



# What's up with Wellness?



Turkey Valley Food Service Director, Diane Shileny, offering a taste-test to students.

April 2012



Spring is here!! Gardens are underway.



Many ingredients go into making healthy kids. Two of the most important are good food and physical activity. Most children today don't get enough of either, and the result is an increase in chronic illness, including Type II diabetes and childhood obesity.

Schools are the public tables, at which many of our children eat two or even three meals a day. By offering healthy food, such as salad bars and other fresh, local options, schools can have a direct impact on the health and wellbeing of our kids.

School is also a place that children spend a good portion of their waking hours. Increasing the amount of physical activity they get while there, or through school-related events, can go a long way toward reversing the negative health trends that have become prominent in the last decade.

In Northeast Iowa, we are working together to make schools health, vibrant places that serve locally grown foods and have abundant opportunities for physical activity and play *everyday*.

## Inside...

Wellness updates from 17 schools, a recap of Postville's Spring Fling Wellness Workshop, plus Salad on a Stick?



We're already harvesting salad greens. Thanks to the Luther College hoop house.

**"WHEN WE SPEAK OF NATURE IT IS WRONG TO FORGET THAT WE ARE OURSELVES A PART OF NATURE. WE OUGHT TO VIEW OURSELVES WITH THE SAME CURIOSITY AND OPENNESS WITH WHICH WE STUDY A TREE, THE SKY OR A THOUGHT, BECAUSE WE TOO ARE LINKED TO THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE."**  
-HENRI MATISSE

CAST YOUR VOTE! "Like" your favorite bike rack created by area welding classes on the [Iowa Food & Fitness Facebook page](#).

# School Updates:



## Allamakee:

- ❖ Waterville had a *Family Literacy* night, which included a bicycle rodeo and information on wellness for families.
- ❖ The Ag program received a \$2,500 grant to put towards a second greenhouse which will feature hydroponics and other alternative production methods.
- ❖ Wellness Working Group met to finalize a draft of the 2012-2013 Wellness Action Plan and presented goals and ideas to key administrators and other members of the wellness committee at a meeting on April 26th.
- ❖ Luther Executive Chef, Jason Skarin, conducted a training with school food service staff on efficiently processing fresh, local fruits and vegetables. He demonstrated simple, inexpensive tools that reduce labor-time when processing large volumes of fresh, whole produce. Jason also shared some of Luther's joys and challenges as the college moved towards more scratch cooking and local sourcing.

## Central of Elkader:

- ❖ FFI Resource Contact, Sonja Arneson-Ecklund, spent a day talking to the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes about the importance of eating the fruits and vegetables served at school lunch. The students identified common fruits and vegetables by feeling and smelling them with their eyes closed and then answered questions about what each fruit and vegetable does for the body. The classes also tried edamame and learned about the importance of trying new foods.
- ❖ The FFI 4-H Youth Team recorded food and fitness radio ads at KTCN radio station in Elkader.
- ❖ The FFI 4-H Youth Team is planning a 5k fun run and walk on Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup> in Elkader— all proceeds will benefit the team.



## Clayton Ridge:

- ❖ The Clayton Ridge Community School district received a mini-grant from Team Nutrition for taste testing activities. First taste-test? Kiwi!
- ❖ 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students learned about why wellness matters from the FFI Resource Contact, Sonja Arneson-Ecklund.
- ❖ Sonja Arneson-Ecklund visited with the 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students during a wellness day held April 25<sup>th</sup>.
- ❖ Family and Consumer Science classes learned about why wellness matters and how they can get involved with making their school district a healthy place.
- ❖ Clayton Ridge hosted a wellness meeting where community came together to bring wellness into the school and the community.

## Decorah:

- ❖ The Decorah FFI 4-H Youth Team completed this month's cross-age teaching lesson on local spinach.
- ❖ Members of the Decorah 4-H Youth Team recorded radio ads with Wellness Co-Chair Gina Holthaus at KVIK radio station.
- ❖ On May 10<sup>th</sup>, the Decorah School Wellness Team will co-host a Family Wellness Fair in conjunction with Gunderson Lutheran.

## Howard Winneshiek:

- ❖ The Howard-Winn FFI 4-H Youth Team completed this month's cross-age teaching lesson on local spinach.
- ❖ Lime Springs held an Earth Day Celebration and they are competing in a Mileage Club.
- ❖ Members of the wellness team are organizing a school-wide walk to school day in Cresco.
- ❖ The District received \$2,000 from [Fuel Up to Play 60](#) for cross-age teaching program and summer nutrition camps. They are also purchasing new scooters and cones for PE at Crestwood Elementary/Jr. High using [Fuel Up to Play 60](#) funds.



## MFL MarMac:

- ❖ See page 5 for *Salad on a Stick?*

CROSS-AGE TEACHING FEATURED LOCAL SPINACH IN APRIL. CAN YOU SAY YUM?!

