

The Paper

Our Town, Our Paper!



Laurens, Iowa



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Local News

Disaster Recovery Fund Activated in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

(Pocahontas, IA, April 10, 2020)

– On behalf of our county, the Pocahontas County Foundation has established the Disaster Recovery Fund (DRF) to support our most negatively impacted populations as they face the effects of COVID-19. The DRF provides an opportunity for the public to give with the reassurance their donations will be used to quickly move resources to where they are most needed and to adapt to evolving needs. The flexibility of the fund will ensure that the community will be able to respond to needs that are not being met by existing non-profit, local, state and federal programs.

The County Foundation's Advisory Board has committed an

immediate \$2,000 to the DRF. To join us in giving to support our communities through these uncertain times, checks made payable to the Pocahontas County Foundation Disaster Recovery Fund can be mailed to: Pocahontas County Foundation, PO Box 189, Attn: Megan Hauswirth, Pocahontas, IA 50574. To donate online, visit www.desmoinesfoundation.org/pocahontascountydisasterfund

Dollars received will first focus on disproportionately affected communities by addressing economic needs and health challenges of populations negatively impacted by COVID-19 related closures and other effects of the outbreak. The long-term application of the fund will focus on additional needs that are not being met by existing non-profit, local, state and

federal programs that will inevitably arise.

We may not know what tomorrow will bring, but thanks to support from the DRF, we have the confidence that we stand ready to meet the challenge. Our county has proven time and time again that we are better together and this collaborative spirit will once again prevail as we support our neighbors in need.

About the Pocahontas County Foundation. The Pocahontas County Foundation, an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, has been created by and for the people of Pocahontas County. The County Foundation's primary goals are to support charitable projects in programs throughout our county and to assist donors in creating lasting legacies through a variety of giving options.



Pocahontas
county foundation

"Building Within Communities"

Disaster Recovery Fund FAQs

Why was the Disaster Recovery Fund created? When a disaster happens, our Pocahontas County Foundation wants to help. The Disaster Recovery Fund was created to provide a collaborative option for donors to help address both immediate and long-term unmet needs that will arise during times of disaster. The intention of the DRF is to provide a nimble philanthropic fund for Pocahontas County in the face of uncertainty caused by disaster. It was created to supplement, not replace, existing resources and services provided by non-profits and local, state and federal agencies. Each disaster is unique and unanticipated needs will arise. This fund is intended to be flexible and responsive in meeting needs that are not otherwise covered by existing programs.

What is the purpose of the fund? The Disaster Recovery Fund (DRF) will provide grants focused on reducing the economic and health challenges on populations negatively impacted prior to and following a disaster as well as long-term needs that may emerge. Grants awarded will supplement, not replace, other resources including government support and relief efforts in cases of local disaster. Grants will fill gaps in services and needs that are not being met by existing non-profit, local, state and federal resources and programs.

How long will the fund be available/open? The DRF extends beyond a single disaster and is a key part of the community's disaster response. Preparedness work will be continuous and ongoing. The fund is activated in times of local disaster.

How do you know what is the most important thing to support? Every disaster can look different, with different impacts, different needs and different resources available for support. The Community Foundation's Advisory Board will be in communication with local non-profits and agencies to identify recipients with deep roots in the community and experience to deliver support and services to negatively impacted populations at moments of crisis. The funds will be used to support needs that are not being met through existing non-profit, local, state and federal resources and programs.

How is money going to be given away? Initial grants will be awarded outside of an application process to provide flexible support to trusted partners quickly and will be provided for direct client assistance and/or organization capacity needs due to demands of the disaster. Grants from the DRF may be awarded on a rolling basis as the evolution of the disaster and community needs is assessed. Grants will be provided to community-based organizations/service providers active in current response and/or preparation in the areas of economic and health impacts for negatively impacted populations. Grants will be made only to cover needs that are not being met by existing non-profit, local, state and federal resources and programs.

How do nonprofits apply for support from the Disaster Recovery Fund? Initial grants will be awarded outside of an application process to provide flexible support to trusted partners quickly and will be provided for direct client assistance and/or organization capacity needs due to demands of the disaster. A letter request outlining organization need and project cost can be emailed to: pocofoundation@pocahontas-county.com.

Can individuals access the money for things they need like supplies, food, help with lost income, etc.? The DRF will support non-profit organizations that provide services intended to reduce the economic and health challenges on negatively impacted populations prior to and following a disaster.

How can I learn more about the fund? Wendy Panbecker @ 515-338-0488, Megan Hauswirth @ 712-358-0897 or Glenda Mulder @ 712-358-2665.

