

# BUILDING A #STRONGIOWA

## O'BRIEN COUNTY

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach connects the needs of Iowans with Iowa State University research and resources. We are working with the people of O'Brien County for what we all want: a strong Iowa.

### O'Brien County Extension Council

Every Iowa county has an elected extension council that guides local educational programs by partnering with staff. From needs assessment through program implementation and evaluation of outcomes, the council represents the issues and people of the county.

We have identified these local issues as priority topics for current and future programming:

- Community and Economic Development
- Health and Well-Being
- Food and the Environment
- K-12 Youth Outreach

### Community and Economic Development

Horticulture Educator Margaret Murphy and O'Brien County Communities Program Assistant Beth Bunkers teamed up with the Willoway Complex in Sutherland this summer to host a healthy living program for older adults.

The first program consisted of an easy-access gardening presentation from Murphy, and following that, attendees planted an easy-access garden which was tended to and enjoyed by Willoway residents. In the fall, a follow-up local



foods brunch showcased the garden's harvest and shined a light on other local producers from the surrounding area.

*Attendees plant the Willoway Complex's container garden.*

### Extension Council Members

We want communities and farmers to thrive, and families and children to be healthy. And eventually we want to turn the world over to the next generation better than we found it.

**Ron McCarty**

*Extension Council Chair*

**Michael Wagner**

*Council Member*

**Ryan Freese**

*Council Member*

**Cheryl Heronemus**

*Regional Director*

**Ryan Goosen**

*Council Member*

**Kiana Johnson**

*Council Member*

**Kathy Wright**

*Council Member*

**Lisa Koehlmoos**

*Council Member*

**Christine Feltnan**

*Council Member*

**Amanda Rausch**

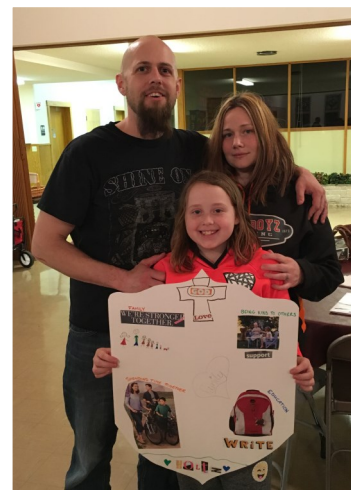
*Council Member*

### Health and Well-Being

In the fall of 2016, Human Sciences Program Coordinator Mackenzie DeJong was contacted by Pastor Jeff, former minister at Trinity United Church of Christ in Hartley. Pastor Jeff, who has since passed away, had heard about the **Strengthening Families Program for Parents and Youth 10-14 (SFP 10-14)**, and he wanted to see it offered in his community. So began a successful partnership and a successful SFP 10-14 program.

SFP 10-14 focuses on building and strengthening family relationships while youth are in middle school. Positive youth-parent relationships and strong communication lead to youth with better social skills, less aggression, higher self-esteem and a stronger sense of self-worth.

The program which consisted of seven evening suppers and sessions had six families participate from across O'Brien County. Families who participated in all of the sessions were awarded at graduation with a certificate and a gift to encourage the continuation of these family-focused evenings even after the program ended.



*The Holtz family shows off their family crest which showcases the ideals that their family values the most.*

## IN 2017

## Food and the Environment

During the months of April and May, O'Brien County hosted **Annie's Project**, a program focused on empowering women in agriculture.

The program which consisted of six sessions was held in collaboration with Sioux County, and was coordinated by O'Brien County Office Assistant Marsha Rehder, Sioux County Office Assistant Anita Jeltama, and Farm and Agribusiness Management Specialist Gary Wright.

This particular Annie's Project drew attendees from O'Brien, Sioux, Cherokee, Clay and Osceola County. The women participants represented a variety of ages from mid-twenties to retirement age, and a variety of agricultural enterprises—dairy goat production, agribusiness human resources management, crop production, swine barn management, and more.

The sessions empowered the women participants to make informed decisions within the following agribusiness areas: financial, human resources, legal, marketing and production.

Participants agreed that the sessions were unique and beneficial in that they were able to network with and learn from primarily other women, which is uncommon in the agriculture industry.

"One of the foundations of Annie's Project is that women learn best with and from other women, so whenever possible, our sessions were led by women who are experts in their fields," Wright said.

Additionally, the women in Annie's Project were given resources to take home. Thus, they were able to utilize what they learned in class on their own farm or within their agribusiness enterprise.

Fifteen women participated in and graduated from this Annie's Project program which was hosted at Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon.



Annie's Project graduates pose during their six and final session.



Youth learn the basics of CPR and First Aid at STEMfest: Healthy Living 2017.

## K-12 Youth Outreach

This year, O'Brien County Youth Program Assistant Beth Bunkers and County Youth Coordinator Sarah Fiddelke had a new idea for **STEMfest**, a science, technology, engineering and mathematics day-long event for 4th through 8th graders. In addition to focusing on STEM curriculum, they also wanted to focus on Healthy Living, one of the core concepts of 4-H.

Thus, in the fall of 2017, Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon was the host of STEMfest: Healthy Living. A regional event, this first-ever Northwest Iowa STEMfest: Healthy Living had 64 participants.

Workshops included: CPR and First Aid Basics, Heart Monitors, Kids in the Kitchen, Yoga, Zumba, Healthy Mathematics, Nursing basics, Incredible Wearables, and more.



Participants focus on healthy eating and nutrition during STEMfest: Healthy Living.

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