



NORTHEAST IOWA FOOD AND FITNESS 2013 NARRATIVE REPORT

Summary

Six rural counties in the northeast corner of Iowa have a six-year history of collaborating to improve the health and well-being of children and their families through the Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness initiative (FFI). The counties include: Allamakee, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek. Currently four institutional core partners provide a base for the work and are building sustainability: Iowa State University Extension & Outreach—Region 4, Luther College Center for Sustainable Communities, Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission, and Northeast Iowa Community College.

Poverty in our communities is not separate and distinct or confined to one community or neighborhood as it might be in some regions. It is pervasive and woven into the fabric of our rural communities. Farm families and farm workers share the burden of living with limited resources. Producers and processors, entrepreneurs and employees, young and old—poverty invisibly affects a majority of people living and working in northeast Iowa. On the other hand, the disparities are less obvious. Generations of rural Iowans have become accustomed to working long hours in difficult circumstances for limited financial gains. Yet our dedication to place, relationships, and rural living keeps us committed to making our schools and communities healthy places to live for ourselves and future generations. FFI is providing the structure and opportunity for people to act upon that commitment in concrete ways that make a difference.

From its inception the Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness initiative has been rooted in the value and the practice of community self-determination. The work began with broad engagement of diverse residents who were committed to creating healthy communities in the region. We invested in developing community members' thinking capacities while they designed a comprehensive systems change initiative to accomplish a future we truly care about creating. Rather than focusing on solving intractable problems, we articulated a shared vision and a practical, comprehensive plan for achieving it. Community self-determination combined with capacity building continues to be a central principle of FFI. We believe that people will support what they help to create.

Four strategies are central to achieving our shared vision:

- *Strategy A: Ensure that school district policies and practices support healthy living of children, families, and community members*

- *Strategy B: Ensure that caregivers (family and others) of children from birth to age five provide health-promoting food and active play*
- *Strategy C: Ensure that local, health-promoting food is available and affordable in all communities, neighborhoods and institutions*
- *Strategy D: Ensure that people use the natural and built environment for physical activity, play, and active transportation*

This year we developed indicators that we use to assess effectiveness of our strategies and tactics and progress toward our shared vision. A summary table is in Appendix A.

Common Vision and Goals

Our shared vision has not changed substantively since we began our work with 55 community members in 2007. The Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative brings people in northeast Iowa together to make our region a place where every day, all people have access to healthy, locally grown foods and abundant opportunities for physical activity in the places where we live, learn, work and play. We see NE Iowa as a unique place where all residents and guests experience celebrate and promote healthy locally grown food and engage in physical activity and play every day.

While our high-level vision has not changed, through continuing conversations we have deepened and added specificity to our picture of what our community will look like when we have achieved the vision. We see a region where schools, young people, and their resident partners on wellness teams lead a rebirth of rural communities that promote healthy living by all people. In our vision schools model healthy living through future-oriented policies and practices focused on eating local, healthy foods and on active living integrated throughout the school day. They buy and serve as many local foods as possible, fueling learners and the local economy. Community members use school buildings and grounds for recreation early in the morning, late in the day, and throughout the year. Young people engage adults and children in establishing the policies and practices that assure a healthy future for everyone. They organize FEEST events, preparing meals from local foods for peers and adults. Institutions and organizations throughout the region are active partners with schools and bring their resources to benefit children and adults.

We see communities where all children get a healthy start from birth and come to school ready to learn. Parents of children from birth to five prepare healthy food, engage with their children in active living, and expect their childcare providers and preschools to do the same. When their children reach school-age parents are ready to join school wellness teams. Parents are a force for health on behalf of all children. Organizations and programs that serve the youngest children collaborate to assure that community culture and structures support health and well-being.

We see a regional food system that is economically vibrant and growing. We imagine a food system where farmers choose to work through the local food hub to assure that together they can meet commercial and institutional needs, while also assuring that every resident has access to affordable, healthy food. Local entrepreneurs are supported in establishing

processing and storage facilities, and other value-added businesses, that make local food available all year round and attractive to buyers. We are nurturing a generation of new farmers. The number of farmers growing local food is expanding to meet growing needs. At the same time, leaders in the local food system have creatively implemented structures that assure community members with limited financial resources can afford to eat what is grown close to home.

We are working to build a region where people of all ages walk, bike, and recreate in an abundant natural environment and in small towns. Adults accompany young people as they walk and bike to school. Whenever possible people use active transportation to get to work. We have safe and adequate connectivity from trails into adjacent communities. Parks and waterways are alive with activity year-round. People are drawn to county and community parks through family active living programs. Young people lead events throughout the region that bring people together for fun runs, community walks, and other activities.

We are committed to a six-county collaborative in which people of every income, age, ethnicity, race, education, and walk of life are invited to provide leadership together for creating a regional culture of health and well-being. In Northeast Iowa we work together because we believe healthier people make stronger families and vibrant communities. We make the healthy choice the easy choice. Together we grow healthy kids.

Our strategies and structure have been designed to support the significant systems changes that are required to achieve our vision. Four years into implementation we are beginning to see significant aspects of our vision become reality. The results we document in this report are indications that systems are moving in the desired direction.

Structure and Governance

When we began our implementation phase, we had deep conversation about whether to create a free-standing 501(c)(3) organization. We weighed the advantages—such as being able to accept contributions directly, not having to work through multiple organizations, and creating a sense of permanence—and the disadvantages, such as having to use resources to build and maintain infrastructure, being perceived as in competition with other nonprofits in our region, and likely duplicating existing efforts. Instead, we chose to develop strong and deep partnerships among people, programs, and organizations that have a common mission.

As we foreshadowed in our proposal a little over a year ago, we transformed our initiative leadership this year. We moved from a complex structure that was appropriate for early phases of the work, to a simpler but more powerful structure appropriate for implementation and recognizing the addition of a fourth core partner.

Previously much of the FFI work was led by a Vision Team including community members and those paid to work for FFI. We created a new structure to clarify roles, diversify leadership, and engage a broader range of community members in decision-making. The

Regional Leadership Council (RLC) meets quarterly. The Operations Team answers to the RLC and is made up of community members who are paid staff and who lead and convene each of the five work groups: school wellness, community food, active living, early childhood and youth. The Ops Team makes day-to-day implementation decisions via bi-weekly meetings.

