



What's up with Wellness?



The radishes are up! Students from West Union Elementary show off their harvest.

May 2012



Inside...

Wellness updates from area schools, a feature about Valley's amazing school garden, & and great PHOTOS.



As the 2011-2012 school year comes to a close, I would like to thank all who have advanced wellness in our region. With your inspiration, vision and boots on-the-ground efforts we're creating healthier communities where all children can live, learn, work and play.

This summer, I'll be leaving the Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative. Come August, I'll join a dozen individuals across the U.S. as a [FoodCorps](#) Fellow and help support Iowa service members. I'm excited that I'll still be connected to Northeast Iowa though I'll be stationed in Des Moines. I hope to come back to this region a little older and a lot wiser ☺

Since 2009 I've enjoyed meeting you, supporting your efforts and learning along side you. Thank you for the work you do to educate and inspire—and know that you've personally fed my desire to change the world.

If I can leave you with one thing I've learned the past three years as an AmeriCorps service member and as an employee of the FFI, it's that YOU are part of a national movement to curb the childhood obesity epidemic. The W.K. Kellogg Food & Community Foundation continuously lifts up the Northeast Iowa FFI up as model. However, our splash extends beyond our funders. This region's community collaboration and selflessness has inspired action in unlikely places—including on both coasts, and believe it or not, the White House.

Wherever I end up the next handful of years I'm proud to have roots in Northeast Iowa. And I promise you this isn't a "goodbye", but rather it's a "see ya later..."

Onwards to wellness, Flannery Cerbin

School Updates:



**Taste Local. The 2012
Local Foods Directory
has sprouted! Check it
out:
[Inspire\(d\) Driftless Magazine](#)**

Allamakee:

- Food Service Director, Julie Magner, is working with other schools to create and pilot new regional, seasonal cycle menus over the summer and into the fall.
- Allamakee School District completed Wellness Action plan for 2012-2013 School Year. Over the coming year, ACSD will be working to:
 - 1.) Increase the amount of physical activity in the elementary school by 30 minutes each month, along with more cross-age teaching experiences.
 - 2.) Increase the amount of nutrition education school students, families and staff receive from the school environment during the school year.
 - 3.) Build youth engagement in school wellness through the Food and Fitness Youth Team.
 - 4.) Incorporate education on healthy, locally grown foods into the Ag/FFA programs.
 - 5.) Offer healthy and/or locally grown foods to students during after school activities.
 - 6.) Collaborate and communicate with FFI and other pilot sites to expand and align current food menus with new federal regulations.

Central of Elkader:

- Students from Central attended [Fuel Up to Play 60](#) recognition day at Kinnick Stadium to celebrate the school's ongoing commitment to wellness.
- The annual Food & Fitness 5k fun run and walk was organized by members of the FFI 4-H Youth Team and was held in Elkader on May 5th.
- The bike safety program for the elementary school students has been a huge success this year. The Youth Team spent time mapping out a bike path for the students earlier this spring, and starting May 9th, students have been able to use the fleet of available bikes and helmets during their recess time.
- The garden club at Central has been very successful so far this spring. Students from nearly every grade have participated in preparing the garden space, planting, weeding, and watering. Students and their families are invited to participate in caring for the garden this summer.

Clayton Ridge:

- The middle school food service served a fresh fruit cup to all students in the beginning of May. It was so popular that they decided to try another healthy snack: yogurt parfaits with blueberries and granola.
- The school food service has made a commitment to continue taste testing fruits and veggies that the students might not have seen before. On the upcoming fall menu? Jicama sticks, sugar snap peas, green peppers, cucumber slices, and grape tomatoes with yogurt ranch dip. The taste tests are supported by a mini-grant from the Department of Education.
- This will be the third year of Clayton Ridge's school garden. This year the Clayton Ridge FFA will be working with the FFI 4-H Youth Team and FCCLA students to maintain the garden.
- FFI resource contact, Sonja Arneson-Ecklund spent the day at Clayton Ridge sampling black bean brownies and kiwi halves. She also presented to the 2nd, 5th-9th grades on the importance of wellness.

Decorah:

- The Decorah School Wellness Team co-hosted a wellness fair with the Decorah Gunderson Lutheran Clinic. Families completed a timed 5k fun run, and had the option to do a scavenger hunt. Students received fun door prizes.
- Decorah High School students in John Condon's *Constructions of Metals* and *Intro to Autocad* classes won the bike rack challenge. Check out the video Mr. Condon made about the project:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13VxvwQYdBE>



Howard Winneshiek:

- The mileage club will continue at Lime Springs.
- The Cadets for a Cause/Go the Distance Day event was held May 9th. The FFI 4H Youth Team handed out free smoothies and ran "taste test the rainbow" booths.
- Lime Springs held "Bee Bim Bop" day. Kindergarten and 1st grade students cooked a Korean stir-fry dish and learned about Korean culture.
- The FFI 4-H Youth Team completed a cross-age teaching lesson about local spinach.
- Howard-Winneshiek will host a Wisdom and Wellness program for Kindergarten-8th grade students in Northeast Iowa.