## New Hampton:

- ❖ New Hampton Middle School students had their *Olympic Unit Kick-Off* event this month. Students have been learning about different countries participating in the Olympics. An Olympic torch was passed between advisor rooms. The finale included student presentations about their countries, a wellness walk around the High School track, and a showing of the film “Miracle.”
- ❖ Local professionals from the Mercy Medical Center in New Hampton gave a presentation on diabetes and diabetes prevention to New Hampton 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades.

## North Fayette:

- ❖ West Union Elementary School students started seeds and North Fayette Middle School students are starting seeds and science classes learned about planting zones and germination.
- ❖ The FFI 4-H Youth Team planned and served a healthy meal at the North Fayette Town Hall Alcohol Forum on April 24<sup>th</sup>.
- ❖ North Fayette High School students held the final community F.E.E.S.T. on April 29<sup>th</sup>.
- ❖ North Fayette high school students continue to partake in cross-age teaching.
- ❖ They are celebrating a *Spring Fling Go the Distance Day* on May 4<sup>th</sup>.



## North Winneshiek:

- ❖ The FFI Resource Contact, Sonja Arneson-Ecklund, Food Service Director, Barb Sazbo, and members of the North Winneshiek FFI 4-H Youth Team are working to incorporate healthy options to breakfast using *Fuel Up To Play 60* funding. Students have sampled fruit and yogurt smoothies, yogurt and granola parfaits, and banana burritos, and can expect to some of these items added to the lunch menu next fall.
- ❖ There are plans to extend the school garden! The new space will feature a few raised beds, a hoop house, and additional space for vegetable production.
- ❖ The North Winn Garden Club has been a smashing success- elementary school students have volunteered to give up recess to work in the garden. They weed, dig, plant, and harvest.

## Oelwein:

- ❖ Oelwein wins *Fuel Up to Play 60* cooking video challenge in Iowa. NFL player Asher Allen visits Wings Park Elementary School as a reward for video.
- ❖ Little Huskies Learning Center hosts Fitness Fridays.
- ❖ Iowa Department of *Pick a Better Snack* highlights avocados and grape tomatoes as healthy snacks.

## Postville:

- ❖ Postville’s school garden is growing again—students and garden volunteers have expanded the garden’s growing space and added raised beds. Members of the Postville’s Garden Club have planted peas, lettuces, spinach, potatoes, etc.
- ❖ Elementary students and their families gathered together on Earth Day to learn about the importance of healthful eating habits and physical fitness for the *Spring Fling Wellness Workshop*. [See page 4]
- ❖ In conjunction with this month’s wellness workshop, Alex Enyart and other FFI 4-H Youth Team members led this year’s final F.E.E.S.T. At this special celebration, youth team members shared the successes of this program with local community leaders. [See page 4]
- ❖ The Postville FFI 4-H Youth Team completed this month’s cross-age teaching lesson on local spinach.

## South Winneshiek:

- ❖ FFI RC, Stephanie Conant, taught two, one-hour lessons in the second grade classrooms.

## Starmont:

- ❖ Ground has broken for Starmont’s garden. The after school club will be in-charge of maintenance.
- ❖ FFI 4-H Youth Team members, along with their coach, Matt Lee, have started planning for Starmont’s annual summertime triathlon.
- ❖ Progress is being made on Starmont’s fitness trail—it should be up and running before the end of the school year!

## St. Joe’s:

- ❖ The St. Joe’s FFI 4-H Youth Team completed their first series of cross-age teaching lessons in grades K-4! Each lesson included an activity outlining the importance of hand washing followed by a taste-test of a healthy food– mangoes pineapple, and local yogurt parfaits.
- ❖ St. Joe’s received an I.D.A.L.S garden grant which included funding for raised bed lumber, a worm compost bin, seeds, and more!  
[See page 4 for more]

- ❖ 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students learned how to construct raised beds during a P.E. class with the help of Mr. Rockwell. In addition to the garden plot at the hospital gardens, the raised beds will be located outside the school's Parish Center to increase garden production.
- ❖ 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes learned all about dairy and the food system in preparation for a fun-filled field trip to the Calmar Dairy Center.

## Turkey Valley:

- ❖ Second grade students planted tomato seeds in their classroom for the school garden.
- ❖ FFI Resource Contact, Stephanie Conant, and the Turkey Valley School Wellness Team coordinated a bicycle rodeo with the Iowa Bicycle Coalition for elementary school students grades K-4.

## Valley:

- ❖ Valley students participated in a "Food Has Value" workshop at Clermont Public Library with the assistance of FFI Resource Contact, Elizabeth Makarewicz.
- ❖ Through a program with Helping Services, Valley students and their mentors participated in a Food and Fitness workshop with Elizabeth Makarewicz.
- ❖ Gifted and talented students used their math skills to create layout plans for Valley's new garden.
- ❖ This month Valley Industrial Tech teacher, Gary Noack, and his students will construct a raised bed for Valley's new vegetable garden.

## West Central:

- ❖ The after-school local foods cooking club focused on low-fat dairy. Students made yogurt with Carolee Rapson from Country View Dairy.
- ❖ The last *Rec Night* included 15 excited middle school students.
- ❖ Middle school science students started tomato and pepper seeds for the school garden.

