



BUILDING A #STRONGIOWA

2019 IN CHICKASAW 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 Chickasaw County for a #STRONGIOWA.

Chickasaw County Extension Council

Every Iowa county has an elected extension council that guides local educational programming 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:

- Economic Development: Business Development and Community Leadership
- Food and the Environment: Women in Ag
- Health and Well-being: Financial Literacy and Aging
- K12 Youth Outreach: Citizenship and Leadership Development

Economic Development

Empowering communities to shape their own future through research, education, community engagement, economic development, community planning and design.

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.

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Chickasaw County Extension and Outreach played an active role in community events by attending Shop New Hampton meetings and participating in downtown open house events throughout the year. Partnerships have been and continue to be developed with local businesses and organizations, such as Mercy One, Chickasaw Connections, NRCS, SWCD, FSA, Chickasaw County Farm Bureau, and many more. We also participated in mock interviews of 8th graders in New Hampton which gave these youth an invaluable experience and feedback to use as they prepare to enter the workforce.

In 2019, we once again offered our office as a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site and prepared tax returns for 48 low- and moderate-income Iowans. The program

Earn it!
Keep it!
Grow it!



Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program

also assisted additional households who did not need to file or who for some other reason elected not to complete their return. During tax preparation, volunteers often use the time to explain changes in tax law, eligibility for credits, best practices in record keeping, and suggest proper withholding for income in the coming year. This information has resulted in changes in financial practices by low income families who return each year.

Plans also began for the Leading Communities program to be offered in early 2020. As Iowa communities face increasing challenges, engagement and local involvement in community matters have been declining. Participants in this program will become more involved in the community and learn leadership skills to effectively plan, develop, and implement local community action.



Health and Well-Being

Engaging and empowering people with research-based information and education throughout their lifetime helps to build strong relationships, families, and communities.

Nine childcare providers from Chickasaw County received training earlier this spring on Moving to Learn & Art and Nature, which leads to a larger appreciation for outdoor play and learning for our youngest clients. Parenting resources and activities were also distributed to young families at a Family Night Out.

Small Change was a financial program attended by 23 educators who received continuing education credits through this in-person and online course. With the tools and resources provided, these educators will be able to implement what they learned in class when teaching financial literacy. Financial Education Curriculum was also distributed to all schools in Chickasaw County with K-5th grade teachers.

Fresh Conversations is a monthly program for seniors who are interested in learning more about nutrition, exercise, and general health. The New Hampton site consistently has 10-15 participants who love to get together to try new foods and ultimately maintain better health and their independence.



Iowa's population is aging, with 16% of the state over the age of 65. In Chickasaw County, the percentage of residents over 65 jumps to over 20%, which increases the need to focus on issues faced by this population, such as caregiving. Five participants completed Powerful Tools for Caregivers, a 6-session series that helps build skills in caregivers so they can take good care of themselves while caring for someone else. Participants learned a variety of communication strategies, developed skills in positive thinking and self-talk, identified ways to manage stress and were connected to local resources to support their family. Making self-care a priority leads to better caregiving and stronger communication for families facing tough decisions.

The rate of Parkinson's Disease diagnosis is on the rise, especially in rural communities. Journey Through Parkinson's Disease—a 3 session series that explores the symptoms of PD, how to seek treatment, how PD

impacts the brain, and alternative approaches to symptom management—was offered in two different Chickasaw communities this year to a total of 25 individuals. The implementation of this program in 2019 has helped raise awareness of potential symptoms and what can be done to lessen the symptoms and make life a little easier.

Food and Environment

Providing unbiased, research-based information and education to agricultural professionals to grow the economic base of Iowa agriculture.

Chickasaw County Extension along with industry partners including Farm Bureau, Farm Credit Services, USDA, local banks, cooperatives, and ag commodity groups continue to provide relevant programming for community members. This year's programming again focused on Women In Ag. Approximately one-quarter of Iowa's farm operators are women. That's nearly 33,000 women. And even more women are involved in related agribusiness operations.



Annie's Project: Managing for Today and Tomorrow was a five-week farm management program designed especially for women. The decisions made during business, estate, retirement and succession planning are combined to form a farm transition plan. Planning helps ensure the farm can continue as a productive agricultural business. This program brought together 13 women who continue to network and learn from each other.

In 2019, the groundwork was laid for a 4 County Women Land and Legacy group which will begin meeting in early 2020 at the Borlaug Learning Center in Nashua. Women from Butler, Bremer, Chickasaw, and Floyd Counties have come together to help plan and organize this group through steering committee meetings and listening sessions attended by 45 women.

Other programs included the Emerging Farmers Seminar at local high schools, Farmland Leasing and Management, and the Conservation Station visited the Chickasaw County Achievement Show this year. Re-certification training was provided for 112 Private and 77 Commercial Pesticide Applicators and 16 Manure Applicators. Other popular programs were the Benefits of Mid-Contract Management for Upland Wildlife and the 2020 Farm Bill Decisions Meeting which brought in 23 and 62 participants, respectively.

K-12 Youth Outreach

4-H Youth Development is designed to empower K-12 youth to reach their full potential through youth-adult partnerships and research-based experiences. The Iowa 4-H program's four priority areas are STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), Healthy Living, Leadership and Civic Engagement, and Communication and the Arts. Last year Iowa 4-H reached over 34,000 K-12 youth.



There are 9 4-H Clubs in Chickasaw County which welcome members in grades K-12 and 2 special-interest clubs: shooting sports and legos. Membership in these clubs totaled 182 this past year. Workshops were held throughout the year that focused on project areas such as livestock, clothing, food, and science. A Record Book Workshop was also held to show youth how to complete and organize their project records.



After-school Clover Kid programs were offered in 3 school districts for K-3rd graders, in addition to Explorers Club which was open to 3rd-5th graders in New Hampton on no-school days. Each of these programs provided youth with 2 hours of scheduled activities once a month during the school year.

Other school programs were offered in Chickasaw County that offered a variety of learning experiences to youth in all grades. Water Rocks! is a program that created an awareness of the many environmental

issues surrounding water in 60 Chickasaw County youth. Precision Ag Days, Farm Safety Days, and Dairy Story helped give youth a better understanding of agricultural careers, safety issues, and dairy farm operations.



The Citizenship Trip program started 2019 fresh with a new group which includes 2 youth from Chickasaw County and other youth and chaperones from Region 4. They have met monthly to learn about citizenship, leadership, and the locations they plan to visit. Earlier in the year, they traveled to the Iowa State Capital in Des Moines and the program will culminate in the spring of 2020 with the trip to Washington D.C. This program is open to 8th-11th grade 4-H members.

The Chickasaw County 4-H Council currently has 6 youth in leadership positions. They meet monthly to help plan and carry out various events, such as Lock-In, Clothing and Communication Day, summer camps, Awards Program, and various fair events. They serve as positive role models and 4-H ambassadors to other youth.



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