

Chickasaw County Profile



W.K. Kellogg Foundation Food & Community Partner

Why Food and Fitness?

St. Joseph Community School offers fruits and vegetables from their school garden on the school lunch main line and salad bar.



School Spotlights

New Hampton Elementary and Middle School have Walking Wednesday each week. All students participate in a 20 minute walk during recess or advisory time.

FFI works in New Hampton, St. Joseph, and Turkey Valley Schools.



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 Chickasaw County in these three areas.



¹ Trogdon, 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.

Chickasaw County Food and Fitness By the Numbers...

62.4% of adults in Chickasaw County are overweight or obese

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

\$11,847 awarded to New Hampton CSD and St. Joseph school for school gardens and wellness programming

712 pounds of vegetables harvested from New Hampton school garden in 2011, with a value of **\$1190**

21 vendors at the New Hampton Farmers Market

651 statewide partners are connected to FFI’s work

\$2.7 million leveraged for FFI-related work in Northeast Iowa

Northeast Iowa Food & Farm Coalition Mini-grants Support Local Food Economy

The Northeast Iowa Food & Farm Coalition Producer Mini-grants awarded \$2,872.25 to support local food businesses and enterprises in Chickasaw County between 2010 and 2012 with a total of \$36,529 leveraged for the local food in Chickasaw County. Items purchased include equipment for a new honey business, a school high tunnel, materials for a farm stand, promotional materials for a farmers market, a tractor and sprayer for an orchard, and a garden tiller and freezer for vegetable production.

Local Food Economy Spotlights

New Hampton High School Builds Two Greenhouses

The New Hampton High School has two new greenhouses thanks to help from Jim Russ, New Hampton FFA advisor and member of the school's Food and Fitness team. His responsibilities are combined in the greenhouse project because it is used both in agricultural education and to promote healthy, local foods in the school and community. First, a high tunnel was completed during the 2010-11 school year. It is used to grow vegetables for use in the school lunch program and family and consumer science classes. A greenhouse was completed in

May, 2012. It is used year-round to grow seedlings for the high tunnel and has several hydroponics stations. FFA members have given tours to many groups including a special tour to State Senator Merlin Bartz.

Peak vegetable production occurs when school is not in session, so FFA students sell vegetables at the New Hampton farmers' market during the summer. When school is in session, the vegetables will be used in school lunch.

In addition, the greenhouse will be used to produce food and plants for the local food pantry. Next winter, vegetables grown using the school's hydroponic system will also be donated.



Total Project cost: \$77,000

Total Funds raised by June, 2012: \$65,000

Donated to food pantry: 50 tomato and 50 pepper plants



Active Living Spotlight



The St. Joseph FFI Youth 4-H Team hosts monthly after-school activities, such as dancing or playing games. Most months 40 to 60 kids participate.

Luther College students created a map of New Hampton to assess sidewalks, signs, crosswalks, and curb cuts to determine safe routes for kids to travel to school. The maps were distributed at the school and City Hall.

Kids Move with Safe Routes to School

Chickasaw County schools are exemplary in their efforts to increase physical activity amongst students.

Two walking school buses have been initiated by the New Hampton Elementary school principal. They meet each morning to walk to school together along with an adult. The buses involve 16 kids. The school also has a policy that teachers are to include Brain Breaks throughout the school days. These one or two minute breaks allow students to move around for physical activity and to refocus their minds. FFI has made several short exercise videos and FFI Activity Cards for use during Brain Break.

Schools also encourage active transport to school by hosting bike rodeos. St. Joseph school kicked off their bike rodeo with a visit from a Decorah couple that shared their experience biking on six continents on a several-year tour. Then students rotated through stations in which they practiced

checking their bikes for safety, tried on bike helmets, learned hand signals, maneuvered bicycles

around cones, and had a race in which the slowest bike without stopping won. The Iowa Bicycle Coalition brought tiny bikes on which kids could practice. The bike rodeo was followed by a lesson on pedestrian safety and a walk to the park.

St. Joseph's FFI Youth 4-H Team leads monthly whole-school wellness activities during the school day. Examples of activities include tug of war, a kickball tournament, a fun run around the play ground, and dancing.



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