



## 2021 IN SIOUX 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 Sioux County for a #STRONGIOWA.



**Sustainable  
ENVIRONMENTS**



**Thriving  
COMMUNITIES**



**Resilient  
PEOPLE**



**Future  
LEADERS**

The Sioux 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.**

**Mark Pottebaum**

*Extension Council Chair*

**Calvin Bomgaars**

*Council Member*

**Jared Bomgaars**

*Council Member*

**Daniel Borchers**

*Council Member*

**Cheryl Buntsma**

*Council Member*

**Brian Hooyer**

*Council Member*

**Cathy Punt**

*Council Member*

**Kevin Rehder**

*Council Member*

**Bruce Schafer**

*Council Member*

## Serving the People of Sioux 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 Sioux County.

During 2021 we focused on the following efforts.

### Providing Traditional Agriculture Programs in New Ways

As COVID-19 continued to affect the area, we developed new ways to provide traditional pesticide, manure management and crop education trainings. Early in the year, hundreds of Sioux County pesticide and manure management applicators attended in-person trainings, with several others taking advantage of the option to complete the required training virtually or individually at our office.

As the year went on, ISU Extension and Outreach Sioux County continued to provide programming and work with farmers and members of the ag industry to reach our main goal - to give farmers and agribusiness representatives multiple options, in-person, virtually and through podcasts, to complete their required trainings and continuing education.

In doing this, ISU Extension and Outreach Sioux County was also doing our part to assure the consuming public of agriculture's commitment to providing a high-quality safe food supply and a healthy environment to live in.



## New Spanish Newsletter Launched from ISU Extension and Outreach Sioux County Office

The ISU Extension and Outreach Dairy Team has been proactive in bringing education to Spanish-speaking employees in the agricultural industry. This has included on-farm training, videos and resources for working in dairies. Yet, while sharing these resources, the team found that a focus on life skills in Spanish was also needed to help the two cultures understand each other and prosper.

Led by local Dairy Specialist Fred Hall, that idea evolved into partners across the communities joining together to provide a bi-monthly newsletter in Spanish to bring timely and topical information to Spanish-speaking employees and their families.

The first issue of “Latinos Trabajando en Siouxland/Celebración de Vida” newsletter has been distributed to employers in Northwest Iowa for placement on breakroom tables and throughout local businesses. It is available as a free download at <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/dairyteam/hispanic-resources>.

While producers use the dairy team’s Spanish videos and brochures to teach professional skills, this newsletter addresses life skills for people working in a new culture.

“The dairy team is excited to expand our reach to Spanish-speaking employees in the food-producing and handling industries,” said Hall. “By working with employers to make the newsletter easily accessible on break room tables, we hope it develops conversations that will help blend the two cultures in the workplace.”



## Revitalizing the Sioux County Master Gardener Program and Breathing Life into the Landscape Around Our Office

Led by Master Gardener Program Coordinator Donna Mills, the Sioux County Master Gardener program was revitalized. Six Sioux County individuals completed the Master Gardener training in the fall of 2020 and began 2021 as Master Gardener interns dedicated to sharing horticulture knowledge and volunteering throughout the community.

One of the projects taken on was breathing new life into the landscape outside of the ISU Extension and Outreach Sioux County office. Mills and maintenance staff joined interns John Buntsma, Lindsay Millard and Phyllis Van Gelder to create a landscape which beautified the area, supported pollinators, created a new educational space, and reduced soil erosion. Plantings filled bare areas and signage was designed to help citizens learn about native species and habitat. Rightfully named, the “Butterflies and Blossoms” garden now gives local residents a beautiful place to visit and learn.

## Focusing on Programs and Resources to Support Healthy Youth, Families and Communities

Local ISU Extension and Outreach staff keep a finger on the pulse of family and community needs. In 2021, staff provided programs to support parents, healthy families and thriving communities in Sioux County. Two programs of note include:

**Small Talk.** Early in the year, Sioux County worked with Family Wellbeing Specialist Lori Korthals to host a pilot program, “Small Talk” which gave parents insight into how they communicate with their infant and how they can improve his or her brain development and social skills.

**Clover Kids Crates.** Due to the continuation of COVID-19 guidelines, Clover Kids Crates continued in 2021 with Sioux County youth and families participating in the take-home educational projects from January through May. Once restrictions lifted, Clover Kids in-person monthly programs returned in five local communities starting in September.



## Providing Quality Youth Summer Programs and Showcasing 4-H at the County Fair

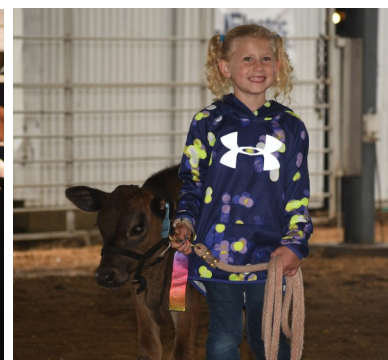
Summer camps and 4-H programs provided by ISU Extension and Outreach Sioux County have always been popular and well attended. This was no different in 2021.

