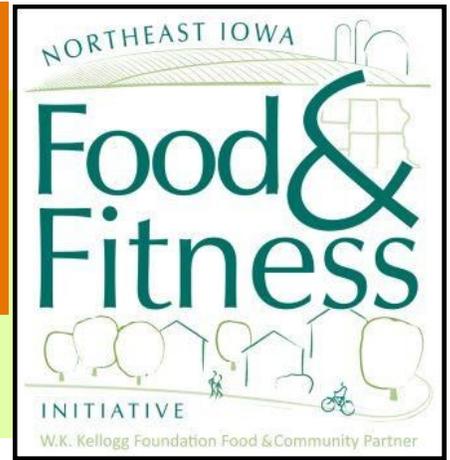


FOOD & FITNESS NEWS

WINTER 2014



The Faces of Hunger

By Megan Woodward, AmeriCorps serving Decorah

Before I started this AmeriCorps position, I knew people across the United States struggled with food insecurity.

I donated to food drives and gave to food pantries. I knew it was a thing some people struggled with, but it was something that happened to people I didn't know and had no connection to.

Then one day at lunch, one of my kindergarteners in Decorah raised his hand and told me that he was still hungry after he completely cleaned his tray.

Honestly, I didn't think much of it, and he went to the kitchen and got a whole bowl of applesauce. I was a little concerned that the food was going to go to waste – because how could he have room for all of it?

But he quickly ate the entire bowl.

Then I learned from the head cook that his family is food insecure. The lunch ladies give him extra food on his tray every day and then more when he eats it all and is still hungry.

Seeing his hunger, I started thinking, is school lunch the last meal he eats for the day? What does he do on the weekends without school breakfast and lunch? How many other kids are just like him, but I just don't know?

This is the face of what food insecurity looks like. He was sitting right in front of me, and I had no idea.

He is the reason why school food and food assistance programs are deeply important to me. Everyone, no matter their class background, should have access to affordable, whole, and healthy foods, especially at school. For some kids, that just might be the last meal of their day.

In northeast Iowa, 1 in 5 children are food insecure. The World Food Summit defines "food security" as having healthy food available and accessible.



Can you pick out the children who are food insecure? Most of us can't. This is why our work is so important.



Northeast Iowa FFI is grounded in the work of these core partners:
Iowa State University Extension and Outreach—Region 4
Luther College Center for Sustainable Communities
Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission
Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque
Northeast Iowa Community College

Where Does Yogurt Come From?

That's the question preschoolers in northeast Iowa were asking recently with the expanded 'Farm to Preschool' programs in the region. Most know yogurt comes from milk, but how do you milk a cow?

Sara Converse, Head Start Teacher in West Union, let her students do just that. No, she didn't have cows in the classroom; instead, she used rubber gloves and water to show children the theory of milking a cow. Sara shared, "We made a cow structure out of cardboard and attached the milking apparatus. It was fun!" Sara and her staff are taking 'Farm to Preschool' to another level for their students by maximizing the use of creative curriculum.

At New Hampton Preschool, teachers Jolene Rosonke, Barb Havlik and Gretchen Myers are first-timers with 'Farm to Preschool' in their classrooms. They taste tested two kinds of Greek yogurt. The plain was not well liked but the local blueberry from Country View Dairy (Hawkeye, IA) was a hit with the children. They taste-tested other flavors including peach, banana vanilla, and raspberry. Yogurt dip and peanut butter-banana smoothies were made. Children took home yogurt information and recipes to families.

South Winneshiek Jump Start Preschool also did taste-tests with locally produced yogurt according to teacher Shanna Putnam-Dibble. Their question of the day was "Do you like yogurt?" All students said "YES!" Shanna reported, "They were very excited to try more."

Other activities included a flavor survey where students tried three flavors, chose their favorite, and graphed the results for a math activity. Cooking experiences included yogurt parfaits, yogurt smoothies and yogurt popsicles. They read about My Plate and various food groups, focusing on dairy.

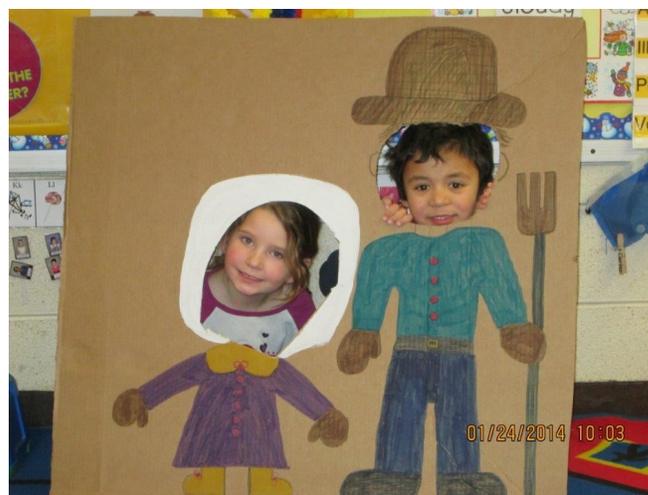
One fun activity was a food group sort. Lunch sacks were labeled with the food groups and a picture and students sorted play food into the various food groups. They watched a short video on My Plate and then put the food/bags in their discovery center for further exploration. They ended with a celebration - inviting families to cook with them.



Milking Chores



Tasting Greek Yogurt



Pretending to be Farmers

Youth Advocate for Health

Healthy Living is a priority area of the Iowa 4-H Program involving youth as messengers to create changes in their environments around nutrition and physical activity.

