Introduction

The Rising Star Interns from Region 1 came together in Sheldon, Iowa for a summer that would change the course of their original plans for their future careers. While Extension had been a thought for some of the interns, this internship has made them each take a second look at the opportunities that are held within this side of education. Allie Faivre, Jessica Gale and Kassidy Kuhlmann collectively pursued informational programs to expand the public's knowledge of the importance of local foods in northwest Iowa. The Region 1 interns started the internship on May 16, 2018 and their work concluded on August 2, 2018 with the presentation of the summers activities at Iowa State University. When the summer's adventures had concluded, the interns from Region 1 could not be more thankful for being granted the opportunity to be a part of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.
**Omaha Tour**

The Rising Star Interns from Regions 1 and 5 met with ISU Extension and Outreach staff and Extension staff from Omaha, Nebraska. They toured Cooper Farm; Metropolitan Community College’s Horticulture, Land Systems, and Management Program; HOPE (Helping Omaha’s People Eat) Garden, and Imagine Science. Cooper Farm, which is maintained by the boys who live there, has cows, chickens, fruits and vegetables that are all used in their kitchens. Metropolitan Community College is home to both hydroponics and aquaponics, a bee hive, rooftop gardens, vegetable and fruit gardens and greenhouses with exotic plants. HOPE Garden, which is run by the Master Gardeners in Omaha, produces fruits and vegetables to donate to low-income families in Omaha. The garden was very well-kept and the black raspberries were delicious. The final stop at the Omaha Extension office was a fun, hands-on afternoon learning about Imagine Science. Imagine Science is a STEM program for low-income children in Omaha, Nebraska; Dallas, Texas; and Orange County, Florida. This program provides week-long, hands-on curriculum for children who might not otherwise be exposed to science, technology, engineering and math. The entire Omaha tour taught the Rising Star Interns about different programs available to help communities and the many caring people searching for ways to aid others.

**Power of Produce (PoP) Club**

Power of Produce (PoP) Club took place at Farmers’ Markets in Hawarden (Sioux County), Rock Rapids (Lyon County), and Sheldon (O’Brien County). PoP Club was open to children ages 4 through 12. Between the three PoP Clubs, approximately 100 children were reached. At each market, kids participated in a vegetable tasting (usually from one of the producers at the market), did an activity, and received a two-dollar token to buy produce at the market. PoP was a great way to introduce fruits and vegetables to kids and brought many new faces to the farmers’ markets. Parents agreed that kids do not eat vegetables and fruits as much as they should; therefore, PoP Club was an effective outlet to get them trying vegetables and fruits, and the youth looked forward to it each week.

**Beginner Gardeners**

Every Wednesday morning, the Region 1 interns traveled to Sibley (Osceola County) to educate 27 children at Bright Beginnings Daycare. The Beginner Gardeners program was held for seven weeks, with each week featuring a different lesson. The Rising Stars used educational games, physical activity, and a craft to teach the children about types of gardens, planning and maintaining a garden, the parts of a plant, nutrition and exercise, pollinators, and harvesting produce. Two of the favorite crafts made were scarecrows and potato people. The 4-foot by 12-foot garden had a party theme, and the beginner gardeners and Region 1 interns planted and maintained tomatoes, onions, peppers, carrots, herbs, and flowers for centerpieces. The kids enjoyed watching the plants grow, especially the tomatoes, marigolds, and celosia (cockscomb).

**Okoboji’s First Annual Bike-N-Bite**

Dickinson County opted to pursue a new opportunity to engage locals and tourists in trying new foods from their community. On June 9 the interns traveled to Spirit Lake, Iowa to help coordinate
the event. The interns created and distributed over 100 signs for bikers to use and learn from. They also worked behind the scenes to make sure the 17-mile bike tour went off without a hitch. Dickinson County had never hosted this event before so there was a great deal of planning and preparation. The bike route took riders through parts of Spirit Lake and Arnold's Park, where bikers were able to stop and sample bites of local foods. The tour featured vendors from Lakes Area Farmers Market, Spudnutz, Smack Shack, Arnold's Perk, Okoboji Canning Company, Boernsen Bees, Lisa's Bake Shop, and ended with a meal at the Dickinson County fairgrounds. The event far exceeded expectations with nearly 250 bikers riding and sampling local foods.

**Dickinson County Fair Photo Scavenger Hunt**

The Dickinson County Fair Photo Scavenger Hunt was designed to give 4-H members another activity to do during their county fair. The scavenger hunt encouraged the youth to walk around the fairgrounds and take fun pictures and “selfies.” The Rising Star Interns created fun photo clues to find and get photos with around the fair. The participants got creative by being in groups of three and taking their own photos. Some of photo clues included: “Take a photo with a first year 4-Her,” “Get a photo by the only show going on today,” and “Capture a photo with the heaviest hog at the fair.” The 4-H members enjoyed getting to see all the fair exhibits and take fun pictures. The photos were judged, and the top photo scavenger hunt winners received awards at the county’s award night.

**Ag Citing for Adults**

Clay County Fair Ag Citing is a program for adults who are not familiar with agriculture. The pilot program aims to teach adults about agriculture in a flipped classroom followed up by a discussion-based educational session at the Clay County Fair in September. The Rising Star Interns developed the curriculum for this year, which focuses on row crops, specifically field corn and soybeans. This year's online "meetings" will be delivered to the participants prior to the fair, and include short videos and other resources that focus on ISU Extension and Outreach, the basics of farming, agriculture by the numbers, and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). If successful, the goal is that this program will be replicated at other county fairs and other events across the state.
Producers

Allie Faivre was excited to work with Vicki Kent from Kentwood Farms near Webb. Kentwood Farms grows tomatoes and cucumbers that are sold at farmers’ markets and in some stores. The Nutrient Film Technique set-up effectively grows many varieties of tomatoes and cucumbers. The tomato plants grow another three leaves each day, so the plants grow very quickly and produce a large quantity of tomatoes. Allie and Vicki picked the tomatoes, pruned the plants, and packaged the tomatoes. Last summer, Allie was able to intern at a hydroponic greenhouse near Austin, Texas, but that farm grew only lettuce, so working with Vicki taught Allie about hydroponics in a new setting. She loved learning how tomatoes are grown this way in Iowa.

Jessica Gale heard that Cherry Lane Farms produced microgreens, which interested her. Cherry Lane Farms is a small farm in Spirit Lake run by Calvin and Krissy Thiessen. The Thiessens produce microgreens including amaranth, pea shoots, sunflower shoots, basil, and cilantro. Microgreens are used in restaurants as a garnish on a meal or as an ingredient in salads. The farm is made up of a greenhouse and a field. Jessica had the opportunity to plant lettuce in the field, wash microgreens, and even package the produce for delivery. The Thiessens sell their produce to restaurants, grocery stores, and the Lakes Area Farmers Market. Jess’s favorite part of working at Cherry Lane Farms was learning about the nutritional value of microgreens.

Kassidy Kuhlmann had the privilege to work with Good Eetens outside of Everly. Michael and Darla Eetens gave Kassidy the opportunity to become a part of their all-natural farming operation for the summer. Kassidy had never been exposed to agriculture outside of the commercial side, so the experience to view agriculture in a different light gave her new views on how the production of foods can be achieved. Michael and Darla grow over 90 different varieties of plants on their farm. The range in production was exceptional and played into the education Kassidy was exposed to. Good Eetens sells their produce at farmers markets in Spencer, Everly, and Sheldon. Michael and Darla also offer weekly CSA boxes, which are packed with fresh produce and a newsletter that brings the members up-to-date on the events of the farm and offers fun recipes to try with the produce. Kassidy’s favorite part of working with her producer was being able to share her love of writing when she helped with the newsletter. Kassidy enjoys being outside and working with plants, so this producer made her feel completely in her element.
Reflection

Allie Faivre: As an Agricultural and Life Sciences Education, Teacher Certification major at ISU, I have taken many classes focused on food systems, agriculture in general, working with various types of people, and developing curriculum. This internship has allowed me to apply my academic knowledge in a meaningful way. Developing Beginner Gardeners and Agriculture Foundations from scratch meant two things: the possibilities were endless, and experience in lesson planning was crucial. Furthermore, having the background in ag that I gained from my past opportunities and my collegiate education was extremely beneficial. They allowed me to feel confident in the material we developed as a group and during presentations to all ages. This internship has enabled me to not only use my skills and knowledge, but it has also helped me expand upon them and explore a possible career. I had considered Extension as a career prior to this summer, but I was still on the border before I moved to Region 1. I have loved every minute of the Rising Star Internship. It has pushed me to truly consider community education through Extension rather than classroom education as a future career, and I could not be more excited to see where this adventure leads me.