Beginning in June and continuing to early-August, 224 youth attended 21 camps with many of the participants choosing to attend multiple camps. These youth plunged into hands-on, innovative adventures in the areas of science, technology, engineering, math (STEM), robotics, cooking and the arts. Participants developed a variety of new skills and expanded their knowledge of subjects that interest them. Some examples include: safe kitchen skills, coding, Origami, meat science, video filming and editing, drone piloting, sewing and archaeology.

Camps were coordinated by Sioux County's newest employee, Leslie Kallsen, who serves as the K-12 Program Coordinator. Following the summer, Kallsen reported that camps were always full, proof that Sioux County families missed the traditional camp experience in 2020 and were excited to return to a more normal summer camp experience in 2021. ISU Extension and Outreach Sioux County offered 9 different take-home camps, called Clover Crates, for youth who were unable or uncomfortable attending programs in person. Reaching all audiences is an important component of the Sioux County 4-H and Youth Development program, and Clover Crates are one way that we are able to do this.

In addition to summer camps, the Sioux County Youth Fair returned in 2021, providing the opportunity for youth to demonstrate what they have learned through their 4-H project work over the past year.

Throughout 2021, Sioux County was home to 285 4-H members with many of them



*Top Left:* Anthony Reyes launches his pop bottle rocket at AstroCamp as Summer Educator Jill Nachtigal and other camp participants look on.

*Top Right:* Isaac Schmidt does his cooking demonstration as his partner films using an iPad at "Lights, Camera, Snacks!" camp.

*Middle:* Marnie and Aubrey Croatt learn from the rabbit judge at county fair.

*Bottom Left:* Tegegn Smit exhibits his Hereford Breeding Heifer at the fair.

*Bottom Right:* Katelyn Wielenga shows her bucket calf at the Clover Kids Show.

participating at the Sioux County Youth Fair, whether that be showing livestock, performing in a communications event or exhibiting non-livestock projects. In all areas of fair, youth, families and volunteers were excited for the opportunity to showcase their hard work and return to a more normal fair.

Although rain and storms plagued parts of the Sioux County Youth Fair, County Youth Coordinator Jenna Keene said things still went well, and throughout it all, there was an ongoing sense of community, passion and support for Sioux County's 4-H members, Clover Kids and FFA members.

## Working toward Recovery

As our state works toward recovery, our staff has been engaging Iowans in addressing mental health and supporting efforts to increase access to quality child care.

In the spring, care packets consisting of mental health resources and tokens of appreciation were distributed to all school nurses and counselors in Sioux County. Daycare providers received similar care packages the week of Child Care Provider Appreciation Day in May. Their packages also contained mental health resources along with trainings and child development resources that would best benefit them.

To help with the shortage of child care and afterschool programs, our staff collaborated to host "On Their Own and Ok," a program designed for 4th through 6th graders to explore how they may begin to stay home safely on their own for short periods of time. The program was hosted virtually and saw participants from across the county and state. Impacts included youth recognizing ways to safely fill their time, youth who can make their own healthy snacks, and youth who know their family's safety guidelines and protocol in case of an emergency.

To start the mental health conversation in Sioux County, we created a new event for targeted audiences. The first was a mental health workshop for faith-based youth workers. Feedback from the first program was appreciative and requested that we continue the conversation. This led to the second mental health workshop for all faith-based workers. Both workshops focused largely on interactive discussions about stigma and mental illness, testimonies from mental health providers and survivors and "Question. Persuade. Refer." suicide prevention training for youth workers and ag professionals. Many helpful resources were provided along with specific opportunities to engage in community efforts.

Looking ahead to 2022, ISU Extension and Outreach Sioux County will continue engaging Iowans in addressing mental health and supporting efforts to increase access to quality child care. Our staff will continue to market online child care provider trainings, as well as Extension resources and programs. Our conversations with child care providers will continue so that we know the needs and can help quickly.

Sioux County will also be the launching pad for Northwest Iowa to utilize a new mental health wellness federal grant. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) will partner with us to help raise awareness about mental health and wellness resources and make them more accessible to farmers and rural communities. Extension staff will offer community outreach and programs to individuals involved in ag and those who support them. We will promote programs focused on strengthening families, and resource packets will be available addressing how to access stress assistance, wellness, and family finance programs.

### Extension Staff



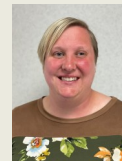
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**Jackie Jiskoot**  
*Office Assistant*



**Jenna Keene**  
*County Youth Coordinator*



**Leslie Kallsen**  
*K-12 Program Coordinator*



**Donna Mills**  
*Master Gardener /  
Mental Health Program Coordinator*



**Sue Boettcher**  
*Human Sciences Program Coordinator*



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