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Community Connections  
for Public Health



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# 2023 COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS

HS 430 – COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAM PLANNING

This document includes abstracts describing the 6 Service Learning Projects completed by senior-level Community Health majors at Iowa State University in collaboration with 6 Iowa County Health Agencies during the Fall 2023 semester (Cerro Gordo, Dickinson, Ida, Marshall, Story County, Wapello)

GREG WELK, PH.D. – PROFESSOR, CCPH DIRECTOR, HS COURSE INSTRUCTOR

[GWELK@IASTATE.EDU](mailto:GWELK@IASTATE.EDU)

# CERRO GORDO COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS & OUTCOMES FROM CERRO GORDO COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

Abby Frescoln, Miranda Lingle, Nidia Garcia-Rodriguez, & Cassidy Flory

Cerro Gordo is a county in northern Iowa with over 43,000 people. The largest cities in the area are Mason City and Clear Lake. Cerro Gordo has a lot of strengths, such as access to exercise opportunities and vaccination services. The county struggles with mental health support, food access, and aging support. After conversations with our county health leader, Cassidy, our group decided to create resources to assist with the food access issue.

With Changes coming to SNAP benefits and the lack of information about SNAP and WIC benefits posted on the Cerro Gordo County's website, our group was tasked to create two separate deliverables. The first deliverable was developing a pamphlet that could be distributed throughout the county. Our group also developed a plan regarding how Cerro Gordo should distribute the pamphlets that were made. The second deliverable was developing visually appealing graphics that can be posted on their website.

The pamphlet we made as our first deliverable for Cerro Gordo County includes information regarding the changes coming to SNAP, which stores within Cerro Gordo County accept SNAP and WIC benefits, and healthy recipes using SNAP and WIC qualifying food items. Cassidy, our assigned county health leader, asked if our group would develop three separate pamphlets

offering different recipes for SNAP and WIC-eligible food items. The county will be able to provide its residents with multiple healthy and affordable recipes. Also, Cassidy will be able to rotate the pamphlets throughout the year when needed.

We created a pamphlet because it is an affordable and accessible way to share information. Cassidy expressed that Cerro Gordo Public Health has desired to create a pamphlet but lacked the time and manpower to do so. Therefore, Cassidy was excited at the idea for us to create this deliverable.

INDIVIDUALS ARE NOT AWARE OF  
HOW STRICT THE GUIDELINES ARE  
FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

This pamphlet is important to the health of the community for the following reasons: 1) Many individuals may not be aware that their SNAP benefits are changing, 2) Individuals are not aware of how strict the guidelines are for food assistance programs, and 3) There is misinformation out there that you cannot have a healthy diet while on a food assistance program (although it is more difficult, it can be done). Community members on SNAP or WIC likely

have many stressors in their lives and may not have the time, resources, or motivation to locate healthy recipes for themselves or their children. Our group wanted to provide some relief to these individuals by compiling information and resources to be all in one accessible place. Hopefully, with this resource, the community members in Cerro Gordo can use their benefits most effectively.

For the entirety of the service learning project, we worked on a couple of tangible deliverables for Cassidy. The first was a couple of brochures with different designs that Cassidy could switch out. We also listed out ways that the county can share the brochures. Cerro Gordo has the resources to be able to print the brochures, so that was not a burden for them.

Our group thought that posting the brochures in public spaces such as libraries, community colleges, city hall, grocery stores, healthcare clinics, gyms, and schools would be the most beneficial way to spread awareness. These

locations could include a lot of community members who are on SNAP or WIC benefits and could be passed on easily to friends or family members in need. The pamphlets are visually appealing and stand out so that they catch people's eyes. The brochures lay out specific steps to take so that Cerro Gordo community members know exactly how to access the resources. Each brochure has a SNAP and WIC recipe and QR codes to scan to locate stores that take SNAP and/or WIC benefits. We created a document that lists out more recipes that Cassidy can copy and paste into the brochures when she wants them to be switched out.

Additionally, we provided graphics for the website that Cassidy can easily add to their public health website. Each of the graphics are available in CyBox, which Cassidy will have access to. The graphics include information such as recipes, store locations, how and where to apply, and changes coming to SNAP.