Kassidy Kuhlmann: At the start of the Rising Star Internship, I believed my heart was in the classroom. Since my degree will be in Ag and Life Sciences Education, Teacher Certification, with a minor in Agronomy, I thought my talents would be best suited in an environment where I would have educational opportunities each day, all day. I have found that sharing knowledge every single day is a major part of extension. I was surrounded by professionals who showed me the passion and desire to share their knowledge with others. People who believe in a better tomorrow. People who showcased their love for education each and every day. This internship gave me the privilege to practice my newly acquired teaching skills and gave me the opportunity to put into practice some methods I have only heard about through my classes. My education has been in the production and foundations of agriculture. Through this internship, I have been able to expand my knowledge on natural agriculture production and the importance of local foods. I found my strengths and weaknesses and feel I have grown as a person, leader, and professional in the short time I have been in this program. I now know that I would like to pursue a career in extension and believe Iowa State University Extension and Outreach could very well be it.

Jessica Gale: I began this internship not knowing how it would eventually apply to my major in Dietetics. However, soon after starting I realized how well it played into my program of study. We designed programs to get children eating more fruits and vegetables and created awareness for local foods. Seeing the agricultural side of food production was eye opening, and being in the community applying my new knowledge was amazing. Every day is so different in Extension; I never had the same day twice. Staff was always friendly and inviting. I am excited to use the knowledge I gained from this summer in my classes and in my professional career. I have grown as a person and gained better professional communication and time management skills. Additionally, this internship has made me think about getting a job in the community aspect of Dietetics.

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Introduction

As a Rising Star intern for Region 2, I was in charge of coming up with my own project by engaging with other community members within towns and cities located within Region 2. Region 2 is a large region that is made up of Emmet, Hancock, Kossuth, Palo Alto, & Winnebago Counties. The official start and end date of this internship for our region was on May 16th and August 2nd. My project this summer will focus on accessing and evaluating businesses in Lake Mills, Iowa.

To help evaluate businesses in Lake Mills I created a database of businesses, including location, contact information, and the service provided (e.g. salon, retail, contractor, etc.). In addition, I included a photo of each business store front when supplied. A separate database will list business building vacancies in Lake Mills, as well as the relative size or square footage of each building. The information provided about each business/business vacancy was transferred into an online mapping software tool to show all information visually. The software included a searchable function for the business name and location. Prospective business owners or consumers will be able to access all of the information listed above in the spreadsheet. The map was uploaded to the City of Lake Mills website. A business needs assessment survey was distributed to help determine the strengths and weakness of business in Lake Mills. The survey assisted in identifying the goods and services each business provides, where people are buying their goods and services, locally or regionally. The information determined the type of potential business people would like to see in Lake Mills. From the results, a 3D speculative drawing for a 10-acre open lot on the edge of the city limits was completed. The city will use the speculative drawing to encourage potential business developers to invest in Lake Mills.

At the conclusion of this project, Lake Mills now has in-depth information on the types of businesses and potential businesses, which will add value and growth to sustainable economic future of the community. From this analysis, Lake Mills will have the tools to develop and execute economic development decisions now and in the future.
Cassie Johnson

Cassie Johnson is the Executive Director of the Non-Profit Lake Mills Chamber Development Corporation and is a former Iowa State University Alumni from the College of business. Cassie has been an absolute pleasure to work with. Cassie was the one who inspired me to choose my project in Lake Mills. Cassie has helped me throughout this project by first connecting me with the city administrator, Ross Hansen. Cassie has also helped make it possible in getting my web application on the Lake Mills city website. Cassie’s generosity and great work ethic has made me want to strive to be as generous and hardworking as she is and to help other Iowa State students when I become an alumnus.

Nora Ladjahasan

Nora Ladjahasan is the CD-DIAL Coordinator, Institute for Design Research and Outreach at Iowa State University. Nora helped me with my project by checking over my questions and my formatting of my online survey on qualtrics. Nora also gave me advise to become IRB certified, which I completed that will give me certification to publish research that I can use throughout my career as a city planner. Nora was very kind and took time out of her busy schedule to meet with me and discuss my survey. She is very knowledgeable and is a great resource in creating and distributing surveys.

Melissa Michaelis

Melissa Michaelis is the Executive Director of Winn-Worth Betco located in Lake Mills, Iowa, which is a non-profit organization that serves economic development interests in housing, tourism, community development, and business recruitment for Winnebago and Worth Counties in Northern Iowa. Melissa is a very down to earth and great person to work with. Melissa generously, through Winn-Worth Betco, provided all the materials such as stamps, letters and labels to send and distribute 150 envelopes with the code for my online survey. Melissa additionally included an endorsement letter to help introduce my project to the business owners and included my bio and what my project was about. This had a positive impact on the survey responses.
Phase #1 Highlights

Lake Mills Business locations & Business Vacancies Web App:

The first part of the project was to investigate how many businesses and what types of businesses were in Lake Mills. Through research of businesses in Lake Mills I found out there were more than 150 businesses. I found this unique for a town housing a population of around 2,000 people. When talking with the Executive Director of the Lake Mills Chamber Development Corporation, Cassie Johnson, I learned she had access to the Lake Mills city website. Knowing this, I created a web app using Arc GIS Online to help make an interactive map of all of the business in Lake Mills (Figure 1). I designed a prototype of the web app to make sure the basic functionalities would work. The trial run of the web app was a success. The map was a success and Cassie’s idea to have the hyperlink as the extension logo (Figure 2) to access the web app made the project look more professional and refined.

The next project I worked with Cassie Johnson to complete the web app and upload the final version onto the Lake Mills city website (Figure 3). This version compared to the previous version included the title built into the app along with a details section, containing additional instructions on how to use the web app effectively. There is also a data attribute table that allows the user of the app to easily find a certain business by either location, business owner, business type, or address of the business. The app is much more user friendly and community members commented on the easy to use functionality and effectiveness of finding a particular business.
Phase #2 Highlights

Mailed Online Survey:

Phase two of the project started with a survey to business owners and employees in Lake Mills. With the help of Winn-Worth Betco, I was able to mail and distribute letters with my biography (Figure 4). The letter also included an endorsement letter to help validate the project. Each survey was authorized to be completed by an owner or employee. I was able to incorporate an incentive for owners and workers to complete the survey. The Lake Mills chamber donated $50 in chamber bucks for the winner.

Mailed Survey Results:

The survey had 35 out of 140 businesses participate, which is a 25% response rate for the survey. The other 10 businesses sent back the mailed survey link, so they were not counted in the results. The results of the survey helped pin point strengths and weakness of Lake Mills businesses. I created a formal report to help visualize and organize the results for Lake Mills. The city now has in-depth information on the types of businesses and potential businesses adding the most value and growth to sustain economic future for the community. From this analysis, Lake Mills will have the tools to develop and execute economic development decisions now and in the future.

Survey results indicated (Figure 5):

- Nearly two thirds of respondents feel that the Lake Mills government is business friendly.
- 88% of citizens in Lake Mills shop locally at small businesses regularly.
- In terms of business quality, general goods stores and technology services had the lowest quality rating and should be a priority over grocery, hardware, and restaurant services.
- Lake Mills Residents frequently go out side of Lake Mills to Albert Lea, Minnesota and Mason City, Iowa for general goods and groceries.
- Respondents value lower cost, wider selection and convenience.
- Lake Mills residents frequently shop online for technology and clothing and shoe items.
- Hardware is the towns strongest business and economic driver, leading in quality and local purchasing.
- Lake Mills residents feel a coffee shop, a general goods store and a professional technology business (E.g. Apple/Microsoft) would work well and maximize economic growth for the community.
Phase 3 Highlights

Spec Drawings: (Drawings will be put in)

After analyzing the results of the survey, the results indicated what businesses residents wanted the most as well as being able to see which business types would be most effective for the community. A general goods store, a coffee shop, and a professional technology business (e.g., Apple/Microsoft) would work well and maximize economic growth for the community. I proposed two specification drawings created in Inventor (Figure 6 & Figure 7) that incorporated these three businesses into a 10-acre lot that is available for development.