In another significant accomplishment, this year we formally added Northeast Iowa Community College as a core partner. NICC is a regional leader in preparing early childhood educators. After a year of providing in-kind support for our new early childhood work, NICC was ready to become a core partner and has committed resources to pay a portion of the FFI staff member who is leading that work. Lead staff members from our four core partners meet quarterly with the FFI Project Director. Core partners manage resources for specific aspects of the work, engage FFI with their networks, and contribute intellectual, material, and in-kind resources.

The diagram on the next page illustrates the relationship among core partners, major bodies of work, and our vision.

Core Partners, Community Roots

Over the past six years, six rural counties in Northeast Iowa—Allamakee, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard and Winneshiek—have collaborated to improve the health and well-being of children and their families through FFI.

FFI's institutional "core partners" are organizations with deep roots in the region and a clear commitment to our kids and our communities. They provide a base for FFI's work and are building sustainability. The core partners include:

- **Iowa State University Extension and Outreach – Region 4** coordinates work on food systems and youth development.
- **Luther College** oversees work in schools through its Center for Sustainable Communities.
- **Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission** supports active living by running the rural Safe Routes to School program.
- **Northeast Iowa Community College** facilitates early childhood initiatives through its Child Development Center and Early Childhood Education Department.
- **The Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque** is the fiscal agent for FFI and guides efforts to ensure community investment and long-term sustainability.



Engagement and Leadership

Cross-sector Engagement

From its inception, FFI has been a multi-sector initiative. Leadership and work groups include community members from education, agriculture, health care, transportation, planning, natural resources, and other sectors who come together to lead and implement strategies.

Lessons learned. As the work expands, deepens, and evolves one of our community members describes it as “bifurcating”, dividing for “form to follow function”. By necessity work groups must oversee the day-to-day activities and to assure that those activities align with strategies and goals. We have found that it then becomes increasingly important to intentionally focus on mutually reinforcing activities and to constantly communicate with one another. This new level of work requires ongoing reflection and trusting relationships in schools, communities, and among core partners. To do deeper complex work, leadership must be both dispersed and connected.

Diversity of the Collaborative

We have worked strategically and steadily to increase the diversity of our Regional Leadership Council. When we transformed our initiative structure (see the preceding section), we engaged the former regional leadership group in explicit conversations about the need to have the group reflect the diversity in our region. As a result, a number of long-time regional leaders volunteered to give up their place on the council in order to create space for others. We consider this collaborative decision one strong indicator of how committed people are to working toward equity and shared leadership. As a result, our Regional Leadership Council now includes 23 community members; 3 (13%) are youth under the age of 20, 2 (9%) are over the age of 65 and 3 (13%) are racial minorities.

Lessons learned. We learned that the idea of “leadership” is not always where parents of diverse backgrounds see themselves. We planned for a parent leadership workshop in June 2013 and actively recruited participants. We were disappointed in the limited response. On the other hand, the Early Childhood learning community connected with parent nights in Head Start Centers, where we are finding a significant opportunity to engage parents and learn about engagement of diverse community members. Perhaps our best tactic is to engage diverse parents where they already have a connection, rather than initiating a new structure.

Youth Engagement

Youth participate actively through youth leadership teams in schools, on our regional youth leadership team, and by serving on school wellness teams. Examples of youth leadership activities this year include:

- Youth have implemented and expanded FEEST. The FEEST training with a focus on advocacy is deepening our commitment and helping us chart a direction with this model.

- Youth and adults working together created three FEEST youth internships for the school year.
- The creation of FEEST venue partnerships is creating awareness of the program and youth work in communities.
- Being more intentional with using the experiential learning model is building our capacity and commitment to the approach.
- West Central Maynard's two Regional Youth Leadership Team members were motivated through a FFI 4-H RYLT meeting to revitalize work at their school with their school wellness committee. Working with adults, creating funding partners through grants and presenting information to their school board, all showcase their development in making decisions and involving others in the process.

Lessons Learned. A few of our most important lessons include:

- Critically important to successful youth engagement is ensuring a safe and inclusive environment for youth to share their voices and have those voices heard. Youth continually work to deepen the FEEST experience and the link to a youth position is creating more ownership of program planning by them directly, while being supported by FEEST Coordinator.
- Because youth leaders continue to progress through school, the only way to maintain a strong youth presence is to continually engage new members.

Community Partners

As we described in the summary, our work is rooted in community self-determination. Every leader and staff member is a grassroots community member. Leaders have emerged from groups and organizations as diverse as farmers, school champions, DNR staff, public health, Head Start, the local food co-op, parents of young children, and grandparents.

Lessons learned. We have found three key factors in addressing power dynamics: relationships, communication, and structures that support effective participation. Relationship building is ongoing. As new leaders emerge and new partners enter the work, relationships change. Building and maintaining relationships is essential. Communication must be constant and in multiple forms. Just when you think you are over-communicating, you find indicators that there is no such thing as too much communication. The challenge becomes how to communicate effectively without overwhelming everyone with information and with demands for information. We have found that we must provide structures that include ongoing opportunities for reflection and design, convene, and facilitate meetings to get the questions and issues “on the table” for discussion.

Leadership

Leadership for FFI will always evolve because of our strong principle of community self-determination. As we described in our structure, new leadership was intentionally sought for the Regional Leadership Council. We have added both racial and age diversity. Our entire initiative is based on shared leadership in every part of our structure. We see our Project Director as the coordinator that assures glue holds everything together, not as “the leader” of FFI. The operations team recommends an annual budget, but it is the RLC that

reviews and approves the budget based on strategic priorities for the year. Therefore, in a very real way it is the grassroots community leaders who distribute funds. From the beginning of FFI we have been known for complete budget transparency and high impact community engagement and leadership.

Our FoodCorps and AmeriCorps service members are youth themselves. The service year is tremendous for giving them skills and habits of mind for community organizing, while at the same time increasing their overall skills in communication, planning, organizing, documenting, writing and listening. They are wonderful role models to younger youth in the region.

We have been surprised by the contribution that serving with FFI has had on creating the next generation of leaders. Interviews by our evaluators with 10 former FoodCorps and AmeriCorps service members who served with the FFI described how their experiences influenced their decision to continue working in areas related to food, health, or education and taught them valuable professional skills.

- All ten former service members entered professions or graduate programs related to health, nutrition, active living, and/or education.
- Three former service members entered training or internships to become farmers after completing service.
- Seven former RCs said FFI influenced their career choice or educational path. Four said their service with FFI helped them discover their strengths and weaknesses and gain confidence.
- Five indicated they grew in their ability to work with other people, citing competencies in teamwork, committee work, collaboration, and organizing through their service with FFI.
- Two entered an education graduate program after discovering their love of teaching during their FFI work in schools.