## STUDENT SERVICE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Abby Frescoln, Miranda Lingle, Nidia Garcia-Rodriguez

COMPLETING AN ASSIGNMENT IN A CLASS AT IOWA STATE IS ONE THING, BUT CREATING A PROJECT THAT WILL BE PUT OUT INTO THE WORLD WAS A GRATIFYING EXPERIENCE FOR US.

Throughout this experience, we learned how to accurately assess the needs of a county by reviewing the Health Needs Assessment and the Health Improvement Plan. With our new gained knowledge about these tools, we quickly

identified the county's needs and determined which need we could most support with the guidance from our county health leader.

After brainstorming our own ideas, we gained leadership experience by facilitating weekly meetings with our county health leader over Zoom. During these weekly meetings we took the initiative of creating an agenda, updating our leader about our current progress, our intended goals by the next meeting, and set some time for feedback and note-taking.

We had the opportunity to be creative by utilizing a graphic design software while making these resources for the county. We were challenged to step out of our comfort zone and

produce informational yet appealing resources for the county that included pamphlets, website graphics, flyers, and billboard templates. This experience was valuable to us because the work we have done throughout the semester has given us the skills and practice that will be used in the real-world. Completing an assignment in a class at Iowa State is one thing, but creating a project that will be put out into the world was a gratifying experience for us.

Additionally, the communication and collaborative skills we developed throughout this semester from working as a team, with Dr. Welk, and our county health leader will be applicable to the next step in our lives- whether that be graduate school, a nonprofit organization, or academia. This will help us be successful in our future careers and has developed us as public health professionals.

THANK YOU, CASSIDY FLORY, FOR TAKING TIME TO GUIDE OUR SERVICE LEARNING GROUP THROUGH OUR SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT. WE ARE GRATEFUL TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH YOU AND YOUR COUNTY IN ORDER TO GAIN EXPERIENCE WITHIN COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH.

SINCERELY,

ABBY FRESCOLN, MIRANDA LINGLE, AND NIDIA GARCIA-RODRIGUEZ

# DICKINSON COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS & OUTCOMES FROM DICKINSON COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

Josie Bergstrom, Mahayla Faust, Molly Stenslien, & County Health Representatives: Katy Burke and Erin Reed

Throughout the semester, our service learning team worked closely with two representatives from Dickinson County: Katy Burke, Dickinson County Health Leader and Erin Reed, Executive Director of Iowa Great Lakes Trails. Dickinson County had three main issues they wanted to address in improving the health of the county.

“...TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF THE PEOPLE IN THE IOWA GREAT LAKES REGION”

These include dental health, mental health, and transportation. While working with our county health leader, we decided that dental health was not a feasible goal for us to achieve. We decided to focus on transportation from a physical activity standpoint that helped to address the mental health barrier within the county as well.

After reviewing the Dickinson County CHNA report, we were able to study and understand the county’s need for increased physical activity. Our team introduced the Move Your Way Campaign to Katy as a way to promote physical activity. From there, our county health leader, Katy Burke, introduced us to the Executive Director of Dickinson County Trails, Erin Reed.

Our team, along with Erin and Katy, decided to promote the trails through social media on Instagram and Facebook in order to target the adolescent, young adult, and midlife adult populations. Specifically, our team made an effort to increase awareness and create a presence on social media for Dickinson County Trails to increase the use of the trails and physical activity.

Each member of our team created four social media posts to create a year-long Social Media Toolkit of monthly posts for Erin to use on Instagram and Facebook. Then, our team created a Social Media Toolkit and mimicked a real-life example County Health Leader, Katy shared with our team.

A specific google folder holds the social media posts as well as the Social Media Toolkit document and serves as a deliverable for Erin to access during the upcoming year. The Social Media Toolkit document has the link to the specific post alongside each month with a caption for the post. These posts include: A bench program post, five active living and physical activity promotion posts, seasonal promotional posts, trail etiquette post, mental health post, trail art post, and a post with the map of the Iowa Great Lakes Trails.

Erin has already begun implementing the social media deliverables from the Social Media Toolkit to Facebook and Instagram. She has reported great engagement through likes, comments, and views on the social media posts and looks forward to growing the Dickinson County Trail’s platforms.

