Meeting the Needs of Iowans in 2016

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ISU Extension and Outreach provides educational opportunities for economic development, agriculture and natural resources, human sciences and K-12 youth outreach. We meet local needs, so Madison County can be an even better place to live now and for the next generation. Learn more about our purpose to see how you can help us create a strong Iowa.

Never too old to learn and wonder

Using leftover STEM kits from youth day camps, Extension Educator, Cynde Keating, modified the lessons to engage senior citizens at Madison Square Assisted Living and West Bridge Care & Rehabilitation in higher thinking activities to keep both their minds and fine motor skills active. The residents have made marshmallow catapult shooters, oobleck goo, balloon volcanoes and more! During one activity a participant exclaimed, “I am 83 years old, and I have never done anything like this in my whole life!”

#4HGrowsHere

In 2015, 280 youth in 4-12 grade were enrolled in 4-H in Madison County, and 76 kids in K-3 grade were enrolled in 4-H Clover Kids. Madison County is proud to have had three 4-H members on the State 4-H Council. Two youth also attended the National 4-H Congress in Atlanta and one youth visited Washington D.C. on the Citizen Washington Focus trip.

4-H Grows Partnerships!

County Youth Coordinator, Jennie Hargrove, created a partnership with Winterset Schools through the creation of an in-school 4-H Innovators program. Every month she would engage 150 fifth graders in STEM education. Youth were able to explore their engineering skills and capabilities.

Sara Tessmer, Buy. Eat. Live Healthy. Program Educator taught nutrition and cooking classes to 33 Madison County citizens. These classes help participants save money at the grocery store and by eliminating food waste. Another essential part of the program is helping picky eaters try new foods and strengthening family relationships over the dinner table.

Farmers cover Iowa

Van Meter farmer, Jeff Koch, has been working with ISU Extension and the Iowa Learning Farms to research the effects of planting cover crops. He hosted a cover crop workshop and shared his experiences and observations with 44 other farmers. Attendees were then invited to come out to one of the plots of farm ground Jeff had aerially seeded with a rye, rapeseed and radish mix.

Participants statewide in the Buy. Eat. Live Healthy program made significant changes to improve their health. See the results:

- 51% ate more fruit
- 56% ate more vegetables
- 49% ate more whole grains
- 58% ate more dairy products
- 49% were more physically active
- 91% improved nutrition practices
- 88% improved food resource management
- 70% improved food safety practices
Your children are our priority, too

ISU Extension and Outreach in Madison County in partnership with 4Rkids Early Childhood Iowa served 28 local child care centers through training, education and grants to supply providers with the tools to improve quality care. Training includes topics like engaging toddler-aged children in science and block play, preventable injuries, risk reduction strategies and CPR certification. Additionally, Madison County Extension provided preschool tuition assistance to 26 families in need. Through this program, 103 children also received free dental screenings and 11 children were provided transportation support to attend preschool.

Respecting the land and agreements

ISU Extension Field Agronomist, Aaron Saeugling, held a private pesticide training for 52 applicants to reinforce safe and appropriate handling of farm chemicals. ISU Extension Farm Management Specialist, Steve Johnson, discussed fair cash rental rates, land values and writing/terminating leases with 30 farmers and landowners at the Farmland Leasing meeting.

Planting the seed of knowledge

Master Gardeners are trained volunteers in the subject of horticulture. Madison County has twenty active Master Gardeners who submitted 1,043 volunteer hours in 2015. These hours have been spent mentoring individuals in community gardens, taking extra produce to the multipurpose center and hosting plant sales. In 2016, they intend to participate in food security webinars in hopes to help start up a garden with Freedom for Youth.

We’re all about summer fun

The county fair isn’t the only time ISU Extension and Outreach interacts with local kids. The 2015 summer camp series in Winterset and Earlham, brought in nearly 40 youth. Younger kiddos explored nature in the outside world with, “Bugs and Botanicals.” They learned what makes a bug a bug, how different bugs eat, how to identify plants and what makes botanicals grow. Older youth participated in, “Let’s Be Mad Scientists!” These young chemists created exploding volcanoes, oobleck, transparent worms, and also filled balloons using chemical reactions. Through these activities they came to understand the basics of chemistry and were challenged to hypothesize what would happen next.

Where’s the beef?

ISU Extension Specialist, Joe Sellers, knows the answer is in Madison County. In May he held a beef management workshop and discussed beef-cow replacement strategies and tall fescue facts with 47 participants. In August, he hosted a 21 attendee Serious Graziers Workshop to discuss the future of the beef industry including family goals, advocating for agriculture and why producers should mentor the next generation. In September, Joe facilitated Women Managing Cattle. Twenty-four women attended to learn about pasture management, watering options, cost of production and financial topics like insurance and loans.

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