Capacity Building

Collective Impact for Sustainability

We have found the Collective Impact framework to be a powerful approach to building sustainability. Within that framework we have used our Community Action Plan, our work on indicators, and our meeting structure to advance a common agenda, assure we have shared measures, identify mutually reinforcing activities, strive for constant communication, and define needed backbone organizational support. Specifically, we are striving to integrate evaluation into our communication with all stakeholders.

The area of greatest growth for FFI in the past year has been our effectiveness in using our work on indicators to connect goals, measures, and planned tactics within strategies for the coming year. The operations team, work groups, and the regional leadership council have all worked with our evaluators to develop a robust set of indicators that will provide essential feedback loops to continuously improve our work. We have taken our systems thinking to a new level of sophistication.

Evaluation capacity

Some ways we strengthened our evaluation capacity and feedback mechanisms this year include:

- The Leopold Center used non-FFI funding (including Center funds and funds from other projects) to support a full-time evaluation assistant whose work has been critical to the evaluation.
- Our evaluators conducted 30 interviews with FFI leaders and partners to capture details of stories related to the FFI to fill in gaps on what we know about outcomes and processes related to the Initiative.
- We used data from the 30 interviews to track and document specific stories that have been or will be used in the Initiative's communications materials as well as information packets for grant writers to use in applying for funding,
- We narrowed the evaluation process to focus on a handful of indicators for each strategy area to reduce the reporting burden, although the cross-site forms still require additional and extensive documentation and justification on how we know what we know in terms of outcomes and impacts.
- Evaluators engaged in monthly conference calls with Operations team leaders to communicate details related to the evaluation as well as to inform our evaluation work (for example, we used the tacit decision making process that the school work team leader was using to decide how to allocate the time of each Resource Contact to each school and to formalize the evaluation process of scoring the engagement of various partners in the schools).

In the next year we intend to invest additional resources in building our capacities in Collective Impact. Sustainability is high on our agenda, and the Collective Impact approach offers us the most concrete evidence of what will sustain social change of the scale we seek.

Progress on Implementing the Community Action Plan

Improving School Food

We are working to improve school food through at least four avenues. First, the School Resource Contacts (FoodCorps and AmeriCorps service members) are assigned to schools and working on improving school food. In 2013 they spent 509 hours focused on local food and nutrition. Second, School Wellness Teams have improving school food as one of their goals. With this approach we support advocates for change from within the school system, including through parents and young people. Third, youth are leading the call for change through their Food and Fitness school teams. Fourth, we are supporting the Food Service Learning Community, where food service workers from across the region come together to learn from one another about how to provide healthier food for children.

A few key priority actions in year 4 of implementation included:

- We shifted our focus to deepen and address comprehensive school wellness.

- We worked with our evaluators to describe and measure the level and depth of student and youth engagement in school wellness.
- We worked with school Resource Contacts to focus their work on priorities to leverage where we see readiness for deeper change.

The challenge for us in answering “yes” or “no” to school food questions in this report is that unlike most other Food and Fitness sites, we do not have just one or two school districts as the focus of our work. We have 18 highly autonomous school districts. Literally for every question we could answer “yes” and “no”—depending on which district. Instead, we will provide some results as documented in our evaluation report:

- In 2013, 15 of 18 districts report that they are buying local food.
- Spending on local food increased 41% over 2012. This does not include the value of food from school gardens that was served in cafeterias. While this is a substantial increase, and the trend over the past five years is definitely in the right direction, the amount of spending on local food is still too low. We are unable to give a percentage of total school food spending that is local food. Because of Iowa’s strongly decentralized approach to public education, no two districts have the same budget structure and most have so many sources of funding for school food that they do not have a single total food budget figure.
- The Central School District in Elkader achieved Bronze status in the HealthierUS School Challenge and the Howard-Winneshiek district received Gold status.
- This year 13 districts implemented 30 new policies and practices to support serving healthy food, bringing the total over the life of the project to 62 new policies and practices in 18 districts.
- Farm to School is implemented in 14 of 18 districts. Seventeen of 18 school districts have school gardens. Of the 14 districts, three have free and reduced lunch rates above 50%: Postville (74.5%), Oelwein (54.2%), and Allamakee (50.7%). As mentioned in earlier grant reports, teachers and administrators believe student participation in these programs regionally is a much lower percentage than the percentage of students enrolled. Rural Iowans are staunchly self-reliant people. They accept assistance only as a last resort, and to ask for it is quite difficult. We suspect that in at least five more schools the actual rate of poverty qualifies more than 50% of students for free or reduced lunch.
- Several schools and early childhood care providers rewrote or expanded their wellness policies in Year 4. Highlights from new written policies include:
 - Clayton Ridge Community School District (CSD) passed a comprehensive addendum to their wellness policy, which includes nutrition education incorporated into the core curriculum, a definition of local food (sourced within 150 miles) and a percentage allocated to local farmers for geographic preferencing (10%), activity breaks, discouraging use of physical activity or food as punishment or rewards, and more.
 - Decorah CSD also passed a comprehensive school wellness policy. It includes a definition of “local” for geographic preferencing, a garden policy, allowing the school cafeteria to buy produce from the school garden at half the market value, nutrition education, and healthy snacks in the classroom.

- Allamakee CSD modified its school wellness policy by adding that no restaurant labeled foods or carbonated beverages are allowed during meal times.
- Central CSD added provisions to their wellness policy for nutrition education and local food procurement.
- Northeast Iowa Head Start wrote its first wellness policy. It exceeds federal mandates by including specific policies on nutrition, physical activity, and parental engagement. Head Start is fulfilling the federal requirement to include nutrition education through its new Farm to Preschool program.
- Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) Child Development Center implemented two new policies; it provided the food service director with a purchasing card allowing for local food purchases and pays for staff meals so staff can eat meals with children, thereby serving as role models eating new, healthy foods.