By looking at the history and design of Lake Mills, there was a sense of connectiveness in how Lake Mills was built and how it operates. The first specification drawing (Figure 6) reflects these ideals with the general goods store being connected to the coffee shop and the technology store. The brick style on the front of the building (Figure 6) looks like many of the built brick buildings found scattered around Lake Mills and fits in with the esthetic of Lake Mills. There are entry and exit points incorporated in the design to align with highway 69 and the entry point across from the site (Figure 8).

The second specification drawing (Figure 7) contrasts the connectiveness in the design constructed in (Figure 6). The buildings as well as the parking lot are open and spread out and displays a plaza style appearance. The brick is still the same but incorporated in the center of the design, around the fountain. This design offers more openness and incorporates modern design.

Site Features Include (Figure 8):

1. **Owner:** Owned by a former construction company owner and investor willing to sell
2. **Size of property:** 10 Acres
3. **Zoning:** Originally was Industrial now it the site is zoned Agricultural.
4. **Available Utilities:** (On Site and or adjacent to site)
   - Fiber optics available
   - Sewer
   - Water
   - Electricity
5. Located within Lake Mills business park on highway 69

![Figure 6](image)

Figure 6

![Figure 7](image)

Figure 7

![Figure 8](image)

Figure 8
Final Reflection

The Rising Star Internship program has been life changing and an experience I will never forget. This program allowed me to apply my academic knowledge learned in the classroom and helping me narrow my career interests more. The Rising Star Internship program challenged me and taught me many new skills and life lessons I will use in the future.

During this project I was able to apply my minor in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Using GIS wasn’t something I was expecting to use on this project. The spreadsheet I received an excel file from the Lake Mills Chamber had the location, contact information, and the manager/Owner of each business in Lake Mills. I found that Lake Mills had around 150 businesses in the area for a town of 2000 people. With this much data and to analyze all at once I went back to my early GIS skills obtained when I began pursuing a minor in GIS. I converted an excel file into a Comma Separated Values (CSV) file and imported the data into an Arc GIS Online. The data allowed residents of Lake Mills to visually see where the business locations are and the relative information about each business and business vacancy. I created a web app to display this information on the Lake Mills City website for easy and convenient access to residents and developers looking to expand or start a new business.

The internship opportunity has helped narrow my focus of potential career interests I want to pursue in the future. Within the planning profession there are many different areas that are split into 3 distinct sectors: Public, Private, and non-profit sectors. I have worked with a non-profit organization from Ames as well as the private sector with the Iowa DNR through Iowa State GIS research Lab, but I have not done any local public sector work for a town before. Lake Mills as well as the other small neighboring towns in Winnebago county opened my eyes to the hardships small towns face to maintain and sustain community and economic structure. The experience of working and meeting people within region 2, I have plans to stay in Iowa a little while longer and to work specifically with smaller towns and rural areas.

I have thoroughly enjoyed connecting with others within extension and local community members around the area. The opportunity to create my own project and go through the steps of planning, developing, and executing this project has help build confidence in my abilities and skills. I have made many valuable connections I can rely on in the future. There are not many internships that give you these opportunities and I am honored to have been a part of the Rising Star Internship Program. I will take all the lessons I’ve learned and obtained from this internship with me throughout my career as a City Planner.
Appendices

Lake Mills Iowa Business Assessment Study

Methods
1. Creation of GIS Web App
   - Created a web app that depicts each businesses:
     - relative locations
     - contact information
     - service provided by that business (e.g. salon, retail, contractor, etc.),
     - A photo of each business store front.
   - A separate Layer within the web app also lists business building vacancies in Lake Mills, as well as the relative size or square footage of each building.
2. Creation & Distribution of online survey
   - Created an online survey through Qualtrics that was
     - Distributed via email through the endorsement of Win-Worth Bank.
   - Generated two distinct specification drawings created in Inventor using the results of the survey.

Results
The survey results indicated:
- Nearly two thirds of respondents feel that the Lake Mills government is business friendly.
- 88% of citizens in Lake Mills shop locally at small businesses regularly.
- In terms of business quality, general goods stores and technology services had the lowest quality ratings and should be a priority over grocery, hardware, and restaurant services.
- Lake Mills residents frequently go out side of Lake Mills to Albert Lea, Minnesota and Mason City, Iowa for general goods and groceries.
- Respondents value lower cost, wider selection and convenience.
- Lake Mills residents frequently shop online for technology and clothing and shoe items.
- Hardware is the town’s strongest business and economic driver, leading in quality and local purchasing.
- Lake Mills residents feel a coffee shop, a general goods store and a professional technology business (i.e. Apple/Microsoft) would work well and maximize economic growth for the community.

Conclusion
The city of lake mills has been resilient in through hard economic stresses that affects small town Iowa. Through this project I see that lake Mills is at a turning point in terms of economic growth, Lake Mills has several advantages in terms of large businesses such as Larson as well as community support for small and large businesses in the area that you normally don’t see in smaller towns. Lake Mills is in need of unique non-traditional businesses as well as more professional businesses to kick start business growth.

This project will give Lake Mills in-depth information on the types of businesses and potential businesses will add the most value and maximize growth to help form a sustainable economic future for the community. From this analysis, Lake Mills will have the tools to develop and execute economic development decisions now and in the future.
**Spec Design #1**

**Site Information**

**Spec Design #2**

**Site Features**

1. Owned by a former construction company owner and investor willing to sell
2. Size of property: 10 Acres
3. Zoning: Originally was Industrial now it is zoned Agricultural.
4. Available Utilities: (On Site and or adjacent to site)
   - Sewer
   - Water
   - Electricity
5. Town has fiber optics available
Introduction

This was a ten-week internship that began mid May, 2018. For the first two weeks, my time was spent among the community having meetings with various members to build social capital. By the end of the second week, I was focusing on a specific project with the YMCA in Forest City. There is a 3-acre plot of land to the south of the YMCA building, and employees have been searching for someone to take on the project of creating an educational garden for their youth programs. After two weeks of working primarily with the YMCA, I realized that this project would not take up the time I needed it to. I used the social capital I gained in the first couple weeks of my internship to find another project in Buffalo Center.

I saw a need in Buffalo Center for community members to have access to fresh, local food. I set a goal to put together a Farmers’ Market where the community would be able to gather, share a glass of lemonade, and buy nutritious food for themselves and their families.
YMCA Educational Garden

Needs

The YMCA in Forest City has a very successful youth program, which students attend every weekday throughout the year. Employees at the YMCA wanted a space for their students to have access to outdoor learning.

Steps

1. During my first week in Forest City, I attended a preliminary meeting with YMCA staff to discuss needs and goals of the project.
2. A timeline of the project was created.
3. The budget was set and funding options were discussed with the YMCA
4. I began to design the garden including exact dimensions, supplies needed, and a list of plants that would be incorporated.
5. I developed a portfolio of resources that the YMCA will need to continue establishing their educational garden.

Results

The Forest City YMCA decided they would like to begin construction of the educational garden in September of 2018. My contribution to their organization was to compile lists of materials and designs of the garden to give to the YMCA as a resource when they begin construction of the educational garden.

Buffalo Center Farmers’ Market

Needs

Based on Iowa State University Extension and Outreach’s Data for Decision Makers City Profile, Buffalo Center has a population of 893 with 7.6% below poverty level (Figure 4). This is a higher percentage than surrounding communities. Buffalo Center also lacks any restaurants, and community members must leave town to have a night out. There is one grocery store in the town, which limits access to nutritious food. Buffalo Center had a need for a community gathering space, fresh and local food, and possible access to a food truck where families can have a nice evening out without traveling to another town.

Steps
1. I began by evaluating specific needs of the town as stated above. I knew I would have to incorporate some sort of food truck to be in the market as well as resources for low income families such as WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) and SFMNP (Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program).

2. After meeting with community leaders, I was able to establish a specific location for the market.

3. A survey was needed to evaluate the community’s interest in having this Farmers’ Market. I also needed the survey as proof to vendors that if they were to come sell products at this market, there would be people willing to buy. I used Google Forms to create a simple, six-question survey that I sent out to local organizations to post on their Facebook profiles and websites.

4. While the survey was up, I began to research what kind of licensing and regulation I would need to start this market. I partnered with Healthy Harvest to evaluate my specific needs to get the market started. I also wanted to make sure I was educated in all aspects of selling products at a farmers’ market in order to be able to answer the questions of future vendors.

5. The survey was up for one week and the results were very positive. Out of 67 responses, 100% said they would attend a farmers’ market in Buffalo Center (Figure 3). Upon receiving this information, I set a date for an opening day of the Farmers’ Market. Once I sent this date and time, I would be able to search for vendors.