## STUDENT SERVICE LEARNING OUTCOMES Josie Bergstrom, Mahayla Faust, and Molly Stenslien

Throughout the process of creating our Social Media Toolkit, we encountered many experiences that have taught us valuable lessons that will help us in our professional careers..

One of the outcomes that we believe will be most beneficial for our future careers was adapting the Move Your Way campaign model into our service learning project. The ability to implement course content into a real life scenario will be helpful in the future when we will need to implement public health models for program development.

Another major outcome we foresee to be beneficial for our future was the use of communication throughout the service learning project. We were given the opportunity to meet virtually on Zoom with our county health representative bi-weekly to create and discuss a plan on how to develop our Social Media Toolkit. Presenting our monthly social media posts to the county representatives required communication between each group member throughout the weeks to decide the responsibilities before the next meeting. Within the public health field, professional communication is necessary at all levels.

Teamwork is a major outcome that will be useful in the future for our public health careers. We learned how to use other group member’s constructive criticism on social media posts in order to improve our content. Our

county leaders played a role in creating the team aspect by recommending social media post ideas that were specifically related to Dickinson County.

For our final outcome, we learned the value of working together as a team to problem-solve. Anytime a struggle arose, we implemented teamwork and communication to problem-solve and to overcome the obstacle. The public health field is a profession that requires constant

**“... PROMOTE THE TRAILS IN AN EFFORT  
TO INCREASE AWARENESS AND CREATE A  
PRESENCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR  
DICKINSON COUNTY TRAILS”**

problem-solving techniques. We learned how to assess an obstacle and create a plan for moving forward, which will be extremely beneficial for our futures.

Overall, this service learning project has provided us with a positive experience in developing and implementing an effective promotional toolkit for Dickinson County Trails. We gained many valuable insights within the public health field, from working alongside our county health representatives, and created lasting connections with our county health leaders.

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK KATY AND ERIN FOR THEIR TIME AND EFFORTS DURING THIS SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT. WITH YOUR HELP AND EXPERTISE, WE GAINED REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE PUBLIC HEALTH FIELD THAT WE CAN APPLY DIRECTLY TO OUR CAREERS.

SINCERELY,

JOSIE BERGSTROM, MAHAYLA FAUST, AND MOLLY STENSLIEN

# IDA COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS & OUTCOMES FROM IDA COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

Nadeja Simon, Eva Sherman, Kerilyn Schmidt, & Rebecca Burns

This semester, we had the opportunity to work with Rebecca Burns and Olivia Ipsen on our service learning project, which focused on creating a fall prevention toolkit for older adults and anyone interested in learning more about fall prevention. This project taught us the importance of collaboration and flexibility in intervention planning.

One of the most significant things we learned from Rebecca was the importance of working with stakeholders in the community. With our initial idea of creating tap dancing videos to encourage older adults to be more physically active, we met with the administrators at one of the living facilities in Ida County, Golden Horizons, and were in the process of contacting a local dance studio to see what they thought about the idea and if it was something that could be implemented in-person instead. This process was essential in ensuring that the intervention plan was relevant and would be sustained by the community.

To begin our project, we first researched our county by looking at the CHA and HIP reports. These reports provided us with a wealth of information about the health of our county, including the top health priorities and the resources available to address these issues. This information was essential for us to understand the community's needs and develop a project that would be relevant and impactful. We also looked at the County

Health Rankings to better understand our county's health relative to other counties in the state. This information helped us to identify areas where our county was doing well and areas where we could improve. One of those areas was injury and violence prevention, with older adults being a demographic significantly affected by falls. So, our team decided to create a toolkit for Ida County with resources on fall prevention for adults 65 and older.

**“THIS EXPERIENCE PROVIDED US  
WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO  
PRACTICE CRITICAL THINKING AND  
PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS IN THE  
CONTEXT OF PUBLIC HEALTH.”**

This experience provided us with the opportunity to practice critical thinking and problem-solving skills in the context of public health. We had to carefully analyze the data in the CHA and HIP reports to identify the most pressing health issues in our county. We also had to brainstorm ways to address these issues that were feasible and sustainable. This project helped us to develop our skills as future public health practitioners and to better understand the complex challenges of improving the health of a community.