Is there a deadline for fund request? Yes. The first deadline for requests will be April 24, 2020. We will evaluate later and release a second round of giving, if necessary.

Our Town Our Paper!

The Paper

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POCAHONTAS COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

April 9, 2020

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Business and Community Partners:

Pocahontas County Economic Development continues to serve as a resource to help county businesses navigate the programs available during this COVID-19 pandemic. On Friday, March 27, 2020, the President signed into law the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which contains \$376 billion in relief for American workers and small businesses. We have compiled a list of programs available as of the date of this letter, as follows:

- **Small Business Administration (SBA) programs** (www.sba.gov; 515-576-6242)
 - Paycheck Protection Program: provides loan forgiveness for retaining employees by temporarily expanding the traditional SBA 7(a) loan program. SBA will forgive loans if all employees are kept on the payroll for eight weeks and the money is used for payroll, rent, mortgage interest, or utilities. You can apply through any existing SBA 7(a) lender, so please **begin the process by reaching out to your financial institution.**
 - The SBA also has information Economic Injury Disaster Loan: provides small businesses with working capital loans of up to \$2 million that can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing. These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact. The interest rate is 3.75% for small businesses. The interest rate for non-profits is 2.75%.
 - Express Bridge Loan Program: allows small businesses who currently have a business relationship with an SBA Express Lender to access up to \$25,000 quickly. These loans can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing and can be a term loan or used to bridge the gap while applying for a direct SBA Economic Injury Disaster loan. If a small business has an urgent need for cash while waiting for decision and disbursement on an Economic Injury Disaster Loan, they may qualify for an SBA Express Disaster Bridge Loan.
 - SBA Debt Relief Programs: The SBA will automatically pay the principal, interest, and fees of current 7(a), 504, and microloans for a period of six months. The SBA will also automatically pay the principal, interest, and fees of new 7(a), 504, and microloans issued prior to September 27, 2020. For current SBA Serviced Disaster (Home and Business) Loans: If your disaster loan was in "regular servicing" status on March 1, 2020, the SBA is providing automatic deferments through December 31, 2020.
- **Iowa Economic Development Authority Programs** (www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com; 515-348-6200)
 - Iowa Business Tax Deferral: allows for deferral of eligible taxes and waiver of penalty and interest. To be eligible, businesses must be experiencing business disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Iowa Workforce Development Programs** (www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov; 866-239-0843)
 - Employees can receive unemployment benefits if they meet all other eligibility requirements. Applications are now expanded to those who are self-employed, independent contractors, nonprofit employees, and gig economy workers. Work search requirements will be waived. Claims that are filed and identified as a direct or indirect result of COVID-19 will not be charged to employers. Fact-finding interviews for these claims will be waived and not be held, although employers will be notified of claims received.

- **Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) program** (www.benefits.gov/benefit/597; 877-872-5627)
 - If employees are not eligible for unemployment insurance payments, they can apply for the DUA program. This program provides unemployment benefits to individuals who have become unemployed as a direct result of a Presidentially declared major disaster. The employee must have been determined not otherwise eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits (under any state or Federal law).

- **Mental Health Resources** (www.yourlifeiowa.org; 855-581-8111)
 - Iowa Department of Public Health and Human Services has created a website for mental health services. Live chat is available on the website. Texting is also available via 855-895-8398.

We have been continuing to encourage our communities to shop local. To that end, we ask you to submit your business operating information to our website so we can keep the public informed (www.pocahontas-county.com/covid-19-resources). Check back often, as we will be posting updates to our website and our Facebook page as things continue to evolve.

Pocahontas County Economic Development exists to support YOU! Please reach out if you need assistance.

Sincerely,

Tom Grau
Executive Director

Emily Williams
Workforce Marketing Coordinator

Birthday Card Shower!

A Happy Birthday to Dorthy Schmidt from her kids. She turns 80 on April 29.

You can send birthday wishes to her at: 1102 Saint Lukes Drive, #201, Spencer, IA 51301.



Thank You!

Whoever would have thought that turning 80 years old would be so much fun?!

The fantastic surprise parade led by our Laurens fire truck and followed by so many cars filled with all of you dear friends was absolutely a huge honor for me! Never in my wildest dreams would I ever have imagined that wonderful event! Thank you all so very much! And, my dear Alice Pomeroy----what can I say? YOU really went over the top planning this! Thank you so much for putting this together! And, I give my heartfelt thanks to all who participated!

Pat Boughey

Laurens 2020 Cemetery Tour Cancelled

The annual cemetery tour sponsored by the Laurens Women's Club has been cancelled for this year. The event was originally scheduled for Sunday, June 28. Plans are being made to hold the cemetery tour again next year in June 2021.



