

BUILDING A #STRONGIOWA

MUSCATINE 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 Muscatine County for what we all want: a strong Iowa.

Muscatine 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:

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



Who We Are

The goal of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is to provide education and partnerships designed to solve today's problems and prepare for the future. In Muscatine County, our local Extension and Outreach Office partners with schools, libraries, nonprofits and other community groups. County staff serve on many committees and coalitions, such as AIM (Aligned Impact Muscatine), Muscatine Community College LULAC Club, Muscatine Chamber of Commerce, Muscatine Community Health Improvement Plan committees, Family Effectiveness Coalition and many more. In 2017 over forty-four community groups utilized our meeting rooms, which also hosted our many different Extension and Outreach programs. Together we are building a Strong Iowa.



Muscatine County Extension Council Members

Mary Maurer
Extension Council Chair

Jo Ann Christofferson
Council Member

Jody Riibe
Council Member

Robert Chrz
Council Member

Lance Rowell
Council Member

Krista Regennitter
County Director

Cindy Mays
Council Member

Becky Vargas
Council Member

Jeffrey Macomber
Regional Director

Sean Olson
Council Member

Chris Wulf
Council Member

IN 2017

Program Spotlight

Juntos: Together for a Better Education

The Juntos program, (pronounced “Hoon-toes”) meaning “Together” in Spanish, empowers Latino youth in graduating from high school by bringing together parents, youth, school staff, and community partners to promote high school graduation and explore possible paths to higher education.

In Muscatine County the **Juntos** program includes five components:

- Family Workshop Series
- 4-H After School Club
- Family Nights
- Academic Coaching
- College Visits

Since starting the program in 2015, 56 youth and their families have participated. Surveys indicate:

Families Increased communication among youth and parents regarding schooling

Youth

Increased sense of...

- Belonging and safety at school
- Commitment to school
- Problem solving, critical thinking, empathy for and acceptance of others

Parents

Increased...

- Expectations for level of education youth would achieve
- Comfort level in communicating with school staff
- Awareness of what to do at home to support youth school success

Funding for this program comes from a Children Youth and Families At-Risk research grant from the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.



Health and Well-Being

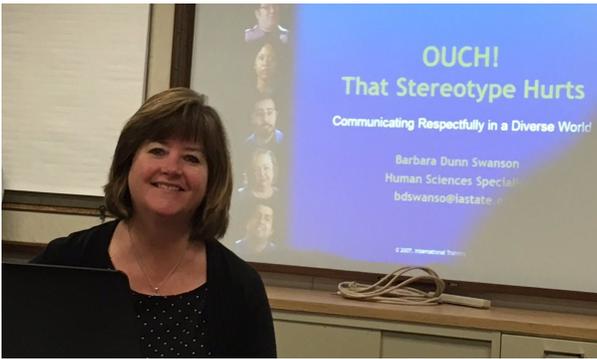
In 2017 ISU Extension and Outreach partnered with Muscatine and Durant Community Schools and University Of Illinois Extension to coordinate a Poverty Simulation for staff development. In Muscatine, 150 teachers also learned about ACEs, **Adverse Childhood Effects Study**, at their January 2017 Professional Development day led by Barb Dunn Swanson, ISU Extension and Outreach Family Life Specialist.

Muscatine County Extension is the fiscal agent for **Community Partnerships for Protecting Children Muscatine County**. Through this community coalition we work with other community agencies to support child abuse prevention efforts and poverty awareness programs, such as helping to fund Donna Beegle's presentation in April 2017. This group has provided funding to many worthwhile projects such as Imagination Library, Safe Sleep classes, 24/7 Dads, Together We Can parenting program, Foster Parent Appreciation events, and activities for Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Buy. Eat. Live Healthy is a program that helps low-resource families with children develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior needed to improve their diet. One-on-one or small group lessons include activities, worksheets, games, and cooking. Families strengthen communication, decision-making, and problem-solving skills through the lessons. These life skills help participants obtain employment and nurture family relationships. In 2017, 208 household members in Muscatine and Louisa County were served by this program.

The six-week **Powerful Tools for Caregivers** series was held in Muscatine during April and May 2017 to empower family caregivers of adults with chronic conditions to take better care of themselves. Participants learned and practiced caregiving “tools” to reduce personal stress, change negative self-talk, communicate feelings and needs to others, set limits and ask for help, and deal with emotions. The program was funded by the Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine.

OUCH! That Stereotype Hurts was delivered to over 45 participants in 2017. Sitting silent in the face of stereotyping condones the action. Research has shown it takes only one person speaking up to make an impact. This program offers participants six techniques to respond to difficult situations and promote feelings of inclusion. 91% of participants reported



feeling comfortable saying OUCH in the face of a stereotype after taking part in the workshop.

