

BUILDING A #STRONGIOWA

STAKEHOLDER REPORT 2022

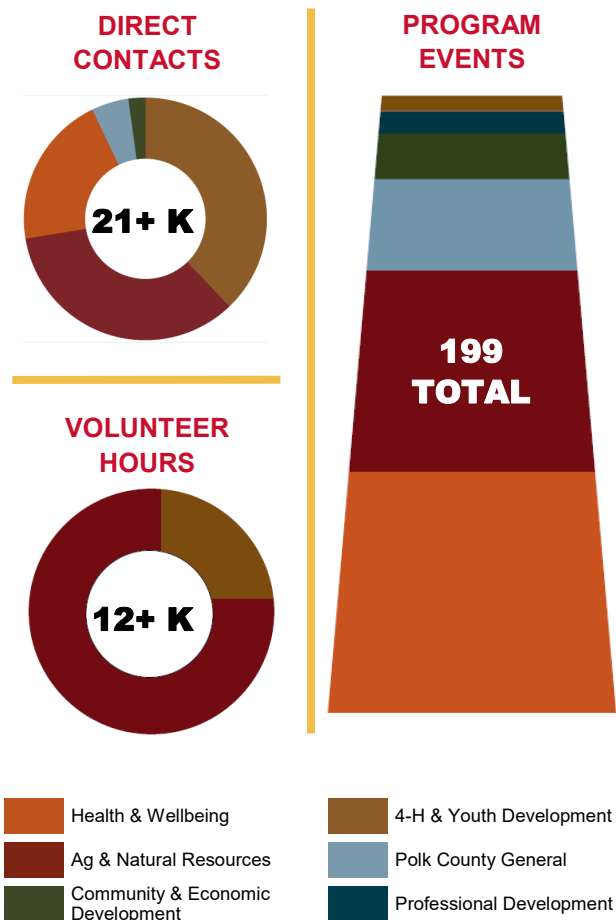
2022 IN POLK COUNTY

For over a century, Iowa State University (ISU) Extension and Outreach in Polk County has served Iowans by connecting them to the research and resources developed by the university. Polk County Extension provides trustworthy information, education, and programming that is designed to enrich the lives of residents and meet the diverse needs of our community. Polk County Extension will continue to listen, learn, and collaborate with the people in Polk County to build a **#STRONGIOWA**.

POLK COUNTY AT A GLANCE

Youth and adults of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds in Polk County are engaged through a variety of educational opportunities.

Here's 2022 at a glance:



Encouraging Residents to Move Beyond Recovery towards Success

Throughout the past year ISU Extension and Outreach in Polk County stood by its commitment to assist Iowans with recovery from Covid and natural disasters by specifically elevating programs and opportunities that helped residents **address their mental health** and **improve their financial security**. We intentionally incorporated these themes in programming and expanded educational offerings to include opportunities like *Question. Persuade. Refer.* and *Money Smart: Prioritizing Bills, Credit, and Debt*.

Alongside these initiatives, ISU Extension in Polk County also began to shift its energy towards reenergizing existing programs, engaging partners old and new, and offering fresh educational opportunities. This included initiatives like Polk County 4-H's three successful daylong summer camps, the establishment of the Polk County 4-H endowment committee, a reimagined Polk County Master Gardener volunteer program, and reignited community relationships. All to serve more Iowans!

Our dedicated Extension professionals delivered research-based education to **thousands** of Polk County residents in 2022 and we can't wait to serve more! Polk County Extension is the reliable resource to help residents move from recovery to success!



Throughout 2022 ISU Extension and Outreach in Polk County served Iowans by supporting families through Familias Fuertes (left), engaging youth through 4-H programs and projects (center), and encouraging mental health breaks by visiting one of the Polk County Master Gardeners three demonstration gardens (right).

4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Exploring passions. Learning life skills. Preparing for the future. The Polk County 4-H team supports youth through camps, after-school programs, fair projects, and more! 4-H lessons and projects focus on healthy living, STEM, leadership, civic engagement, communications, and the arts.

