of programming and 13

hours of training for Center staff.

Evening care director, Maria Garcia, said concepts from the 4-H Positive Youth Development philosophy helped to significantly reduce behavior problems at the Center. “Having Mary and Rachel come to the evening sessions and do lessons with the children was very fun. The children looked forward to learning new things and were very excited to share what they had done that evening with their parents.”

“These parents are working hard to transition into their new surroundings and want very much to learn English. Thanks to the evening care provided at no cost to them, they can attend English classes without worry that their children are being cared for in a safe environment. The 4-H grant and programming of ISU Extension came at just the right time to allow us to continue offering this service—thank-you, thank-you, thank-you!”
—Carol Thien, *Centro Latino* staff

For more information about this and other ISU Extension programs, contact Mary Kramer, 4-H youth development field specialist, West Pottawattamie County Extension, 712-366-7070, mkramer@iastate.edu