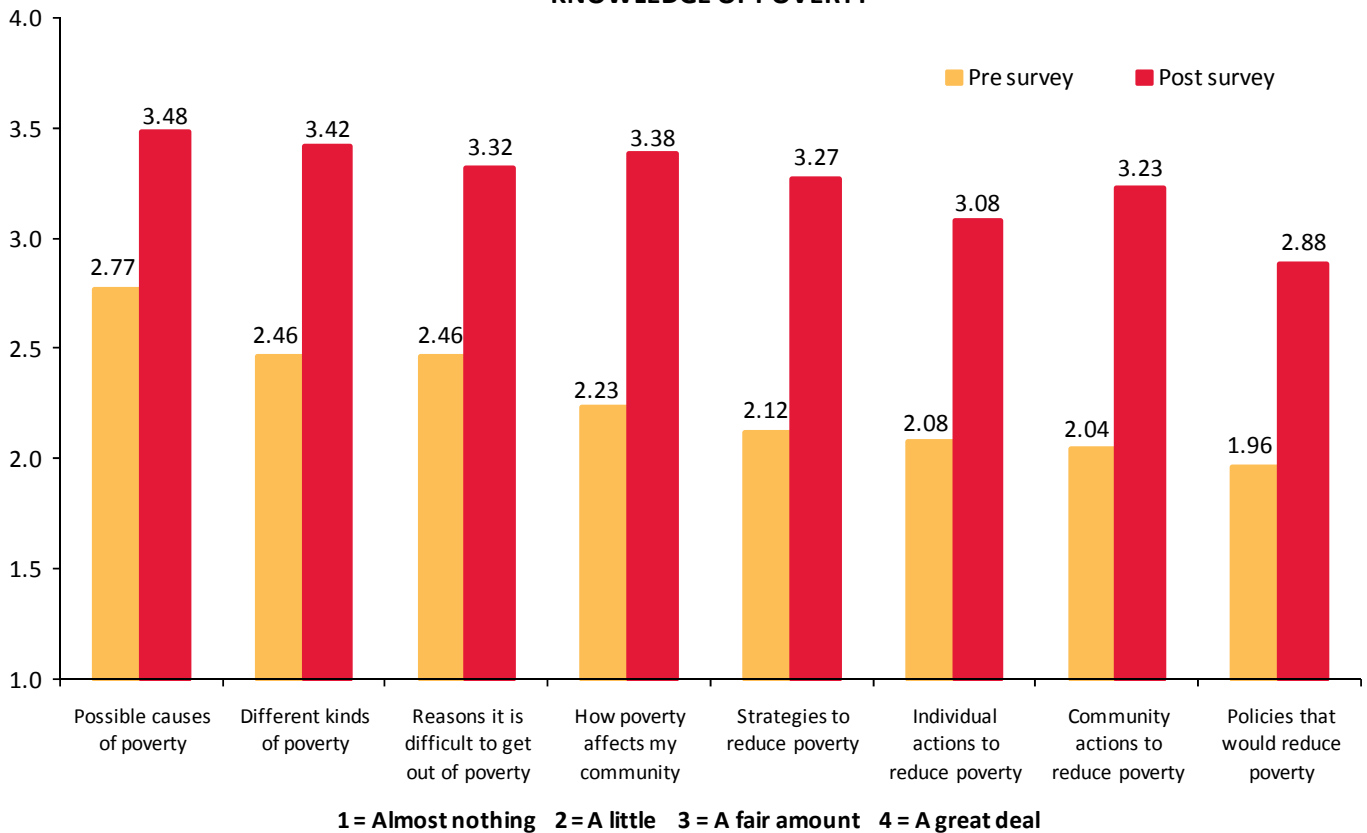


**STUDY CIRCLES MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN DUNLAP**

Study Circles were the first phase of Dunlap’s Horizons program. Led by trained local facilitators, small groups discussed demographic characteristics of the poor in the community, causes of poverty, and community-based solutions. After five two-hour conversations, an action forum was held to share poverty reduction strategies with members of all the local study circle groups.

Participants completed surveys to assess knowledge and attitudes toward poverty before and after the Study Circle experience. Dunlap participants increased their knowledge about poverty, how it affects the community, and ways to reduce poverty. For example, participants—on average-- knew “a little” about strategies to reduce poverty before Study Circles, but reported knowing “a fair amount” after the five sessions. Survey results can be used in on-going Horizons discussions about ways to reduce poverty and build a thriving community.

**DUNLAP [N=28]  
COMPARISON BEFORE AND AFTER AVERAGE RATINGS  
KNOWLEDGE OF POVERTY**



The Study Circles had a very positive effect on participants' attitudes. **89.3%** said they agreed that "we can make a positive difference in our community" and **78.5%** agreed that "we can work to help reduce poverty in our community." This "can do" spirit will move the Horizons project forward. In fact, actions are underway. At the conclusion of the Study Circle discussions, **67.9%** had already taken individual actions to reduce poverty and **53.6%** reported they would speak out or support policy changes to reduce poverty.

## OUTCOMES OF STUDY CIRCLES

A Community Action Forum was held in Dunlap on November 16, 2008 with 28 community members in attendance.

Prioritized Action Ideas included:

- 1) Green Pantry for Food and Clothing
- 2) Youth Mentoring Program
- 3) Dunlap City Wide Extreme Makeover

Other ideas generated included a Dunlap celebration, call system for support and resources, development of a community resource guide and public education presentations.

Dunlap residents have been working on several of the action ideas through committees and the Leadership Plenty® Program and will revisit all ideas during the Community Visioning Process to be held June – August, 2009.



Horizons is an 18-month program carried out by Iowa State University Extension with funding from the Northwest Area Foundation.

To learn more about the Horizons program visit [www.extension.iastate.edu/horizons/](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/horizons/) or contact Ruth Freeman, Horizons Director, [rofreema@iastate.edu](mailto:rofreema@iastate.edu); 515-386-3611.

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reduce poverty*

... and justice for all

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