Polk County 4-H 2022* Programming

- Impacted **1,485** area youth.
- Supported **31** 4-H Clubs and **12** Clover Kids Clubs
- Depended on nearly **100** caring and passionate adult volunteers.
- Celebrated **18** 4-H Urban Youth Leadership Academy graduates who represented **eight** Des Moines metro area schools!
- Developed **three NEW** summer day camps engaging **63** youth during the summer.
- Showed **3,222** static and livestock at the 2022 Polk County Fair.
- Raised nearly **\$3,005** for the Polk County 4-H during its annual day of giving!

*4-H program stats are measured Sept. 1, 2021-Aug. 31, 2022



In May, the Polk County 4-H Urban Youth Leadership Academy graduated 18 students representing eight Des Moines public schools. The Academy provided youth leadership development and opportunities to learn and network with community leaders (top). In July, over 500 youth participated in the 83rd annual Polk County Fair. Fairgoers could visit the fully grown chicks from Capitol View Elementary (bottom left) or see Bacon Buddies & Friends in action (bottom center). The Bacon Buddies and Friends program connects youth with developmental or intellectual disabilities with a 4-H or FFA mentor to show swine or goats (bottom center). In December, Polk County 4-H partnered with Bondurant-Farrar Intermediate School to engage nearly 400 students in STEM-related activities focused on ocean exploration. The event was supported by a grant from Meta.

Program Spotlight *Embryology with Polk County 4-H and Capitol View Elementary*

Polk County 4-H partnered with Capitol View Elementary in Des Moines to teach youth about the process of incubating, hatching, and raising chicks! Two first grade and the special education classrooms participated in the chick hatching, or embryology, project. Over the course of 21 days, elementary students learned about the physical development occurring within the eggs, participated in relevant literacy lessons, and did hands-on activities to reinforce their learning.

“One of the best ways to engage youth in the sciences is to give them real-life opportunities for learning,” Marci Vinsand, county youth coordinator for Polk County said. “We were so happy to partner with Capitol View to bring this interactive experience and elements of 4-H into to their classrooms.”

The chick hatching program follows the 4-H experiential model of ‘do, reflect, apply’ and meets the Iowa core curriculum science standard for participating students.

“This was an amazing opportunity for all students in my class,” said Kristen McIntyre, first grade teacher at Capitol View. “Many students do not get the chance to interact with animals and this was the perfect way for them to see the different stages an animal goes through, falling in line with our curriculum.”

In addition to the science component, an accompanying activity included a literacy lessons. “Most of our reading throughout first grade is about birds. The students used their existing knowledge about birds with this project which made our learning even more significant,” said McIntyre.

Ask us about other hands-on activities for youth!

Contact

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County Youth Coordinator
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HEALTH & WELLBEING

Health takes on many forms: physical, mental, social-emotional, and financial. ISU Extension and Outreach in Polk County offers programs and information that assists individuals and families in making healthy choices regardless of age, ability, or background.

Family & Relationships

- Familias Fuertes (Strengthening Families Program 10-14)
- ¡Salir Adelante! Pathways for our Future
- Community Baby Showers in partnership with Nutrition 4 Young Children
- Small Talk
- Our Bookshelf
- Raising School Ready Readers
- Programs specific for daycare providers

Food & Nutrition

- Kids in the Kitchen
- Buy. Eat. Live. Healthy.
- ServSafe® Certification

Financial

- Finances of Caregiving
- Your Money, Your Goals
- Small Change
- Identity Theft

Partner Spotlight Collaborating to support a diverse community

Collaborating with community organizations of all types is critical to the success of ISU Extension and Outreach in Polk County. Partnerships help us fulfill our mission to serve all Iowans and support the community.

Building on past success, the family life team partnered with **EMBARC, a non-profit serving refugees**, to implement *Our Bookshelf*. Through EMBARC's translation support, 17 participants were engaged in early literacy lessons in Burmese and Karen. Participants also received free books from the Des Moines Public Library in their native language and in English.

