

# STORIES OF IOWA EDUCATORS FIGHTING HUNGER



A Teacher Networking Packet Prepared For The  
2014 Iowa Youth Institute at Iowa State University



# DEAR EDUCATOR

We are continually amazed by the diverse and innovative approaches that you and educators across Iowa are taking as you support your students to make lifelong contributions to the fight against hunger.

In this 2014 Iowa Youth Institute Teacher Networking Packet, we have collected several of your stories, including:

- Community Hunger Summits at Boone and Clay-Central/Everly
- School-Wide Hunger Activities at Maquoketa, Midland, and Sumner-Fredericksburg
- Curricular Innovations at Des Moines Agri-Science Campus and Emmetsburg
- A School-Based Food Pantry at Perry

Many of these stories have also been shared with Iowa business, nonprofit, and civic organizations through our Iowa Hunger Directory at [www.iowahungerdirectory.org](http://www.iowahungerdirectory.org).

Please do not hesitate to call us anytime at 515-245-3783 or email Catherine Swoboda ([cswoboda@worldfoodprize.org](mailto:cswoboda@worldfoodprize.org)) or Stephen Lauer ([slauer@worldfoodprize.org](mailto:slauer@worldfoodprize.org)).

As you continue to educate and inspire Iowa's next generation of hunger fighters, we hope that you will keep the World Food Prize in mind as a resource to you.

Sincerely,  
World Food Prize Staff



# BOONE COMMUNITY HUNGER BANQUET

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In Boone, a high school senior worked with Iowa-based Outreach, Inc., the school's talented and gifted coordinator, and eighth-grade students to organize a community hunger banquet raising awareness and funds for community development in Tanzania. About 75 people battled winter weather to attend the Boone Hunger Banquet, where they participated in an educational hunger simulation, learned about Outreach and its work in Tanzania, and raised \$756 to send Tanzanian children to school and equip a kitchen at a newly built children's feeding center in Tanzania. Students and adults from the community also discussed next steps, and there is substantial interest in sponsoring an Outreach, Inc. meal-packaging event to provide meals for hungry people in the Boone area and overseas.

An important contributor to the success of the Boone Community Hunger Banquet was the emphasis on partnerships. Boone high school student-organizers worked closely with Outreach, Inc., and their decision to mentor eighth grade students supported the middle school's service-learning and citizenship curriculum.



Participants at a student-led community Hunger Banquet in Boone

# CLAY-CENTRAL-EVERLY HUNGER SUMMIT

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Ms. Betsy Schoelman, an agricultural educator and FFA advisor at Clay-Central/Everly worked with two student FFA officers to organize a Hunger Summit for students and members of the community on February 17, 2014. Despite winter weather, over 100 people participated.

The Hunger Summit included a series of five 20-minute workshops in which participants learned about the local backpack program for hungry kids, tips and tricks for communicating about hunger through social media, the Farm to Fork program at Iowa State University, issues and opportunities in Iowa agriculture, and the National FFA “Running on Empty” hunger simulation.

Senior management with Elanco Animal Health gave a keynote address, and participants were supported to continue raising awareness and encouraging action against hunger through Elanco’s nation-wide #Feedthe9 initiative (online at: [www.sensibletable.com](http://www.sensibletable.com)).

Recommendations based on the Clay-Central/Everly Hunger Summit include:

- Designing collaborations so that they further the top priorities of each partner. A successful collaboration makes the academic work of students more relevant, raises the profile of local nonprofits, and demonstrates local businesses’ commitments to corporate citizenship. Clay-Central/Everly students were sensitive to the priorities of businesses and nonprofits by involving ISU Extension and Outreach, the Clay County Cattlemen, the local food pantry, and the CC/E FFA chapter as workshop leaders, and by partnering with Elanco’s existing #Feedthe9 initiative.



- Identifying teachers and nonprofit leaders who have facilitated successful collaborations in the past and learn from their successes and failures. Clay-Central/Everly Hunger Summit was inspired by the students’ experiences at the national FFA conference last October, and they were able to learn from FFA’s network as they planned their event.

- Applying for outside funding when necessary. Organizers at Clay-Central/Everly received a “Be the Seed” mini-grant through a partnership between DuPont Pioneer and the Iowa Food and Family Project.