Fayette County Food and Fitness 4-H members Briana Morey and Ashley Buzynski recently shared those messages and the work of the West Central FFI 4-H Youth Team with the Fayette County Extension Council in November.

Briana and Ashley serve as Regional Youth Leadership Team (RYLT) members from West Central Community School. Food and Fitness 4-H'ers from 15 school districts in northeast Iowa make up the roster for the RYLT which meets quarterly during each school year to build on the 4-H outcomes of successful learners, effective leaders, outstanding communicators and productive citizens. Education is focused on positive youth development through experiential learning. Strengthening relationship with policy makers, like school boards and county extension councils, is a primary objective for FFI youth engagement.

The West Central FFI 4-H Youth Team was a recipient of a mini-grant in 2012-2013 to focus on connecting youth to local foods. With the help of their FFI 4-H Youth Coach Lauren Adams and former AmeriCorps Intern, Katie Lay, the group leveraged these funds to purchase a healthy snack cart. The snack cart led to a fundraising effort to apply for other grants with an ultimate goal of building a school greenhouse.



Pictured: Briana Morey (left) and Ashley Buzynski (right).
Photo credit to Janell Bradley at Fayette County newspapers.

When asked why a greenhouse appeals to her, Ashley responded, "The whole school can get involved in keeping the greenhouse and garden up, harvesting it and you get fresh food instead of canned."

The Fayette County Extension Council financially supports school-based FFI 4-H Youth Teams by paying for a portion of the 4-H enrollment fee each year.

County Extension Council members are elected officials that oversee the planning, preparation, marketing and delivery of the extension educational programs in the county. Through a unique partnership with Iowa State University and other federal and state organizations, Extension Councils provide research-based unbiased information and education to help county citizens make better decisions.

West Central on the Move!

Students participating in West Central Community School District's after-school program have no need for chairs. Instead, they are up on their feet moving to the beat of fitness!

The school, located in the community of Maynard, started a Fitness Club this fall thanks to efforts by Jake Geis, AmeriCorps Service Member and FFI Resource Contact for West Central.

Last year, FFI helped West Central organize a Food Club. Jake decided to add a few new spins, twists and turns this year to the K-6th after-school club by transforming it into a Fitness Club. Each month, Jake takes students on an active exploration of fitness, and the kids love every minute of it!

With themes like "Meet, Mingle and Move" and "Walking in a Winter Wonderland", Jake gets students up out of their desks for a healthy dose of physical activity. Jake's high energy lessons will continue on into the spring with indoor aerobics, yoga, jumping games and beyond!



Appreciation for Support

By Ann Mansfield, Project Coordinator

“Together We Grow Healthy Kids”... We know that our children’s health is directly linked to the quality of food they eat and the environments in which they grow and play. When our kids eat well and are active, they thrive.

Creating access to healthy food and places for physical activity also **strengthens communities**, reinvigorates local economies, reduces health care costs and addresses historical inequalities that prevent all children from reaching their potential.

Over the past (almost) 7 years, FFI has been greatly supported by generous funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Food & Community Program. As we’ve reported, the Kellogg funding is phasing out over the next 2.5 years. The current year funding is \$200K less than 2 years ago.

To continue FFI’s success, **increased community support is essential**. FFI is moving into a new phase where increased community support is necessary to continue the work. We have started the conversations in the spirit of “communities supporting community work.”

We are deeply appreciative of the generous support of regional community members and organizations who have made a contribution to FFI in 2013! We received \$9525 in donations to the FFI Direct Fund and Endowed Fund in 2013. Please join the FFI leadership team in thanking these individuals for investing in a community-based movement to create the conditions to support healthy choices in northeast Iowa.

2013 Direct Fund Donors

Erickson Law Office
Ann and Daniel Mansfield
Oneota Community Food Coop
Craig and LeAnn Watson

2103 Endowed Fund Donors

Regina and Gerald Buls
Lindsay and Karla Erdman
Randall and Haleisa Johnson
Joan and Kent McCormick
MJ & Andy Smith
Ron L Van Veldhuizen Law Firm

Join us at iowafoodandfitness.org/site/donate.html

Economic Impact of Local Food

Local foods are making an economic impact in northeast Iowa. In fact, sales of food produced in the six counties in northeast Iowa from 24 reporting farms added nearly \$7.3 million to the local economy in 2012. In addition, \$1.8 million of local foods was purchased by thirty restaurants, grocery stores, schools and institutions in the region.

The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture coordinated the evaluation for one of the first statewide attempts to measure actual impacts of the local food industry on Iowa’s economy.

The evaluation tracked local food purchases by grocery stores, restaurants and institutions, and sales from Iowa farm-based enterprises that marketed their products locally in 2012. Nearly 180 businesses and individuals participated in the data collection effort, including 74 buyers and 103 producers of local foods.

The evaluation also measured job creation as a result of local food production, processing or utilization, and counted funds leveraged by the regional food groups that comprise the statewide regional food system network.

“We believe there is a powerful story to tell about the value that local foods bring to our communities and commerce in our region,” says Teresa Wiemerslage, Regional Program Coordinator with ISU Extension and Outreach.

Get more details in this report, The Economic Impact of Iowa’s Local Food Champions: NE Iowa Food & Farm Coalition at www.iowafreshfood.com.

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