This past year the team also collaborated with a **corporate partner, Turner Construction**, to provide *Question. Persuade. Refer.* This suicide prevention program was provided in Spanish by Extension staff and Turner Construction assisted by recruiting participants and providing lunch and giveaways.

Educational Spotlight *Early literacy programs provide foundation for later learning*

ISU Extension and Outreach in Polk County offered several early literacy programs to highlight the importance of literacy and language development in the youngest of Iowans. Three programs offered through our family life team in 2022 included:

- **Small Talk**
A ten-week virtual series using patented technology and evidence-based curriculum to help reduce the "word gap" in infants and toddlers. The series teaches parents with infants or toddlers how to improve quantity and quality of parent-child talk.
- **Our Bookshelf**
Offered in both Spanish and English this program helps parents and caregivers of preschoolers learn and apply literacy techniques while engaging in shared reading activities. This four-week virtual series focuses on dialogic reading.
- **Raising School Ready Readers**
A five-week in-person series for parents or caregivers with children ages three to six. The program helps participants turn everyday experiences – like fixing meals, giving baths, or riding in the car – into early literacy learning opportunities.

"All three of these programs assisted participants with young children establish those early literacy and language skills that set a solid foundation for later learning," Cassie Odland, family life and nutrition educator said. "Although the intended age group for these programs is slightly different, all of them provide fun and practical tools, techniques, and resources to incorporate literacy in their day-to-day interactions and activities."

Participants in these programs also received a variety of free books to go along with their learning courtesy of Early Childhood Iowa!

Ask us about upcoming early literacy programs!

Contact

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Small Talk participants received a bag filled with books, toys, and learning guide. Additionally, participants were able to utilize the program's patented "talk pedometer" to measure their child's language environment. Based on those measurements, families would receive personalized, actionable feedback reports, explored the data, and discussed strategies to increase the quality and quantity of talk at home.

AG & NATURAL RESOURCES

Agriculture and Natural Resources programs offered by ISU Extension in Polk County target consumer and commercial agriculture. Our participants range from the home horticulturist to farm owners and ag professionals.

The Polk County office supports our signature horticulture program, the Polk County Master Gardeners; the Master Conservationist program; farm management education; and technical expertise for crops, livestock, and pests.

Polk County Master Gardeners

Polk County Master Gardeners is a volunteer service organization where advanced horticulture education and training is provided in exchange for volunteer service within the community. This year, our **346 active** Master Gardener volunteers served the community by:



- Donating **over 5,000 pounds** of fresh produce to local food pantries.
- Providing community spaces for education and respite through **three community gardens**.
 - Demonstration Garden, Urbandale
 - Discovery Garden, Iowa State Fairgrounds
 - Enabling Garden, Altoona
- Serving **over 10,000 service hours!**

Polk County Master Conservationists



The Master Conservationist program is a seven-week intensive education program designed to create a community of knowledgeable and passionate conservationists. Participants learn about Iowa's native ecosystems, local conservation challenges and opportunities, and connect with other conservation enthusiasts and organizations in Polk County.

In 2022 the program partnered with **five** other organizations and graduated **22 participants**.

Pesticide Applicator Trainings

Through our partnership with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, ISU Extension and Outreach in Polk County provides continuing instruction courses for pesticide applicators. In 2022, ISU Extension in Polk County **educated 589 applicators!**

Farm Management & Education

Workshops held throughout the year educate farmers, landowners, and agribusiness professionals about farm business management, fair cash rent lease practices, farmland ownership issues, and crop marketing planning. Ag professionals met with **224 residents** to help educate individuals, families, and businesses on best practices to encourage a healthy ag economy.

Polk County 2022 Extension Council

The nine member Polk County Extension Council represents diverse groups, issues, and concerns of the county. Through their leadership, the Extension Council identifies and reviews the needs of local residents, prioritizes programs to meet these needs, and guides implementation of programming.



Dennis Goering
Extension Council Chair



Joe Gonzalez
Council Member



Julie McGonegle
Council Vice-Chair



Emma Runde
Council Member



Rich Degner
Council Treasurer



Denise McAfee
Council Member



Kasey Peters
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Bart Weldon
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