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 Dickinson County to help build a strong Iowa.

### 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.

Susan Reiser  
*Extension Council Chair*

Josh Paskert  
*Council Member*

Cheryl Heronemus  
*Regional Director*

Connie Purchase  
*Council Member*

George Bower  
*Council Member*

Curt Smith  
*Council Member*

Keith Brockmeyer  
*Council Member*

Ann Warburton  
*Council Member*

Cindy Mart  
*Council Member*

Jodi Zahren-Brevik  
*Council Member*

### Dickinson 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 Dickinson county.

Together, we have identified these local issues as priority topics for current and future programming:

- Community and Economic Development
- Health and Well-Being
- Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Youth Development

Highlights for 2018 are detailed within the following pages.

### Community and Economic Development

First Annual Okoboji Bike-N-Bite Exceeds Expectations

Modeled after the Siouxland Bike-N-Bite, the First Annual Okoboji Bike-N-Bite was hosted on June 9, 2018. With hopes of increasing local food awareness and encouraging healthy living, county staff, assisted by the Iowa State University Rising Star Interns, planned and hosted the event which far exceeded the expected attendance. Over 240 bikers spent the day riding around the beautiful Lakes Area sampling local cuisine from six bakeries and restaurants, as well as eight farmers market vendors.

The route began at the fairgrounds where riders registered and received the route map and a t-shirt. Next, they stopped at the Lakes Area Farmers Market where Tannenbaum Trees and Berries provided roasted asparagus; Pampered Chef, mini cinnamon rolls; Mr. Fudge, peanut butter cookies; The Bread Man, fresh baked bread; Marilyn’s Jellies, jelly; Lazy Jane, acai bowls; the Inn Hot Dogs, lemonade; and the Berry Patch, rhubarb. From there, riders travelled approximately 17 miles and enjoyed bites from Boernsen Bees, Lisa’s Bake Shop, Wyman’s Spudnuts, The Canning Company, Arnold’s Perk and the Smack Shack. The ride culminated with a noon lunch hosted by staff at the ISU Extension and Outreach Dickinson County office.

Plans are already underway for next year’s event, with some exciting changes and improvement being planned thanks to feedback from riders and new community partners joining in. Additional vendors, a short and long route, and more exciting changes to come in 2019!
Health and Well-Being

Powerful Tools for Caregivers Partnership Brings Needed Resources to Dickinson County Caregivers

Through a partnership with Respite Angels, Lutheran Family Service, Calvary United Methodist Church and ISU Extension and Outreach, a 6-week series of Powerful Tools for Caregivers was delivered this fall in Arnold’s Park.

The program is designed to empower family caregivers of adults with chronic conditions or children with special health and behavioral needs 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.

ISU Extension and Outreach coordinated the partnerships and promotions; Calvary United Methodist Church in Arnold’s Park graciously opened their facilities to host the program; Lutheran Family Service provided the Powerful Tools trainers; and Respite Angels Caregiver Support group provided care to the loved ones.

Respite Angels is dedicated to providing caregiver relief to family members who are caring for their loved ones who are suffering from an illness or injury, and two of the attendees brought their spouses to the Respite Angels which enabled them (attendees) the opportunity to attend the training. Without the support of Respite Angels’ caregiving these attendees would not have been able to participate in the class.

After having participated in the course, a local resident said, “I am taking better care of myself and I have less guilt. I feel less ‘alone’ knowing that others understand. I have better approaches.”

That quote, according to Human Sciences Program Coordinator Sue Boettcher, clearly explains the need for the program, and encourages her to continue seeking new partnerships to host the program in other communities around Dickinson County.
**Food and Environment**

**Master Gardener Program Revitalized in Dickinson County During 2018**

Who are Master Gardeners? Master Gardeners are individuals who are passionate about serving their communities, and learning and sharing gardening best practices. These individuals participate in the Master Gardener training and then share their time and expertise as volunteers in community gardens, city beautification projects, farmers market and more.

It had been seven years since Master Gardener training was offered in Dickinson County, but in 2018, thanks to the leadership of Sue Boettcher and the willingness of many community expert volunteers, the program was brought back to life in the area. Boettcher said that the goal was to revive the program in order to encourage more volunteers in the community.

