

# Snow playground.

What's up  
with  
Wellness?



January 2012



## Inside...

\*Wellness Updates from 14 schools throughout Northeast Iowa.

\*More about school wellness projects, Move to Beat the Winter Blues workshop, FFI 4-H youth ICN meeting, and food service networking meeting.

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*.

**Making the  
healthy choice,  
the easy choice.**



# Save the Date!


## School Wellness Teams: a Retreat for Building Capacity

Wednesday, March 21, 2012, 8:30am-2:45pm. Luther College- Valders Hall of Science


This workshop is designed for *teams*— we strongly recommend diverse representation your school wellness team including a food service director, classroom teacher, parent, administrator, community member, P.E./health teacher, youth coach, and youth representatives. **Max. registration/** school is 10. Please stay tuned for registration info.

## School Updates:

### Central of Elkader:

- ❖ Food Service Director, Jeanne Helgerson, has worked very hard to get some of the Iowa Gold Star Menu cycles into her cafeteria, making local purchases whenever possible. The effort is a part of The Healthier US School's Challenge, which recognizes food service directors' efforts in creating healthy school lunch menus.
- ❖ All students are participating in the 100-day challenge at Central. This is the school's second year participating in the event.
- ❖ The school garden's planting season is going strong due to efforts from guidance counselor Jane Metcalf and the student members of the garden club.
- ❖ PE teacher and youth FFI 4-H Coach, Trevor Arnold, is making an effort to include a wide variety of activities in his class this spring. Some of the possibilities? Snowshoeing, paintball, ice fishing, kayaking, and canoeing. 

### Decorah:

- ❖ The Decorah School Wellness Team hosted *Move to Beat the Winter Blues* (see page 5) for info.
- ❖ The Decorah Cross-Age Teaching Teams completed their first lesson of the new year at John Cline, Carrie Lee, and St. Benedict schools. 

### Howard Winneshiek:

- ❖ The Howard-Winn Cross-Age Teaching completed their first lesson of the new year.
- ❖ They are applying for [Fuel up to Play 60](#) at Lime Springs and Crestwood High School for dodgeball tournaments and smoothie bars.
- ❖ Planning Cadets for a Cause/Go the Distance Day.
- ❖ Preparing to apply for the [U.S. Healthier Schools Challenge](#)

### MFL MarMac:

- ❖ Monona's school nurse, Ann Keehner, and FFI Resource Contact, Sonja Arneson-Ecklund, are working to create monthly wellness bulletin boards that will be displayed outside the nurse's office.
- ❖ MFL MarMac's Wellness Team welcomed four elementary school teachers who have expressed an interest in integrating wellness in classroom activities.
- ❖ Reading Week in the Elementary School will take place in April. This year's theme is camping. The school is planning a number of wellness-related activities for the students.
- ❖ After a parent wellness survey revealed students' high screen times, the school is planning family-oriented and fitness-related activities for Turn Off the TV Week in April.
- ❖ The High School Foods Class has been spending time doing healthy snack lessons with the elementary school students. Teacher, Tamara Butikoffer, reports lessons have been a success!

### New Hampton:

- ❖ New Hampton Middle School is working towards becoming a [Fuel up to Play 60](#) School. If funded, the grant would allow for new kitchen equipment, a cafeteria re-style, taste test days, and a portable L.C.D projector and fun workout D.V.D's to keep kids active year-round.

New Hampton continued page 3

## Nutrition Lessons in New Hampton

New Hampton Elementary School students are learning about nutrition from FFI Resource Contact Melanie Stewart. Lessons were tailored to be informational and engaging for each grade level.

First grade students learned the importance of eating a balanced diet and being physically active through an introduction to MyPlate. Students picked activity cards with different food items, named which food group it belonged to, did the corresponding activity, such as hopping on one foot or dancing.

Second grade classes “tasted a rainbow” of fruits and vegetables after learning how eating different colors helps our bodies. Students made a rainbow of fruits and veggies to sample. One student said, “I’ve never had a yellow pepper before, but I liked it!”

Third graders sampled brownies baked with black beans. All students said they liked them before learning what the secret ingredient was, and almost all said they would try them again. After the taste test, students learned the importance of balance, variety, and moderation by reading Shel Silverstein poem’s “Food?”

Fourth grade science classes learned the difference between whole grains and not-whole grains (“refined grains”) by reading food labels and packaging. There were many great questions such as “what does ‘organic’ mean?” and “what is the difference between ‘dietary fiber’ and ‘insoluble fiber’?”