# STUDENT SERVICE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Nadeja Simon, Eva Sherman, and Kerilyn Schmidt

The final deliverables that we presented to Ida County were a toolkit filled with resources, information on physical activity and fall prevention, and individualized awareness posters for Ida County. Rebecca agreed that physical activity and fall prevention were two key areas that needed additional resources, specifically for the county's older adult population. To create our deliverables, we gathered evidence-based research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths, and Injuries (STEADI), Walk with Ease, and Iowa Community Hub.

**“THE TOOLKIT AND AWARENESS POSTERS ARE VALUABLE RESOURCES FOR COUNTY PARTNERS LOOKING TO CREATE A HEALTHIER AND MORE ACTIVE COMMUNITY.”**

Our toolkit and awareness posters are beneficial because they provide a comprehensive and user-friendly resource for Ida County, which is looking to implement a fall prevention program. The toolkit includes a variety of evidence-based programs and resources. The awareness posters can be used to spread the word about the importance of fall prevention and encourage community members to take action. The posters are also designed to be easy to understand and use. They feature clear and concise messages about the importance of fall prevention, and they can be placed in various high-traffic areas to reach many people. The toolkit and awareness posters are

valuable resources for county partners looking to create a healthier and more active community. They provide the tools and resources necessary to implement effective fall prevention programs, and they can help to raise awareness of the importance of fall prevention in the community.

At the beginning of our project, we aimed to create a series of seated and standing tap videos that would help promote activity and community within assisted living facilities. After realizing we needed to incorporate more evidence-based information in our project, we shifted our focus to creating a toolkit for our county partners instead.

Creating the toolkit meant we had to do a lot of research on how to create and what to include in one. Once we had a basis of what we needed to do, we started creating our toolkit on Canva. Our toolkit included information for activity recommendations, group activities that promote physical activity and stability, and two customized posters for Ida County to distribute. As some of our team members had never used Canva, there were some struggles with learning how to use the tool, but we adjusted and created our final polished toolkit.

After our setback of having to change plans for our final product for Ida County, we went full steam ahead to ensure they would receive a quality product by our due date. The toolkit we created for Ida County will be useful in various capacities for the county. From providing resources to residents who are susceptible to falling and resources for Ida County to use in the future, our final toolkit will hopefully continue to be a great resource for them to refer to.

**WE ARE INCREDIBLY THANKFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH IDA COUNTY, SPECIFICALLY REBECCA BURNS AND OLIVIA IPSEN. THEY WERE HELPFUL AND SUPPORTIVE THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE PROJECT. THEY'VE GIVEN OUR GROUP A POSITIVE OUTLOOK ON OUR FUTURE CAREERS!**

**SINCERELY,**

**NADEJA SIMON, EVA SHERMAN, KERILYN SCHMIDT**



# MARSHALL COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS & OUTCOMES FROM MARSHALL COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

Caitlin Weber, Denali Conover, Kaitlyn Miller

Patricia Thompson-Peden R.N., BSN

Under the supervision of our county health leader, Pat Thompson, we developed a physical activity program for families of Marshall County utilizing the Physical Activity Tracker and other resources from Move Your Way. Our final deliverable was a toolkit shared in BoxNote and PDF format that provides a comprehensive plan for implementing our program in the county.

THROUGH OUR PROGRAM,  
FAMILIES OF MARSHALL COUNTY  
WOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO  
LEARN ABOUT THE NATIONAL  
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES  
AND FIND NEW WAYS TO  
INTRODUCE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY  
INTO THEIR LIVES.

The toolkit we created includes a step-by-step overview of the program, a fillable script for contacting potential incentive donors, a flyer with QR code links to the Move Your Way Fitness Tracker, and ready-to-post social media materials from Move Your Way. During our program, families will find the Move Your Way Physical Activity Tracker as a pinned post on the Marshall County Public Health Facebook page and in QR code on flyers that can be distributed around the community in English and Spanish. They would be able to print the tracker and fill it out over the course of one week. When the tracker is completed, they may bring it to a partnering grocery store and redeem it for a discount on groceries. The prospective length of this incentivized program would be one month throughout January; however, Move Your Way resources would also be regularly posted on the Marshall County Public Health Facebook page. Through our program, families of Marshall County would be encouraged to

learn about the national physical activity guidelines and find new ways to introduce physical activity into their lives.

