

Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness News - October 2012

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Are You Ready to Walk?

Wednesday, October 3rd — (nicknamed 'Walk'tober 3rd by FFI's Ashley Christensen) is an opportunity for schools to take part in three fun, health-promoting events:

- Int'l Walk to School Day
- Fall Fitness Day
- Gov's Healthiest State Walk

All schools are encouraged to participate in at least one of the 'Walk'tober 3rd events.

"The main goal of these events is to promote physical activity; the rest of the details are really up to your school," says Christensen.

Giving schools the opportunity to be creative, yet practical in their planning is the key ingredient for a successful turnout. Be creative, be fun, be active on 'Walk'tober 3rd!

[Learn more on the Blog.](#)



New Look for School News

Back to school means new jeans, new shoes, new books, new teachers and...a new newsletter?!

This fall marks the NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative's fourth year of programming and partnering with schools to create healthy environments for students and staff.

The Initiative has always valued transparency, cooperation and the stories of its partners. In an effort to share more stories, and to distribute that responsibility to more people, we have launched a blog feature to our website.

School resource contacts, FFI staff, youth and other partners will be sharing at this site and the tagging feature will make those stories easier to find. We would love to feature your stories and will post guest blogs from time to time.

You can even have the updates delivered to your inbox by subscribing to the RSS feed. We hope you enjoy this new way to receive your news. See you at the blog!

FFI Welcomes NICC as Newest Partner

NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative is enthusiastic to announce Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) as the newest partner in their work.

NICC joins three other core partners -- Iowa State University Extension & Outreach—Region 4, Luther College, and Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission—in efforts to create a shared vision for the region. All of the partners have common missions and values aligned with FFI. They believe that by working together, they can achieve more. [Read more.](#)



Walking School Bus Revolution

Looking for a way to help kids in your community? Start a Walking School Bus in your neighborhood!

A Walking School Bus is a group of students walking to and from school with one or more responsible supervisors, such as a parent or neighbor. It is just like riding the bus...minus the bus!

The structure of every Walking School Bus is different, especially in Northeast Iowa. In some communities, Walking School Buses run daily, regardless of rain or snow. In other communities, it works best to have a monthly "Remote Drop-off Location", where kids are dropped off at a location off of school grounds and walk the remaining trip to school. [Learn more on the Blog.](#)

www.iowafoodandfitness.org/wegrow



The Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative is grounded in the work of these core partners:



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach



New Faces @ School

There are some new faces in school cafeterias and gardens this year. Six young women have joined the Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative as resource contacts for area school districts. There are two FoodCorps and four Iowa AmeriCorps State of Promise positions for the 2012-2013 school year.

Resource contacts link FFI and school wellness outreach with twenty school districts. Members assist the school wellness teams as they work together to deepen student, teacher and staff understanding about the benefits of growing and consuming local, healthy food and being physically active.

These resource contacts work hard to be in each school district every week. They are based out of Luther College and work closely with the other FFI core partners, Iowa State University Extension & Outreach and Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission.

The Food & Fitness family extends a warm welcome to these new members.



Melanie Stewart - stewme01@luther.edu - (515) 975-4880

Serving New Hampton, St. Joseph's and Turkey Valley

Hey there! My name is Melanie and I am a proud native Iowan! I was born in Des Moines, raised in Ankeny, and graduated from Grinnell College in 2011 where I studied Biology and Environmental Studies. I'm thrilled to be back in this beautiful corner of the state for a second term as a FoodCorps Member! I see my service with FoodCorps as an opportunity to fuse my two passions—education and the environment. In the future, I envision myself as an educator at an outdoor learning center with its own onsite garden and kids' kitchen.

Elizabeth Makarewicz - elizabeth.makarewicz@foodcorps.org

Serving Postville, Valley and Oelwein

Elizabeth here. This year I will be serving a second year with FFI as a FoodCorps service member. When I went away to college, I quickly affiliated myself with the growing local food movement by founding a student Slow Food club. This was an incredible opportunity for us to connect with the local foods economy, share food and cooking knowledge, and raise awareness on campus of these "Slow Food" values that were important to us. Now as a FoodCorps service member, I hope to make these connections with my students.



Erika Randall - rander01@luther.edu

Serving Decorah, N. Winneshiek and S. Winneshiek

Erika is originally from the Twin Cities, but after graduating from Luther College in 2009 she spent a year volunteering as a teacher in Malaysia. Following her return to the United States Erika moved back to Decorah where she has worked a variety of jobs in the community including leading programs for children through Decorah's park and recreation department and working as a nutrition coach for women at Curves fitness center. She is passionate about wellness and excited about the opportunity to serve children, parents and school districts throughout Northeast Iowa.

Kayla Koether - koetka01@luther.edu

Serving MFL Mar Mac, Central and Clayton Ridge

Hi! My name is Kayla Koether, and I'm excited to return home to Northeast Iowa and serve my community as an AmeriCorps member. I grew up on a 5th generation farm in rural McGregor, where my family has raised grass-fed cattle and sheep since the 1980's. Since agriculture and education run in my family, I'm looking forward to working with schools to make Northeast Iowa happier, healthier, and more vibrant.



Katie Lay - layka01@luther.edu

Serving N. Fayette, Starmont and West Central

Hello! My name is Katie Lay and I am a new AmeriCorps member serving with the Food and Fitness Initiative. I'm originally from Miamisburg, Ohio but I lived in Indiana for four years while I got my degree from Saint Mary's College in Biology. I'm excited to be based here in Northeast Iowa where there is such a strong community, especially one that is so conscious of food sustainability and security! I think it is important to educate our country about the power they have through their food choices. You can say a lot about who you are and what you care about by what you eat!

Whitney Brewer - brewwh01@luther.edu

Serving Allamakee, Riceville and Howard-Winneshiek Schools

Hello! My name is Whitney and I was born and raised in Iowa's capitol city of Des Moines. I recently graduated from the University of Iowa where I studied cultural anthropology and international human rights focusing on food and the environment. My two favorite things in life are food and Iowa! After graduating college, I decided to dedicate this next year of my life to serving rural communities in Iowa and working with people to encourage the expansion of local foods and nutrition education. I couldn't be happier to be living in NE Iowa doing important work through the Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative.

