



2021 IN MAHASKA COUNTY

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach connects the needs of Iowans with Iowa State research and resources. We listen, learn, and work with the people of Mahaska County for a #STRONGIOWA.



**Sustainable
ENVIRONMENTS**



**Thriving
COMMUNITIES**



**Resilient
PEOPLE**



**Future
LEADERS**

Serving the People of Mahaska County

As Iowans adjusted to life during the COVID-19 pandemic, ISU Extension and Outreach continued to prioritize health and safety as we delivered research-based education to the people of Mahaska County.



The Mahaska County Extension Council has been elected by the people of the county to guide local educational programming by partnering with Extension staff. From needs assessment through program implementation and evaluation of outcomes, the council represents you and your issues. We are always serving Iowans and we are here for you. Now. Always.

Thank you for your support.

Joy Prothero

Extension Council Chair

Eileen Blom

Council Member

Phil Hol

Council Member

Amanda Lusk

Council Member

Sherrie Moore

Council Member

Andy Padgett

Council Member

Stacey Scott

Council Member

Mike Sytsma

Council Member

Seth Van Zante

Council Member



Local small business owners participating in the Financial Analysis Workshop in Mahaska County.

During the height of the pandemic, Mahaska, Marion, and Jasper Counties took the unprecedented step to work together to fund a Community and Economic Development (CED) Coordinator position. This position focuses on positively impacting small business in three key areas:

- Building partnerships with the key people and organizations in each county, as well as partnering internally with Iowa State University
- Presenting, promoting, and/or facilitating small businesses training

Featured Program: StoryWalk®

The StoryWalk® Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and developed in collaboration with the Kellogg Hubbard Library. StoryWalk® is a registered service mark owned by



Ms. Ferguson. StoryWalk® was created to promote reading and exercise in both children and adults. The StoryWalk® program with ISU Extension and Outreach is designed for families to engage in literacy activities while also getting exercise, learning about content areas (STEM, art, social studies) and enjoying the outdoors.



Mahaska County Extension Horticulture and 4-H Outreach selected the book "Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt" by Kate Messner for the content area and to promote interest in gardening. The 23 attractive yard signs with the pages of the book attached have additional comments/activities for children to

participate in. StoryWalk® is an opportunity to join family and friends, have lots of fun, create memories, and play and learn outdoors! This book is appropriate for preschoolers, and the content will likely interest older children. Activities like StoryWalk®, can better prepare children for school and meet literacy milestones by building vocabulary skills through reading and conversation.

Mahaska County Extension staff utilized the StoryWalk® many times in 2021, including participation in the Master Gardener Plant Sale, Art on the Square, the three libraries in Mahaska County (Stilwell-New Sharon, Eddyville, and Oskaloosa), the Southern Iowa Fair, Nelson Pioneer Farm Fall Festival, and the YMCA childcare program.

Suzette Striegel, Horticulturist
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- Facilitating and partnering to plan events that drive economic activity and growth
In Mahaska County there have been several successes across all three initiatives listed above. Regarding partnership-building, we have actively worked with MCARD, the Mahaska Chamber, the Exchange for Entrepreneurs and the SBDC on events and business training.

We co-sponsored a Financial Analysis Workshop, originated the Tri-County Sip & See that promoted local businesses, and are actively planning a Farm-To-Table Dinner for next summer that will draw together Local Foods, 4-H, CED, and Human Sciences.

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The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimates one in six Americans will experience foodborne illness each year. Nine participants attended the ServSafe® Manager course developed by the National Restaurant Association during May 2021. Six participants passed the exam and received their certification demonstrating knowledge of food safety.

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Showcasing 4-H at the County Fair

The Southern Iowa Fair in Mahaska County returned to a traditional fair in 2021, providing the opportunity for youth to demonstrate what they had learned through their 4-H project work over the past year.

- 1883 volunteer hours were logged in the month of July by 4-H leaders, Superintendents and other 4-H volunteers.
- 148 4-H members showed 801 static exhibits at the Southern Iowa Fair.
- 416 4-H and FFA members exhibited 803 animals at the Southern Iowa Fair.

The Southern Iowa Fair was held July 19th -24th, 2021.





