

# BUILDING A #STRONGIOWA

## JOHNSON COUNTY

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 Johnson County for what we all want: a strong Iowa.

### 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:

- Economic Development example
- Food and the Environment example
- Health and Well-being example
- K12 Youth Outreach Example

### Economic Development

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach of Johnson County hosted a **Pro-Ag Outlook and Management Seminar** on December 6, 2017. The program is designed to provide agribusiness leaders with a concise evaluation of current market conditions, expected trends in crop and livestock income potential, management implications and the current financial situation of farming in Iowa. Participants had the opportunity to listen to Chad Hart, Lee Schulz, and Alejandro Plastina, all professors in the department of economics at Iowa State University. Each speaker gave an overview of different sectors of the agricultural industry and discussed how local and global changes might affect Iowa producers in 2018 and beyond.



### Health and Well-Being

Human Sciences, Extension and Outreach collaborated with the University of Iowa to offer a spring and fall session of the 5-week series of the **Finance of Caregiving** program. Participants received materials to help them and their families protect their assets and prepare for their retirement while providing care. Evaluations and comments from the classes were uniformly positive and many participants said they would encourage their friends and family to attend upcoming sessions. ISU Extension and Outreach Interim Vice President, Dr. Lawrence, attended one session and commented; "I wish I had taken this class earlier as I dealt with my aging parents."



In addition this fall, Human Sciences, Extension and Outreach collaborated with Heritage Area on Aging and the University of Iowa to offer **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. Twenty-three people attended the program and participants were able to share similar experiences and resources and learn from each other. One participant commented, "This has been a very rewarding class. I feel stronger and more able to cope."

### Extension Council Members

We want communities and farmers to thrive, and families and children to be healthy. Eventually we want to turn the world over to the next generation better than we found it.

**Scott Stutsman**  
Extension Council  
Chair

**Connie Brinton**  
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**Karissa Wikert**  
Council Member &  
BBBS Liaison

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Vice Chair

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JCAA Liaison

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Council Member

**Luann Pisarik**  
Council Member

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## IN 2017

## Food and Environment

Johnson County Master Gardeners (JCMG) had a successful year working with local partners for their **2017 Growing Together Grant**.

As an Iowa State University Extension and Outreach 2017 Growing Together grant recipient, JCMG strengthened and increased garden produce production to provide more fresh garden fruits and vegetables to area organizations serving low income individuals and families in need.



A grant of more than \$3,000 supported a variety of projects and supplies to aid efforts and build awareness to address food insecurity in Johnson County. JCMG worked closely with Grow Johnson County, providing gardening and harvesting assistance, as well as supplies for production, collection and distribution of produce.

In addition, JCMG assisted United Way of Johnson & Washington Counties by assembling food packages, provided the North Liberty Community Pantry and Garden with a new scale to weigh donations, and developed a Seed Share program with the Iowa City Public Library that attracted more than 70 people.

JCMG collected, donated and distributed more than 1,600 pounds of produce to the Crisis Center of Johnson County Food Pantry, Table to Table, Shelter House and North Liberty Food Pantry including more than 200 pounds of apples collected and cleaned by JCMG and contributed by Wilson's Orchard.

Lavon Yeggy, co-leader of JCMG Steering Committee, said during the timeline of the grant, 55 JCMG contributed more than 500 volunteer hours to aid food security projects. "We are pleased our partner agency collaborations continue to grow and become stronger as our volunteers utilized their personal garden spaces to increase produce production for donations."

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"In addition, Master Gardeners successfully moved and expanded our Demonstration Garden on the Johnson County Fairgrounds. The garden space includes vegetable plantings that were harvested and donated, along with the development of an educational space that will continue to be used to expand awareness of gardening and food security efforts.

## K-12 Youth Outreach

**Grow It Cook It** was a new, six session camp where youth gained hands-on agriculture and nutrition education to connect them to the foods they eat, their personal health, and the health of their communities. Garden learning sessions were led by Ilsa DeWald of the North Liberty Community Pantry (NLCP) in partnership with Amey Kollar, 4-H staff with Iowa State University Extension who lead cooking, nutrition and health sessions at the North Liberty Recreation Center.

While planting, weeding, and harvesting produce in the Growing Together Garden at the NLCP and serving in the Pantry store, teens practiced citizenship while gaining an understanding of hunger and food insecurity within their community. Youth learned the importance of "Being Food Safe" before, during, and after food handling; developed safe knife handling skills while they diced, chopped, and minced vegetables for their team stir fry; gained independence as they browned meat for tacos in an electric skillet; 100% of the youth gained a new cooking skill while using a meat thermometer for safe food practices; worked as a team to follow recipes and prepare ingredients; responsibility while cleaning up after cooking and setting their team table; and practiced communication skills while answering questions during their meal. The youth grew in leadership skills as they planned the Taste and Tour event, at North Liberty Community Pantry where the young chefs prepared recipes using fresh fruits and vegetables for attendees to sample and gave tours of the Growing Together Garden while they shared their harvest of knowledge.



**Clover University** are STEM based day camps held each summer in Johnson County. There are 4 different curriculums developed each year in order to inspire youth of all ages in grades K-7. Camps vary in topics and range from Robotics, How Does Sound Work, Fizz Bubble Goo to Kids in the Kitchen. Every camp uses hands on learning experiments to keep youth actively engaged in the learning process. On average, 85 youth are able to be served by this program each summer in Johnson County, majority of which are non-4-H members.



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