Poster #12
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Title of Research: How to Implement a Student-Led Garden in Rural Iowa: The Together We Grow Healthy Project
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Introduction/Purpose:
Introduction: A goal of the Washington County Health Improvement Plan is to reduce rates of childhood obesity. One strategy to achieve this goal is renewing community interest in local food production and consumption via children growing their own food. Purpose: Our poster describes the process of designing and implementing an integrative nutrition curriculum and student-led gardens tailored to the needs of rural communities.

Experimental Design:
Experimental Design: Personnel from Ainsworth and Lincoln Elementary schools, Washington County Obesity Task Force, and University of Iowa Department of Health and Human Physiology met four times to design the project. We blended topics from two established curricula to create Together We Grow Healthy. In two in-service trainings, we worked together to select and prepare lessons from topics including seed, soil, harvesting, plants/nutrients, MyPlate, fruits and vegetables, and end-of-season. Community volunteers built on-site gardens at each school. Lessons and gardening occurred spring 2013 and continue. Produce, mostly leafy green vegetables, was harvested summer and fall.

Results:
Results: Students received nutrition education integrated in science, math, and reading and did hands-on gardening. Challenges included limited time frame for delivery and budget communication. Successes included enthusiastic student, parent and teacher cooperation, monetary support from businesses, opportunities to eat local produce, and sharing produce with senior centers.

Conclusions:
Conclusions: Public health and university professionals can successfully collaborate with schools to implement nutrition education and student-led gardens. Together We Grow Healthy is sustainable, consistent with Iowa's heritage, and inexpensive.