



#STRONGIOWA

2020 IN PALO ALTO 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 Palo Alto County for a #STRONGIOWA:



Sustainable
ENVIRONMENTS



Thriving
COMMUNITIES



Resilient
PEOPLE



Future
LEADERS



The Palo Alto 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.

Sue Haack
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John Banwart
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Scott Anliker
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Roberta Hersom
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Diane Nelson
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Serving the People of Palo Alto County

ISU Extension and Outreach Palo Alto County began 2020 focused on the following efforts:

- VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) Program
- 'Pick a Better Snack' for youth in grades K-3
- Beef Bonanza 4-H
- 4-H workshops and Clover Kids programs
- 80 Private and 60 Commercial Pesticide re-certifications, 30 Manure Certifications
- Progressive Ag Safety Day



Program Spotlight: Checkout STEM Backpacks

ISU Extension and Outreach Palo Alto County is collaborating with the Emmetsburg, Graettinger, Mallard, Ruthven, and West Bend public libraries to deliver STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) experiences for K-3 children and their families throughout Palo Alto County.

Each of the mentioned libraries, along with the county extension office, are now equipped with seven Checkout STEM backpack kits. Topics include Bee and Me, Curious Coding, Fabulous Five Senses, Super Slinky, Building Bridges, Humpty Dumpty, and Magic Eye. Designed for engagement, each backpack has colorful and age-appropriate activities: two books, materials for STEM play, and a lesson plan that revolves around a theme, such as coding.

Many thanks go out to the Palo Alto County Gaming Development Corporation, as their grant funding directly supported this opportunity.

We encourage you to check with your local library to learn more, as checkout processes may look different from library to library.



Increasing Access to Literacy

This summer, we brought *Dolly Parton's Imagination Library* to Palo Alto county residents. As a part of this ongoing program, families with children ages 0-5 years can register online today for FREE, age-appropriate, and high-quality books delivered on a monthly basis - right to their mailbox! To sign-up your eligible child[ren], ages 0-5, simply follow the link below to register online. There is no cost or limit to the number children who can be registered per family.

Register here: <https://bit.ly/PACbooks>

ISU Extension and Outreach Palo Alto County would like to thank the Arthur W. and Audrey F. Smith Foundation and Jamie Rouse, with the Emmetsburg Education Center, for the support and partnership in bringing this opportunity to Palo Alto County.

Interested in supporting this program?

Community groups, businesses, and individuals interested in learning more about sponsoring a family or child's participation with *Dolly Parton's Imagination Library* should contact Jamie Neff at jblaser@iastate.edu.

Adjusting to the Pandemic

As the COVID-19 pandemic changed daily life, ISU Extension and Outreach prioritized health and safety as we developed new ways to bring research-based education to the people of Palo Alto County. We remained open for business and we continued to educate, engage, and serve Iowans.

- *Mid-March through June, staff worked in shifts and remotely to continue providing education and resources to our local community.*
- *Our office reopened to the public in July. We now ask*

visitors to use the south ramp entrance, wearing a proper face covering.

- *Tax returns were filed virtually to wrap up the VITA season (24 total for PA county).*
- *Offered Virtual Goal Setting Workshop.*
- *Hosted a Virtual Grant Writing Workshop.*

Iowa 4-H Creates Face Masks

At the end of March, Palo Alto County 4-H recognized a need for face masks due to the pandemic and the growing shortage of personal protective equipment in the state of Iowa. After youth specialist Lisa Berkland and CYC Julie Naig initiated a plan and shared it with the State 4-H Office, it soon became a state-wide project. On Wednesday, April 8, Iowa 4-H challenged its members, volunteers, alumni, and staff to make and donate 10,000 face masks to the people and organizations in their local communities who were in need of them. In only nine days, the Iowa 4-H family met the goal! So...a new goal was set, 25,000.

Iowa 4-H programs empower young people to be well-informed citizens who are actively engaged in their communities and the world. “4-H members pledge their “hands to larger service,” and in this challenge, they acted fast to respond to local needs,” says Lisa Berkland, ISU Extension and Outreach 4-H Youth Development Specialist.

Helping her community through service projects is one on Aliza Woodford’s favorite things to do as a part of 4-H. Woodford is a member of the Palo Alto 4-H Shooting Sports Club. “I have donated face masks to the staff at a local coffee shop. I have also made some for my family and our foreign exchange students that had to return home early,” said Woodford. “I knew that I had the ability to make these face masks, and I want to help people. There are many people who are essential workers and I wanted to make a difference for them.”

The program still continues and currently we are at 28,446 face masks sewn and donated. Palo Alto County has donated 251 face masks!

To learn more about this project or to record your face mask donations, please visit:

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/iowa-4-h-creates-face-masks>.



Pictured below:
Iowa State University President,
Wendy Wintersteen

Providing a County Fair Experience

Although the traditional fair was not possible because of the pandemic, ISU Extension and Outreach—Palo Alto County worked with the Palo Alto County Fairboard and other partners to provide an alternate experience to demonstrate and showcase the work of our 4-H youth.

Static exhibit and horticulture judging were held on Tuesday, July 14 using an in-person format. Judges were located in two separate buildings on the fairgrounds and 4-H members brought their exhibits to be judged at scheduled times. An extended time period allowed for easier social distancing. Face coverings, plexiglass shields, adhesive floor markers, all became part of the alternative plan to protect all involved. Exhibits considered for additional recognition were held back for further evaluation while all others received a ribbon and were sent home with the exhibitor.

All fair livestock shows were switched to a “show and go” format. Livestock/animal shows took place July 14-19 with



one species being shown in the morning and one in the evening. With the exception of beef feeder pens, all animals came on the grounds just before the show, were judged by an in-person judge, and were released immediately following the show. Spectators were limited to family members only.

Even the livestock premium auction took on a new dimension. Instead of a live premium auction, a Livestock Premium Fund was developed where any individual or business wanting to donate to the auction could do so. Youth exhibitors could solicit donations to help the fund grow. The pool of money was then divided equally between all livestock exhibitors in beef, sheep, swine, and meat goat with youth getting one premium per specie shown.

Palo Alto County had a total of 26 static exhibitors and 67 livestock/animal exhibitors who took advantage of the alternate fair experience.

The Palo Alto County Fairboard looks forward to returning to a full fair in 2021. Dates are set for July 22-25.

Planning for Recovery

ISU Extension and Outreach Palo Alto County is determined to help Iowans help each other. Looking ahead to 2021, we will support Iowans in reviving the Iowa economy, including the farm economy. ISU Extension and Outreach believes in the power of entrepreneurs and the value they bring to our communities. We support small businesses through research-based training and technical assistance. We provide agribusinesses and farmers with research-based education to inform their decisions. We are committed to helping Iowa's rural communities, agribusinesses, and farmers remain financially solvent, connect to appropriate resources, find alternate markets, and increase their profitability.

In collaboration with Dickinson, Clay, and Emmet Counties, we will strive to connect and re-engage people back into our communities. As a region, we have ample tourist attractions, and connecting the relevant resources to business, non-profit, and entertainment industries is critical to the long-term success of our small town economies. Economic wellbeing impacts mental health, relationships, and overall family-wellbeing. By bringing more opportunities for adults to feel a sense of belonging and connection to their communities, we can instill a sense of pride and commitment in these changing and challenging times.

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