Regional Leadership Team Meeting Notes

The NE Iowa FFI Regional Leadership Team met on June 27, 2012 at 11 am at the Postville YMCA.

Ann Mansfield welcomed the group. The following updates were presented.

NIFF Coalition update by Teresa Wiemerslage.

- Success: spontaneous happenings to increase access to local food.
- Farmers' market coupon program expanded Riceville, Calmar, and Waukon, New Hampton. The coupon program places a $5 coupon redeemable for fruits or vegetables at the farmers market in the box received by food pantry clients. Last year approximately $1000 of fruits and vegetables were sold. The project is financed through donations.
- Decorah is looking at offering EBT at their FM.
- Challenges: Federal regulations for school food service have changed, so schools are all redoing their menus. This is a temporary set-back for Farm to School. In the long run, however, the federal changes will probably help farm to school, because they require that more fruits and vegetables to served to students. Six schools asked FFI for help to create their menus, so a regional, seasonal cycle menu is being created with those six.

Safe Routes to School Update by Ashley Christensen.

She wants to meet individually with each person at the meeting to discuss how Safe Routes to School can be implemented better in their communities. Starting this year, each school and community will create their own Safe Routes to School plan with assistance from the UERPC.

Schools updates from the RCs.

- New Hampton did a lot of nutrition education last year
- Riceville has a new Food and Fitness Youth coach.
- Oelwein is serving products from Rapson Dairy at their summer program. Their new food service director is enthusiastic about the school garden and already helped build and plant it. The school wellness team is also focusing on community outreach.
- Turkey Valley has 'one of the most comprehensive school gardening programs', because students start the seeds, transplant the plants, and harvest. The school wellness team is building momentum. The marketing instructor wants to use study hall times for walking. The elementary school has weekly walks.
- South Winneshiek- Nutrition lessons. Working to make the school garden more kid focused.
- Postville received a Master Gardener 4-H grant of $1000 and used it to build 8 raised beds. They've already grown lettuce, kohlrabi, and radishes. The addition of these beds has doubled their gardening space. They did an activity at the park called Park It, led by the Youth Team. On Sept 15 there will be a tour of Allamakee County (23 mile loop) to raise money for playground equipment. They received a Garden to Grow grant and used it to install three raised beds near the lunch room. The after-school program is caring for those three beds. They had a Spring Fling event, which included scavenger hunts, nutrition education, gardening, and a light meal. Alex Enyart held several FEEST meals during the school year and his group also make the food for the Spring Fling.
- Starmont- A summer school session is gardening. Their fitness trail is nearly completed. They received a Fuel Up to Play 60 grant of $2000.

- Valley- Held a community wide wellness forum. Their summer gardening program allows families to sign up to care for the garden for a one-week slot.
- Howard-Winneshiek- Their summer wisdom and wellness program is running. Approximately 150 kids are involved in the K-3 program and 40 in the 4th-8th grade program. It will run through all of June. They applied to be a Healthier US School.
- North Fayette- there is a school garden at the elementary and middle schools. They donate the food produced to the food shelf. The elementary received several grants for their greenhouse.
- West Central- Gordon Murray-John has helped a lot with the school garden. The food service is working to procure local apples and melons for the coming school year.
- Central- Sonja taught two consecutive days of yoga at the middle school and high schools (6 hours a day). They also applied to be a Healthier US School.
- North Winneshiek- held nine breakfast and lunch taste tests last year and used those results to add new items to their menus.
- MFL MarMac- taught nutrition education in the 4th-6th grade health classes. They have a garden at the elementary school in Monona.
- Clayton Ridge- working on procuring local food for school lunch.
- Allamakee submitted a school wellness plan. Cycle menu pilot. Their summer program is hiking at local land marks and planting raised garden beds. A 21st Century grant for $1.1 million was awarded to several schools for three years, including Postville and Allamakee.