Lessons learned. Our lessons this year include:

- Resource Contact (RC) capacity is greatly determined by on-site support at schools. In addition, having an RC located within the community (as one RC was) can provide a more meaningful service term in some ways, but it can be isolating to not work as closely with other members.
- RCs quickly become involved in nutrition education, but struggle more with the systems change aspect of the work. In part this may be explained by influencing policy and practice change requiring more established long-term relationships.
- A diverse and effective school wellness team is an essential strategy that any school should implement in service of reducing childhood obesity. We have created a School Wellness Action Plan template schools can use to develop their purpose, vision, goals and work plan. We see a strong need for volunteer service within schools to help implement wellness programs.
- Establishing relationships with school food service personnel should be a key strategy for Farm to School. FFI has invested in educational opportunities for food service employees. Across the country school food service employees receive meager reimbursements to use for preparing school lunch and have felt effects of budget cuts. This has meant fewer professional development opportunities for food service employees. Area food service employees have appreciated the opportunity to network and learn new culinary and food safety skills.
- In order for schools to increase their use of local foods, we have provided assistance to food service directors as they develop menus, specs and secure bids from farmers. Sometimes a small investment in technical assistance produces significant improvements in school food.
- With the aim of increasing local food procurement throughout our region, we see opportunities in two key areas: (1) providing technical assistance to a farmer-advised local food hub as they develop products and delivery routes to schools, and (2) working more in-depth with individual districts on their local food procurement goals.

- We believe that Iowa farmers can meet the demands of area schools. Producers have been able to extend their growing season with high tunnels and greenhouses. Farmers are interested in selling food to local schools and educating students about their food.
- We are well-known for our local food system work. However, we are at a tipping point. We will either make significant progress through a food hub and expanded production, or our local farm to school work will stall at current levels. We will either expand food processing and storage, or we will not increase local food served in schools and other institutions. We must have a more sophisticated, highly developed food system in order to both meet that demand and to assure that local foods are available at a fair and affordable price for schools.
- We have reached the point where additional assistance is also needed by schools to procure local products, develop relationships with farms, prepare and cook fresh food, market the food in the cafeteria, conduct taste-tests with students and to assist with student trips to farms. Each school will need a customized approach and individual assistance.

Transforming Community Food Environments

We have resisted the “build it and they will come” trend for aggregation and distribution of local food. We are aware of examples in the Midwest where efforts failed because the food hub structure was present before demand could support the quantity of local food being aggregated in a food hub, or where the hub created demand that producers could not meet. At the beginning of this grant year we determined that demand was sufficient to establish a local food hub and the supply had been increased enough to meet demand most of the time.

We are in the early stages of establishing that food hub. We are accelerating the process by working as a program under the auspices of a nonprofit organization, Allamakee New Beginnings, that was already established in one of our counties and has a mission aligned with our work, “to reduce the effects of poverty in northeast Iowa.” We have created a board for the Iowa Food Hub. Members are representatives from the two newer local dairies, a young vegetable and fruit producer, an entrepreneur marketer, our regional food system value chain coordinator, and our FFI core partner for ISUEO. All of the producers are low-income, with their average annual income being at about 200% of the federally defined poverty level. This year we began a small pilot of aggregating produce and distributing it through nine local employment sites. As of September 2013, 200 families are participating in the hub’s Food Box program through their workplaces.

Other significant work this year includes:

- Creation & Implementation of a seasonal cycle menu in schools, which increased local food procurement and aids local producers in planning production
- For October Farm to School month, we brought weekly deliveries to six schools. Over 6000 pounds of food were delivered through the hub in that month alone. This does not include additional purchases of food directly from the farmer.
- Obtaining the Convergence grant enabled us to direct funds where needed to advance the access to local food for our most vulnerable community members

- Working with the Wallace Center helped with our application to USDA RBEG for our food truck and Food Box pilots.
- When developing the Iowa Food Hub we used a pilot/research approach, which helped us this year and we moved the next step in development.

Significant outcomes for our community food work include:

- Tracked food sales by farmers more than doubled during the 2013 grant year. Sales were \$7.3 million, up from \$3.6 million in the previous year.
- In the 2013 grant year, fourteen new food producers/food enterprises were started, and six positions were expanded.
- Besides the new food enterprises, local food accounted for 8.5 new jobs this year (a total of 31.5 over the past four years).
- When combined with FFI positions, across the four years of the initiative the local food economy has created approximately 37 new jobs and 57 new or expanded jobs attributable to food producers/food enterprises.
- Approximately 50 farmers are selling through the food hub, many of which are marginalized farmers. An October survey of NIFF farmers indicated that 93% are marginalized in one or more of three ways: beginning farmers, female farmers, or operating limited-resource farms as defined by the USDA.

Lessons learned. We have myriad lessons that we have learned from our work to transform community food environments. A few of the most significant include:

- Our work would not be as far as it is without relationships, encouragement, and partnership that says, “Come with us. Let’s do this together.” Not only have we facilitated and educated school food service about local food procurement, food safety and menu planning, but we have applied a consistent pressure to nudge them forward. These changes would not have been made on their own by just giving them the tools.
- Schools are slow to pay their accounts. Because we have to wait 30 days or longer for payment, the hub will need to have a larger cash reserve on hand to be able to pay its farmers in a timely fashion. Being able to manage cash flow will be key to the food hub’s success.
- Food hub development has been focused on the business planning and market development versus infrastructure construction and capital investment. We have borrowed and rented cold storage and trucking. We have contracted out with delivery drivers from other farms. By building the business slowly, we have still been able to quickly reach traditional milestones, like hiring a truck driver and bookkeeper.
- Initial public investment into a position to develop markets and farmer relationships can quickly lead to the creation of a viable business model. Our Food Value Chain Coordinator is jointly funded through ISU Extension and a USDA RBEG grant to provide business technical assistance.
- A position funded through Extension has allowed for pilot projects to be conducted as research. The projects are innovative and are often carry more risk than a producer might be willing to bear. By challenging some of the assumptions of

traditional distribution, we are learning about feasible and profitable practices. We have been willing to accept more risk and that has led to greater learning.

Creating Safe Environments for Physical Activity

The FFI work in creating safe environments is building rapidly. More schools, families, and communities are becoming involved with SRTS than ever before. Additionally, more infrastructure projects are taking into account pedestrian and bicycle safety measures.

Several activities this year are examples:

- FFI was asked to provide a letter of support to ensure that a new bike path being built with private funds would include not just the middle-class neighborhoods in the original plan, but would also connect to a neighborhood of low-income manufactured homes that are primarily residences for Latino families. Decision-makers and others are attributing the revised plan to the influence of the letter submitted by the FFI Project Director and FFI's standing in the community.
- More community school districts participated in the SRTS Travel Tally than ever before (17 out of 18).
Walking School Bus routes more than doubled from the 2011-2012 school year (from 7 to 17). Our work helps to locate safe routes and provide safety, which leads to parents feeling more comfortable with allowing children to walk.
- While only making up 5% of school buildings in Iowa, Northeast Iowa schools represented 40% of the schools in Iowa that participated in the 2012 International Walk to School Day event.
- Bike Rodeos provided opportunities to teaching bicycle safety skills. We work to prevent dangerous habits. The rodeo helps learning stick with child longer and will be more likely to keep biking in their lives.

