

BUILDING A #STRONGIOWA

STAKEHOLDER REPORT 2022

2022 IN O'BRIEN COUNTY

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach provides research-based education and engages Iowans in solving today's problems and preparing for a thriving future. We listen, learn, and work with the people of O'Brien County for a #STRONGIOWA.



Pictured: First place winners of the Local "Lights, Camera, Prevention" substance abuse prevention program.

The O'Brien 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.

Chas Biery
Council Member

Eric Brown
Council Member

Christine Feltman
Council Member

Ryan Freese
Council Member

Lisa Koehlmoos
Council Member

Lindsay Kracht
Council Member

Ron McCarty
Council Member

Emily McDowell
Council Member

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF O'BRIEN COUNTY WITH MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

In 2022, ISU Extension and Outreach O'Brien County continued to engage Iowans in addressing mental health and provided access to research-based training and education on mental health awareness and suicide prevention. Staff continued to be involved with the local suicide prevention coalition and increased efforts to support mental health, focusing largely on youth education and awareness. A 2020 Harris Poll study commissioned by the National 4-H Council found that 55 percent of teens say they have experienced anxiety, 45 percent have experienced excessive stress, and 43 percent have experienced depression.

O'Brien staff led five sessions of Mindful Teen at the Sheldon Community High School Wellness Day focusing on mental health triggers, coping mechanisms, and appropriate communication with trusted adults. The Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn Health class completed "Lights, Camera, Prevention," a program dedicated to substance abuse prevention. These students researched vaping, nicotine, tobacco and alcohol use, and created PSAs (Public Service Announcements) to discourage these addictive habits in their communities. PSAs were aired on local radio stations.

SUPPORTING LOCAL CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

ISU Extension and Outreach O'Brien County continued to support access to quality child care by networking with community partners and connecting providers with educational opportunities.

In partnership with the local O'Brien County Conservation Board, our staff hosted "Growing Up WILD," a hands-on in-person child care provider program that had originally been scheduled in 2020, but put on hold through the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery. In early April, child care providers from across Northwest Iowa gathered at the Prairie Heritage Center to examine ways to build and nurture children's sense of wonder about nature, wildlife and the great outdoors. Graduates of the program took the information learned back to their child care centers and preschools, and are now able to provide extensive nature-based learning opportunities for youth.

STRENGTHENING THE LOCAL AG ECONOMY AND PRIORITIZING FINANCIAL WELLBEING FOR ALL

As a rural county, ISU Extension and Outreach O'Brien County is committed to supporting lowans in reviving the Iowa economy, including the farm economy.

One key program that focused on these efforts was done in partnership with the O'Brien County Economic Development office and the O'Brien County Value-Added Ag Committee. The Value-Added Ag Committee was seeing historic land prices, as well as out-of-state and out-of-country investors purchasing land throughout O'Brien County, so committee members requested a local farm succession workshop to support area farm families, from beginning farmers to those ready to retire.

Working with these partners, ISU Extension and Outreach brought "Farm Succession For You" to Primghar. The unique program provided both practical real-life experience and research-based technical expertise together to guide farmers in building their own succession program. Attendees left the program with a better understanding of how to successfully create a farm succession plan that is harmonious, follows Iowa laws, and is beneficial to all parties involved.

ISU Extension and Outreach O'Brien County also recognized the need to support lowans in improving financial security, specifically related to fraudulent attacks on older lowans. Research shows that 1 in 5 lowans have lost money to imposter scams since 2018.

This concern led to staff working with local Family Wellness Specialist Carol Ehlers to host two "Stay Independent: Spot, Stop, and Avoid Fraud" workshops in 2022. The first workshop was held in March at the Willoway Complex in Sutherland and the second workshop in Sheldon at the Christian Retirement Home.

As participants of the program, 57 adults received reliable, research-based consumer advice to help them protect themselves and loved ones against imposter scams, identity theft and telephone fraud. They are now able to recognize the key signs of fraud, understand strategies to avoid scams, and know the proper actions to take to report suspected fraud.



Cheryl Heronemus
Regional Director



Marsha Rehder
Ag Program
Coordinator /
Office Assistant



Michele Wagner
County Youth
Coordinator



Kate Stewart
K-12 Program
Coordinator



Kiley Biedenfeld
Marketing
Coordinator



Pictured: Local middle schoolers participate in the Ricochet Leadership Program.

GROWING PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE LOCAL YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES

Every year, ISU Extension and Outreach O'Brien County works to expand educational opportunities for youth with programs that spark youth interests and support academic programs.

In 2022, in-school programs saw incredible growth in O'Brien County. Extension was present in every school in the district working with youth of all ages and in all academic areas. Elementary programs focused largely on agriculture and biology education, with programs like "Adopt-A-Cow, chick hatching, and seed germination. An increased focus on middle school and high school enrichment programs saw our staff offering a variety of programs in 2022. More than 50 students participated in the Ricochet youth leadership program at Sheldon Christian School and Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn. Twelve high schoolers, as part of their Ag Business class, participated in the World Food Prize Iowa Youth Institute as a partnership with Extension. Students selected a topic relating to a sustainable development goal to address an international issue relating to world hunger. Through research and career exploration, they developed potential solutions and grew their own awareness of issues at the local and international levels.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION AND OUTREACH O'BRIEN COUNTY

340 2nd Street SE | PO Box 99, Primghar, IA 51245

712-957-5045

www.extension.iastate.edu/obrien