Through exploring Marshall County's health outcomes and behaviors on the county health rankings website, our group was able to determine the focus of our program. Marshall County ranks 84 out of 99 counties in terms of healthiness. When examining what factors and behaviors might contribute to this standing, our group found that this county had higher-than-average access to physical activity opportunities. However, Marshall County reported lower-than-average physical activity levels. We then needed to ask ourselves why

community members were not getting active even though they had plenty of access to physical activity opportunities. Our group concluded that time was a large barrier that prevented community members from participating in physical activity. The Move Your Way campaign provided us with a structured program that can help eliminate that barrier and provide valuable information to community members about the national physical activity guidelines. Therefore, this program was made to promote physical activity in Marshall County to create a healthier and more active environment.

# STUDENT SERVICE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Caitlin Weber, Denali Conover, & Kaitlyn Miller

We learned, while working with our county public leader, Pat, that creating a service learning project involves a lot of work and time. We spent multiple weeks on this and had to be flexible when parts of the project weren't going as envisioned. Understanding that there will be successes and challenges helped us to know how important it is in the public health field to be prepared for what to do next. This can apply to anything we will do in the future and strengthen our skills to know how to navigate future problems. Thinking about the specific audience and outreach helps hone in on change. By having strong communication skills in our group, we also worked on the project efficiently together and kept Pat in the loop so she could provide us with feedback to continue to push ourselves to do the

project to the best of our abilities. Additionally, we learned that accessibility is important for creating outlines/toolboxes for others to use. We didn't realize that Pat had some links blocked on her computer, so by reaching out to her with our project with BoxNotes and PDF was important for accessibility and to share in the future. Finally, we learned that public health leaders are very important and often don't receive help to create activities like this, so anything can help.

UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE WILL BE SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES HELPED US TO KNOW HOW IMPORTANT IT IS IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH FIELD TO BE PREPARED FOR WHAT TO DO NEXT.

OUR GROUP IS INCREDIBLY THANKFUL FOR THE OPPURTUNITY WE RECEIVED TO WORK WITH PAT THROUGHOUT THIS PROCESS. PAT'S GUIDANCE, EXPERTISE, AND SUPPORT HAVE BEEN ESSENTIAL IN HELPING US NAVIGATE THE PROCESS OF BUILDING A PROGRAM. WE ARE EXCEEDINGLY FORTUNATE AND GRATEFUL TO HAVE COLLABORATED WITH PAT ON THIS PROJECT.

OUR GROUP WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK LOUISE LEX FOR HER HELP IN FACILITATING THIS COLLABORATION AND EXPERIENCE.

SINCERELY,

CAITLIN WEBER, DENALI CONOVER, AND KAITLYN MILLER

# STORY COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS & OUTCOMES FROM STORY COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

Alyssa Farley, Kinzie Peyton, Chloe Teagarden, & Treasa Ferrari

Our project consisted of creating a brochure and website that pertained to how physical activity improves mental health in older adults. This project was made for the purpose of serving Story County's elderly population and is to be distributed throughout the county as a resource for them.

NOT ONLY DOES EXERCISE HELP  
PROTECT YOUR HEART, JOINT, AND  
MUSCLE HEALTH, AS YOU AGE, BUT IT  
ALSO CAN IMPROVE YOUR OVERALL  
SENSE OF HAPPINESS.

During class it was emphasized that our service learning project should address the need for physical activity, however, when we met with our county health partner, Treasa, she expressed a need for mental health improvement. We agreed that mental health could be an area to look into. And after doing some research and looking at Story County's needs assessment, it was evident that there should be a focus on improving mental health services.

We specifically aimed our project towards older adults because she had told us that her department was already working towards interventions within school age children and older adults in Story County is an underserved population.

With our background in a Kinesiology major we have learned more information about physical activity and so

we decided to link the topics of physically activity and how it improves mental health. We concluded and wanted to share that exercise can be especially important for senior mental health as older adults may be more vulnerable to stress, anxiety, depression, and other emotional challenges. Not only does exercise help protect your heart, joint, and muscle health, as you age, but it also can improve your overall sense of happiness.