6. My goal was to have four vendors, all selling different products. I knew marketing and community awareness would be important in this step of the process. I designed ads for the newspaper, created flyers to distribute throughout the community, and utilized social media. Over the next few days, I received phone calls from six different individuals asking me if they could sell their products at the Buffalo Center Farmers’ Market. I also reached out to two other vendors who I knew would attend the market.

7. The last step of this process was to make sure I was leaving the community with the tools it would need to continue the market once my internship is completed. North Iowa Betterment will continue to take on the responsibilities, to assist, I also established a market board who will be solely responsible for the farmers’ market. This board includes individuals from Buffalo Center who understand the importance of the farmers’ market and will put in the needed time and effort to keep it going for years to come. I compiled all the resources I used in creating this market and gave it to the market board to use in the future.

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Steve Hassebroek
Central States Agency

Steve Hassebroek was a top contributor to the Buffalo Center Farmers’ Market project. He is involved in various aspects of the community including a membership with North Iowa Betterment, an organization whose mission is to “strengthen and expand the growth of communities through public service programs and activities”. Steve also has a connection to Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. He owns the first land grant parcel in Winnebago County and is continuing to contribute to Iowa State University Extension and Outreach today. Steve generously offered his private land to be used for this farmers’ market because he knew it would be a needed benefit to the community of Buffalo Center.

Healthy Harvest of North Iowa

Healthy Harvest works to provide a network of local food producers and consumers. Their goal is to “foster the health and vitality of North Iowa communities through development and support of a sustainable regional food system”. Healthy Harvest also helps farmers’ markets across their region by providing them with resources to grow. They have given the Buffalo Center Farmers’ Market tools needed to start and maintain a successful market.
Results

Opening day of the Buffalo Center Farmers’ Market was on Tuesday July 24th. Eight vendors showed up to sell products including fresh produce, honey, eggs, maple syrup, baked goods, and more. North Iowa Betterment provided the event with hot dogs and sweet corn, which people could enjoy on family-style tables under tents for shade. We also had an ISU Extension and Outreach tent which promoted the Winnebago county office and the Rising Star Internship Program.

Six vendors were completely sold out before the end of the market, and the remaining two only had a few products left. Each vendor filled out a feedback form that I had created with questions asking them what went well and what could be improved. Overall, they were happy with the market. Their only remarks were regarding the time frame of the event, which they recommended be shortened to two hours instead of three.

Citizens were very happy with the market and provided me with positive feedback as they went through the market. I had created a space for them to come together as a community and enjoy a beautiful evening outdoors.

North Iowa Betterment and the market board decided that, using the resources I provided them with, they would like to continue the market on a weekly basis for the rest of the season. They saw the positive impact the market had on the community and want to see it carry on.
Reflection

Outside my independent projects

While working on my independent project, I made time to go on tours and expand my social capital. Some of these tours and experiences included attending a delayed planting workshop where I was able to witness first-hand Iowa State University Extension and Outreach’s importance to communities. I continued to network with Healthy Harvest throughout the summer and was able to attend a few of their programs where I could learn about the importance of local food to small communities. I went to Sukup and became very interested in their philanthropical values and the ways in which they want to help the community around their facilities grow. Each and every one of these experiences partnered with my independent project helped me in this academic and professional growth.

My independent projects

Aspects of my independent projects that went well included the farmers’ market survey, support from communities, and resources that were created in order to leave the projects in good hands for the future.

The survey was a success due to its simplicity and the areas in which I promoted it. I was able to evaluate where community members would be most likely to see the survey and fill it out without creating an inconvenience for them. The support of individuals in the communities of Forest City and Buffalo Center was needed for these projects to succeed. It was important for me to reach out to them and utilize knowledge of their own communities. The most important aspect of these projects was to create resources for the community to use so that the educational garden and farmers’ market can be successful in the future.

There were a few challenges that I faced while working on my independent projects. The first challenge came in the beginning of the summer when I realized that the YMCA Educational Garden would not take up enough of my time, and that I needed to find a new project. It required initiative to be able to make phone calls and use my resources to find the need in Buffalo Center for a farmers’ market. Once I began work on getting the market started, I faced some communication challenges. I learned the importance of delegating specific tasks to individuals that I can know I can rely on.

Through these successes and challenges, I was able to learn a variety of important skills throughout the summer. I realized very early that since I would be working independently, I needed to manage my time efficiently. I was able to create goals and deadlines for myself, which helped me to complete every task in a timely manner. I also learned how to take initiative, which is one of my most important take-aways of the summer. I gained the confidence needed to take on these projects and complete them successfully. This is something I will carry with me throughout my future careers.

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Rising Star Internship Program
2150 Beardshear Hall, Ames, IA  50011-2031
(800) 262-3804
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Appendices

Figure 1: Preliminary ad asking for vendors

Figure 2: Ad to promote opening day of the market

Figure 3: Survey responses

Figure 4: Statistics from ISU Extension and Outreach Indicator Portal
Introduction

During the summer of 2018, I was housed in Forest City, Iowa at Waldorf University, which is located in Winnebago County where most of the Region 2 interns had projects. I also had a project in Kossuth County.

Our internship began with tours of towns in Winnebago County. This included Buffalo Center, Forest City, Lake Mills, and Thompson Iowa. As a group we had many informational meetings that Bryan set up for us with betterment groups, the chamber of commerce and economic development professionals. These meetings helped us gain more information about the towns and some of the needs and challenges they are currently experiencing. Many are experiencing population decline. In some cases, it can be very extreme and the towns lose the school, elevator, and grocery stores. This leaves citizens with limited services that they have to drive to receive. Some towns have not experienced as severe population decline, but are still losing local businesses and have main streets with many vacancies.

From these meetings I realized that each town has a unique problem which cannot be solved in one internship. But I knew I could help them get more ideas and resources for potential economic development, they could use as a guide for business attraction in the future. The two towns for my projects; Buffalo Center and Whittemore, had very different needs and demographics.

Buffalo Center is a town with a population of 893 (Data For Decision Makers, 2017) has a full main street, business is doing well there, but they have no restaurants and people must drive to surrounding areas. In the early 2000’s lack of restaurants was not an issue for the town as they had six options.

Whittemore is a tiny town with a population of 484, They are desperate for any type of business. At our initial meeting with city employees and council members, the empty main street was the main focus. The town had done some visioning previously, but now they wanted something more specific, such as like research on a potential fitness center, or getting the meat locker back. My survey results concluded that the citizens also want a fitness center, a healthcare/pharmacy facility, and more food options like a small grocery store.

Claire Michelson
College of Design,
Community and Regional Planning
Des Moines, Iowa
The tour of Sukup Manufacturing was very eye opening. It gave me a better idea of how much a company means to the community it is in and how much the community means to the company, especially when it is as large as Sukup. Sukup manufacturing, which employs 714 workers.

The company had similar worries as the towns and people we met with earlier in the summer. Those worries include limited housing for new employees, limited entertainment, and healthcare. In Sukup’s case Mason City is not far away, but it is not convenient either. They want to help strengthen the small towns around them and enter in many public private partnerships. It is great to see a company’s devotion to the area it helps support.

The need for this project was that the town had six restaurants in the early 2000’s and now they only have Casey’s General Store which has convenience food and limited full meals, and a small market that has groceries.

The initial meeting was with the executive director of North Iowa Betterment Beth Matheson, Pam Angstman President of the Buffalo Center Historical Society and involved community member, as well as Steve Hassebroek another involved community member and business owner in town.

There were many ideas for projects presented at the meetings but one barrier was that the city was very unwilling to spend any money. Therefore, they were grateful for any ideas I could come up with that could offer that could bring businesses to their town with little to no cost to them.

In working on this project I had the opportunity to discuss the internship and project with KIOW radio’s Mark Skaar on their morning conversation segment.

My goal for this project was to compile resources for potential developers or future business owners on the open lots. Now all the information is conveniently gathered for them, and it should be easier to visualize space needs.

The final product of this project is packet for North Iowa Betterment which included an assessment of surrounding restaurants in a 20-mile radius, and specs of the open lots and vacant buildings that could hold a restaurant. These specs include the zoning regulations, a potential building drawing for the open lots, and a remodel for the vacant building.

This summer I had an opportunity to join the Kossuth Palo Alto Economic Development Corporation Intern Advisory Committee. This provided an opportunity to meet and work with other interns in the area on different events and projects.