MFL MarMac:

- The whole school district celebrated "Go the Distance Day" with various wellness events in each grade. The high school students participated in a dodge ball tournament; The lower elementary students participated in an obstacle course and a game of "tail tag," and the middle school students played SPUD and tried yoga with FFI Resource Contact, Sonja Arneson-Ecklund.
- The lunchroom gave out free smoothie taste tastes for breakfast 2 days during May.
- The district completed the 100 Day Wellness Challenge; A total of 35 out of 42 staff members participated at the McGregor Center.

New Hampton:

- 3rd grade school students took a field trip to the Dairy Center in Calmar to learn about Iowa's Dairy Story!
- New Hampton FFA is gearing up for another great greenhouse season.

North Fayette:

- Kindergarteners at West Union Elementary School started squash and parsley seeds. The 5th grade classes planted French Fingerling potatoes. There is already produce at the garden! Students harvested eight pounds of radishes and four pounds of spinach from the WUE garden and donated to the Fayette County Food Bank.
- The greenhouse at West Union Elementary School is finished and operating.
- West Union Elementary held a "Diggin' in the Dirt" garden party.
- The School District held a "healthy all-staff cookout" where they served radishes from the WUE garden- Leah Chapman, the FFI resource contact was recognized and thanked.
- The Middle School Art Class painted plant identification signs and made garden stepping stones for the middle school garden.
- North Fayette High School held Spring Fling/Go the Distance Day on May 4th. The FFI 4-H Youth Team made free smoothies.
- North Fayette High school held its third and final [Fuel Up to Play 60](#) breakfast taste test. What did that sample? Whole wheat vegetable muffins!
- North Fayette Teach Ed class submitted a bike rack for the Bike Rack Challenge.

North Winneshiek:

- North Winn second graders participated in a bike rodeo this month. Students learned about bike safety from Winneshiek Deputy Sheriff Dan Marx, FFI resource contact Sonja Arneson-Ecklund, 2nd grade teacher Janet Falck, and two wonderful parent volunteers.
- The garden club continued to meet throughout the month of May, with students involved in planting, weeding, watering, harvesting, and maintaining the school's large flower and vegetable gardens. The garden club also began construction on two caterpillar beds, which will help to extend the growing season.
- Garden club students helped plant 8 tiny pine trees in recognition of Earth Day and Global Youth Service Day. The seedlings will grow in a protected area before they are transplanted to various parts of the school grounds next fall.
- North Winn finished up a successful year of [Fuel Up to Play 60](#) funding and look forward to finishing up a couple of wellness-related surprises for the students this summer.

Oelwein:

- Oelwein was awarded a \$1,000 garden grant from the [Whole Kids Foundation](#). Wings Park Elementary school plans to put in four new raised beds with the grant money.
- Wings Park Elementary School hosts a Safety Fair for all Oelwein students and community members
- Iowa Department of Health *Pick A Better Snack* program features asparagus and rhubarb as healthy snacks.
- Little Huskies Learning Center hosts "Breakfast with Mom's", their Fitness Fridays and a Track and Field day
- Parkside Elementary School hosts Grandparent's Day.
- Oelwein's Summer School Program will include a variety of speakers including the FFI Resource Contact, Stephanie Conant, and representatives from Rapson's Dairy. Local and healthy snacks will also be served to students during these activity days.
- Oelwein's Tech Ed class made a bike rack for the Bike Rack Challenge.

Postville:

- Postville Garden Club members held a mini-art competition to determine the designer of their club t-shirt. Results will be announced in June.
- Early in May garden club members worked together with adult supervisors to use power tools to construct tomato trellises.
- Wellness and FFI 4-H Youth Team members have commenced planning for a "Park-It", an event which will encourage active transportation and play, scheduled for August 15th.
- Food service director, Laurie Smith, recently attended the W.K. Kellogg Food and Community Conference in Asheville, North Carolina. Food and Community brings together leaders in the good food movement from throughout the nation to share ideas, network, and celebrate successes within the movement.

Riceville:

- Fitness was incorporated into Riceville's annual May Day community service day projects, which included a "color run" where teachers painted students as they ran a race!
- Riceville Elementary School had a fun field day this month.
- The Riceville school garden is growing well in its new location on school grounds.

South Winneshiek:

- The FFI Resource Contact, Stephanie Conant, completed her sample group lessons with Ms. Styve's and Mr. Bakewell's 2nd grade classrooms. Students ended their lessons by planting basil seeds.
- South Winneshiek's Wellness Team completed their 2012-2013 School Wellness Action Plan.

Starmont:

- Under the direction of David Cavagnaro, from the Pepperfield Project, Starmont after school club students planted their garden.
- To celebrate the start of their new garden, after school club students constructed their own healthy snacks (banana burritos and lettuce wraps with homemade ranch dressing) and played "Food Groups" relay races.
- Starmont students participated in Live Healthy Iowa's annual *Go the Distance Day* to demonstrate the importance of physical activity.