The 12-week Master Gardener training is no small commitment nor are the 40 hours of required community service the following year, but the program is fulfilling and shares a vast amount of gardening and horticulture knowledge. Not to mention, the friendships gained are the “icing on the cake,” according to Boettcher.

The 2018 Master Gardener program in Dickinson County was done in a “flipped classroom” style, meaning that the trainees watched lectures via video and completed the workbook on their own time at home, and then traveled to a related local business, organization or outdoor area during the allotted training time.

These tours gave trainees an opportunity to apply the knowledge they learned that week and see how it is actually used in our communities. Tour sites included: Lakeside Lab, Del’s Garden Center, Dickinson County Nature Center, Brooks Golf Club, Little Sioux Orchard, Tannenbaum Berry Farm, Emmet County Nature Center and Arboretum, Ferguson’s Garden Center and Rain Gardens/Swales in Spirit Lake and Okoboji. Many of these tours included hands-on training, such as dividing perennials, identifying insects, trees and weeds, and taking sod samples. Trainees also spent a day on Iowa State University’s campus learning from horticulturists and entomologists.

Community Service projects are already in the works and many more will be planned for Spring/Summer 2019. Some ideas that have started are reviving the gardens at Camp Foster and offering gardening camps, new landscaping in front of the Expo Building at the fairgrounds in Spirit Lake, plans for helping residents with raised beds at Accura in Spirit Lake, a potential donation garden near the Community Gardens, a possible Spring Garden Show, helping to teach the Growing in the Garden summer camp for youth, and much more.

The Master Gardener program will be offered again in Dickinson County during the fall of 2019.

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**Youth Camp Encourages Green Thumbs**

Nine local Kindergarten through 3rd graders came together for Growing in the Garden camp each week during the summer to learn about plants, soil, food, nature and the environment.

Youth gardeners helped plant, care for and harvest vegetables, flowers and herbs from the garden at the Dickinson County Fairgrounds. These young gardeners discovered where food comes from and were encouraged to try new and different healthy foods. Participants were eager to take home fresh produce each week and meet the many creatures who visited the garden.
K-12 Youth Outreach

Youth Summer Program Enrollment Triples

A key ingredient to ISU’s land-grant mission is to provide educational opportunities to youth. ISU Extension and Outreach in Dickinson County provides a variety of school enrichment programs in the classrooms, and offers weekend, winter break and summer programs to youth — in addition to 4-H club membership and participation.

Each year, a variety of summer programs are hosted for local youth and 4-H members. In the past year, that offering has expanded, thanks to the hard work and creativity of County Youth Coordinator Hannah Brockshus.

“We strive to provide a variety of affordable summer learning opportunities in our county so that youth stay active in the summer, create fun memories and keep their brains engaged,” Brockshus said.

In 2017, 44 youth participated in summer camps, and in 2018, participation soared to 142 youth.

With 17 camps offered to youth in grades Kindergarten through 12th, topics varied from entrepreneurship to home economics to outdoor adventures. Three of this year’s favorites included Passport to Adventure, Snoozing Under the Sea and Reach for the Stars: Constellation Camp Out.

Passport to Adventure took Kindergarten through 3rd graders on an adventure around the world! Youth learned about the culture, language, music, food and crafts of Mexico, China and France by taking part in hands-on experiences.

Snoozing Under the Sea was a unique camping experience that took a bus full of campers to the Omaha Zoo. While there, they slept under the aquarium, took a private tour of the zoo, and learned all about the animals that call it home.

Reach for the Stars brought Dickinson and Osceola County campers to Willow Creek County Park where they spent the evening learning about constellations, adventuring on a night hike, journeying on a scavenger hunt, creating their own comet, making and eating Milky Way s’mores, searching for constellations in the night sky, and discussing astrology and mythology.

Plans are underway to continue the strong summer camp offering in 2019. Many new camps covering diverse interest areas will be offered to Dickinson County youth, along with some camp theme favorites returning from last year.