- ❖ FFI Resource Contact, Melanie Stewart, has completed a series of nutrition lessons see page 3.
- ❖ New posters are going up in the cafeterias in both buildings in New Hampton. These posters will feature lunch menus, as well as fun facts about different foods that are locally produced in NE Iowa.

## North Fayette:

- ❖ FFI Resource Contact, Leah Chapman, helped completed Fayette County Community Foundation grant to fund the “Growing Green Kids” Greenhouse Project at West Union Elementary. She is currently helping the wellness team apply for the Alliance Pipeline grant to further fund the greenhouse.
- ❖ Members of the North Fayette youth wellness team will begin cross-age teaching in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes at West Union Elementary.
- ❖ In the process of planning a school garden at North Fayette Middle School.
- ❖ Mrs. Schmitz’s 4<sup>th</sup> grade class wrote their first letter to Beeman Elementary School in Gloucester, Massachusetts as a part of their Garden Pen Pals Program at West Union Elementary School.
- ❖ North Fayette Senior High received \$3,190 from [Fuel up to Play 60](#). They are 1.) Installing a smoothie bar in their cafeteria, 2.) Implementing a series of breakfast taste tests to make the breakfast menus healthier, and 3.) promoting the “Morning Mile Walking Club”.

## North Winneshiek:

- ❖ Planning for the garden is well under way at North Winneshiek, thanks to parent and local farmer, Erik Sessions. Sessions has agreed to create a planting and harvesting schedule for the school garden, with respect to the requests from the food service staff. Sessions is also helping the school with plans of installing hoop houses. The school plans to implement an “adopt-the-garden program” during the summer months.
- ❖ Teachers, Cristy Nimrod and Nancy Sojka, have administered a survey to students and parents to determine the amount of screen time students are exposed to during the day, and plan to have a culminating event during Turn Off the TV Week in April.
- ❖ [Fuel up to Play 60](#) grant plans are in the works at North Winn. possible plans include breakfast taste tests, new kitchen equipment that would help cut down on the prep time of fruits and vegetables, and new equipment for PE.


## Postville:

- ❖ The Postville Cross-Age Teaching Teams completed their first lesson of the new year.
- ❖ FFI Resource Contact, Elizabeth Makarewicz, read aloud a “Story in Motion” to Mrs. Snitker’s kindergarten class.


Postville continued on page 4....

- ❖ Food Service Director, Laurie Smith ordered parts for a mobile kitchen cart.
- ❖ As part of the 100 Day Wellness Challenge, Laurie Smith, teacher Denise Imoehl, and other volunteers are leading elementary students in 20 minutes of physical activity before school.

## Riceville:

- ❖ New soups added to the salad bar at have been a huge hit with students. The FFI 4-H Youth Team is hoping to work with food service staff to get different, healthy options in the breakfast and lunch menu. 
- ❖ The town of Riceville has completed the Blue Zones application in early January and is polling well in the scoreboards!

## St. Joseph's:

- ❖ St. Joe's FFI 4-H Youth Team sponsored their first all-school fitness activity of the new year: an outdoor scavenger hunt! Students worked in their family groups to complete a series of physical activities, including playing leapfrog, running a lap around the park, and making the letters of "ST. JOE'S" with their bodies. A special thanks to the warm winter for making it such a fun day. The St. Joe's FFI 4-H Youth Team also sponsored a voluntary after school fitness event in January. 
- ❖ With the St. Joe's Walking Club, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders have completed the walk across Iowa...other grades are nearly there, so keep up the good work! For more info. about this competition contact Heidi Skildum, Safe Routes to School Liaison, [skilhe01@luther.edu](mailto:skilhe01@luther.edu)

## Starmont:

- ❖ Four Starmont students were trained to be cross-age teachers and led their first lesson on January 10th.
- ❖ Students of the STARS after-school program made and ate their own fruit pizzas for snack out of rice cakes, low-fat cream cheese, and fresh and dried fruit.
- ❖ After school students cooked and froze 48 servings of veggie soup to be donated to local families in need.

## Turkey Valley:

- ❖ Turkey Valley has already started planning for their garden. They want to plant peppers, cucumbers, a variety of tomatoes (to be used in salsa), zucchini, red and white potatoes, sweet potatoes, and decorative gourds and pumpkins. The Physics class with repair fencing.
- ❖ In January Turkey Valley students were outside for P.E. classes.
- ❖ The Wellness Team reviewed the Healthy Kids Act.

