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
- Food and the Environment
- Health and Well-being
- K-12 Youth Outreach

LIFE promotes whole wellness to improve physical, social and cognitive health while benefiting both generations. The exercise portion was followed by eight newsletters sent bi-weekly to offer additional fitness and nutrition information. One participant said "The LIFE program has improved my balance and confidence. I started exercising with my walker, then used a chair to one side, and now I exercise on my own with no assistance."

Families Celebrate Strengthening Families

Eight Monona County families made an investment in their families through their commitment to the ISU Extension and Outreach Strengthening Families Program 10-14. The program was implemented at no cost to families due to a grant from the Monona County Community Partners Foundation. The program was held on three Sunday afternoons in January 2014 at the Lewis and Clark Visitor Center at Blue Lake. Through the program, families learned more about each other and how to work together for a positive future. Parents explored ways to express love and set limits. Youth participated in games and activities that taught them how to get along with their peers and parents and stay out of trouble. The program is taught by a team of professionals in the county.

SFP 10-14 will be offered each year in Monona County starting in...
January for youth in grades 5 & 6 along with their parents. The 2015 program will be held in Mapleton.

Youth Grow Through Special 4-H Experiences

4-H Lego Adventure Camp

Thirty eight kindergarten to 3rd grade youth spent 2 full days at the Monona County Fairgrounds learning about simple machines, constructing legos and programming their legos to move. During the marvelous machines sessions, youth discovered levers, inclined planes, wheels and axles, pulley and double-pulley systems. They got to see how they are constructed and discovered first-hand how simple machines make work easier. During the lego sessions, children built simple machines to discover how gears worked in a chain, how pulleys took the place of gears and how axles worked. The children had an opportunity to build a LEGO creation that ran on a battery or could be plugged into the computer to run on a pre-determined program as well as just making their own creation from legos.

Monona County 4-H Cooking Club

In 2010, leaders, Brenda and Megan Wimmer, started the 4-H Cooking Club for those who were especially interested in cooking. This club is a hands-on, member-focused club that meets monthly using stove, microwave, blenders, choppers and other machines in the kitchen. They have made from meatballs to cake pops to the proper way to set the table, learning something new at every meeting while having fun. They have been growing every year. The Cooking Club is one of the thirteen active 4-H Clubs in Monona County.

4-H County Council Exceling with Their Mission to Make 4-H Shine

County 4-H Council members serve by mentoring younger 4-H’ers, develop leadership skills, and help to promote the 4-H program. All 8 members brought unique strengths to Monona County 4-H. The group planned and worked together for the annual Jr. Summer Day Camp and also spent countless hours helping to bring a variety of new entertainment to the Monona County Fair. New events included an Ag (farm chore) Olympics, BINGO, Whipped Cream Pie in the Face, and improvements to the 4-H Game Alley. The group spent an overnight at the Iowa State Fairgrounds volunteering at the Little Hands on the Farm exhibition before enjoying free time together at Adventureland. County Council members are working towards more fair improvements and plan to be even more involved with community projects and 4-H promotion in the coming year.

Healthy Impact Statement

Over 1,240 participated in organized Extension meetings and programs throughout Monona County. That includes over 500 for agricultural recertification instruction for pesticide and manure applicators; education to ag producers on farmland leasing, marketing, and crop and livestock production and risk management; education for community members, leaders and families on nutrition, parenting, financial management; and 300 youth in special programs such as workshops on leadership, livestock quality assurance, nutrition and fitness, babysitting, farm safety, school enrichment, camps and trips. In addition, provided training and support to over 100 adult volunteers who worked with 173 youth in organized 4-H clubs.

Healthy Economies

Land Lease/2014 Farm Bill Seminars helping farmers

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach works to bring unbiased information to land owners, renters and lenders to help make successful management decisions. Shane Ellis, ISU Extension Farm Management Specialist, provided two programs late summer. At the Farmland Leasing and Valuation Workshop, Ellis discussed current land values, rental rates, trends and projections of how values and rents might change in the coming years as well as how to calculate a rental rate based on county specific information, the variety of leasing arrangements that land owners and tenants may use, and the expected cost of crop production in the coming year.

The tentative timeline for Farm Bill Programs was discussed at a second meeting to help land owners and operators prepare for the upcoming election and enrollment process. Also discussed was the new programs and how they compared to the old programs.

Ag Decision Maker is an agricultural and business website through ISU Extension and Outreach that provides current and valuable information and may be accessed at www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm.

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