Several major projects culminated in significant outcomes:

- SRTS community coalitions are the backbone of planning, organizing and implementing programs.
- Postville and Oelwein chosen as I- WALK communities (I-WALK is a project led and funded by the Iowa Department of Transportation in partnership with Iowa Department of Public Health)
- A Walking School Bus project in West Union funded by the Iowa Department of Public Health
- Walkability assessment grants to survey walking paths in Elkader, Fayette, Hawkeye, New Hampton and Waukon
- Discussion of SRTS projects for inclusion in comprehensive planning efforts for Guttenberg

Lessons learned. In our active living work we see several lessons:

- We need to continue to get our message out to the public in any way we can. Residents of Northeast Iowa are beginning to recognize the terms “Food and Fitness”, “Safe Routes to School” and “Walking School Buses”. Because of our persistence, word is beginning to spread and stick.
- Focusing on what can be done with what we currently have helps us find success in the short-run and build support and show need for those larger projects which will leave lasting impact (e.g., building a sidewalk or bike path).
- Assistance and support from the school and community are vital for efforts to be sustainable. The school and community offer specific advice, ask important questions, act as volunteers and determine whether a project was successful and should continue.
- Meet a community at its readiness level. Some may be ready to jump into a daily Walking School Bus route. Others may need to slowly introduce the idea with a monthly or weekly route at first. Make suggestions, but don’t push a community too hard. The community must own the decision and implementation if it is to be sustained.
- Take time to build relationships with school staff and community members. When people know you, people trust you and what you can bring to the table.

Extending the Work to Early Childhood

When we submitted our Community Action Plan in 2012, we had barely begun our work to extend FFI work into early childcare settings. The combination of hiring a well-known long-time trusted community member part-time to coordinate this work, and having NICC as a core partner in the work has propelled the efforts and results faster than we could have imagined. NICC brings its extensive network of relationships with childcare providers and educators throughout the region. Being able to build on NICC’s strong base has helped us make deep and extensive progress in moving FFI work into early care settings. A few examples of year 4 work include:

- Reaching Head Start where we have the most vulnerable children and families in the region. People believe that if it works in Head Start programs, it is more easily adopted and replicated in other early care environments
- Head Start Centers have adopted model wellness policies. Health Start’s action has been a catalyst with staff and other early childhood networks
- Engaging NICC as a new core partner with the commitment to the Early Childhood Education Program integration of FFI

Lessons learned. We have lessons from the Early Childhood work, but we also built on lessons from prior FFI work.

- In Early Childhood (EC) cultivating and nurturing quality relationships has been paramount to moving the work forward.
- Seeking those who share a common value to improve children's health and well-being expedites and aligns the work.
- Organizations will find the needed resources if they see the importance of healthy food and active living and these priorities serve their purposes. Early in FFI history,

we paid to bring people to the table (e.g., Community Health, Public Health, teachers, youth).

- Providing that pay hasn't always been beneficial to the work. In some cases, when we ended payment, people ended their participation. Learning from that experience, we began EC with saying no to compensation, knowing full well that there is no money in EC organizations. Salaries are low and standards are high due to state and federal requirements. Our belief is that in order to truly embed this work EC care providers have to find a way internally to incorporate healthy living principles in their current work. For example, Head Start had no extra funds when we approached them to implement a wellness policy and Farm to Preschool. In fact, their funds had been cut. We suggested using their snack money to purchase the Farm to Preschool taste testing food. We worked with CACFP staff to make sure the taste tests still met nutritional requirements. We had the same experience with introducing curriculum. We demonstrated that it met the new Iowa Infant/Toddler and Early Childhood Learning Standards.
- Sometimes non-monetary resources (curriculum, materials) are enough to entice organizations to implement change.

Opportunities/Circumstances in the Wider Environment

While we have made much progress in the past year, one challenge remains. In a geographic area the size of Connecticut, collaborative work continues to be a challenge. The amount of in-person time among FFI leadership and staff is limited. We are finding it imperative to focus on continual relationship building, effective communication, reflection and trust building. We cannot take our eyes off this ball! We have pockets of deeper engagement across significant distances that we constantly work to connect and leverage learning and results (in schools, communities, etc.) with others. This feeds into the community-driven approach that we believe is essential for sustainability. But we invest significant time and attention to maintain this level of deep engagement.

Everywhere there is constant growing emphasis on health (e.g., Affordable Care Act, public health, education), which has created “urgency” but is also quite distracting for schools, early childhood providers and agencies, and community members. Programs, expectations, and materials are coming from every direction. For FFI, then, the challenge is to continue to work with School Wellness Teams to support them in taking a more integrated, systems approach to creating school that supports health of children, rather than implementing myriad disconnected activities.

Public school districts in Iowa are highly autonomous and answer primarily to local school boards. We have worked within this reality from the moment that we identified schools as being critical to our work. While work in the schools has been successful, the autonomy extends to bookkeeping, budgeting, and record keeping. Therefore, our ability to evaluate some aspects of our work has been quite limited, for example, purchases of local food as a percentage of total food budget.

In contrast to public schools, Iowa early childhood agencies and programs are closely linked in networks: WIC, Head Start, Early Childhood Stakeholder Group (agencies and advocates for early childhood), and Area Education Agency preschools. By tapping into those networks we have been able to accelerate adoption of policies and practices and engagement of parents.

Critical Incidents

Several incidents have been critical to our progress this year:

- Our investment in time to develop indicators: refining indicators, defining measures and processes to collect data, and using them in collaborative planning by all work groups
- RLC commitment to long-term fiscal sustainability: FFI is moving into a new phase of our work. We are looking for community support for community work. This is the only sustainable source of funding.
- We are focused on capacity building for the Operations Team to secure additional funding. We created a small focused fundraising campaign with established processes for the community to contribute (Direct Support Fund and Endowment Fund).

