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

**Tama 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**– Free Income Tax Preparation Assistance
- **Food and the Environment**– Master Gardener Training and Women in Ag
- **Health and Well-being**– Daycare Provider Training
- **K12 Youth Outreach**– Partnering with local conservationists to bring outdoor education to youth and continuing to grow 4-H

**Economic Development**

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach was able to partner with several other community groups, including STC Schools and Marshalltown Community College, to form a group focused on celebrating and sharing about the diverse cultures of the residents of the county. In March, a total of 125 long-time residents and newcomers gathered for a potluck and program to share cultural foods, music, art, and clothing. The same group gathered at Toledo Heights Park again in the fall for a potluck and time of learning about services offered in the community. These gatherings have resulted in better understanding between cultures and more inclusion and interaction among groups from differing countries.

In March, the Extension office hosted two days of free income tax

**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.

- **Judy Morrison**  
  Extension Council Chair
- **Gene Mohling**  
  Interim Regional Director
- **Jacob Benda**  
  Council Member
- **Cathy Gethmann**  
  Council Member
- **Jackie Skala**  
  Council Member
- **Eric Werner**  
  Council Member
- **Jennifer Wrage**  
  Council Member
- **Jim Poduska**  
  Council Member
- **Marla Clark-Hlas**  
  Council Member
- **Keith Zhorne**  
  Council Member
**Preparation Assistance in Cooperation with Meskwaki Economic Development**

More than 20 lower-income families utilized this service.

**Health and Well-Being**

A collaboration with Child Care Resource and Referral led to an engaged evening of discussion around stereotypes and bias statements with an *OUCH! That Stereotype Hurts* workshop. Fifteen early childhood professionals explored stereotypes they’ve experienced and practiced six communication strategies for effectively speaking up when faced with demeaning statements. In another training, *Linking Literacy with Learning*, 22 early childhood care providers explored new ways to read and share favorite children’s books by engaging the children in the story through questions and discussion. Activities to accompany the books were discussed and lesson plans developed that implement skills learned during the workshop. Snack options and food activities were incorporated into the plans. Participants stated that they gained renewed excitement about sharing familiar stories with the children in their care and are eager to use strategies presented.

At the start of the 2018-19 4-H year, every club in the county was asked to have two or three club members and two adults attend Food Safe training for volunteers in our county office. Tama County Extension staff presented information on proper use of gloves, food handling, handwashing, and temperature danger zones for food. Those who attended, then took the knowledge and activities they learned in training, back to share at their club meetings in November. Clover Kids were trained during October meetings using a kit designed to give better understanding of germs and good handwashing practices. They were given the opportunity to practice proper handwashing and safe food handling through playing games. Almost 200 4-H members and adults were given food safety information through these meetings. Future club fundraisers involving preparing and serving food will present 4-H families with situations to use these proper food-handling practices so Iowans don’t get sick.

**Food and Environment**

One mission we have is to help farmers connect through peer...
networks. Grundy, Marshall, and Tama county brought farm women together for Annie’s Project in Toledo. Twelve women met for five weeks for an educational program dedicated to strengthening women’s roles in the modern farm enterprise. The course fostered problem solving, record keeping, and decision-making skills in farm women. Participants reported increased family communication and better understanding of the family farm financial situation after completing the course. Following this course, several participants returned with a family member to attend an estate planning program presented by a farm business management specialist. Those families gained information which helped open discussions with professionals and family members about business arrangements to work together on the farm and succession plans for family farms.

Four women completed Master Gardener training in Tama county this year. They are passionate about serving their communities and sharing gardening best practices. Master Gardeners are individuals who have taken the Master Gardener training and share their time and expertise as volunteers in community gardens, city beautification projects, and farmers markets to name a few.

K-12 Youth Outreach

Through K-12 youth outreach we prepare young people for the future. We build leadership, citizenship, communication, and life skills in youth, helping them reach their full potential.

Programming in Tama county this past year led to more than 2400 contacts with youth. This includes contacts through school programs, day camps, library programs, and all outreach efforts, as well as, 4-H.

New partnerships were formed with the Chelsea Library and Junior Achievement this past year. The library partnership has resulted in a monthly after-school youth program in that town. Through the Junior Achievement program, 50 youth gained a better understanding of their community and how money flows through its people, workplaces, and businesses and into the global marketplace. Students were also introduced to ISU Extension and Outreach and 4-H during these visits. An existing partnership with the DNR, USS Polaris, Tama County Public Health, and STC FFA enabled 110 students to attend a Safety Day at STC School. This day teaches students information to keep them safe when enjoying activities in the sun, on water, and involving bikes and recreational vehicles. Another ongoing relationship with Tama County Conservation resulted in a Winter Survival camp where youth were presented with survival information. They were then given a challenge to put to use what they had learned using limited supplies to build a shelter for themselves.

Other popular events have been the Water Rocks and Conservation Station visits to our county. The county fair and three schools were able to host visits where classes gained
practices they can implement to help keep a clean water supply and learned how what they do impacts the environment in which they live.

For the fourth consecutive year, the 4-H Clover Kids program has grown in Tama county. In 2017-18, a total of 190 youth and 109 volunteers were involved in 4-H countywide. Together this group attended and conducted activities including pie-making workshops, salsa gardening, food drives, livestock workshops, and Food Safety Quality Assurance training for youth to become aware of livestock medication withdrawal times and other methods of providing a safe food supply to consumers. They also gained understanding of humane care for animals and nutrition needs of livestock.

4-H members participated in activities such as Monarchs on the Go. Two youth were trained on campus and later shared the life cycle and habitat needs of the monarch butterfly with audiences throughout the county. They also distributed milkweed seeds to encourage establishment of suitable monarch habitat.

The Swine Grant Program, which was begun by a county 4-H member and conducted through a partnership with the county Pork Producers group, continued to provide the opportunity for youth who have never worked with pigs to experience daily care and feeding of several animals. Youth also gained skills in recordkeeping and learned responsibility through this program.

The Tama County 4-H Endowment was formed in 2018 to provide funding opportunities for 4-H members to explore learning opportunities beyond the county. This will enable youth who may not have been able to participate in these activities otherwise, to attend.

Photos at left
Top– Pesticide Applicator Training for farmers
Bottom left– 4-H exhibits that qualified for State Fair
Bottom right– Master Gardeners learning about vegetable gardening at the Meskwaki Elder Garden

**County Extension Staff**

- Cheryl Bruene
  *Executive Director*

- Jennifer Hulme
  *County Youth Coordinator*

- Sara Sorensen
  *Office Assistant/Bookkeeper*

- Gene Mohling
  *Interim Regional Director*

**ISU Extension and Outreach**

**Tama County**

203 W. High St.

Toledo, Iowa 52342

641-484-2703

[www.extension.iastate.edu/tama](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/tama)