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

Scott 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

Scott County Extension’s school-based family support and education program, called Families Matter, was approached by a local nonprofit to identify a family that would be a good fit for their Affordable Housing Program. The Affordable Housing Program has a goal of helping low-income families access affordable housing that will lead to home ownership. Over the course of about 15 months, the Families Matter staff member worked with the family to analyze their current financial situation and understand how to manage their income and expenses to be able to meet the fiscal requirements of the program, while also meeting other needs. She also served as a liaison between the family and the non-profit’s financial manager to make sure they fully understood the process, and that they could meet the loan requirements and the expectations of the program. Throughout the year, Scott County Extension staff collected donations of furniture and household items from community partners and individuals who were interested in helping this family achieve their sustainable housing goal, as well as worked together with the program coordinators from the nonprofit to completely furnish the home. Families Matter will continue to be a source of support for the family while they are completing the requirements of the program, and achieving their family’s education and work goals.

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.

Michael Ryan
Extension Council Chair

Terri Benner
Council Member

Peggy Dykes
Council Member

Jeffrey Macomber
Regional Director

Jodi Blake
Council Member

John Maxerll
Council Member

Becky Bray
Scott County Extension Director

Chuck Buel
Council Member

Suzy VenHorst
Council Member

Alexandra Dirck
Council Member

Jane Weber
Council Member

Scott County Master Gardeners provide education with a variety of gardens at the Extension office.
Health and Well-Being

In the six-week "Powerful Tools for Caregivers" series, parents of children with special health and behavioral needs 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. Grant funding from Scott County Kids supported resource materials, a meal at each session, weekly stipend for childcare, and a $50 incentive for attending all sessions. In addition to the behavior and learning changes, participants shared multiple comments on how they will be a better caregiver by taking care of themselves first. All the participants would recommend the series to other caregivers.

The goal of the Wellness and Independence through Nutrition Program (WIN) is to reduce hunger in underserved mid-life and older Iowans who are eligible for but not yet enrolled in the food assistance program. All counties in Region 16 are involved with outreach which includes distribution of information, a display, and a variety of presentations. A unique outreach in Scott County was delivery of the “Gardening: Grow Your Wallet” program at five senior housing locations. Participants learned about the importance of consuming nutrient-rich foods in their diets, how food assistance can help get the nutrition needed, and how plants and seeds can be purchased with food assistance. Master Gardeners then shared about container gardening and assisted participants in planting a vegetable or herb to take home. The program was well received and has opened opportunities for continued Human Sciences programming.

4-H Spotlight: (Sheridan Sluggers)

The Sheridan Sluggers 4-H Club is beginning its third year of a civic engagement project called the North Scott Blessing Box. North Scott is the school district in which many of the club members are students. The Blessing Box is a stand alone free food pantry which can be accessed by anyone at any time. In 2017, the club built the first Blessing Box in Park View in cooperation with the Park View Lutheran Church. The pantry is a wooden structure cemented in the ground. North Scott Community Schools allowed the members to build the pantry, along with other students, in their industrial tech classroom. Food collection containers were placed in the local grocery store.

Club members, which total 65, signed up to care for the Blessing Box for a week at a time. As a result of the needs of the community, members were required to restock the food items 2 to 3 times a week. It became such an undertaking, the Sheridan Sluggers enlisted the help of other youth groups, businesses and individuals to adopt the box for a month. In 2018, every month was adopted by a business or individual. As plans are being made for 2019, this will continue. Representatives of the club send reminders to the businesses or individuals with instructions and expectations. The youth manage an email account and Facebook page. This one project has allowed the club members to explore the 4-H program project areas of communications, civic engagement, wood working, and food and nutrition.

The Sheridan Sluggers enthusiasm to help their neighbors has spread! The North Scott School District covers nine towns. Supported by many area organizations, businesses and individuals, each one of the communities in the district now has a North Scott Blessing Box.