Communication

While our structure is designed to keep collaborative members informed about the work, we recognized that as the growth and complexity of the work increased, the structure (work groups and leadership teams) alone was not going to meet our needs. Keeping the community informed was even more challenging. Following extensive work with Katie Eukel, we took the following actions:

- Reviewed all materials (including website) to include up-to-date information and meaningful outcomes. We updated our website design and organization.
- Participated in a workshop with Katie Eukel and Corry Bregendahl to build our capacity to more effectively communicate evaluation results.
- Utilized feedback from internal and external stakeholders to update communication tools and processes
 - Instituted weekly electronic distribution of “Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Bits”, which highlights results, activities, and programs.
 - Created the Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Newsletter, which is distributed quarterly. The newsletter offers longer articles and materials that others can print and share.

In addition, we wove together evaluation and communication in order to strengthen both.

- We shared the stories we developed with FFI leaders for use in communications materials and for use by team members working on leveraging funding.

- The evaluation team developed a short list of outcomes based on the indicators that were selected for use in meetings with state legislators, core partners, and local funders.
- During the monthly conference calls with evaluators and operations team leaders we shared information pertinent to evaluation and the work of the teams.
- Evaluators communicated via phone and email with the work team leaders to refine and polish the data we collected for our short list of indicators.
- We wrote a two-page brief report summarizing regional food system development outcomes that was shared with the NIFF Coalition leader and core partner who shared it with state legislators at a meeting and with the media.

Success

In reviewing year 4 of implementation, we considered the question, “What have been our greatest achievements this year?” We identified seven:

- Early Childhood work, including engaging networks and parents of the region’s most vulnerable children
- NICC as new core partner
- Instituting a Regional Seasonal Cycle Menu in the schools. This will allow producers to see a market for local food in schools.
- Food hub advancement
- Strengthened and increased community engagement as evidenced by:
 - In Active Living, the proliferation of walking school buses in the region
 - An investment in FFI from county supervisors from their budgets
- The Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque providing technical assistance for fiscal sustainability. We set up the endowment fund and a direct support fund at CFGD.
- Building FEEST to the point where we are investing in a coordinator and youth internships for year 5

Additional Lessons Learned

- Activity isn’t systems change. While we’ve known this fact, we continuously have to remind ourselves to consider whether a particular action or opportunity will move us toward our vision by implementing our strategies. Helping new FFI leaders understand the difference will be an ongoing responsibility.
- Working on this annual report provides us with the opportunity to reflect on a complex body of work, notice patterns, gather learning to inform the next year, and recognize progress.
- Continuity and long term involvement of FFI Work Group leaders has helped us deepen our collective capacity for systems change work.

Appendix A

FBI Community Action Plan Worksheet for Year 5

FFI Community Action Plan Worksheet for Yr. 5 Nov. 1, 2013 – Oct. 31, 2014

FFI Indicators by Strategy	Measures	Current Status	Goal	Tactics	Activities
	Percent of schools categorized at an <i>intermediate</i> level.	2012-13: 44% (8) 2011-12: 22% (4)		As above	
	Percent of schools categorized at a low level.	2012-13: 39% (7) 2011-12: 56% (10)		As above	
Sustained presence of a youth FFI 4-H team and youth coach in schools in NE Iowa	Number of schools with an FFI Youth 4-H team.	2012-13: 17 teams (217 youth) 2011-12: 16 teams (240 youth)	15 teams; Increase # of youth/team	<p>Deepen youth team connections to County 4-H Program through CYC support and link educational opportunities to leadership/communication/citizenship programs, recognition and outcomes.</p> <p>Provide deeper support to school-based FFI 4-H adult coaches through CYC, RC and community partners.</p>	<p>Communication Days Wellness Fairs Cook-This Event County Fairs</p> <p>Consistent Youth Team planning and programs within school/community.</p>
<p>Increase in youth leadership</p> <p><i>Schools categorized at level of youth engagement on the youth engagement scorecard.</i></p>	Percent of schools categorized at a <i>high</i> level.	2012-13: 33% (6 schools) 2011-12: 11% (2)	8	<p>Reorganize adult leadership at Oelwein through FFA Chapter & community with administrative support. Outreach to middle school youth teams with leadership focus and education and/or Cafeteria Coaching.</p> <p>Continue Youth Internship</p>	<p>Farm to School Cross-Age Teaching Oelwein Youth Planning</p> <p>Leadership & Cafeteria Coaching Training for North Winn, MFL and St. Joseph.</p> <p>FEEST</p>

				Positions for youth-adult partner programs.	
	Percent of schools categorized at an <i>intermediate</i> level.	2012-13: 39% (7) 2011-12: 39% (7)	5	Offer training opportunities to build leadership around nutrition education through Cafeteria Coaching to 2 Youth Teams.	Regional Youth Leadership Team School-based trainings or dual trainings. Youth Team Focus
	Percent of schools categorized at a <i>low</i> level.	2012-13: 28% (5) 2011-12: 50% (9)	2	Increase opportunities and support to encourage deepened engagement.	Youth Team Focus Regional Youth Leadership Team
Decrease or lack of increase in BMI, where available*	BMI of K-6 students at Central Community School District.	Central CSD K-6 Overweight or Obese rates: 2012-13: 34%; 2011-12: 33%; 2010-11: 38%; 2009-10: 36%	No increase		
Increase in the number of opportunities to access healthy local food in the schools.	Total policies and practices implemented at schools to increase access to healthy food.	62 policies and practices implemented at 18 schools		Build wide spread community engagement through influence of wellness team, continue to look for school/community champions, promote wellness team and activities in press-releases etc. Look for local support for RC.	Build wide spread community engagement through influence of wellness team, continue to look for school/community champions, promote wellness team and activities in press-releases etc. Look for local support for RC. Support RC school based activities and increasing relevance of gardens into school curriculum Include more policy discussions at Wellness team meetings, host additional teacher education workshops
	Total <i>new</i> policies and practices implemented in previous school year to increase access to healthy food.	30 new in 2012-13, implemented among 13 schools.	+ 2-4		

