



What's up with Wellness?

October 2011



St. Joe's students play a game of tug-of-war with teacher and FFI Youth Coach, Amy Kloberdanz.



Turkey Valley students enjoy produce from their school garden.

Inside...

- *Wellness updates from 15 schools throughout Northeast Iowa.
- *Features about Cross-Age Teaching, Walking with Senator Wilhelm, and F.E.E.S.T.

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.

Cresco High School Cross-Age Teachers



Cross-Age Teaching 2011-2012

Decorah, Howard-Winneshiek, Oelwein, Postville and Turkey Valley Community school districts are participating in cross-age teaching.

What's cross-age teaching? High school students deliver monthly lessons about local, healthy foods to elementary school students.

Some of the foods students will learn about this year: melons, broccoli, carrots, dry beans, and milk.

School Updates:

Central of Elkader:

- ❖ Members of the Elkader School Wellness Team have been working to secure bikes for PE classes and bike safety workshops. In addition, the school is selling reduced-cost bike helmets to students.
- ❖ After football games players are given a healthy sack meal to refuel, which includes foods such as a turkey sandwich, veggies, and fruits.
- ❖ Central of Elkader will continue its partnership with Iowa Department of Public Health to voluntarily track BMI's of students.

Decorah:

- ❖ The Decorah School Wellness Team hosted Food has Value in late October. Parents and members of the wellness team discussed how food relates to family, health, local economy, community and the environment. In an experiential model, participants rotated through a series of tables with food (some real, some fake) meant to probe conversation. Children were supervised, played games and helped prepared dinner for their parents. "Food has Value" is part of a three-series workshop focused on parent education.



MFL MarMac:

- ❖ See page 5 for a story about MFL MarMac's school garden.

New Hampton:

- ❖ New Hampton FFA students are helping maintain their new greenhouse. There's so much excess produce, FFA students have started selling to community members. FFA and Family and Consumer Science students have lead tours for elementary school students, and helped make salsa with greenhouse tomatoes. Currently, there's cement being laid for new greenhouse.

Students pose with Senator Mary Jo Wilhelm



Students from Riceville School had a treat on the morning of October 5, 2011. Iowa Senator Mary Jo Wilhelm joined the students for International Walk to School Day.

Students gathered at the Methodist Church and walked the several blocks to school with guidance of school nurses Jeannie Watts, adult mentors Cheryl Smalley, and Sandy Offen and several student-crossing guards.

Once at school, students and teachers gathered for a ribbon cutting ceremony at the head of the newly paved Wildcat Trail, which meanders through school property. Contractors with Buckwheat and Sons held the ribbon across the path as Senator Wilhelm did the honors of cutting. After the ceremony, students and teachers walked an inaugural lap around the path before heading to classes.

The Wildcat Trail was installed as part of the school's commitment to healthy living. Students will track their walking record along the trail. Art students will soon paint paw prints lining the trail.

To commemorate the special event, student participants were given a certificate of completion of International Walk to School Day, a fitness-themed coloring book, and Wildcat Trail bookmarks.

Elaine Govern, member of the Riceville's Wellness Team, organized this event in tandem with the school's "Walking Wednesdays," a project initiated to get students to safely walk to school the first Wednesday of each month.

New Hampton (continued...):

- ❖ New Hampton Wellness Team is continuing to expand their two Walking School Buses and promoting safe walking to parents.
- ❖ The New Hampton Community is part of *Live Healthy Iowa* Check it out: <http://www.livehealthyiowa.org>.
- ❖ The New Hampton School District has also been involved in discussed starting a series of mini-challenges for staff such as trying new recipes, increasing cardio fitness. These mini-challenges would preface a bigger wellness challenge.

North Fayette:

- ❖ The PE teacher started a morning walking club at the high school. Community members, high school and middle school students begin walking each morning at 7:15 and walk for 45 minutes before the bell rings!
- ❖ North Fayette food service staff are increasing fresh fruits and vegetables options at breakfast. In order to learn more about why there was low participation at school breakfast, North Fayette champions administered a survey. Many students indicated they wanted more healthy options for breakfast. Food service is exploring the option of having a tasty local yogurt bar as a breakfast option.
- ❖ Fifth and sixth graders are in the process of starting a student lunch committee. Students meet with the food service director once a month to discuss the school lunch and breakfast programs. Students should have a say in what is served for lunch and breakfast. The committee will do monthly cafeteria taste-tests and will incorporate the well received food into the school menu.
- ❖ See page 6 for an update about F.E.E.S.T, a project spearheaded by North Fayette senior, Kaylee Michelson.

