

Community Visioning Launches Marble Rock After-school Program

It's 4:15 and the big yellow school bus screeches to a stop on Marble Rock's nearly deserted main street. The bus driver pulls the handle to open the doors while the elementary kids are ready like horses at a starting gate to spring off the bus. The door pops open and the kids swoop out of the bus with Barbie and Minnesota backpacks that carry home work and projects from school. As the kids in grade K-4 sprint up the sidewalk, it may look like they are heading home, but instead veer off to the town library door. Instead of going home to an empty house, they are racing to Marble Rock's afterschool program.

Once inside, off come the backpacks and coats. They now race to a table for a snack. After that, it is homework and reading time. Once homework is done, it's activity time. It could be anything that day: a lesson on agriculture from the Farm Bureau's Ag in the Classroom teacher, the county naturalist teaching about animals, or learning about rockets and shooting them off using one of the E-Set Kits from Iowa State University Extension.



This daily afterschool program was a priority action project during the Marble Rock **Horizons** visioning process. Two local school bus drivers, Carol Wreghitt and Beverly Fisher became members of the work group that supported the project. As the afterschool program moved from the visioning to action stage, Carol and Bev, with assistance from Extension families specialist Brenda Schmidt, Floyd County Extension Education Director Greg Reese, and 4-H Field Specialist Kendra Crooks created a sustainable program structure and activity resources.

The program is now five months old and still evolving. Local citizens, both young and old, have stepped forward to help. A part-time teacher now heads up the program, and middle and high school age students and retired citizens volunteer their time. Even though the Horizons program has completed, ISU Extension continues to assist with programming ideas, grant writing and developing the after school program's policies.

The Horizons program helps communities build stronger leaders to address economic issues and find ways to implement change. It is directed by Iowa State University Extension with funding from the Northwest Area Foundation.



For more information contact the Floyd County Office at 641-228-1453. Information is also available at www.extension.iastate.edu/Floyd

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