	Number of new, written policies implemented by schools in last school year.	7 written policies implemented at five schools in 2012-13.			
	Hours spent by FFI Resource Contacts and work group leaders on nutrition and local food programming in schools and the community by school year.	599 hours in 2012-13.	650	Continue with promotion at staff meetings and events, provide quality programming that other teachers want to invest in.	
Local/Regional Food System					
Indicator	Measure	Current Status	Goal	Tactics	Activities
Increased economic opportunity related to local foods commerce	Total value of local foods sold by farmers (include number of farmers reporting)	\$7,316,563 in 2012 (n=24) \$3,583,000 in 2011 (n=25)	+ \$500,000	Establish a regional food hub to aggregate orders and food. Support regional food system learning communities and networks. Provide consultation and education	Food Hub/School delivery project NIFF Coalition Lunch and Learns NIFF Workshops
	Total value of local food purchased by institutions (include number of institutions reporting)	\$1,181,198.88 (n=32; includes 15 schools)	\$1.3 million	Create opportunities for value chain partners to engage in food system planning. Support and facilitate local food value chain development. Provide consultation and education	Business technical assistance Luther College food system educator BFBL Food Directory
	Number of new local food producers (including youth or youth organizations) selling food to local markets**	14 (2012 data; 7 of these were reported to U of MI in CAP year 3.)	+ 10	Promote opportunities for existing and new producers to engage in the local food system. Provide consultation and education.	Convene workshops and networking events (NIFF Expo, Farm Crawl)
	Number of net job gains by farm businesses or institutions as a result of producing, processing, or utilizing local foods in last calendar year.	Net gain of 10 jobs in 2012 (13 created, 3 lost)	+ 8	Provide consultation and education	Business TA

Early Childhood

Increased opportunities for citizens in the region to affordably access local food	Number of venues implementing programs or infrastructure to increase affordability and accessibility of local food	7 (partial 2013 data)	+ 10	Provide consultation and education	FM Coupon program EBT access FM TA
Increased capacity of the region to scale up local foods production and commerce	Number of businesses or organizations that increase aggregation, storage, and processing capacity for local foods in the region in last calendar year	5 (2012 data)	9	Establish a regional food hub to aggregate orders and food. Work with local entrepreneurs to develop and maintain storage and processing capabilities for local food	

Indicator	Measure	Current Status	Goal	Tactics	Activities
Increase in the number of early childhood care providers committed to building capacity to make environmental, policy, and curriculum changes to promote wellness and engage parents.	Number of early childhood care providers receiving training to build capacity to make environmental, policy, and curriculum changes to promote wellness and engage parents. <i>Early childcare includes Head Start teachers and staff, NICC early childhood education students, etc.</i>	80 in 2012-13	+ 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepen Head Start and NICC ECE work and expand F2PS in other areas • FFI EC will partner with ISUEO and CR&R • Introduce F2PS to Voluntary Preschools in Public Schools through AEA • Head Start – Revisit/Review • NICC Early Childhood Classroom Students 	Increase reach with workshops/trainings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create training for daycare provider audience around Together We Grow Healthy Kids/5-2-1-0 in 2014 • Train Preschool Teachers and Para-professional on F2PS November 2013 • Head Start Staff In-service update August 2014 • Present in NICC ECE classroom with Messaging and FFI and F2PS Curriculum 2013-14 school year
Increase in the percent of Head Start centers in the region increasing opportunities for pre-K children to access healthy local food and physical activity	Number of Head Start centers in the region who participate in Farm to Preschool programming (building on the FFI Farm to School model)	10 sites with 15 classrooms (one classroom at one site is outside FFI's region, but also participating); 100% of sites	Maintain	Follow up with Site Managers, Nurse Consultant and Teachers to maintain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program will be evaluated through questions directed at the Farm to Head Start program on the annual NEICAC Program surveys for parent input • Farm to Preschool will address foods Review Snacks with Head Start Staff
	Percent of Head Start centers in the region that incorporate 60 minutes of physical activity daily during quarterly checks	100% (n=15); Fall, 2013	Maintain	Track policy compliance to adhere to Head Start Wellness Policy established and implemented in the summer of 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Wellness Policy annually to assure it maintains needs (Summer 2014) • Center Managers will do qt. checks for activity minutes.
Increase in the no. of early childhood parents committed to wellness in the Pre-K care environment	Number of parents attending NICC parental meetings from September 1 to August 31 of most recent measurement period. (Include number of total parent meetings held.)	19 parents from Sept 1, 2012-august 31, 2013. (2 meetings held)	Maintain	Track Parent Meetings at NICC Dev. Center Track Head Start Parent Meetings Review Head Start F2PS Increase parent engagement with 'celebrations'	FFI present at meetings Follow up with Rhonda Seibert /NICC Follow up with Head Start Site Managers
	Average number contacts	An average of 1400	Maintain		

	through messaging or programming with parents participating in WIC in the Northeast Iowa region.	parents of young children in WIC reached with the 5-2-1-0 message in 2012.	# of parents, double contacts to each = 2800	WIC Clinic Participation - 1,400 Double times of contact with message	5-2-1-0 message contact Breast Feeding contact during August/National Breastfeeding Month (First Foods/Early Foods)
	Number of parents or adults participating in Farm to Preschool Celebrations at Head Start by school year. (Some children may invite an adult guest that is not their parent.)	Approximately 72 adults in May, 2013 pilot (for 74 students). 122 adults in September, 2013 (for 247 students).	100	Increase Parent/Adult participation Personal invite for parents to Farm to Preschool Celebrations	Head Start Teachers will track attendance and report numbers monthly
Increase in the number of families with young children supporting access to physical activity outside the school environment	Number of young children (under the age of 5) participating in the Safari program.	190 (13%) out of 911 participants in the Driftless Safari were children under age 5, as of September 5, 2013. (Turkey River Recreation Corridor and Allamakee Safari numbers are not yet available.)	Increase by 1%	Track with County Programs TRRC, County Conservation and Economic Development Engage counties without current Safari programs. Reach more of the population with the Safari program.	Promote and increase awareness through advertising Assist Safari programs with promotion, advertising, etc. Work with AL WG
Increase in the number of early childhood care institutions in the region institutionalizing access to healthy local food and physical activity.	Number of early childhood care provider practices and policies that change from September 1-August 31.	4 (Head Start policy, F2P replaced Head Start nutrition curriculum, NICC Child Development Center received a purchasing card for local food purchases, and NICC paying for Child Development Center staff meals so they can eat with the children).	+ 2	Review and increase Head Start Policies Review and track NICC Child Development Center goals and policies Encourage new policies within NICC Early Childhood Education Department	Track and record new policies