North Winneshiek:

- ❖ North Winneshiek teachers participated in series of wellness in-services this fall. In October teachers dreamt about what wellness could look like in their school.
- ❖ Science classes regularly utilize North Winn's raised garden beds for place-based education. Recently, the seventh and eighth graders helped harvest garden produce.
- ❖ North Winneshiek students enjoy regular taste-testing of fresh foods in their cafeteria. The most recent? Black bean brownies!

Oelwein:

- ❖ Oelwein Community Schools has a new food service director. Welcome Autumn Kelly!
- ❖ 'Dates with Date' events are being held regularly. Food is provided at school and parents are encouraged to meet with their children in a healthy environment.

Oelwein continued page 4

Oelwein (continued...):

- ❖ The community of Oelwein sent a letter of intent and application to be a Blue Zones Community. What's Blue Zones? "It's a collaborative project between Wellmark and Healthways to ignite a community-by-community movement to improve the well-being of Iowa communities. Ten Iowa communities will be selected to participate in a community transformation effort to make permanent environment and policy changes to improve the emotional, physical, and social health of their residents. This should result in lower health care cost trends, higher productivity, and increased economic viability." Check it out: <http://www.bluezonesproject.com/>

Postville:

- ❖ Last spring, Postville Community Schools hired a new food service director. Written into the job description is that this individual will lead wellness initiatives within the school. Welcome Laurie Smith!
- ❖ Eating meals together is a chance to connect with love ones. Over 200 individuals attended Postville's Family Meal night sponsored by Allamakee Substance Abuse Program (A.S.A.P.). Thank you to all who attended and donated!
- ❖ See page 6 for an update about F.E.E.S.T., a project spearheaded by Postville senior, Alex Enyart.

Riceville:

- ❖ Third and sixth grade students harvested potatoes from the school garden. They were used for lunch the following week!
- ❖ See page 3 for feature about Riceville and International Walk to School Day.

St. Joseph's:

- ❖ Monthly, students and staff participate in a school-wide wellness activity. In September students did all-school tug-of-war and in October an all-school kickball tournament.
- ❖ The third and eighth graders have made either spaghetti or zucchini cake with the assistance of Principal Beth Wright. Principal Wright also helped the second graders do "pumpkin math." According to one student, "it was the best math lesson I ever had!"

South Winneshiek:

- ❖ Students in health classes are learning about nutrition from the help of Stephanie Conant, the FFI Resource Contact (see page 6 for an explanation).
- ❖ Farm to School message came full circle during South Winneshiek's Homegrown School Lunch Week. Student, Michael Havel, was somewhat skeptical of the broccoli on his plate. However, after learning it was from Glen's farm Michael started shoveling it into his mouth. When asked what changed his mind about the broccoli Havel said, "I really like Glen! I worked for him this summer." Farm to School is meant to help students understand where their food comes from and how it is grown. By building connections between students and farmers, local communities can make a difference in the marketplace.



Driftless Safari Closing Ceremonies

Driftless Safari closing ceremony was on September 25, 2011 at Phelp's Park in Decorah. Young and old explorers enjoyed a family-centered scavenger hunt, nature art, walk in the woods and a raffle. Local apples were served and children excitedly donned their new t-shirts earned by completing the countywide scavenger hunt. Driftless Safari maybe coming to your county next summer.

For more information or to volunteer, contact a naturalist at your county conservation board. And remember: healthy families play outside together.

Adventure on!



The following schools participated in HomeGrown School Lunch Week (September 19-25):

Central of Elkader, Clayton-Ridge, Decorah, Howard-Winneshiek, New Hampton, North Fayette, North Winneshiek, Oelwein, Postville, St. Joseph's, Starmont, South Winneshiek, Riceville, Turkey Valley, and Valley of Elgin.

Thanks food service staff!

Starmont:

- ❖ Students enjoyed sampling local homemade jams on whole wheat bread at Starmont's Jam Bonanza.
- ❖ This past month students sampled pumpkin with S.T.A.R.S after-school program. FFI Resource Contact, Elizabeth Makarewicz, will go to Starmont every other week to do a taste test with this program.



A picture says a thousand words!

Turkey Valley:

- ❖ Pre K-4th grade students are participating in activities lead by Stephanie Conant, FFI Resource Contact on a monthly basis. In September students did yoga. Thanks, Robyn Vsteska!
- ❖ In October the students participated in a Fall Harvest Festival which included activities such as a pumpkin roll, beet toss, and taste-testing of crispy kale and romanesco broccoli.