I wanted to join this committee so I could learn more about the area and the interns that were coming to small towns to work. There were 36 interns in the Intern Program run by KPAEDC, and 8 on the committee. Being on the committee had the opportunity to talk to the County Board of Supervisors for Kossuth and Palo Alto Counties. These events were geared towards professional development and were very informational.

I am very thankful that KPAEDC had this opportunity for interns.
Project Highlights

Whittemore, Iowa
Kossuth County

- The need for this project was due to shrinking population, the town of Whittemore had lost a significant amount of businesses. Residents have to travel to surrounding towns for certain services. The lack of services and businesses worries the government. People moving to the area will not choose to live in Whittemore.

- The initial meeting was with the Mayor Pro Temp, the City Clerk, the City Administrator as well as a young town member, they expressed the needs and problems facing Whittemore. From this meeting I came up with my project. Throughout the remainder of the project I worked closely with City Administrator Linda Farrell.

- I had the opportunity to speak about my project and get the word out about my upcoming survey for Whittemore residents during the Kossuth County Extension report on Hometown Radio KGLA in Algona with host Al Lauck.

- My goals for this project are to provide information so the town members and city government will have more knowledge on potential economic development as well as a new resource to refer to. 

- There is a vacant double store front available there is good potential for partnership businesses, and where the city suggested I focused my research.

- The completed product for a packet for the city has suggestions on potential economic development. a complete list of area surrounding business within a 20-mile radius, the survey results from town members, and recommendations on moving forward with a town run fitness center, food service/restaurant, and retail.

- The survey I created had a total of 66 responses. This was by household not per person. All citizens with a residence in the city limits received a survey that was included in all of the utility bills.

- The top three types of businesses that citizens want to see in Whittemore were Health and Wellness at 38.46%, Food Service at 29.97%, and Retail at 23.08%. The other two options were Ag related, and Financial Services, they only had 4.40%. (Figure 1)

- In our meetings it seemed that the city was really interested in a fitness center, the survey results showed that people would like one, and would use it on average of 3-4 times a week. I researched other town run, and small town fitness centers in northern Iowa and compiled a packed for the city to use if they move forward.

Afternoon Spent with President Wintersteen
Intern Networking Luncheon and Tours

We had the wonderful opportunity of meeting with Dr. John Lawrence and President Wendy Wintersteen, for a visit of Kossuth County Extension, as well as tours and meetings with businesses important to the economy of Iowa, such as Snap On in Algona, Country Maid and MaxYield Co-op located in West Bend.

Following this the very informational tour, we had an intern networking luncheon with Kossuth Palo Alto County Economic Development Corporation, where President Wintersteen was the guest speaker. She spoke on the importance of having a mentor as a young professional, and how employers should be mentors to their interns. She also spoke on the importance of Iowa, and that as young professionals we should remember that there is a lot of opportunity here and we do not have to go to a big city to find a good job.

It was a valuable experience to spend the day with President Wintersteen and listen to her ideas for the future of Iowa State University as well as Iowa State Extension and Outreach. Visiting the businesses was helpful to my project that is in Kossuth County, as it helped me get a picture of types of businesses in the area and the jobs that they provide.
Reflection

My academic knowledge when coming into this internship was limited compared to all the knowledge I have gained in these past three months. This internship provided for me an opportunity to jump out of my comfort zone. Previously I was not aware of the needs and challenges facing small towns in Iowa, particularly those with populations of 1,000 and under, as well as towns that have limited or no industry to drive the economy. As a community and regional planning major, coming into this internship I felt that I had substantial knowledge of the interworking’s of small towns. As the internship progressed and my knowledge expanded, I realized that I knew very little in the beginning. Everything I learned this summer is extremely valuable and important to my studies this upcoming semester, I know I will be able to use the knowledge I gained for projects in classes.

The Rising Star Internship also helped gear me towards what I want to do in the future, post graduation from Iowa State. It showed me the challenges smaller towns face, and how good planning and economic development can boost and fulfill the needs of the town. Now that this has come to an end, when I think about further career plans, I know I want to work with small towns. May it be in a private firm that focuses on small town planning, or for one of the Iowa Council’s of Governments, an entity that has planners in regions that assist with small town planning, long range plans as well as transportation. I also find Iowa State University Extension and Outreach a phenomenal place to work, and I would enjoy working here again with more of a focus on community development. Extensions drive to create a stronger Iowa is exciting to see as a young professional.

Overall this experience was one of a kind, and I am so happy that I took the jump to try something new. I have learned more in one summer then in one semester of school. The hands on opportunities given to us because of this internship are invaluable and I will use the skills gained throughout the summer for many years to come.

References


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Appendices

Whittemore Survey Results

Figure 1

Q4 - What type of business would you like to see on Broad Street?

Figure 2

Q6 - If a space were to be used for a fitness center, how often would you use it?

Figure 3

Q11 - How far do you typically travel for these?
Buffalo Center Spec Drawings

Location 1 – City Park that is under used.

Lot Size – 0.19 Acres, 8,340 Square Feet
Dimensions – 90'L x 140'W
Spec Dimensions – 40'L x 40'W
Spec Height – 12'
Roof Height – 9.5'
Window Dimensions – 6'L x 4' 3/8"W
Door Dimension – 8'L x 5'W
Patio Dimensions – 20'L x 20'H
Pergola Height – 11'
Parking – Street Room Only

Location 2 – Previous Restaurant Lot

Lot Size – 0.55 Acres, 23,940 Square Feet
Dimensions – 180'L x 133'W
Spec Dimensions – 75'L x 55'L
Spec Height – 12'
Roof Height – 10'
Window Dimension – 7'L x 5'W
Door Dimension – 8'L x 5'W
Parking – Gravel lot on the side and back
Introduction

We were located in Region 5 for the summer and worked within Woodbury, Monona, and Plymouth Counties. Throughout our time within Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Extension, we were involved with food demonstrations, youth programs, event planning, and getting to know and learn the inner workings of ISU Extension and Outreach. Ebere and Joi began on May 24th while Rebecca joined on May 29th. We will complete the Rising Star Internship Program on August 9th. The Rising Stars of Region 5 would like to thank everyone in Iowa State Extension and Outreach and their community who made their summer a very exciting and memorable one.
Spotlight: Bike-N-Bite Event

The Bike-N-Bite event is a local event celebrating local foods in Sioux City and surrounding area. Participants took a tour of Siouxland on their bikes, starting at the Sioux City Farmers Market, visiting 5 different vendors as well. They then strolled through the city and visited 11 different restaurants and bakeries. The bikers then finished off with a bigger ‘bite’ at the Sioux City Public Museum green space with some great tunes from Alex Erwin.

In preparation for the event we were tasked with contacting different locations that would be willing to donate a ‘bite’ and serve as a location on the route for the Bike-N-Bite Event. We also assisted in marketing the event through some broadcasting stations including KMEG, and some radio Stations at Powell Broadcasting. Additionally, a Facebook Event Page was created to share the event on the different Extension pages.

We had a great turnout of 91 participants! All together, 16 bite locations were able to serve the bikers and we had a great time visiting each location during the event. The party at the Sioux City Public Museum featured our blender bike, and we gave out some samples of chips with salsa (made with the blender). KCAU and KMEG also featured the event on the news! Wheelhouse Bar and Grill provided a great lunch for the bikers that completed or visited most of the stops and locations!

Youth Programming

Kids in the Kitchen

- We ran three different Kids in the Kitchen Program events with the help of INN School Grant Director and Educator, Cindy Zortman. The first two programs were with the Beyond the Bell Summer Program, which is designed to help students retain their academic skills that they’ve learned during the school year and eliminate any academic losses that can occur during the summer months. The first sessions were only an hour and consisted of a garden tour, a hand washing informational session, learning food and kitchen safety skills, and a delicious and nutritious snack at the end. The next two sessions were open to the public and lasted three hours. We were able to expand the original curriculum to incorporate more in depth lessons in each of the areas as well as adding a small craft for the children to make.
• Some of the children we worked with had never used knives or prepared any of their own meals before. We were able to introduce the students to new foods and educate as well as reinforce some of their knowledge about nutrition and gardening.
• In total we reached over 75 children with the Kids in the Kitchen Program and had a generally positive response. Some were skeptical about trying the various produce and other products, but in the end everyone was able to find at least one part of the snack that they enjoyed. Many children asked where they could buy the products used so they could make this snack for their families at home. They seemed generally intrigued by the topics covered and could not wait to share what they learned with their families and friends.