## West Central Hosts Rec Nights & Foods Club

West Central Community School will start an afterschool "Local Foods Club" in which K-6<sup>th</sup> grade students will sample and learn how to prepare fruits, vegetables, homemade whole grain breads, smoothies and other nutritious foods. The club will focus specifically on local foods and will bring farmers from Fayette County to the club to connect students to local food and agriculture.

West Central Food Service Director, Willa Miller, also received funds to purchase new kitchen equipment including cutting boards, a lettuce cutter and an apple slicer. This new equipment will help West Central process and serve more whole fruits and vegetables throughout the school year.

Each month, West Central will use FUTP 60 funds to hold "recreation nights". Students and family members will enjoy healthy snacks and opportunities for physical activity. The school will purchase two Wii exercise bundles and will hold dodge ball tournaments and limbo competitions. The first rec. night was held on January 16, 2012 Students and staff are busy planning the next rec. night.

## Youth ICN

Seven School FFI 4-H Youth Teams participated in an ICN on January 19, 2012. Teresa Wiemerslage, Iowa State University Extension & Outreach Region 4 Extension Education & Communications Coordinator, lead the meeting which focused on increasing understanding of geographic preference of local foods. School groups started examined regional maps and discussed school-based definitions of "local foods" for their school. The group also reviewed talking points for school wellness teams and school boards about the benefits of local foods and establishing a definition. For more information or to review the presentation contact, Teresa at [wiemer@iastate.edu](mailto:wiemer@iastate.edu)

## Valley of Elgin:

- ❖ FFI Resource Contact, Elizabeth Makarewicz, visited Valley elementary classrooms to get students pumped up about the 100 Day Wellness Challenge.
- ❖ Planning in the works for a community wellness forum, to be hosted February.

## West Central:

- ❖ Received \$4,000 from the [Fuel up to Play 60](#) grant (see page 4)
- ❖ In the process of planning the new school garden and starting a garden subcommittee within the wellness committee.
- ❖ In the process of planning "Walking Wednesdays" where all students and staff will walk from 12:00- 12:30pm once a month.
- ❖ Participating in Live Healthy Iowa Challenge.



## Decorah Families Beat the Winter Blues:

About 40 parents and 40 children participated in "Move to Beat the Winter Blues" lead by the Decorah School Wellness Team, in partnership with the Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative. The workshop is part of a four-part series focusing on wellness.

Families trekked across the Decorah Middle School campus in snow shoes loaned from Winneshiek County Conservation. They followed clues for an activity-centered scavenger hunt.

Families also participated in laughter yoga with guest Laura Gentry— a new popular activity were participants trigger laughter and yogic breathing. For one activity, participants used school sports scooters. Parents hooked arms with their kids and scooted in lines across the gym floor. Relay races were won based on which teams were laughing the loudest.

Parents also watched [23.5 Hours](#), which demonstrates benefits of daily physical activity.

After the activities families enjoyed a meal of soup, breadsticks and veggies. Many attendees went home with a door prize that included two sets of snowshoes, a Crock Pot, a gift certificate to Discover Happy, and many free skate and ski rentals donated by Jewel Skate Barn, Ace Kitchen Place, Decorah Bicycles, respectively.



January 2012

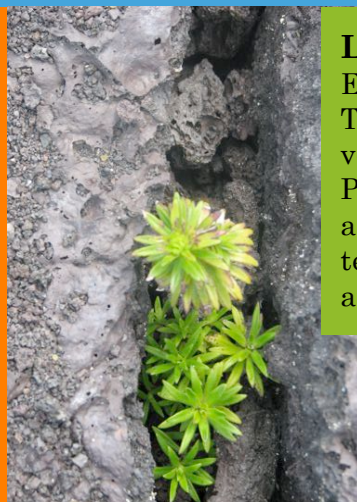
[Click here](#) for fun winter activities

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, [fcferbin@iastate.edu](mailto:fcferbin@iastate.edu) /

563-382-2949.

Thank you!



### Lessons from Nature:

Even in unusual, unlikely places life exists. This plant emerges from a crack in the floor of a volcanic crater in Hawaii's Volcano National Park. It provides a lesson on resiliency and adaptability. As you plunge into 2012 be tenacious and hopeful. There is life teeming all around.

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