Valley of Elgin:

- ❖ K-6th grade students participated in a bike and pedestrian education class hosted by Nick Sobocinski from the Iowa Bike Coalition, Elizabeth Makarewicz and Heidi Skildum both from the FFI. Students learned about age-appropriate lessons on visibility, rules of the road and trail etiquette. Younger students practiced their knowledge on road and hand signals, while older students learned how to fit a helmet correctly and check air, brakes and bike chains. Several grades competed in a mini-bike relay race to test their bicycling skills. Fifty free helmets were given away, while others earned stickers, magnets and erasers.

West Central:

- ❖ West Central Wellness Team is hosting Monday rec nights. Community members are invited to use the school gym and be active with their family!
- ❖ West Central School is focusing on nutrition education. In the cafeteria students have taste tested local carrots. In addition food service staff prepared broccoli quiche, which was a huge success. Students are involved in planning school lunch menus! Each classroom submits a potential lunch menu to the food service director, and she selects a menu from each grade and will make the menus throughout the year.
- ❖ Gordon from Gordon's Garden visited the school to talk about his farm and plug local squash.
- ❖ Youth team members are making daily food and fitness announcements on the intercom.

Lessons from a Garden!



Second grade students at MFL MarMac's Monona campus can tell you a thing or

two about gardening.

"It tastes better when it comes from the ground!" one little boy exclaimed. "Yeah, cause the dirt makes it taste like earth!" another agreed.

MFL MarMac School garden is complete with six-foot tall sunflowers that tower over melons, cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, and squash. Second grade students have been especially influenced by the



"We made stone soup," said a little girl "At my garden we grow watermelons and pumpkins that get to be THIS BIG," stretched out her arms in front of her. "Wanna know something?" shouted a boy in a shark t-shirt, "we got to have cherry tomatoes as a snack one day!"

Teachers at the Monona-based elementary school agree that it's a nice change to hear the students talking about garden produce instead of television in the hallways. The idea of having lessons in a garden and teaching kids about food, but will hopefully ripen into a lesson that gets kids even more excited about how things grow.



F.E.E.S.T.

Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Youth Leadership members, Alex Enyart (Postville) and Kaylee Michelson (North Fayette) learned about F.E.E.S.T at the W.K Kellogg Partnership this summer. Enyart and Michelson decided to adopt it

for Northeast Iowa. F.E.E.S.T, Food Education Engagement and Sustainability Team, engages high school youth in a collaborative cooking process. Enyart and Michelson contacted local chefs in their communities to help create and eat a health, local feast. They have several events planned. What has been on the menu thus far? Frittatas, fried green tomatoes, purple potatoes, green beans al dente, and baked apples. Yum!



The following schools and communities celebrated active transportation the first week in October by participating in the Governor Challenge "Start Somewhere Walk" and/or "International Walk to School Day":

Central of Elkader, Crestwood Elementary, Cresco, Decorah Elementary & Middle Schools, MFL MarMac Elementary, Monona, New Hampton, North Fayette, West Union Elementary, Oelwein Elementary Schools, Postville, Riceville Elementary, South Winneshiek, Turkey Valley, Valley of Elgin, Waterville Elementary, Waukon- East/West Elementary, and West Central.

NICE WORK!

Meet your FFI Resource Contact!

October 2011



Bottom row, L to R: Stephanie Conant, Melanie Stewart. Back row, L to R: Leah Chapman, Sonja Arneson-Ecklund, Elizabeth Makarewicz, and Emily Neal. Not pictured: Maren Stumme-Diers.

The Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative (FFI) has the help of seven Resource Contacts for the 2011-2012 school year. Five of the members are part of the Iowa State of Promise AmeriCorps or the new national FoodCorps program. Service members are assigned three schools each. In addition, Emily Neal and Maren Stumme-Diers, both employees of Luther College, are resource contacts for Decorah and Waukon schools.

Service members receive a monthly stipend and an education award upon completion of their year term. Each member brings a unique set of skills and interests relating to nutrition and fitness. Look for these women to help foster a culture of wellness in your school!

Here's what a few of the service members had to say about what has inspired them thus far....

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, fcerberin@iastate.edu / 563-382-2949.

Thank you!

"I love the younger kids' excitement and the fact that they like to try new things. I thought they would be picky, but they're not!" Leah Chapman

"I was inspired by International Walk to School Day at Ossian. Kids filled out a survey with sidewalk chalk." Stephanie Conant

"When walking in Riceville, a first grader grabbed my hand and made me her walking buddy. That was awesome!" Melanie Stewart