Both our brochure and website consist of resources such as hotlines, online sites for information on mental health, and areas in the Story County community where older adults can be involved in physical activity and mental health activities. (Below is a picture of the home page of our website)



Ultimately, we aimed to spread word of resources and activities in Story County that the older population could get involved in to improve their physically activity levels which in turn would improve their overall mental health, making the county more healthy.

# STUDENT SERVICE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Alyssa Farley, Kinzie Peyton, Chloe Teagarden

We learned a lot throughout this whole service learning process. From the beginning we had to understand the community needs and how to address these needs. Not all communities need the same corrections. It is important to take all information from a community into their health plan. There were many interesting aspects to this project. It was very educational to be able to work with a public health partner. We learned a lot about the process. It was extremely interesting to see how these programs would be implemented into a real county. Seeing the impact of a program you create would be an amazing feeling. We now have the knowledge of all that it takes to get a program up and running. This will help us to be better prepared for our future careers because it was a guided run through of exactly what it takes to produce this great product. By having one program under our belt, we are more prepared to take on future tasks similar to this service learning project. We also learned how to communicate with another professional in the field. Specifically with Treasa we also learned more about how busy of a schedule public health partners have. It can be difficult to find times that fit with their busy schedule. With this we learned how to be flexible and in good communication with each other. We have all gained many skills such as confidence, leaderships, communication, usage of resources, time orientation, adaptation, and

much more. All of these are beneficial not only for future careers in this field but life in general as well. We really appreciate this experience and all that we have learned from it.

During this process, while there were many successes, we also came across struggles that we had to overcome. Some of these would include the difficulties that we had connecting to other organizations and figuring out a feasible distribution plan. While putting our project together we reached out to many different services. We had success with our Health Partner and Heartland Senior Services, however for many of the others we did not even receive a reply. This made working with existing partners very challenging. When figuring out our distribution plan, we ran into the issue of not having a way to print our brochures. We reached out to places like CopyWorks and University Printing Services yet were unable to get a donation for the printings. We also had some struggles finding a way to support our website for longer. Right now, we were able to have it last for the next three months. We were working with our partner to try and find a way to make this last longer. After all these struggles, however, we still were able to persevere and create a final project that we are all proud of.

In the end we produced a project that we feel fulfills the needs of the county relating to mental health and older adults. We were able to find resources and work with our county health leader to gather existing programs to highlight that ultimately promoted our topic. We strengthened our team working skills within our group and formed a relationship with a professional in the public health field.

LOOKING BACK, WHILE WE FELT UNPREPARED AND OVERWHELMED, WE WERE ABLE TO PULL ALL OF OUR IDEAS TOGETHER AND PRODUCE A PROJECT WE ARE PROUD OF.

THANK YOU, TREASA, FOR ALL OF THE TIME THAT YOU HAVE PUT INTO HELPING US. WE KNOW IT WAS NOT ALWAYS EASY, BUT WE APPRECIATE ALL YOU HAVE DONE TO HELP US PUBLISH THIS SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT!

SINCERELY,

ALYSSA FARLEY, KINZIE PEYTON, AND CHLOE TEAGARDEN

# WAPELLO COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS & OUTCOMES FROM BLANK COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

Savannah Evans, Ethan Kraulos, Teresa Winkelmann, & County Health  
Representative Lynelle Diers

Wapello County is currently ranked among the lowest regarding health across the state of Iowa. After meeting for the first time, it was decided to focus on increasing physical activity across the county. To do this, a walking program called “Walk with Ease” will be implemented to target the physical activity of working adults in the county. Walk With Ease will be utilized to engage the county residents in walking habits and to educate on the positive effects that regular exercise may have on their lives.

It was agreed upon by us as students as well as our county health representative, Lynelle Diers, that a county-wide walking program such as Walk with Ease will be successful in creating exercise habits in the county’s residents. Deliverables such as flyers and an email template have been created to simplify the implementation of Walk with Ease in hopes of making the process smoother. The program will support the community by creating physical activity habits, decreasing illness, and by producing a more tight-knit, healthy county.