HELP WANTED Full Time Production Employee

This position requires someone with a strong work ethic, ability to multi-task, forward thinker and self starter who will continue to help HorseTech/PupSup grow.

On a daily basis you will be packing products, pulling products from shelves, helping keep the production area clean and other duties as assigned.

Does this seem like the job for you?
We would love to hear from you!

Stop into HorseTech and get an application from Jody today!
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Phone: (800) 831-3309

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Friday, May 1st

Cod Loin (8pieces) * Baked Potato * Coleslaw

5:00 - 8:00 pm

\$10 per order - CARRY-OUT ONLY

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One bite & you'll be hooked!

*At the Library
with Glenda Mulder
April 22, 2020*

The library is still closed due the Corona Virus Covid-19. Our book drop is still open, so feel free to drop off your library materials as you finish with them. Naturally, all items are sanitized to the best of our ability when they are returned. At this point, we are making materials available for curbside pickup. Contact us with your needs. We are still waiting for word when we can reopen and what modifications we may need to make.

OK, the progress this week is that the YouTube channel has been set up! Look for it by searching Laurens, Iowa Public Library. You'll recognize our nifty library line drawing, no doubt! By the time you read this, I will have set up links on our Facebook page and website also. I've been uploading videos of community leaders, businesses and events as fast as Lorin gets them transferred from VHS tapes to DVD and computer files for us. Be sure to check back for new videos in the coming weeks. We'd hate to give them all to you at once! This is surprisingly time consuming. In theory, the tape can be put in, push the magic buttons and check back later. In reality, I walk past, see a younger version of something or someone I recognize, and the next thing I know an hour or more has passed! But what a fun way to spend some quarantine time. We didn't even live in Laurens during the Centennial, but we sure enjoyed watching some of the festivities.

Have you tried reading an e-book from our Bridges collection? It's fun to see our stats start to rise, and realize there are many of you taking advantage of this format. Contact us if you have any problems, or if you need your library card number!

Jeri and I have been making craft/activity packets for L-M Students to pick up with their lunches a couple times a week. It seems every time we open that magic cupboard, another idea falls out!

Stay safe, stay in, and stay healthy! We look forward to seeing you soon!

COMING EVENTS (hopefully!)

- Book Club 7 p.m., 4th Monday of the month
- Take it Tuesday 6:00 p.m. the 1st Tuesday of the month
- History of Agriculture by Darcy Maulsby 7 p.m. May 12



ELECT

JOSH HAMMEN

**POCAHONTAS COUNTY
SHERIFF**

**REPUBLICAN PRIMARY ELECTION
JUNE 2, 2020**



- **20+ years of Law Enforcement experience**
- **Desire to serve multiple terms as Pocahontas County Sheriff**
- **Community Leader**
- **Contact Josh at 712-358-2372 or follow on Facebook @joshhammenforsheriff**

Paid for by the Josh Hammen for Sheriff Committee

It's a Boy!

Nick and Paige Brincks are proud to announce the birth of their son, Keelan Joseph, who was born on Tuesday, March 17, 2020. Keelan weighed 5 pounds, 8 ounces and was 20 inches long.

Grandparents are Jerry and Renee Brincks of Carroll and Monty and Julie Potter of Laurens.

Keelan's great grandparents are Rich and Linda Olson of Laurens and Mary Ann Potter of Bogata, TX.



Youth for the Quality Care of Animals

All 4-H and FFA members must complete YQCA training before they may exhibit at the Pocahontas County Fair. Coupon codes are available by contacting the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Pocahontas County at lzeman@iastate.edu.

Pocahontas County 4-H

Until further notice, Pocahontas County 4-H will not participate in any face to face meetings or activities. 4-H club leaders and members may get together electronically for meetings and activities.

4-H members are encouraged to go to the <https://extension.iastate.edu/4-H> website. There is a wealth of information regarding all project areas, activities, service learning ideas, and more.

Join us to shower our
Bride-to-be
Morgan Krischel
STOP, DROP & GO
April 25th 9:00-noon
Feel free to drop your gifts at
Barry & Leah Aden's Home
60173 230th Ave. Pomeroy or
Pioneer Seed -Aden Ag
15 S. Main St. Pocahontas

Miss to Mrs.

Our way of showering them with LOVE during
this time of social distancing. Registered at
Amazon, Target & Powhatan Travel

This Week at Laurens United Methodist Church

Pastor Ed Frank

All in-person services and activities have been cancelled until further notice. Worship services and devotionals may be found on our church website at www.laurensunc.org and facebook pages Laurens United Methodist Church and Varina United Methodist Church.