Organizers sort donations at Clay-Central-Everly Hunger Summit



Participants learn about domestic hunger at the Clay-Central-Everly Hunger Summit

# DES MOINES AGRI-SCIENCE CAMPUS

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Mr. Jacob Hunter and Mr. Craig Nelson serve as chapter instructors for the Des Moines FFA, an urban FFA and agricultural education program that strives to “lead by example in Urban Iowa”.

Mr. Hunter's Reflections:

Food insecurity is a relevant topic to my urban students. About 70 percent of Des Moines Public Schools' students are body eligible for free and reduced lunches. My students see food insecurity on a daily basis. On the other hand, as a regional academy, I have students from suburban schools that often times come from affluent families and may not witness the same levels of food insecurity as the other students do. This interesting mix of students allows for a healthy discussion between students about shared values.

In my food science class we lead the year by having students identify what values they have, how they compare to their friends and family, and lastly the class. From this list of values we can build a discussion on how to end world hunger. Various global, case studies and current efforts are analyzed to discover solutions to food insecurity. Topics covered include entrepreneurship, food waste, food safety, microfinance programs, education efforts, and biotechnology. Students then research a country of their choice and share their findings with the class. A factor is chosen once students better understand their country. This research can evolve into World Food Prize participation if the students so choose. The classroom also utilizes modified lessons from Cornell University's Food Safety Investigation curriculum. Students also start their own animal based business for class to experience entrepreneurship.

Outside of the classroom students have Supervised Agricultural Experiences that build off of classroom work. As an urban program, it is difficult to find traditional SAE programs for students, but I still want to provide meaningful experiences. To capture on the unique nature of the program, I have students complete SAE programs under the area of Home and Community Development area. This includes setting up dinners for homeless shelters, volunteering at food pantries, and implementing a homeless outreach program. This helps them make agriculture and food insecurity real life by being the link to those in need. This allows them to receive FFA Degrees and recognition for their role in agriculture.

There are some little things looking back I think I would change. Two concepts come to mind that would help guide my following years. The first is “to not sweat the small stuff.” I think that focusing on the big picture is important. There are times that there are set backs but staying focused on your goal will keep you going in the right direction. The second word of advice is to be more thankful. Sometimes as educators we get caught up in the next big mountain to conquer that we can miss out on the moments to thank others authentically.

One thing that I have had to devote a lot of my energy to is creating “buy-in”. I have to devote a significant amount of my time selling ideas to students, parents, and other teachers. Participation in intercurricular activities like World Food Prize and FFA are often a foreign concept to many in an urban district. Selling the idea can be challenge if participation in an activity is not a priority of the family. Once you sell it to the student, you have to explain the advantages to parents. The best way to accomplish parent “buy-in” is through having parents witness their student’s involvement. After they have seen how much their child has grown, they often become an advocate for your program or class. The best way to summarize this barrier is apathy. I have some students that are ready to change the world and some it is a challenge to come to class. The way I can create buy in is by encouraging them to analyze what they want out of life and what they are willing to do to get it.

One student that has excelled through World Food Prize and FFA involvement has taken this advice to heart. Once joining FFA and participating in WFP and FFA, he realized he wanted more out of life than the low expectations his school/family had given him. He ended up switching high schools, moving out of his home, and getting a job to provide for himself. All while excelling in school work and leading an urban FFA chapter. Once you get over the apathy, there are some pretty inspiring things that can happen.



# EMMETSBURG BORLAUG BIOLOGY SCHOLARS

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Tricia Reichert, a sophomore biology teacher at Emmetsburg High School, has modified the free curriculum published by the World Food Prize to introduce all sophomore students to the human face of global hunger through a poster project and canned food drive.

Sophomore biology students research a country and a challenge that contributes to hunger in that country, come up with their own solutions, and then present their ideas on a poster through short written lists and pictures. Students are encouraged to bring in non-perishable food items as part of the project, which are donated to the local food pantry in the name of the Emmetsburg High School Sophomore class.



The posters are hung in the school for public viewing to further raise awareness of hunger. After completing their posters, students have the option to write a paper and attend the World Food Prize Iowa Youth Institute at Iowa State University.

