

# BUILDING A #STRONGIOWA

## JOHNSON 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 Johnson County for a #STRONGIOWA.

### Johnson 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:

- Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Health and Well-being
- Food and the Environment
- K-12 Youth Outreach

### Agriculture and Natural Resources

**Ag Exploration Day:** One-hundred and thirty area high school students participated in a new event at the SE Research and Demonstration Farm called Ag Exploration Day on Sept. 5! The goals of this event were to engage students in hands-on learning, get students excited to enter careers in agriculture, teach students skills they can use at home, and provide networking opportunities. Students rotated through 8 stations learning about a variety of topics ranging from livestock and crops to precision agriculture and horticulture. Additionally, students had the opportunity to visit with local community colleges, ISU, and sponsor representatives.

Link to video: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=PxnWeYYyck4&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PxnWeYYyck4&feature=youtu.be)



### Health and Well-Being

According to the Iowa CareGivers website ([www.iowacaregivers.org](http://www.iowacaregivers.org)) as the population of elderly increases, the demand for services is going to exceed the supply of workers to provide those critical services. In response to the care gap ISU Extension and Outreach Human Sciences staff partnered with Heritage Area on Aging and Johnson County Livable community to coordinate programs in Johnson County such as **Powerful Tools For Caregivers**. This series of classes is designed to empower family caregivers of adults with chronic conditions to take better care of themselves. The "tools" learned in the six-week series benefit caregivers by helping them reduce stress, improve caregiving confidence, establish balance in their lives, communicate their needs, make tough decisions and locate helpful resources. Participants were able to share similar experiences and resources and learn from each other. One participant commented, "I think this is one of the most worthwhile classes I have ever taken."



### 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.

**Scott Stutsman**  
Extension Council Chair

**Scott Ritter**  
Vice Chair

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Treasurer & IECA  
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**Karissa Wikert**  
Council Member &  
BBBS Liaison

**Marianne Klouda**  
Council Member

**Greg Kuntz**  
Council Member

Iowa ←  
Extension Council  
→ Association

## IN 2019

**Finances of Caregiving** – Human Sciences, Extension and Outreach collaborated with the University of Iowa, Heritage Area Agency on Aging, and Johnson County Livable Community to offer 2 sessions of the 5-week series of the Finance of Caregiving program in Burlington. Twenty-six people participated in the programs, materials provided to these individuals help them, and their families protect their assets and prepare for their retirement while providing care. Once completing the series, the participants were able to have a complete binder with all the necessary information and documents needed to make informed decisions. One comment from a participant, “I liked the interaction in the class and learned a lot from the questions that other people had. It helped me think through possible solutions for my parents (and myself!) that I may never have considered before. Great class!”

### Food and Environment

More than 2,000 Johnson County 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders participated in the **Pick a Better Snack** program in 2019. Nutrition education, information on exercise and less screen time and sampling fresh produce taught these students that being healthy is important but can be fun! They learned that they have the power to make healthy changes. In the words of one 2<sup>nd</sup> grade student, “I love Pick a Better Snack! I am teaching my whole family how to make healthy choices.” Teachers agree saying they have noticed more fruits and vegetables are being consumed at lunch and students are more active at recess.



### K-12 Youth Outreach

**Johnson County 4-H** partnered with the 9th Floor Nursing Team to provide University of Iowa Children’s Hospital with a *Trunk or Treat* experience. The goal was to provide a community service project to children while

sprinkling some 4-H education within our booth. The patients from the University of Iowa Children’s Hospital came down to the lobby and were able to experience approximately twenty different booths that were created for them to have a positive, safe experience. They went from booth to booth to enjoy educational, hands-on activities and receive goodies. When they came to our booth, they learned about agriculture in Iowa and 4-H. They were able to touch, feel, and experience kernels, cobs, and whole stalks of corn. There was also a photo booth where they could compare their height to the height of an actual stalk of corn. We served approximately 75 children received 4-H bags, Ag literature, coloring sheets, goodies, and other materials.



**4-H/BBBS partnership** reaches an underserved population that includes: youth eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch, one parent or non-parent homes, one or more incarcerated parent homes, and our diverse cultural community. The program helps Littles avoided the Juvenile Justice System, avoided use of marijuana or other illegal substances and many have plans to finish high school.

45 youth and their mentors were enrolled in the 4-H Big Brothers Big Sisters Club as part of the National 4-H Mentoring Grant. Youth and mentors meet one to one, monthly for 4-H meetings/activities and six times during the year for family nights.

BBBS migrated their Match Management System to a salesforce platform which will allow more robust data collection, reporting and efficiency in management.



BBBS in partnership with 4-H continues to offer two afterschool programs: Noble Knights at North Central Jr. High and Spartan Life at Solon Middle School. Youth are matched in a 1:1 mentoring relationship and attend the afterschool club once a week during the school year where they participate in experiential learning including STEM, Arts/Communication, Healthy Living and Civic Engagement.

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