Grow With Us Camp

• Grow With Us Camp is a Woodbury County day camp for children from Kindergarten to the third grade. The campers learned about healthy food choices, food preparation, and pollinators. This camp did a great job of introducing the food groups to the children and why it is important to have a balanced diet. Also, it showed them the importance of gardening, and how important pollinators are for the environment.
• This year we assisted staff with a garden tour, teaching about the food groups, physical activities, crafts, teaching about pollinators, and assisting the children with preparation of lunch and snacks. Over the three separate day camps, we impacted fifty-two children!
• The children gained a lot of knowledge about the food groups and healthy eating, the importance of physical activity, what we can grow in gardens in Iowa, and pollinators.

Mad Scientist Camp

• We were fortunate to work with and help Plymouth County Extension with their two annual Mad Scientist Day Camps. From teaching kids about how simple circuits work using just a battery, foil, and a light bulb, to extracting DNA from a strawberry, it was a great way to get kids thinking, and explore within science and technology.
• We helped to lead different activities including DNA Extraction, Eco-bot, explore chemical reactions, and test different bubble solutions. For some of the activities we either walked through the experiment while asking questions to make the kids think about why a reaction occurred, or maybe why it did not happen. We also let the kids go free and discover on their own after giving some guidance at the beginning of the activity.
• As a result, we led a total of 50 kids in 3 separate Mad Scientist Day Camps. They learned how chemical reactions work, how simple it is to extract DNA, and how to code and follow steps to make a robot dance. In all we hope that this camp continues to encourage kids that science and technology can be fun, intuitive, and it continues to take place all around us. “Also as a nerd at heart, I loved helping with the Mad Scientist Camp. Using my acquired knowledge within coding and physics, I was able to assist with leading those demonstrations and teach the kids a few things that they could store in their mind,” Ebere Agwuncha.
**Food Demonstrations**

- Throughout the summer we were able to do a multitude of food demonstrations at various locations including farmers’ markets, library summer programs, a retirement center, county fairs, and food giveaways. The food demonstrations were one of our first ways to connect with the community. By doing these demonstrations we were able to talk with parents, children, and others about what we do as interns within Extension while promoting local foods.

- While doing food demos and promoting our events at the Sioux City Farmers’ Market, we soon became recognizable by the community and other vendors. It was nice to see familiar faces at markets and start to build a relationship with the community. We prepared a summer bounty salad, corn and asparagus salad, salsa, frozen fruit cups, and one of our personal favorites, a smoothie on the blender bike.

![Left: Joi and Ebere at Mapleton Library Middle: Berry & Green Smoothie Samples Right: Rebecca and Joi at Sioux City Farmers’ Market](image1)

**Farm to Fork Dinner**

- Farm to Fork is an annual event that connects people from the community to local foods in their area. The dinner often incorporates an educational component for the attendees to learn about the farm where it is held. This year the dinner was held at Tucker Hill Vineyards, and the guests toured the vineyard to learn about the grape production that goes into the wine they make.

- The Rising Star Interns assisted Katelyn Brinkerhoff, Horticulture Educator with a focus on local foods, in planning the small details for the dinner, helped served the dinner, and interacted with guests. There were 64 guests attending the dinner, and we had the opportunity to tell them about our internship within Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Aside from educating guests about local foods, this dinner helped people realize that Iowa State University Extension and Outreach has a lot of educational programs to offer people of all ages.

- When we were conversing with the guests, they seemed very interested in the other events that Iowa State University Extension and Outreach has to offer and what our internship entailed. After the dinner, guests shared with us that they appreciated the foods they have access to at their local farmers’ market and were curious when the next dinner would take place!

![Top Left: Flavors apron & decor Top Left: Menu for the Farm to Fork Dinner Bottom: Barry giving a talk about the Tucker Hill Vineyard](image2)
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Events/Programs</th>
<th>Total Reached</th>
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<td>Mapleton Summer Reading Program</td>
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<td>Grow With Me Camp (Woodbury)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clover Kids Camp (PCE)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mad Scientist Camp (PCE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grow With Me Camp (Anthon)</td>
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<td>Kids in the Kitchen (Beyond the Bell)</td>
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<td>Water Rocks Camp (Moville)</td>
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<td>Healthy Snacks (Onawa Public Library)</td>
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<td>Onawa Food Giveaway</td>
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<td>School Garden Lesson (West Monona)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Farm to Fork</td>
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<td>Demonstration Garden</td>
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<td><strong>Total reach as of July 24th, 2018</strong></td>
<td><strong>958</strong></td>
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**TOTAL REACH FOR THE SUMMER**

For the summer we tracked every person with whom we interacted with. Whether it be through a food demo, or helping out with a camp, we had a reach of about 960 people (as of July 24th, 2018) in total and still runnin’!
Reflection

Joi Latson:
I came into this internship wanting to learn how I could combine my interests in language, cooking, and working to build a healthier community within Iowa. I was able to utilize my knowledge from past nutrition and agriculture classes to assist with programming and working on the different projects throughout the summer. I was also able to connect with the amazing people of Extension and learn more about the different positions that we have to offer.

One of my favorite experiences was going to the schools to work with the Beyond the Bell summer program. The children were all excited to try snacks and participate in the activities that we brought to the schools. We created a fruit pizza using berries, rice cakes, and cream cheese and talked about the importance of eating fruits and other nutritious foods. That next week the same group of kids came to the office for our Kids in the Kitchen Program. The students remembered me and were excited to see the office that I worked in. They were all excited to learn more about kitchen and food safety while dressing up in aprons to create their own snack.

I've always had an interest in public health and this internship has shown me the various ways that a career in Extension can work to improve community and public health.

Ebere Agwuncha:
At the beginning of the summer my motto was, “I'm ready to extend my hands using my evolving and developed set of skills throughout the community.” I also was unfamiliar with the community known as Extension and Outreach, and I really wanted to unwind the roots and understand how each branch is connected and support one another. I also wanted to find my place within and use my skills and knowledge in order to reach others.

Throughout this internship, I have been able to serve as a Rising Star in several different ways. As a design student, I have tried to work with, and observe our regions’ Marketing Coordinator, assisting in creating documents and brochures for different events that we helped host. I have learned that the roots of Extension and Outreach extend way beyond what I had imagined. Within each event this summer, I have tried to reach out to the community, and gain an understanding for the people present.

My most vivid memory was meeting a man at the Mapleton Food Giveaway. After handing out some samples out he thanked me for coming, and asked me what what my ambitions were. Just that simple conversation reminded me of what I am passionate about, and as a part of Extension and Outreach just for this short time, it has encouraged me to take on more activities, giving back to the communities that are yearning for more helping hands.

Rebecca Wallace:
This internship has allowed me to use my academic knowledge during food demonstrations, nutrition education opportunities, view developmental stages in children, and apply teaching techniques. Since Family and Consumer Sciences Education and Studies encompasses a lot of what Iowa State University Extension and Outreach offers, it was a great internship to connect what I have learned in the classroom to real career opportunities. Throughout this internship, I was able to observe several different career opportunities within ISU Extension and Outreach and talk with many people about what role they play in the counties they serve. This internship has allowed me to explore career options within ISU Extension and Outreach that would complement my degree in various ways.

One of the most rewarding experiences this summer was working with children during food preparation at the Grow With Us and Kids in the Kitchen Camps! Since my major focuses a lot on nutrition and food preparation, it was great to see the delight in their faces when they got to prepare their own lunch or snack. Although supervising young children in the kitchen can be stressful, it was all worth it to see the children get so excited to get their hands on some food and make yummy snacks for themselves!

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Introduction

Region 20 Iowa State University Rising Star interns were located at the Henry County office in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. We began our internship on May 14 and ended the internship on August 2. Throughout Region 20, we led a pilot program within four elementary schools promoting local foods and teaching children how to prepare and store produce. We also taught them other lessons on food safety, physical activity, parts of a plant, healthy choices, produce selection and compost/soil. We also visited local farmers markets and made promotional videos to share with the public, visited local homesteads and U-Pick farms, visited county fairs and even were cupcake contest judges!
Project Highlights

Sharing from the Garden

Our biggest project and main focus this summer was implementing our 8 week pilot program called “Sharing from the Garden”. This program was designed for elementary students. We implemented it into one school in each of the 4 counties in Region 20. Two of the schools was partnered with their summer school programs in which the teacher brought the students to us for a lesson every week. The other two schools was offered during their summer school free lunch program. For these schools, we set up a table during their free lunch and students approached us with interest. We were then able to teach them a short lesson and they were able to sample the food we had available and take home any resources or supplies we were giving out. We implemented this program in these areas due to the need of more local food and nutrition awareness. Iowa is ranked number 50th in the nation for produce consumption. With the large number of local farmers in Southeast Iowa, this is something that could easily be changed if we increase the amount of awareness and support we give to our local farmers. This was a change we could easily start with the children with.