	Total number of early childhood care centers that changed/improved provider practices and policies from September 1-August 31.	2 (Head Start, NICC)	+ 18 (AEA Voluntary Preschool classrooms)	Introduce F2PS to Voluntary Preschools in Public Schools	Train Preschool Teachers and Paraprofessional on F2PS. Encourage engagement and track progress and number of classrooms
Improved health outcomes for vulnerable children	BMI change in Head Start children	In 2012-13, 38.87% of NE Iowa Head Start students were overweight or obese at the beginning of the school year, up from 34.71% in 2011-12.	No increase	Continue to follow and track	Work with WIC, Head Start and Central Community School
Active Living - SRTS					
Indicator	Measure	Current Status	Goal	Tactics	Activities
Increase in active transportation opportunities to and from school.	Percent of children that walk, bike, skate, or scoot to school in communities/districts where it is practical	Spring, 2013: 16% (n=4930) (note: poor weather during week of tally, new WSBs has not yet walked) 2012: 22% (n=4107)	Increase 1-2%	Target schools with more potential. Engage private schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of times data is collected throughout the year; have FFI assist schools with collection. • Increase participation in Walking School Buses. • Relay benefits of walking/biking to school to schools/parents/communities. • Host events to promote walking/biking to school. • Share information at school/community events.
	Total number of walking school buses in last school year.	2012-13: 17 2011-12: 7	Maintain; increase days of operation	Support current WSBs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversations with schools/parents/communities. • Share information at school/community events. • Maintain communication with Walking School Bus/Safe Routes to School Coalitions. • Recruit and educate more Walking School Bus volunteers.

	Total number of <i>new</i> walking school buses in last school year.	2012-13: 10 (however, 2 new buses never ran due to weather)	+ 1-2	Target schools with more potential. Engage private schools. Highlight Remote Drop-off Locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversations with schools/parents/communities. • Share information at school/community events. • Maintain communication with Walking School Bus/Safe Routes to School Coalitions. • Recruit and educate more Walking School Bus volunteers
Increase in the number of communities within the region engaged in community planning and development efforts that incorporate active transportation as a central consideration in their strategies	Number of community projects within the region [partnering with UE] that incorporate elements that support active transportation into significant infrastructure projects.	6 projects in 2 communities from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013.	+ 1 per County	Engage communities to think more about active transportation and safety measures.	Share cost-effective, simple ideas with city councils, other civic organizations and community groups. Continue to support and utilize engineers as a valuable resource to our work.
	Number of communities completing community plans which incorporate active transportation in their strategies during UE's last fiscal year.	2012-13: 5 communities. (comprehensive plans- Lime Springs, Cresco, and McGregor; I-WALK and Postville and Oelwein)	+ 3	Engage communities working on planning and development efforts.	Present ideas to communities and facilitate community discussion on the topic. Continue to look for existing programs and funding sources to engage communities in active transportation planning efforts.
	Number of counties completing community plans which incorporate active transportation in their strategies during UE's last fiscal year.	2012-13: 2 counties (representing 9 communities)	0 (increase of one in next three years)		
Sustained youth leadership in safe routes to schools and active living promotion	Number of youth leaders participating in planning, advocating, and implementing active transportation activities and community efforts	46 in 2012-13	+ 10	Create more leadership and volunteer opportunities for youth in the SRTS program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve FFI 4-H Youth Team in SRTS events/activities. • Utilize a school district's requirement for community service to encourage student involvement. • Contact school and church-based service leaders to share opportunities for

					<p>students to gain community service hours through SRTS activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Have students assist with any walkability/bikeability assessments and/or presentations. •Create a fun SRTS challenge.
Equity – Racial and Socio Economic					
Indicator	Measure	Current Status	Goal	Tactics	Activities
Increased access of vulnerable groups to local food and opportunities for physical activity and play.	Head Start enrollment by school year	2013-14: 247 2012-13: 283 2011-12: 291	Maintain; strengthen engagement	<p>Tactic 1 : Translating EC resources into Spanish (including the 5-2-1-0 message) will address equity with parent and provider education and engagement</p> <p>Tactic 2: Make SRTS information, programs and events available to all students.</p>	<p>1 - Activities: 1) Working with the Luther Spanish Department to translate the resource publications. 2) Post translated publications to FFI Website and have print documents available through NICC 3)Share translated resources with Parents,Head Start, NICC ECE, WIC, Preschools and Daycares in the region</p> <p>2 - Activities: 1) Send SRTS information home with all students at a school. 2) SRTS programs and events are widely publicized: letters home with all students, posted on school website, posted on school calendar, flyers distributed throughout community, newspaper articles</p>
	Number of non-white PK-12 students enrolled at schools involved with FFI by school year.	1104 (7.83%), 2012-13; 985 (6.95%), 2011-12; 983 (6.92%), 2010-11		Same as above	Activities - Above
	Number and percent of students enrolled at FFI schools that qualify for free or reduced lunch.	5367 (39.6%), 2-12-13; 5267 (39.4%), 2011-12; 4948 (38.3%), 2010-11.		Same as above	Activities - Above
	Number of FFI contacts to parents of children enrolled	2013: 1400		See Tactic 1 above	Activities - Above

	in WIC.				
Increase in impacts associated with increased access of vulnerable groups to healthy food and physical activity.	Stories re how the Food & Fitness Initiative is making a difference for traditionally marginalized groups and how their participation increases the effectiveness of FFI	2 (Head Start teacher whose daughter was impacted by the “garden lady” Farmers Market Coupon Program story)	+ 2	Tactic: Engage more community members in the Active Living Work Group and SRTS Community Coalitions	Activities: Expand Active Living Work Group and current SRTS Community Coalitions. 2) Build more SRTS Community Coalitions.
Increased access of vulnerable groups to local food related economic opportunities.	Percent of NIFF Coalition members that are “marginalized”- defined as female, beginning, or limited resource.	92.59% (n=27), 2013		Tactic: Broad outreach to producer (current and potential) community	
Increased engagement of vulnerable groups in decision making about increased opportunities for health food access and physical activity.	Number of community members from marginalized groups participating in FFI leadership and work teams (Regional Leadership Council, school youth teams, work groups).	3 out of 23 (13%) of Regional Leadership Council are members of a minority group. At least 4 out of 271 (1.5%) of youth enrolled in FFI Youth 4-H Teams in 2012-13 were Hispanic (data collected by 10.16.13).	+5	Tactic: Ongoing reflection of opportunities to engage, educate and invite community members to be involved in work groups, community/school teams and the Regional Leadership Council	
	Number and type of activities and events sponsored by the Postville Youth Team	6 events in 2012-13 (FEEST, Tour de Allamakee, Cross-Age Teaching, Bike Blender, Spring Fling, Garden Club)	Maintain	Tactic: Continue with collaborative support and engagement with School outreach and youth team	

Note: 12-10-13 Draft. We will continuously review progress against the plan and revise it as appropriate.