St. Joe's:

- St. Joe's participated in *Go the Distance Day* on May 3rd. Students listened to a talk from Jacky and Ward Budweg about their bike trip across the world. Students learned about bike safety in a bike rodeo led by Nick Sobocinski from the Iowa Bicycle Coalition and Trevor Rockwell, St. Joe's P.E. teacher. The day ended with a lesson in pedestrian safety and a school-wide walk to the park.
- 5th and 6th grade school students helped plant the school garden on May 9th. There appears to be lots of family support over the summer and they are looking forward to a great gardening season!

Turkey Valley:

- Turkey Valley School District was awarded a \$2,000 dollar grant from the [Whole Kids Foundation](#).
- Kindergarten-4th grade school students planted the vegetable garden near the school playground. Specifically, 4th graders planted six apple trees near the garden and 2nd graders plant a squash and pumpkin patch near the entrance of the school. Turkey Valley families will be taking care of the school gardens over the summer.
- Students and staff celebrated *Go the Distance Day* on May 4th and walked for 30 minutes.
- Turkey Valley Community School hosted *Little Trojan Relays* for elementary students and community members, which included samples of local yogurt and goat cheese.
- The FFI Resource Contact, Stephanie Conant, completed nutrition lessons with Mrs. Smith's 1st grade classroom. They celebrated the end of lessons with a frozen fruit day at the Fort Atkinson City Park.
- The Turkey Valley Fitness Center is open to the public, with excellent response by community members.
- The Turkey Valley Wellness Team completed their 2012-2013 School Wellness Action Plan, hoping to keep the public more aware of wellness activities that are going on in the coming year.

Valley:

- This year at Valley's Hawaiian-themed Extravaganza day, FFI Resource Contact Elizabeth Makarewicz taught elementary students about the importance of farming and community through the reading of a "Story in Motion", *The Gift of Ku*.
- Students in Mr. Noack's high school shop class finished construction on two large raised beds for Valley's elementary school. Shop and FFA students worked together to fill raised beds with soil and manure.
- From preschool to 5th grade, all Valley elementary students had the opportunity to plant in the school's garden this month! And third and fifth graders have kept the beds watered.
- Parents, teachers, and students gathered May 29th for a garden orientation with FFI Resource Contact, Elizabeth Makarewicz.

West Central:

- The After School Local Foods Club focused on local vegetables. Students circled through three stations and practiced making healthy after school snacks that they could make on their own cucumber sandwiches, salad on a stick and banana burritos. Students prepared an end-of-the-year meal for their parents. They made fruit kabobs, smoothies, a chicken and vegetable pasta and vegetable wagons for 30 people.
- West Central students planted potatoes in their new school garden and each received a pair of gardening gloves.



Valley Students, Teachers, & Community Members Rally Together to Make School Garden a Success

Valley's grounds have experienced some drastic changes in the past several weeks! Two new raised bed gardens, a small one in the front of the school and a large one next to the school's playground, and two additional patches of pumpkins and melons have sprung up, seemingly overnight. Thanks to high school shop and FFA students and teachers, the beds were constructed and filled with soil and manure. Soon after, all students from preschool to fifth grade busied themselves with planting.

When school is not in session, garden planners are asking for volunteers to participate in an "adopt-a-garden" program, in which students may sign-up with their families to care for the garden for a week out of the summer.

When asked about the value a school garden has for her two sons, first graders at Valley elementary, garden volunteer Nikki Henderson says, "I am excited to work on the garden with my kids so that we can all learn together about living a healthier lifestyle, because it is a lifelong habit. I want to share the experience of growing and eating our own food so that they are more connected with the things that come into their lives. One of my most important goals with this, though, is to be a role model for volunteering. I hope to instill in them, like my father instilled in me, a sense of giving back to the community we live in as a way to enrich our lives."

As the school year wrapped up at Valley, whispers and excited mutterings concerning the garden could be heard throughout the hallways. When students return in the Fall, they should be delighted to see their garden teeming with life.



Thirteen individuals from the Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative attended the W.K. Kellogg Food and Community Conference—Assembly Required—in Asheville, NC. Over 500 individuals from across the United States were present to discuss what is being done to curb the rising trends in childhood obesity.

Guest speakers included representatives from the nine Food & Fitness sites from across the U.S, as well as big names like Anna Lappe ([Institute for a Small Planet](#)), Curt Ellis ([FoodCorps](#)) and the president of the W.K. Kellogg Food & Community Program. For more information including photos and videos from the conference check out on the following link: [Assembly Required-Conference](#)

May 2012

Enjoy the SUMMER! We'll be digging in school gardens, running summer camps, catching up on paperwork, planning for next school year & orienting new service members. We hope to see you out 'n about soaking up the sun, picking berries & enjoying occasional the ice cream cone!



What did the chick say when it saw an orange in the nest? Look at the orange mama laid. (pronounced like 'marmalade')...ha, ha, ha!