Ms. Reichert's Reflections:

Since I am a science teacher who touches the lives of ALL sophomore students here at Emmetsburg High School, they became my focus group. My intention was to raise their awareness of not only food insecurities, political instabilities, infrastructure inadequacies, etc. across the globe, but also try to bring a face, a name, and a human connection to these issues.

My idea of the poster allowed several things to be accomplished:

- 1) This assignment empowered the students by allowing them to select the country and factors that interested them and allowed them to come up with their own solution.
- 2) It was no longer a long writing assignment, but rather short bullet factoids logically arranged by topic.
- 3) The option for the students to find graphics that told a story helped them to connect with the country they were studying.
- 4) The poster size I chose gave us the biggest size for the most reasonable cost.
- 5) The posters have been hung in the school for public viewing and have received a lot of positive feedback. This has hopefully increased public awareness about global food insecurity.
- 6) Each student has a finished poster product that he or she is very proud of.
- 7) The process we used to create the posters is a skill the students now have "in their toolbox" and can use for future assignments/presentations.
- 8) ALL students were able to produce a good looking poster with appropriate content - even the special education students!



I tried to bring the problem of food insecurity "home" by having the students bring in non-perishable food items as part of the project. These items were donated in the name of the EHS Sophomore class to the local food pantry.

The newspaper was alerted to this inspiring story and invited to come and share the day with us during presentations and help spread the word to the local public about what our students did to learn about global food insecurity and their efforts to make a difference locally.

# MAQUOKETA MIDDLE SCHOOL WORLD HUNGER SERVICE DAY

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Ms. Mindy Orris and Ms. Jane Schmidt have teamed up to organize a second school-wide World Hunger Service Day at Maquoketa Middle School. An overview of their lesson plan follows:

## MMS WORLD HUNGER SERVICE DAY | The REAL Hunger Games | Friday, April 11th, 2014

	HMR M	1	2	3	Zero	4	5	6	7
8TH	Reap	Exploratory	Documentary	Documentary		Packaging	Activity	H G	Speaker
7TH	Reap	Activity	Exploratory	Packaging		Documentary	Documentary	H G	Speaker
6TH	Reap	Activity	Packaging	Exploratory		Documentary	Documentary	H G	Speaker

**PURPOSE:** To create an awareness of the global issue of world hunger.

**OUTCOME:** Development of awareness of world hunger from the movie, activities, speakers, and packaging of food.

The grade levels will be involved in special events each period as indicated above. Teachers should escort their classes to each event – speaker will be in the gym at the end of the day, packaging will be in the gym, The Real Hunger Games will take place in the gym, but will use live feed streaming for students to watch in their Districts classroom, activity will be in the classroom, and movie can be in the classroom or if classes want to buddy up they can go to a designated area to view the movie. Students should check in at their regular class and then, if necessary, go with the teacher to the designated area.



### ACTIVITIES: Molly's World Lesson Plan – World Food Programme (LOCATION: classroom)

This activity will be done in the classroom. Lesson plans will be provided and link is listed below. Refer to lesson plan given in this pack for which videos to watch and how to teach the lesson. <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/communications/wfp251438.pdf>

### SPEAKERS: "You Determine Your Fate" (LOCATION: Gym)

During this presentation, you will be listening to Andy Yohe, a Bettendorf native who at a young age made a terrible choice that cost him his legs. Overcoming the battles of being a paraplegic, Andy is determined to win at the game of life which includes a career in cutting edge prosthetics development and even participating in 3 Olympics and winning a GOLD MEDAL!

### DOCUMENTARY: "A Place At The Table" (LOCATION: Classroom)

This documentary is of the journey of 3 families and how food insecurity here in the US affects their daily life. It explains why there are issues of food shortages or food insecurity within the most powerful country in the world. This film is 84 minutes in length and you will receive questions for discussion.

#### **PACKAGING: "Feeding the World through Kids vs. Hunger" (LOCATION: Gym)**

This will take place in the gym. Pam Gettert is the representative from this organization. She will lead the 3 grade levels through a 45 min food packaging experience. 6 lines (16 feet long – 2 eight foot tables; and 8 and a 6 foot would work) with 12 in each line at a time works best. 1500 each hour per line – so we are hoping to do about 3750 meals. Pam will be here about 8:00 to unload the trucks.

