Meeting Local Needs 2012

County Extension Staff
Phillip Jensen  
County Program Coordinator
Jill Sadler  
County Youth Coordinator
Marla Seuntjens  
Office Manager

Ida 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:
• Family financial & nutrition education
• Senior care & service education
• Next generation growth
• Community & economic development

Healthy People
With slightly less than fifty percent of Ida County residents age 45 and over, the Mid Life & Beyond: The Whole Picture program provided Ida County an opportunity to talk together and find ways to make our community a place where people midlife and beyond can live successfully. Two Study Circles brought over 20 Ida County residents together for eight hours of conversation during October 2012. Ideas from these conversations will be shared with the county at an Action Forum early in 2013. Study Circle participants, the public, and decision makers will decide what action to take and work teams will be formed.

According to the Center for Disease Control & Prevention 48 million people in the U.S. become sick with foodborne illnesses each year. The FDA estimates cost of $131 to $1092 per foodborne illness case. In October 2012, Ida County Extension offered ServSafe training, a nationally recognized certification program that teaches safe food handling practices and helps prevent foodborne illness outbreaks. Four food service employees took the eight hour class and 100% became certified in ServSafe. As a result, $525 to $4368 was potentially saved from pain and suffering, reduced productivity and medical expenses if one case of foodborne illness in Ida County was prevented per food handler completing the course.

Family Storyteller, an early literacy program for parents and their 3 – 6 year old children, offered families a time to increase the amount and quality of time spent together in literacy activities. The sequenced program was offered for six weeks during February and March at the Ida Grove Presbyterian Church. After the parents learned about the skills highlighted for the week, the children joined the parents at the end of the session to read the featured book and do one of the take-home activities. By the end of the program the families had six books, 24 take-home activities and supplies worth $50. Of the nine families starting the program, six families attended four or more of the sessions. Several families said the best thing about this program is parent/child reading the books together!
During the past year, Ida County had seven Master Gardener Interns each complete 40 hours volunteer service to become Master Gardeners and eight people complete 40 hours classroom training to become Master Gardener Interns! These volunteers have given back over 400 hours to the community!

Ida County Extension partnered with Ida County Economic Development and provided $8000 in financial support as they pursued strategic planning in each community in Ida county.

4-H and Youth
The Ida County 4-H Youth Council exhibited outstanding leadership through their numerous projects during 2012. In February, eight people attended their Technology Workshop focused on helping people with email, photo downloads, cell phones, computers, I-pads, texting, picture messages, and Facebook.

In May, they set up, organized, carried out, and finalized a highly successful Swine Progress Show. There were over 97 hogs and 70 exhibitors!

Youth Council has completed many other projects this year including a Mud Volleyball Tournament, Ag Olympics, Christmas Food Drive, Cow Pie Bingo, and Celebrity Showmanship!

Three Ida County 4-H Clubs completed improvement projects at the Ida County Fairgrounds. They assumed leadership and citizenship roles as they applied for and received grants, local donations and did fundraising events. Thanks to their leadership and labor, the swine barn has been re-wired, the Pen of 3 cattle barn has a fresh coat of paint, and the 4-H Exhibit Hall, including the Open Class area, has been painted, updated, and has new signs!

Food Safety Quality Assurance (FSQA) training is required for youth exhibiting livestock. Of the 40 youth trained in Ida County, 70% indicated the Overview as “very useful” to 30% as “useful”. FSQA training increases youth life skills, provides career education and the role livestock agriculture plays in the community, and creates networks with other 4-H’ers. The participants learn to apply better livestock production practices which lead to healthier animals and benefits the community by offering a wholesome food supply and trust in animal production.

Ida County Extension appreciated and enjoyed the opportunity to participate in the 2012 summer library program county-wide. The theme this year was “Dream Big” and we connected with over 163 youth!

A Farm Grain Truck workshop held in September at the Ida Grove Rec Center provided ten Ida County residents with current Iowa DOT rules and regulations for farm trucks and trailers used on highways and secondary roads. Kris Kohl, ISU Extension & Outreach Ag Engineer, covered grain handling best practices.

Healthy Economies

Healthy Environments