



BUILDING A #STRONGIOWA

2019 IN WINNESHIEK 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 Winneshiek County for a #STRONGIOWA.

Winneshiek County Extension Council

Since 1917 Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Winneshiek County has served its residents by connecting them to research and resources developed by Iowa State University.

Programs offered through Winneshiek County Extension and Outreach have been tailored to represent, enhance and meet the diverse needs of Winneshiek County residents. Staff implement programs that fall under four specific program areas:

- Community and Economic Development
- Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Human Sciences
- 4-H and Youth Development

Ag & Natural Resources

Farm Couple Getaway

Pictured right, **10 couples** participated in the Farm Couples Getaway in February. The event is designed to help farm couples learn about creative communication skills, personality differences, and resources available from the community and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, as well as planning for the future for both farm and family. Participants enjoyed reconnecting with their spouse and interacting with other couples facing similar farm challenges.

Tri-state Dairy Expo

In September, at the annual Tri-State Dairy Expo, held at the Northeast Iowa Community College, (NICC), Iowa's Dairy Center, **27 schools with nearly 400 participants** enhanced



their evaluation skills on dairy cattle and products. The expo offered seminars on agriculture topics which included linear dairy cattle evaluation, dairy products evaluation and robotic technology. Pictured is Brooke Courtney of Decorah FFA, as the highest-scoring individual of the dairy judging contest.

2019 Planning for Profitability

Dairy producers and other industry professionals, 66 in total, gathered in July from four states, including Iowa, South Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Topics included strategies to increase financial resiliency, how cow health/financial records can be combined, and world economics in pricing milk, among others. Over 96% of participants wanted to consult with the presenter for more information, following the program. From participants' responses, **233 additional people** will receive the information from this program.

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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Extension Council Chair

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Council Member

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Dave Wise
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Brandi Hemesath
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Stacy Bushman
Council Member



Human Sciences

Gardening with Children

In April, a Childcare Provider workshop, *Gardening with Children*, was held in Decorah with 15 childcare providers attending. Attendees learned about growing medium and a variety of plants. When children are active they do better in school and increase social skills.

The Finances of Caregiving

In August, Winneshiek County held its first in a series, *The Finances of Caregiving*. It is a program consisting of five 2-hour workshops. Lessons include financial planning, legal issues, income adjustments for caregivers, and exploration of caregiving arrangements.

What About Me?

My Wellbeing worksite series was offered in Winneshiek County in 2019 with 10 attending. This program is designed to enhance individual wellbeing and quality of life in ways that are personally meaningful to participants. The four sessions focus on understanding wellbeing, building strong relationships, managing your money, and enjoying health and energy. This series was co-led by the Human Sciences staff team.

Nature Explorer

Time outdoors significantly reduces stress and, for children, increases creativity, collaboration, and physical activity. Nature Explore® training was offered to child care professionals in Winneshiek County to enhance their skills in helping children and families engage more meaningfully with nature. In Winneshiek county, 16 infant/toddler professionals completed the Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale Version 3 (ITERS-3). Over the course of the 4-night series, professionals used information they learned to self-assess their environments and create an improvement plan.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers:

In Winneshiek County, the percentage of residents over 65 is over 20%, which is higher than the state average of 16%. Six participants completed the course, 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 communication strategies, developed skills in positive thinking and self-talk, and identified ways to manage stress. Making self-care a priority leads to better caregiving and stronger communication for families.



Master Gardeners

A Love of Plants and Gardening for Over 40 Years

Winneshiek County Master Gardeners are passionate about serving their communities and sharing garden best practices. They are individuals who have taken the Master Gardener training and share their time and expertise as volunteers, city beautification projects and farmers' markets, to name a few. Winneshiek County currently has 35 members.

Most members agree community service, while a worthwhile challenge to fit into a busy schedule – is one of their favorite aspects of the Master Gardener Program.



Master Gardeners can be found delivering produce to the Decorah Farmers' Market; providing flowers to hospice nurses to share with patients; weeding community gardens and the butterfly garden on the Decorah Community Prairie; and helping pot trees with local elementary students, annually.

K-12 Youth Outreach

2019 was another year of growth and “Making the Best Better” for Winneshiek County youth!