Spotlight:
Schnickers Specialities

During the Pop-Up Farmers Markets incorporated with our program at the elementary schools across South East Iowa, the Rising Stars were able to build a great partnership with Mary, Helen, and Lucas Schnicker of Schnicker Specialties in Mt. Pleasant, IA. Schnicker Specialties is a family owned farm where the kids of Mary and Marty Schnicker grow and sell their own produce. This was a great partnership because the Schnicker kids were able to make connections with the students at the Farmers Markets and show them that kids their own age can grow vegetables too.

During the Farmers Markets the Schnickers contributed a large supply of various fresh local foods including: eggs, potatoes, berries, carrots, radishes, lettuce, and tomatoes. Although the students purchased their items with our pretend veggie money, Helen and Lucas were reimbursed with real money from our grant for all their hard work and partnering with us.

The Schnickers were great to work with and were such a friendly family. You can tell they have a passion for what they do and enjoy growing foods they love eating. When asked what their favorite part about growing their own food was, Helen replied, “Eating it, and learning that you have to take good care of it and can’t take breaks from taking care of your food” and Lucas replied, “Growing watermelon, and helping his dad.”

Schnicker Specialties - Marty & Mary Schnicker, 319-931-5223
Mt. Pleasant, IA
Each week we had a new lesson that involved learning about a new vegetable and learning how to prepare a recipe with that produce. We used local vegetables each week in a variety of recipes. Some of the lessons included: tasting the difference between local and store bought strawberries and cucumbers, and a physical activity lesson with a healthy smoothie including local kale, strawberries and honey. We also had lessons on how to store and prepare various vegetables, parts of the plant we eat, and a compost lesson was also included. Some of the recipes that the children assisted in preparing and tasting included; carrot raisin salad, coleslaw, homemade pico de gallo, fresh salad with homemade dressings, and tacos with homemade tortillas and fresh vegetables.

Throughout the month of June, we reached an average of 110 students each week. In July, we ended one program at one of the schools, but started the program at another summer school, which put us at an average of 130 students each week throughout July. Primarily, we reached ages kindergarten through 6th grade.

The greatest result that we observed in the children as the interns, was observed in the activity for lesson 8. For this activity, we hosted a ‘pop up farmers markets’ in each of the 4 schools we held the program in. After completing an activity or series of activities, the children received cash to spend at the market we were hosting. We had a couple of other farmers attend to sell their produce as well. This gave the children a ‘real market’ experience. By offering a wide range of fresh produce, it gave the children an opportunity to make decisions and manage their money. After getting the children to taste new vegetables throughout the program, we offered some of those to them at the markets and had success with them purchasing them. The children were always excited to take the produce home to their families and share with them. We had 60 children participate in the “pop-up farmers market” in Keokuk Schools and 45 children at the Wapello farmers market. After completing evaluations, many children said their favorite parts were the farmers markets, cooking and the smoothie bikes. The children said the lessons they learned the most from was the compost lessons, where to store your food and how to prepare different fruits and vegetables.

The lack of awareness and need that started this program is true all across Iowa. With the amount of local farmers available all throughout Iowa, this program would be beneficial in being implemented in every county. With our positive results from this summer’s program, we hope that it reaches other county extension offices to be implemented into their local schools so that as a state we can see the produce consumption rise, while supporting local farmers.

**Farmers Markets**

A main highlight for the Region 20 Rising Star interns was promoting and attending Farmers Markets throughout South East Iowa. Some of the markets included: “Jefferson Street Farmers Market,” “Mt. Pleasant Farmers Market,” “Market on Main,” Fort Madison Farmers Market,” and “Montrose Riverfront, Inc.” During these markets, the Rising Stars reached out to community members to promote local foods and inventive ways to utilize them. From taste testing to compare local versus store bought foods, to giving away recyclable grocery bags, with recipe cards inside, to those who completed a survey, the Rising Stars were able to expand the excitement of Farmers Markets.
Another way to get communities members excited about Farmers Markets was by creating promotional videos. The Rising Stars were given a GoPro camera to explore the different markets and what makes them special. After capturing footage of the different markets, the Rising Stars created videos using the “GoPro” app and added important information about the markets, i.e. when they were, where they could be located, and some of the fun things they had to offer. Videos reached a variety of people through Facebook, and one Rising Star posted the Harvestville Farm Promotional video to YouTube, which you can see below.

One of the main attractions the Rising Star interns brought to the Farmers Markets included smoothie bikes. A smoothie bike has a blender attachment that blends as the pedals move forward. The Rising Star interns created a recipe card using a recipe from the Spend Smart. Eat Smart app. The first stop took place at the Fort Madison Farmers Market at the beginning of the week and adults were convinced to give the bike a ride and sample the locally made smoothie. Many people had never seen anything like a smoothie bike before, and it brought in many curious customers.

The relevance of Farmers Markets is important because they are the critical component in rebuilding local food economies. Not only are buyers supporting local farmers, local foods provide better nutrition than store bought food, which was a main goal for the Region 20 Rising Stars was to inform youth/communities. Traveling to the Farmers Markets was a worthwhile experience as the Rising Stars introduced community members of all ages to new produce and how to prepare them, encouraging community members to shop for a variety while attending markets.

It was clear to see the excitement the Rising Stars had and how it affected the community. Community members showed interest in the recipe cards offered and were pleased with their new Farmers Market bag. The Rising Stars wanted to promote Farmers Markets and encourage more people to attend Farmer’s Markets, especially to those who might not have attended one before.

**Special Events**

One of our goals in Region 20 was to promote local foods in each county in addition to implementing our pilot program. We knew we would hit a large variety of audiences by traveling to county fairs and one 4th of July celebration. Our summer program targets younger students varying from Pre-K through middle school however an adult audience was still necessary. By traveling to all four counties, we were able to promote eating local, provide recipes and even healthy samples for taste testing to a wide variety of ages and ethnicities.

Our first special event was a 4th of July celebration in Morning Sun, Iowa (Louisa County). As interns, we created a game called “Taste that Veggie,” where both kids and adults spun a prize wheel, which landed on a vegetable. Then they had to taste that specific vegetable the wheel landed on to win a prize! On the wheel, we had local tomatoes, cucumbers, lemon cucumbers, kohlrabi, and everyone’s favorites, eggplant! For many, especially the kids, they had never tried eggplant before. With the incentive of a prize and a little push from us to just take a little bite and try it, many didn’t think it was as bad as they thought it would be! Some of the prizes we had included Iowa State University Extension cups, pencils, pens, sunscreen sticks and magnets.
We also did a Facebook produce giveaway, which we promoted that day. The purpose of this giveaway was to promote the Eat Fresh South East Iowa Facebook page where we post updates on region wide events and tips for producers and consumers. We also use the website to promote local farmers and local farmers markets. The produce giveaway reached over 1,500 people and we had over 60 participants. One lucky winner was selected the evening of July 4. As a result of this event, participants became more knowledgeable and aware of when fresh local produce is available to them.

Our second event took place in Donnellson, Iowa for the Lee County Fair. This year was their 100th year celebration. During the celebration dinner, which included brats and hotdogs, we made recipes for a sweet pickle relish and a roasted veggie salsa. Both toppings were a healthy alternative and were made entirely from local produce! We served around 75 people including extension employees, county representatives and fair go’ers! This event gave us the opportunity to promote local produce, healthy food alternatives and mingle with other extension representatives.

Our third special event was the Henry County fair in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. The fair had sponsored a children’s movie one evening and we knew it would be a great opportunity to target a younger age group. We created two different recipes for popcorn seasons that offered healthy local herbs. Instead of children dousing their popcorn in butter and salt we provided flavorful seasonings such as a Cool Ranch and Parmesan Herb. Attendance at the movie included about 65 youth and adults. Even one young fair go’er came back for seconds!

Our fourth event and third county fair was the Louisa County in Columbus Junction, Iowa. About a week before the fair, we visited a “U Pick” Blueberry Farm in Illinois and wanted to use the produce in some manner. We decided to use the blueberries in a refreshing water infused drink. That evening we served a Blueberry/Pineapple Mint infused water all made from local produce to adults, 4-H’ers and youth. We also decided to create a guessing game for fair go’ers. A jar was filled with colorful beans and whoever could guess the right or closest amount won a ISU/extension prize basket. We had over 50 participants and a first time 4-H member won! This event provided us with the opportunity to explain the health benefits of infused water and interact with youth!