#### **The Real Hunger Games: The Hunger Games (Location: Gym and Classrooms)**

Through the use of LIVE STREAMING, we will be hosting the REAL Hunger Games. The kids will be divided up by grade level into 14 Districts they will be assigned to a designated Homeroom for the day. At 8:20 the kids will be given a schedule of the day with a brief explanation of what will be going on. At 8:25, the teachers will use their LCD projector to show the REEPING which will take place via the live stream feed at [www.maquoketa-cardinals.com](http://www.maquoketa-cardinals.com). We have two characters from the movie the Hunger Games who will draw out of envelopes one girl's name and one boy's name per district. Those 2 people will be the ONLY kids for that District who will compete in the Hunger Games activities during 6th Period. While the 28 kids are competing in the gym, the rest of the district will be watching live via the live stream feed in their homeroom/District. The 28 kids will be competing in archery competition, blind food competition, and sled race. The top scoring team will have won the Hunger Games and qualified their team to an ice cream treat when they walk out the door on Friday.

#### **Fundraising:**

We are asking that each District raise more than \$300 which is \$15 per kid. We will be giving kids a Pledge Packet and Envelope which they will get people to sign up to support their fight against hunger. Their goal is to find someone not employed by the school to pledge \$1 to \$15 for them to participate. If they are not able to raise the funds then they will report to their District Leader (Teacher) who will let Jane and me know. Jane and I will also be asking local club and businesses to participate again this year – but at a MUCH lesser level of donations than last year.



# MIDLAND WORLD HUNGER DAY

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Sixth through twelfth graders at Midland recently participated in a school-wide World Hunger Day, organized by a team of ten high school students under the mentorship of Ms. Jamie Christiansen, an Ag/Science Instructor. The Midland World Hunger Day included:

- In partnership with the nonprofit Outreach, Inc., students packaged 10,000 meals to fight hunger in Tanzania.
- Middle school students delivered canned foods to a local food pantry and spoke with staff there about hunger in Iowa. The cans had been donated by students as part of a competition between seminars.
- Students rotated through breakout sessions. Each breakout session focused on a specific problem that leads to hunger in another country. Breakout sessions were led by student-organizers, and included problems of reduced access to clean water, refrigeration, and nutrition.
- High school students participated in an Oxfam Hunger Banquet, an interactive meal which simulates the unfair distribution of food in the world. Middle school students participated in a similar interactive meal at which a large Rice-Krispy treat was divided between students based on the actual distribution of food between regions of the world.

Based on her experiences at Midland, Ms. Christiansen offers the following advice:

- Students need to be involved. Recruiting students to lead the Midland World Hunger Day got a core group of students involved early on and led them to take ownership of the project. Once the core group of students took ownership, their peers saw that and began to care more.
- Don't be intimidated. Administration and other teachers at Midland were very supportive of the Midland World Hunger Day.
- Reach out to others for help. Ms. Christiansen reached out to Ms. Mindy Orris at Maquoketa to learn from Maquoketa's experiences organizing a school-wide hunger day in April 2013. Ms. Orris provided advice, videos, and lesson plans for the Rice-Krispy treat activity.

The success of the Midland World Hunger Day has already led to the creation of a new group of middle and high school students who are eager to organize another event for the 2014-2015 school year.



# PERRY HIGH SCHOOL FOOD PANTRY

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School-based food pantries are one way to help make sure that hungry, food insecure high school and middle school students can eat outside of school breakfasts and lunches. With the support of the principal and the Perry community food pantry, teachers at Perry High School started a school-based food pantry just over a year and a half ago. Their recommendations for a successful school pantry include securing buy-in from school administration and the community early on, prioritizing food items that students will eat and can cook, and prioritizing personal relationships with students in need to avoid stigma and make sure that the school pantry is used. The Perry High School food pantry organizers were fortunate to have support from the principal at the very beginning of the process. The district used some of its modified allowable growth funds to refit an old school photography lab into a food pantry. The food pantry is accessed through the alternative school classroom, which is beneficial because many of the users attend the alternative school and because the pantry is managed by a guidance counselor and an alternative school teacher.

