

Winneshiek County Profile



W.K. Kellogg Foundation Food & Community Partner

Why Food and Fitness?

North Winneshiek CSD has a policy that all students, teachers, and staff participate in a daily 10-minute walk.

School Spotlights



Twenty Decorah high school students headed a weekly Nutrition and Fitness club. Elementary students from walked to the high school campus for a physical activity, healthy snack and wellness lesson with the high school students. Activities include kid-friendly yoga and learning how much sugar is in soda.

Turkey Valley Community School District has a comprehensive garden program. Students plant seeds, tend, and harvest the garden. The produce is incorporated into the lunch menu.

The Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative (FFI) is a six-county effort dedicated to creating healthy places where all children and families can thrive. We are working to increase access to affordable, healthy, locally grown food and opportunities for physical activity and play for all. FFI is one of nine Food & Fitness collaboratives supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Food & Community Program.

Obesity is a growing problem all over the United States. Obesity has been linked to chronic diseases, including diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease, and some cancers. In fact, a study published in 2012 estimates annual obesity-attributable expenditures in Iowa to be \$1.435 billion¹. It is estimated that obesity and related diseases cause an annual loss of productivity in the U.S. worth \$73.1 billion². In contrast, there is "irrefutable evidence" that physical activity is effective at protecting against cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, hypertension,

obesity, depression and osteoporosis³. Similarly, high fruit and vegetable consumption is linked with lower incidence of cancer, stroke, and heart disease.

Experts agree the best chance of reversing obesity trends include community interventions to change environments and policies. Communities can create a culture where the healthy choice is the easy choice—making healthy food, and space and time for exercise readily available.

To make this a reality, FFI works in three areas: **school wellness**, the **local food economy**, and **active living**. This report highlights FFI's achievements in Winneshiek County in these three areas.

¹ Trogon, J.G., et al. (2012) State- and Payer- Specific Estimates of Annual Medical Expenditures Attributable to Obesity. *Obesity*, 20, 214-220

² Finkelstein, E.A., et al. "The Cost of Obesity in the Workplace." *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 52(10): 971-976, 2010.

³ Warburton, D.E.R., et al. (2006). Health benefits of physical activity: The evidence. *CMAJ*, 174(6), 801-809.

Winneshiek County Food and Fitness By the Numbers...

59.2% of adults in Winneshiek County are overweight or obese

2 in 5 Iowa children are overweight or obese
(2011 Iowa Youth BMI Survey)

\$15,505 awarded to schools in Winneshiek County for kitchen equipment and wellness programming

\$3919 spent in 2011-12 by Winneshiek County schools on local foods for school lunch

1604 pounds of vegetables harvested from school gardens in Decorah in Fall 2011, with a value of **\$2586**

153 people in Winneshiek County and **651** statewide partners are connected to FFI's work
\$2.7 million leveraged for FFI-related work in Northeast Iowa



**NE Iowa Food & Farm Coalition
Mini-grants
Support Local
Food Businesses**

The Northeast Iowa Food & Farm Coalition Producer Mini-grants awarded \$8,550 to support local food businesses and enterprises in Winneshiek County between 2008 and 2012; a total of \$131,020 was leveraged. Mini-grants were used to buy fruit trees, a hoop house for tomato production, a brush washer for potatoes and new field bins for a packing house, a small greenhouse, a flame weeder, nesting boxes for laying hens, refrigerated storage for tree fruits, farm stand construction, fencing for livestock, and more.

**Local Food
Economy
Spotlights**

Luther Leads by Example in Promoting Local Foods

Luther College in Decorah is one of Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative's core partners and is leading by example in its use of local foods.

Led by the Norse Culinary Crew dining services staff, Luther College has a goal to purchase 35% of their food from sources within 150 miles of Decorah by 2013. In 2011, they surpassed 20% in local purchases. Local producers that sell to Luther College include Grass Run Farms of Dorchester, Country View Dairy of Hawkeye, WW Homestead Dairy of Waukon, and the GROWN Locally farmer cooperative, which sells products from 30 local producers.

In addition, the Norse Culinary Crew purchases vegetables grown on the Luther campus. Students and staff from Luther's Sustainability and Environmental Education programs care for the production gardens. In 2011, their harvest weighed over 3600 pounds!

The campus is also home to three Residence Hall Gardens, two edible landscapes, and several community gardens. Luther also offers

plots on campus to faculty and staff, 26 of whom have plots this year measuring approximately 20 foot by 20 foot each. Furthermore, Luther has a few plots dedicated to the Greening Churches interns, who grow food for the food pantry.



A Community Supported Agriculture program for faculty and staff was launched in 2012; thirty-seven faculty and staff members joined. Luther pays half of the membership fee to join a local CSA. As members of the CSA, staff members receive a weekly box filled with fruit and vegetables harvested from a local farm. Participating staff members take part in at least two of five book discussions on campus during the summer and attend two cooking classes. The cooking classes could be taken at the Oneota Community Food Coop in Decorah or on campus with the Norse Culinary Crew.

Turkey Valley Elementary has a walk every Friday that lasts 15 to 20 minutes.

**Active Living
Spotlights**

Decorah Community School District has several walking school buses. The percent of walking and biking trips to and from school made by John Cline Elementary students increased from **2%** in 2008 to **21%** in 2011.

There are **29** miles of trails in Winneshiek County.

The North Winneshiek CSD has a ten-minute daily walk before or after lunch. They integrate an activity into the walk and play music in the hallways.

Driftless Safari Invites Winneshiek County Residents to Explore the Outdoors

The Winneshiek County Driftless Safari encourages county residents to explore the outdoors. The county-wide adventure hunt begins over Memorial Day weekend and continues through Labor Day weekend.

Registered participants can pick up a free Safari Adventure Kit at any public library in Winneshiek County. The kit includes a draw-string backpack, Safari map, guidebook, and pack of crayons. The map shows 20 locations in Winneshiek County included in the Safari. Destinations include the Canoe Creek Wildlife Management Area, Moe Park, and the Chipera Prairie. Many participants report the Safari takes them to sites they had never been to before. To encourage annual participation, organizers plan new destinations each year.

Participants are encouraged to walk, bike, or canoe while on the Safari. Once at each site, families use their guide book to locate the Safari post and make a rubbing in their guide book using a crayon. Families that visit 15 of the 20 sites can return their guidebook to a library and receive a free Frisbee. By June 2012, 776 individuals had joined the Safari.

The first Safari was organized by FFI staff and AmeriCorps service members. Now, it is organized by the Winneshiek County Conservation Board. The Safari is financially supported by the Winneshiek County Community Foundation and several sponsoring businesses. Registration forms and more information is available at www.driftless-

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



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach



upper explorerland
regional planning commission