What About Me? My Wellbeing a free four-week educational workshop series was offered to MUSCO employees in January 2017. The introductory, research-based program covers taking time for oneself, relationships, finances and physical health. Participants learn new information and tools to keep working on personal wellbeing.



K-12 Youth Outreach



Over 630 school-age youth participated in in-school and out-of-school programs. This represents nearly 1 out of every 11 Muscatine County K-12 youth.

Adult volunteers are an important part in leading the 15 **4-H Clubs** in Muscatine County. Over 40 volunteers guide nearly 280 youth in exploring citizenship, leadership, STEM (science, technology, engineering & mathematics), healthy living, communications & the arts.

Fifteen youth and their mentors participate in a Big Brothers Big Sisters 4-H Club in partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Muscatine County. Muscatine County Master Gardeners lead the Planting Crew, a horticulture-focused 4-H Club. Our newest club, West Liberty Latinos Americanos, started in the fall of 2017.

The **Muscatine County Fair** is the learning showcase for Muscatine County 4-H and FFA members. 290 4-H and FFA members exhibited 1,181 projects in 2017. Projects ranged from photography, home improvement, horticulture, robotics, communication, and livestock.

An assortment of **school enrichment and afterschool programs** occurred throughout the

year. Several examples are: FIRST Lego® League Junior, a club designed to introduce STEM concepts to kids ages 6 to 10; Grant Elementary School Leadership Lab, a new afterschool enrichment program; Sunset Parks After School program and Clover Kids Clubs, for K-3rd graders, which are active in Muscatine and West Liberty. Staff have also worked in partnership with Wilton Community School District on K-2nd grade literacy events.

Over 180 youth participated in the seventeen **4-H Day Camps** offered during school breaks and over the summer. Camps were offered in Muscatine, West Liberty and Wilton. Themes ranged from food science to art to animal science. Over 90% of youth said they would like to attend another camp and would encourage a friend to attend.

A partnership with the Muscatine Community School District, the United Way of Muscatine, and Women United led to the implementation of an in-school **Ricochet** program for middle school youth. Volunteers facilitate weekly sessions at each Muscatine middle school. Their focus is on building leadership, problem solving, and team work skills. Over 60 Muscatine students are participating. After one school year in the program, 74% of youth indicated a high level of leadership life skill development through post-survey questions, 26% had a moderate level of development.

Fourteen youth participated from Muscatine County in **Maize**, a culturally-based youth leadership accelerator hosted at Iowa State University and Clover Woods Camp. Youth from all across Iowa gathered to experience healthy living, STEM, citizenship, leadership, and communication and the arts programs through a Latino and Native American perspective.



Over 50 foodservice managers from a variety of establishments attended the **ServSafe®** Food Safety Training Program in Muscatine County. The program is in partnership with the Iowa Restaurant Association. Participants attend an eight-hour class then take the national exam.

Economic Development

West Liberty Core Committee was created to discuss the future of working with Latino and other immigrant communities. The mission is to provide support to immigrant families and educators to positively influence children's education, provide legal information, and assist with citizenship acquisition. This committee helped to organize a variety of events such as; Immigration informational event, Know Your Rights; Citizenship Classes held on a weekly basis at West Liberty Elementary School with over 20 participants; and Beyond Borders movie viewing and panel discussion at the New Strand Theatre with over 70 attendees.

Food and Environment

Master Gardeners extend the mission of Extension and Outreach through horticulture-related programs and volunteer activity. Over 3,200 hours of volunteer service was provided in 2017, equating to a public service value of over \$67,000. In 2017 Muscatine County Master Gardeners hosted the annual Art of Gardening, a one day symposium organized in partnership with Muscatine Community College, provided four \$500 scholarships to High School Seniors, held a plant sale, and participated in numerous community projects.



For the second year, Master Gardeners received funding to help increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables for community members who utilize food pantries. Due to this project, **5,000 pounds of produce was donated** to Muscatine County food pantries.

We are protecting our environment through **Private and Commercial Pesticide Applicator** and **Confinement and Commercial Site Manure Applicator** trainings. Over 175 applicators participated in one of these trainings in Muscatine County.

In addition to agricultural consultations with county farmers, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Agricultural Specialists have offered a variety of workshops such as Farmland Leasing and Crop Insurance meetings.

Muscatine County Extension Staff



Krista Regennitter
County Director



Shirley Grimm
Office Manager



Lindsay Stecher
4-H Program Coordinator



Aracely Martinez
Youth Program Coordinator—Juntos



Dana Yerington
4-H Youth Development—K-12 Outreach Educator



Lupita Saucedo
West Liberty Schools Community Liaison

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Muscatine County

1514 Isett Avenue

Muscatine, IA 52761

563-263-5701

www.extension.iastate.edu/muscatine

www.facebook.com/MuscatineExtension



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