Scott County 4-H Members are excited to present their community service project for judging during the Mississippi Valley Fair.
K-12 Youth Outreach

Scott County ISU Extension and Outreach has established a new partnership with the North Scott Rotary Club and North Scott Junior High School. The Rotary Club sponsors and leads an Interact Club at the school. The primary focus of Interact is to foster leadership skills in young people. The formation of this group created a great opportunity for Scott County Extension to collaborate with Rotary by sharing a programming resource, Ricochet. Ricochet is a middle school leadership initiative developed by ISU Extension and Outreach and Iowa 4-H, designed to lead students through a variety of adventure-based activities to identify and practice leadership skills. The Scott County 4-H Youth Program Specialist facilitates the Ricochet curriculum monthly during Interact meetings. Through the hands on, team building, fun filled activities, the youth are identifying and practicing valuable leadership skills which will prepare them to be successful, contributing members of our communities.

Over 4000 youth in Scott County received the benefit of Scott County Extension programming. They are reached by School Enrichment activities, hands-on lessons used by their youth leaders or teachers, afterschool programs, 4-H Clubs and Clover Kids groups. The lessons taught are topics from STEM as well as teambuilding, citizenship and leadership.

AmeriCorps Youth Corps project served 34 Davenport teens this year. The youth were placed with non-profit agencies, government offices and businesses who cooperated in teaching the youth hands-on workplace skills. Partnering on the project with Scott County Extension was the City of Davenport and the Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

Ann Green, a Youth Program Specialist, works with young Rotarians on Ricochet, a middle school leadership initiative.

The 4-H County Council has done various leadership and civic engagement activities and assisted staff during the Mississippi Valley Fair in August. Their biggest project of the year was applying for a Pioneer Grant that they could use to better their community. The group voted to sponsor a meal for the Ronald McDonald House in Iowa City. The house serves families from Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois, as well as families who travel from out of state and even internationally to be treated at the University of Iowa Stead Family Children’s Hospital. The group collected pop tabs and planned a meal to serve the 35+ families staying in the house. On September 9th a group of 8 members traveled to Iowa City, where they purchased food to make Walking Tacos, and other supplies needed for families at the house. The kids had a great time and said it was a very rewarding experience. They also received a tour of the house and learned a little about some of the families that were staying at the house. The County Council plans on serving 2 meals during the upcoming year and raising more money for donations of supplies and food for the families.
Food and Environment

Classes in the Master Gardener training program were presented in “flipped classroom” sessions in 2018. Participants studied topics from a book and videos presented by ISU on their own at home, then came to class for enhancement activities. These activities were presented by horticulture experts in the local area who built on their homework studies with real life experiences. The classroom was usually outdoors and offered participants the chance to experience application of what they had learned. Local partners were Nahant Marsh, Vander Veer Park and Conservatory, Davenport Parks and Recreation, Davenport Compost Facility, Quad City Botanical Center and University of Illinois Extension.

Child Care Nutrition workshops, which meet Department of Human Service licensure renewal and Child and Adult Care Food Program recertification, equip childcare providers with strategies to improve the nutrition and health status of children under their care. Approximately 70 child care providers attended one or more of the five offered by Nutrition & Wellness Specialist. Over 90% of the 70 childcare providers trained reported increased preparedness to apply or teach health promoting dietary behaviors to children in their care.

On average, Iowans eat too few healthy foods like fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Often, Iowans with lower income eat fewer of these healthy foods than those with higher income. Buy. Eat. Live Healthy is working to change this trend by helping Iowa families build knowledge and skills to make healthy choices despite tight food budgets. Often referred by local agencies, participants take 9 classes from local Iowa State University educators. They learn about nutrients, food safety and how to increase their family intake of healthy food. In Scott County Master Gardeners gave 5,656 hours of service to the public in 2018. That translates into almost $140,000 value to the citizens of Scott County.