The last county fair we visited was Des Moines County fair in Burlington, Iowa. We again, used our “Taste that Veggie” game with adults and youth. This time our wheel consisted of various veggies including tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, pea shoots, dragons tongue beans, tomatillos and purple carrots! After trying the vegetable the wheel landed on, again the participants were given and Iowa State Extension prize! This experience gave youth and adults to try new vegetables they haven’t ever eaten before and learn more about local produce!
Reflection (Kelsey Pretz)

Over the course of the past 12 weeks, the value of knowledge, experience and opportunity this internship has offered has exceeded my expectations. The Rising Star internship has allowed me to expand my academic knowledge, interact with extension employees among my career interests and take part in one of a kind experience.

Beginning with our pilot program “Sharing from the Garden,” this program has allowed me to expand on experiences working with youth in agriculture. The knowledge I have gained from creating curriculum and activities, being flexible and always having patience will help me with my future career and endeavors. From growing up on my family acreage with a garden, I never really had true insight to vegetable production. After working with Morgan Hoenig (local foods coordinator,) I truly feel so much more knowledgeable about vegetable production, gardening and selection! I am so grateful I have had the opportunity to work with someone so witty and generous. I am excited to use the knowledge and information I learned into action once school starts again. My agricultural sororities’ national philanthropy is Ag in the Classroom and I’m looking forward to incorporating the lessons this summer into our philanthropy event.

During this internship, I also had the opportunity to help create marketing material both electronically and paperbound for our program and farmers market promotion. I was able to expand my previous marketing skills to reach new target audiences using Adobe software. This internship has sparked my interest into advertising and public relations and I am looking forward to taking some classes this fall.

Several extension careers also sparked my interest this summer. Although as interns we did not work with the County Youth Coordinator, we did have the opportunity to work with Cherry Sandeen, the regional 4-H Youth Program Specialist. I have always thought of a CYC as a possible career and working with the 4-H program this summer has strengthened my interest. We also got to interact with Karen Lathrop, the advancement specialist for marketing and communications in eastern Iowa. As a communication major with strong emphasis in marketing and advertising, being able to meet Karen and understand some of her job responsibilities sparked my career interest in the extension marketing field. I’m very honored to have met several extension employees this summer that all serve as personal career interests.

This summer I had several personal highlights and experiences. Some of my favorites include: smoothie bikes at both schools and farmers markets, traveling to different farmers markets and interacting with customers, traveling to different farms and greenhouses and harvesting produce, and lastly some of our special events including the 4h of July and county fairs! Having the opportunity to work in not only the county I grew up in but also the surrounding counties opened my eyes to the lack of knowledge about the food system and agriculture. This program was necessary to educate and increase the awareness of local foods and the system as a whole.

Reflection (Kelley Harris)

Becoming a Rising Star intern gave me the opportunity to utilize my academic knowledge in a professional setting. Being a Family and Consumer Sciences major, I’ve had a wide variety of courses that include human development, food and nutrition, and other life skills.

One of the main components I’ve learned over the years is how important interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence are. Emotional intelligence is defined as having the ability to perceive and regulate emotions; I have utilized emotional intelligence quite often because I work in a group of three interns, along with multiple school-aged children. I switch on my social awareness and go about things how I would want if the roles were reversed and I was in the other person’s shoes. Building connections with people is a strong quality to have, especially when reaching out to members of the community.

I was able to build connections with the students and members of the community based off the knowledge I have developed through my Human Development courses and previous work experiences. All members of the community are different and are at a different level of understanding when it comes to local foods, so it’s important to be as approachable, understanding, and patient when working with a variety of different people.

Food and nutrition is another skill I have been able to utilize. During one particular lesson, I had to teach elementary students safe knife skills and how to prepare fruits and vegetables properly. My main academic passion is nutrition, and I
was given the opportunity to take a recipe and modify it to become healthier using local foods. Once the recipes were created, I designed a recipe card for them to be showcased on.

Being a Rising Star also helped me to improve and develop new skills I can utilize in the future. My communication skills have improved immensely, and I am much more willing to make phone calls and approach community members on the street. Outreach is a main part of this job, not only do you have to have strong communication skills, but social media plays a strong role as well. For almost everything we did in the summer of 2018, there was either a blog post, Facebook message, or Instagram post and I was amazed to see the numbers it has reached. One Facebook post in particular reached over 1600 people.

During my Rising Star summer, I was able to meet and have a discussion with Patty Steiner, former human sciences specialist - nutrition and health, of Des Moines County. Her passion for working with community members and expanding the knowledge of health and nutrition was inspiring to me and made me foresee a possible career with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. This internship has opened my eyes to new career paths that I never knew existed, for example a School Lunch Coordinator. I’ve worked in a total of five schools this summer, mainly located in the lunchroom and I met with the school lunch servers and the school lunch coordinators. Through this, I learned that there are careers working with both students and ensuring they are given nutritious meals throughout the day.

The summer of 2018 wasn’t all work for us Region 20 Rising Stars, there were many activities and experiences I enjoyed. One of my favorites would be going to multiple “U-Pick” farms and selecting our own blueberries, tomatoes, and strawberries. It was enjoyable to be outdoors and promoting local foods in a fun/active way. Given the opportunity to teach students knife skills was also a highlight of my summer because I played the role of a chef and did a demonstration on how to make salsa using my knife skills and explaining the local foods as I created the salsa in front of the student’s eyes.

This internship also provided me the opportunity to speak on the radio for the first time, as we did an interview at the beginning of the summer informing the community that we had arrived and were ready to get started. I also got to experience South East Iowa for the first time, coming for North West Iowa I saw some similarities, but I enjoyed seeing how different they compared as well.

Reflection (Allison Hadley)

This internship has expanded my academic knowledge in a variety of ways. Our main project that we worked on this summer was our ‘Sharing from the Garden’ program. We implemented this program into school lunch programs and summer school programs. The two schools that we were able to work along side their summer school programs gave me some in classroom experience that I will need for my future career. It allowed me to use my leadership skills in the classroom to teach the lessons. We immediately had to put our communication skills to use when we first began this internship. We had to get in contact with the schools and schedule meetings to discuss our program and schedule for the summer. Throughout the program we learned how to problem solve and think on our feet. Whether it was a change in schedule, a change in the number of kids or a lesson not working out perfectly, we found ways to work as a team to solve the problem.

By working almost daily in a school with children, it allowed me to gain hands-on experience with the children. I want to focus my future career on elementary ages 2nd through 5th grade, who were our main grades that were involved. I was able to talk to the elementary teachers when they brought their students to our program, as well as talk to the principles when working with their school programs. Within the Extension Office, we worked closely alongside Cherry Sandeen, the 4-H Youth Program Specialist. What intrigued me most about her position was her ability to chose and plan her own programing. She then is able to implement it into a variety of ages within schools and 4-H programs.

One highlight from this program for me was being able to see the children’s interest in local foods grow during the program. Many were not aware of the variety of fresh produce available to them locally. After educating them about local farmers markets and different farms with merchant stores, they would get excited and say they want their family to take them there. We also gave children the chance to try a variety of local vegetables this summer. We even got to try many new vegetables that we didn’t even know existed. Some of my favorite vegetables to persuade kids to try were roasted white eggplant and garlic scapes. These are two vegetables that you don’t see at the grocery store and vegetables that ‘sounded gross’ to the kids. However, after they tried the vegetable, they would often say, “It’s pretty good!” At the end of
the program, we hosted a popup farmers market at each school. This gave the children the chance to earn “cash” to spend at the market that had a variety of fresh, local produce. After learning about different produce through out the program, many students stepped out of their comfort zone and bought a vegetable that they had tried for the first time in one of our lessons. This was rewarding to see as the instructors as we knew we had left a mark on them and changed their views on many different produce. Overall, opening the children’s eyes up to new foods and educating them on the importance of eating local and seeing our impact, was the biggest highlight to me.
Appendices

https://keharris7.wixsite.com/kelleysfcs/rising-star-internship

Link to Intern Kelley Harris’ website explaining Region 20’s internship. Also included would be promotional videos and an exclusive radio interview with the Region 20 Rising Stars.

Love your Region 20 Rising Star Interns

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