- 289 4-12th grade members
- 90 K-3rd grade members
- 299 4-H & FFA and 65 Clover Kids Exhibitors at the Winneshiek County Fair
- 212 summer day-camp participants

4-H members are supported by 40 4-H Club leaders, and 89 fair and other volunteers. Over 142 community members and businesses donated to the 4-H Clover Club fund to offset membership fees and program support.



Turkey Valley. Cross-age teachers are trained high-school youth who lead lessons in the **classroom** about healthy, local, and new food choices.

- At the county fair **event** a new exhibit class, \$10 Meal Challenge, was offered to youth. *Can you prepare a meal for 4 on a \$10 budget?* This experience engaged youth in financial and balanced meal planning.

18th Year of Ossian Summer Kids Club

An 18-year partnership with the City of Ossian and area teachers stemmed interest with the City of Calmar to offer summer youth programs for youth grades K-3. Through 6 combined days of programming in rural Winneshiek County, 160 participants learned about the power of sun and light, marshmallow catapults, engineering and mystery solving, food, the five senses and more. Participants are pictured making solar-ray pizza ovens to bake kale chips for snack.

Healthy Living Across 4-H Delivery Modes

All five 4-H delivery methods featured healthy living throughout the program year, a few highlights include:

- The Washington Prairie Peppers 4-H Club participated in the Iowa 4-H Healthy Living Club Challenge. Pictured are members practicing yoga.
- Youth at Pine Bluff Adventure day-camp mastered the kitchen with knife skills, sanitary dish washing steps, healthy pizza topping options and teamwork.
- **Afterschool** Clover Kids prepared healthy snacks each session. Cutting apples, washing grapes, and enjoying yogurt, fruit, and granola parfaits were among their favorites.
- The Farm to School teaching program continues at

4-H Nation Citizenship Group:

Fifty-five youth and adults traveled to Des Moines in March. Members toured the Iowa Hall of Pride, where they learned about why they should be Iowa proud. The afternoon was spent at the century-old capital building where members also engaged in exclusive conversations with Senators and their local Representatives. Youth also met Governor Kim Reynolds and Lieutenant Governor Adam Gregg concluding the trip.



County 4-H Endowment Holds True to Roots: Nearly 100 years strong

Community members and 4-H supporters alike gathered for the 2nd “Friends of 4-H” Gala in November. Special guests shared their 4-H memories. The work in Winneshiek County continues to reflect youths’ sense of belonging to our communities and leadership, just as it did nearly 100 years ago at the start of 4-H in Winneshiek County. The Winneshiek County Endowment Committee provides financial assistance for educational workshops, State and National conferences, and financial scholarships for camps and program materials.



Youth Attend Regional Jr. Camp: Passport to Adventure

In June, **25 youth**, grades 4-6, attended Regional Jr. Camp at Pine Bluff 4-H Camp near Decorah, IA. Aboriginal dot painting, drum and maraca making, native bees and non-traditional camp foods are a just a few of the adventure’s highlights.

Through a pollination simulation youth were bees as they foraged for nectar and pollen. Youth also learned that different bee species are drawn to different types of plants. There are 300-400 native bee species in Iowa!

Community and Economic Development

Spring of 2019. Scott Timm, Field Specialist - Community and Economic Development, was contracted by the Oneota Community Coop to lead their member loan campaign to remodel their store, with a goal of raising **\$520,000.00**. Through his efforts, and the work of many members, employees and volunteers, they exceeded their original campaign goal and raised a final figure of **\$600,000.00!**

Scott was also asked by Decorah Mayor, to serve on the Sustainability Plan Committee - facilitated **4 community feedback groups** and worked with all city departments to draft a new plan for the City of Decorah. There was a public input process that included several “Build a Better Decorah” visioning sessions and an on-line survey open for all residents. In addition to public meetings, the Sustainability Committee met with both city employees and businesses owners to develop specific ideas and actions outlined in the plan. **Eight** task groups were formed, focusing on energy, transportation, waste, communication/education, social sustainability, water and air, land use and economic vitality. The draft of the plan outlines specific policies, infrastructure improvements, communication tools and educational programs designed to reduce the city’s carbon footprint, mitigate Decorah’s vulnerability to floods, strengthen the local economy and cultivate a more connected and welcoming community.

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