The Perry High School food pantry had early support from the Perry community food pantry, which has so far contributed \$4000 to a separate account for the school pantry and community pantry staff helps purchase food items on behalf of the school pantry organizers. The community pantry also accepts expired but still usable food items from the school pantry – due to liability concerns; the school pantry does not give out any expired food items.

Students who may benefit from the school pantry are usually identified by the alternative school teachers or by the guidance counselors. There are periodic announcements made through school publications, but these are carefully worded to avoid stigma. The organizers acknowledge that their heavily relationship-based approach means that some students who may benefit from the pantry don't know about it, but avoiding stigma is a higher priority for the organizers at this time. They also note that they have not had any abuse of school pantry so far, and they don't anticipate abuse being a problem in Perry High School in the future. Approximately 8-10 students use the Perry High School food pantry every week.

Recommendations for other school-based pantry initiatives include:

- 1) Secure buy-in from school administration and the community early on. Administrators who focus on learning and test-scores may recognize that students learn better when they aren't distracted by hunger. Teachers and staff often have connections in the community that can support the food pantry. In Perry, teachers were able to involve their spouses – one spouse is a dentist who donates dental care supplies to the pantry, while another works at Hy-Vee and donates over-stocked food items.
- 2) Prioritize food items that the students will eat and can cook. Keep in mind that students may lack appliances such as stoves, ovens, and refrigerators. The most popular items at the Perry school food pantry are Ramen, pasta with sauce, peanut butter and jelly, soup, and pop tarts.
- 3) Personal relationships with students are the key to success, especially in smaller districts such as Perry. By integrating the school pantry into alternative education and guidance counseling programs, Perry High School has been able to avoid stigma and customize their food pantry program to the varied and changing needs of individual students. Tying the school pantry into existing at-risk programs may be a viable approach for other school districts to copy.
- 4) While the popular "Backpack Buddies" program is useful for serving elementary school students, older students' needs are often better served through different programming. In schools with an existing Backpack Buddies program, it is important for organizers to think critically about which aspects of Backpack Buddies need to be modified in order to better serve older students.

# SUMNER-FREDERICKSBURG HIGH SCHOOL HUNGER BANQUET

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FFA students at Sumner-Fredericksburg High School worked with their advisor, Ms. Meghan Bond, and with school administration to organize an Oxfam Hunger Banquet and fundraiser involving their entire school. The Oxfam Hunger Banquet (online at: [www.oxfamamerica.org/take-action/events/hunger-banquet](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/take-action/events/hunger-banquet)) is a free curriculum that helps participants understand the injustice and causes of world hunger through an interactive meal at which some are fed well and others eat very little. The student organizers used the school-wide hunger banquet as an activity to introduce the issue of hunger to their entire school and to kick off a week of fundraising, where students voted with their donations on which teachers would participate in a hands-free pie eating contest in front of the student body.

Students at Sumner-Fredericksburg raised \$250, which was donated to Oxfam America's global hunger relief efforts and to the local Fayette County Food Shelf, which is recovering from a fire. The community was supportive, and funds to cover the cost of food at the Hunger Banquet were donated by the first person whom the students approached.



Students share a meal at a school-wide Hunger Banquet in Sumner-Fredericksburg



Organizers address their peers at a school-wide Hunger Banquet in Sumner-Fredericksburg

Recommendations for encouraging high school students' interest in hunger and supporting them as they take action include:

- Ensuring that projects provide an appropriate mix of challenge and support to meet a variety of students where they are at. At Sumner-Fredericksburg, the hunger banquet provided opportunities for student participants to speak or observe based on their comfort level. Interested students had the option to help plan a hunger activity next year. By involving the entire student body in the hunger banquet, the organizers provided academic value and created a shared experience that teachers are using to frame discussions in classes across disciplines.
- Allowing students to take the lead where possible. At Sumner-Fredericksburg, a core group of FFA students had worked with Ms. Bond on other projects in the past and felt ready to organize the school wide hunger banquet with little direct involvement from her beyond providing advice when asked.
- Fostering teamwork and solidarity. FFA students at Sumner-Fredericksburg were interested in helping organize the hunger banquet but had to overcome the fear of failure. By visibly working as a team, the organizers reminded themselves that they would succeed or fail together. Focusing on those among their peers who were positively impacted by the hunger banquet, rather than those who seemed apathetic helped organizers to persist.