### POSTVILLE HOSTS SPRING FLING WELLNESS WORKSHOP

In celebration of Earth Day and [Global Youth Service Day](#), 41 Postville elementary students and their parents gathered together to participate in a workshop that emphasized the importance of physical activity and healthy eating habits.

Additionally, during the workshop members of Postville's elementary garden club worked with high school members of the Postville Food and Fit team to prepare dinner for both workshop participants and local community leaders through a program called F.E.E.S.T.

F.E.E.S.T., which stands for Food Empowerment Education Sustainability Team, brings youth together with community partners to prepare a meal. Working alongside a chef, students are responsible for seeking out food donations from local farms and businesses and then creating a meal (without recipes!), from the ingredients they procure.

For the past school year, Postville's youth team, largely under the direction of Senior Alex Enyart, has completed a F.E.E.S.T. monthly. April's F.E.E.S.T. was unique, as local community members were invited to partake in the meal and learn about the value of such a program. Community members offered valuable insight on the creation of partnerships between students and adults to foster better environments of wellness within the school and town communities.



**Reflections from Stephanie Conant:** In April, I helped plant tomato seeds at Turkey Valley Elementary School. It's always a lot of fun for me to plant seeds with students, because I love watching them carefully tend to their seeds. Students spread the soil and water over the seeds until they think the mixture is "just right." At Turkey Valley elementary school students are involved in planting, transplanting, and harvesting plants into and from the garden. This comprehensive approach has made the Turkey Valley school garden a great success over the past three years. Through efforts like the Turkey Valley school garden project, northeast Iowa schools, in partnership with the Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative and the Pepperfield Project, are making it possible for students and families to have greater access to local foods and more opportunities for physical activity and play in our region.

### ALLAMAKEE COUNTY RECEIVES GARDEN GRANT

Allamakee County Extension and Outreach and Postville Community School announced in March that their local 4-H youth and Master Gardener team was awarded a \$1,000 grant for the Postville School Garden program. The Youth Voice: Youth Choice grant is funded by Walmart and the goal of the community partner program is to reach 50 youth in the community to promote healthy eating. The team has built eight raised garden beds and will plant a variety of vegetables and fruits. A new garden club of 12 kids has been formed and will plant and harvest the produce for the school lunch program and for local families. The club will also be making recipes from the garden produce to learn more about healthy eating.

## Salad on a Stick?

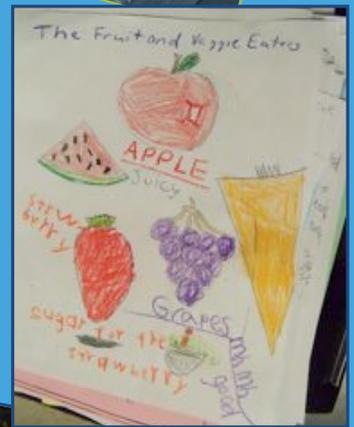
Fifth grade students at MFL MarMac's McGregor center earned the title of school champions for recording their data in the Live Healthy Iowa 100 Day Wellness Challenge. Jennelle Schroeder, the school nurse, and Sonja Arneson-Ecklund, the FFI Resource Contact, worked together to come up with an activity for the kids that reflected their interest in learning more about vegetables. Sonja brought local cherry tomatoes, local basil, and local mozzarella goat cheese to the classrooms during health. She taught students about a unique snack. Classroom helpers passed out toothpicks. Students speared a piece of cheese, a tomato, and a leaf of basil to make a Caprese salad on a stick. Most students had never eaten a salad on a stick.

As one student said, "I've always eaten salad off a plate...So this is like eating an adventure salad!" The students tasted their snack simultaneously, and one even went so far as to report that the flavors combined in "the most delicious way I've ever tasted in my life!"

Caprese salad is a Mediterranean appetizer and is often served on a plate like a normal salad. Sonja learned about the salad when she lived in the Mediterranean, but she explained that a unique feature of the salad is it can be made from all local ingredients.

The rest of the lesson involved planting a windowsill garden. Classroom helpers passed out biodegradable planting cups, sharpies, potting soil, and seeds. The students made the tough decision between planting basil seeds or tomato seeds. A student who decided he wasn't fond of basil or tomatoes thought of a creative way to still enjoy the classroom activity. "I'm going to hide my seeds at my friend's house until it grows into a plant, and then I'm going to give it to my mom for mother's day," he explained.

Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative's is working to create places where people have access to healthy, locally grown foods. When students plant seeds and watch the growing process, they make connections between where food comes from, how food grows, and how we choose to eat it. And the education that happens gardening is profound—something as simple as dirt, water, and sunlight can become the most fascinating part of the school day.



## When was the last time you leapt?

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This newsletter is a product of the Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative.

We encourage recipients to contribute! Please submit articles or bullets to Flannery Cerbin, Communications Liaison, [ferbin@iastate.edu](mailto:ferbin@iastate.edu) / 563-382-2949.

Thank you!