“THE PROGRAM WILL SUPPORT THE  
COMMUNITY BY CREATING PHYSICAL  
ACTIVITY HABITS, DECREASING  
ILLNESS, AND BY PRODUCING A MORE  
TIGHT-KNIT, HEALTHY COUNTY”.

Based on information by Wapello County community meetings, we know that 30% of the population in Wapello County are not physically active. The rate of physical inactivity in the county has led to high incidences

of illness and disease, and high rates of obesity. The main concerns and reasons for implementing Walk with Ease are:

1. To create lasting physical activity habits
2. To educate residents on the benefits of physical activity.

By collaborating with businesses in Wapello County, we will be able to accomplish gaining higher rates of adults who exercise regularly in the county. By implementing Walk with Ease, participants will be able to have free access to an online training course offered by the Arthritis Foundation. Participants in the county will also be able to access a customized online portal alongside Walk with Ease to facilitate the program delivery. The online portal includes access to the Walk with Ease guidebook, a weekly email series, a place to track daily and weekly walking minutes, and daily notifications for encouragement to reach their walking goals.

We believe that by implementing the Walk with Ease program in Wapello County, that a healthy community will be restored. Walk With Ease will accomplish our goals of increasing physical activity by encouraging participants to set walking and exercise habits on their own time. The program will increase education on the benefits of physical activity by providing educational content for participants to learn from and utilize.

Simplicity of implementation was expressed as being important due to the county’s growing need for this program. We hope that by providing information on Walk with Ease, as well as creating flyers and an email template, the future implementation of the program will be successful. With successful implementation, we will be successful in creating a healthier Wapello County.

# STUDENT SERVICE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Savannah Evans, Ethan Kraulos, and Teresa Winkelmann

Our overall experience with the project was positive. We adapted to the idea after our first meeting with Lynelle. She was very welcoming, and we shared our ideas and concerns. Once Dr. Welk offered his involvement with Walk with Ease program, we proposed it to Lynelle, and she was ecstatic about the idea.

Community health is a learning process. Our group learned a lot about how a county health department works and its purpose. Everyone within a community can play a role in helping the county health department, such as getting vaccinated, taking care of the land, staying home when sick, etc. Some things that we found interesting throughout the project was how we were able to convert the Walk with Ease program into a county wide program rather than just for worksites. We were able to reach more people this way and hopefully it will impact more families.

“WALK WITH EASE WILL BUILD THE  
NECESSARY SKILLS TO STAY ACTIVE  
FOR LIFE.”

We learned how to communicate daily with one another and our county partner. We covered if someone was not able to make a meeting and that individual might do a different part of the project. We used an online platform to hold meetings and they ran smoothly and covered everything we needed to that specific day. We also learned the value of teamwork. For all of us, this was a new experience and at times, nerve-racking. Learning

about how each one of us works and contributes played a large role in the success of this project.

This experience taught us that community health is an ever-changing field, where it is never a “one size fits all” situation. Each town, county, state, and even each country will have its own unique public health needs. Through this experience, we learned how to examine data from various resources, collect the data, analyze it, and then discuss it as a team to go over the county's most pressing needs that need to be addressed and how we can accomplish that. We now know what it's like to make plans for a community, and then change them multiple times to adjust to the evolving needs of the community. We have the experience of coordinating an evidence-based program by pitching it to the county health leader and putting together promotional materials such as a flyer and an email template. Surprisingly, this is also what we found most interesting about the experience. We loved being able to gather different evidence-based sources and gather them into one solid program to promote to a whole county. Ultimately, that is what is most important.

Being able to research effective strategies and implementation practices, then turning around and using those same strategies and practices but changing them slightly to fit the unique needs of your population is very important. Not every strategy is going to be useful for every population/county, that's why it is critical to find the right one and tweak it accordingly. That way you can better sell/promote your program to the population to get the positive change that is needed.

WE WANT TO EXPRESS THE UTMOST GRATITUDE TO LYNELLE DIERS. WE ARE SO  
THANKFUL FOR YOUR TIME AND GUIDANCE.

SINCERELY,

SAVANNAH EVANS, ETHAN KRAULOS, AND TERESA WINKELMANN