Community Health Update by Haleisa Johnson.
NICC Early Childhood continue to use the curriculum developed with FFI and to create new curriculum. They may partner to expand FFI's reach into early childhood work, which is one of FFI's goals included in the application for the next round of funding. They are also applying for a Community Transformation Grant. They hope to combine the work funded by Kellogg, Wellmark (for messaging), and NICHQ.

Northeast Iowa Funders Network by MJ Smith.
The Funders Network includes community foundations in all six northeastern counties. They applied for a USDA Rural Community Development Initiative Grant. The Funders Network was going to provide $12,000 in matching funds and raised another $37,000. They didn't get the grant, but believe they can do much of what they intended to do with the money they have. They want to work to integrate the wealth transfer message with the wellness message.

Fayette County Update by Donna Story and Gordon Murray-John.
Donna went over a bridge the other day and realized that the Clermont-Elgin trail runs below it AND she saw people using the trail. Gordon wants a walking school bus at Maynard. GROWN Locally has rented a building in Clermont to use as an aggregation point and also have a storefront. The building is near the campground, so may benefit from business from campers. They are preparing for a third-pary audit at that location. Gordon is also preparing for his own GAP audit.

Clayton County Update by Kay Vifian.
Clayton Ridge has a new school wellness team and a new PE teacher. Kay has been asked to share some classes about food at the head start and several other classes. The hospital sponsored a wellness fair in Guttenburg and it was well attended. While at the fair, Kay made a connection with the hospital and will start selling greens to the hospital. She and other producers in Clayton are working with Nick to create a "wellness CSA" or an on-line food co-op. St. Mary's school wants to join FFI. They have a school garden and may create a school wellness plan. Recently three people in the community asked her how they can get involved with FFI: a retired farmer, a retired teacher, and a community member that has always struggled with her weight.

Howard County (Cresco) Update by Laura Schmauss
The Howard Winneshiek garden is being maintained by a child care center. The garden is at the hospital, but may be moved closer to the school. Cresco, Provitin, Elma, and Riceville are all holding fun runs this summer.

Winneshiek Update by Johanna Bergan
The Decorah School Wellness team held four events last year. The final event was a run held in conjunction with the Gunderson Lutheran Church bike fair. The plan to repeat three of the four events in the next school year. Decorah is a cycle menu pilot. On June 10 Decorah has their first "Open Streets" event. They closed off the streets to one square downtown. People could do whatever they wanted in the space. Businesses had booths, kids played, and there was a small wellness fair. They will do another open streets event on Sept 23.

Chickasaw Update by Joanne Tupper
Several fun runs are being held this summer. About 280 participated in Nashua's mud run last weekend. The New Hampton school has a school garden, hoop house, and greenhouse all running. She heard they donated extra pepper plants to the food pantry. Farmers market- They worked with the economic development people, the city of New Hampton, and Park & Recreation to move the farmers market to the Car Quest parking lot and switch the day from Saturday morning to Thursday late afternoon. They Parks & Rec department are organizing the market. They have 21 venders. They were really busy on the opening day.

Brandon Friedlein-
A field day displaying vegetable equipment and demos was held in June. They had a good turnout; some people even came from Minnesota. When he graduates from UIU he is going to return to Clayton County to work on the farm.

Cindy Baumgartner
Hosting Food Preservation 101 Workshop for either August 6 or 7 in the evening. The class is 2.5 hours and they learn to can, freeze, and dehydrate. She will hold two Taste of Summer programs. The program includes an on-line class and workshops. She will hold salsa-making workshops on July 19 in Dubuque and July 30 at the Decorah VFW.

Next Steps
Kellogg has invited FFI to apply for additional funding, but for less. $300,000 for 2 years, then $250,000 in the third year and $200,000 in the fourth year. At the next meeting we will discuss what we are doing that is directly leading to positive outcomes and what activities are sustainable. A big question is how to embed this work in the communities. One way may be to place the RCs in the communities and ask the schools to financially support the RCS ($6,000/year divided between three schools).

Notes by Arlene Enderton.