The 4-H members were able to showcase their hard work and experience in-person learning opportunities, through conference judging, livestock shows, communication events, and educational outreach activities planned and executed by the Mahaska County Extension and Outreach staff and volunteers who generously gave their time to make the Fair a success.

The broad scope of projects that were exhibited shows the diverse interests of youth in Mahaska County, from restoring tractors, successful gardens, detailed



welding projects, delicious berry pies, and quilts, to community service projects that are touching lives in our community. These exhibits are the culmination of the year of hard work.



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Left: Ioponics 40-gallon fish tank located at the Extension Office, includes five Koi fish and plants in a microecosystem. Top right: 4-H Outreach visit to local elementary classroom where students were challenged to think like engineers while building Lego structures and sharing. Bottom right: Teale, AmeriCorps Member, working with BeeBots in a local Kindergarten classroom.



Working toward Recovery

As our state works toward recovery, ISU Extension and Outreach Mahaska County decided to create a County Youth Outreach Coordinator Position led by Amy Brainard. This position was designed to help provide more involvement in school enrichment, afterschool, and day camp programs for youth. School enrichment has been implemented in Oskaloosa Elementary, Oskaloosa Christian, North Mahaska Schools and Ricochet youth leadership afterschool program with Oskaloosa Middle School. Nearly 1,000 youth have been reached through the 4-H Youth Outreach programs listed below and the program continues to grow.

- Foodie Friday Day Camp where children learned about kitchen and food safety, preparing their own snacks, and using the Bike Blender to pedal and blend their own smoothies.
- Additional day camps were offered during school breaks.
- Ioponics Governor's STEM Scale-up program was awarded. The Mahaska County Extension office now homes a 40-gallon fish tank and plants while helping youth learn about microecosystems.
- Babysitting Basics courses for Girl Scouts, which includes becoming safe and responsible babysitters, and creating babysitting bags and notebooks.

Looking ahead to 2022, ISU Extension and Outreach Mahaska County will expand day camp offerings through school breaks. Youth activities will be increased at the Southern Iowa Fair. Other curriculum includes: Real Money, Real World, On Their Own & OK, and Family Mindfulness. Soccer for Success will be offered as an after school program and day camp, and Pick A Better Snack will be facilitated in local classrooms.



Youth & Mental Health Recovery

Mahaska County 4-H provided opportunities for youth to focus on their mental health through the Ricochet and The Mindful Teen Programs, and through opportunities provided by the Mahaska County 4-H Honor Council. Ricochet provides middle school youth with opportunities to learn and gain skills in leadership, communication, decision-making, stress management, teamwork, and civic engagement. Participants completed weekly activities and debriefed each activity they completed. Additionally, they planned and implemented their own fundraiser, and service project to give back to their school. They frequently wrote "Positivity Post-Its" and placed them on lockers and teacher's desks to provide them with something positive to read. The Ricochet program is quite successful and is in its fourth year at Oskaloosa Middle School. After the Ricochet program wrapped up in 2021, The Mindful Teen program was offered to the Ricochet students. A recent survey administered by the National 4-H Council found that 64% of teens believe that COVID-19 will have a lasting impact on their generation's mental health. The survey showed that even before COVID-19, 81% of teens viewed mental health as a significant issue for youth; 82% are calling on America to talk more openly and honestly about mental. Iowa 4-H Youth Development staff developed the program as a new and innovative way to meet the needs

and interests of adolescents and communities. The Mindful Teen program supports the Iowa Department of Education and Society of Health and Physical Educators America Standards.

Additionally, the 4-H Honor Council selected Youth Mental Health as their primary focus for 2021. During winter break, they provided Stress Bottle Kits for anyone to pick up at no cost. Kits included materials to make their own calming glitter bottle at home and resources regarding youth mental health and a coloring page. Over summer break, they provided Stress Kits for all teenaged youth who participated in 4-H Summer Fun Day Camps. The kits included resources about youth mental health, coping with stress, and some fun items including a pop-it keychain, calming stone, and positive affirmation cards. These kits were made possible through United Way of Mahaska County grant funding.



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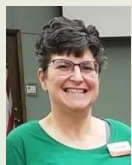
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