This Week at First Christian

Pastor Rev. Rita Cordell
712-845-6164

All services and activities at First Christian Church have been cancelled until further notice.

New Hope Baptist Church

202 Byron St, Laurens

All services and activities at New Hope Baptist Church have been cancelled until further notice.

This Week at Bethany Lutheran

Pastor David E. Klappenbach

All services and activities at Bethany Lutheran Church have been cancelled until further notice.

Resurrection of Our Lord Catholic Church

Pocahontas, IA -- Pastor: Very Rev. Craig Collison, VF

All services and activities at Resurrection of Our Lord Catholic Church have been cancelled until further notice. Find us on Facebook to watch recorded mass.



**The Laurens Community
Food Pantry**

Hours: Mondays 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Thursdays 4 - 6 p.m.

The Food Pantry is located at the United Methodist Church at 201 West Main St.

Use the West door (alley).

The Food Pantry is CLOSED the FIRST Monday of each month and Thanksgiving Day and other holidays that fall on a Monday or Thursday.

Use Cleaning and Disinfectant Agents Safely to Fight COVID-19

As they try to protect themselves and others from contracting COVID-19, Iowans may feel overwhelmed by information about using various chemicals for cleaning and sanitizing. Food safety and nutrition and wellness specialists with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach offer tips to help Iowans sort through the information overload and safely use disinfectants to clean and sanitize their homes.

Whether using commercial or homemade products, Iowans need to follow the guidelines outlined by reputable agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other governmental organizations, say Anirudh Naig, Shannon Coleman and Angela Shaw.

Naig is a food safety state specialist and associate professor in the ISU Department of Apparel, Events and Hospitality Management. Coleman is an assistant professor and food safety specialist in the ISU Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition. Shaw is a food safety state specialist and associate professor in the ISU Department of Food Science and Human

Nutrition. They offer the following recommendations.

Use approved commercial products. One way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to use recommended cleaning products and disinfectants. The Environmental Protection Agency has **provided a list of products that are EPA-approved for use against COVID-19**. If using alcohol, the concentration of alcohol must be at least 70% for it to be effective. Some of these chemicals require consumers to use gloves as they can cause chemical burns.

The CDC has outlined methods for cleaning and disinfecting surfaces:

- **General Recommendations for Routine Cleaning and Disinfection of Households.**
- **How to Clean and Disinfect Surfaces.**

Prepare homemade products safely. If your local grocer runs out of the routine commercial sanitizers for home use, preparing a bleach solution is also an effective disinfectant. Consumers can mix five tablespoons (one-third cup) bleach per gallon of water or four teaspoons bleach per quart of water. Follow the manufacturer's directions on how to apply the disinfectant and ensure it stays on the surface (contact time) for one minute to be effective as a disinfectant. Michigan State University Center for Research on Ingredients Safety developed a resource to guide on **how to prepare**

an effective disinfectant solution using bleach.

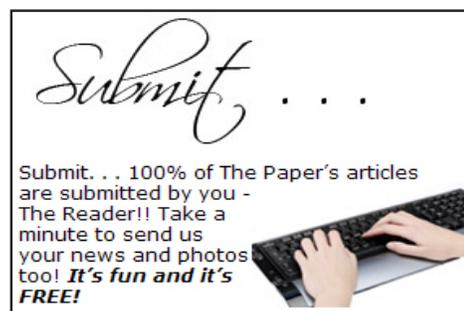
Read the manufacturer's directions on how long the disinfectant solution stays effective when diluted. Do not use expired chemicals. When preparing any type of disinfectant, always follow safe chemical handling practices.

Clean and sanitize surfaces, and wash your hands. Remember, cleaning and sanitizing is a multiple-step process:

1. Preparation. Remove loose dirt and food particles.
2. Cleaning. Wash with clean water and a food-grade detergent.
3. Use an approved sanitizer outlined above for the designated time.
4. Air-dry the surface.

Before and after you clean and sanitize a surface, wash your hands. Follow these four steps to proper handwashing:

1. Rinse hands under clean water.
2. Apply soap and scrub hands for 20 seconds.
3. Rinse hands under clean water.
4. Dry hands with a paper towel or hand dryer.



Additional Options Available for New Pesticide Applicators

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship continues to update its pesticide applicator requirements amid ongoing issues with the COVID-19 pandemic.

On April 2, IDALS and Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds announced that some regulatory and certification provisions would be temporarily suspended. As of April 3, the state now has new options for those impacted by canceled certification testing.

The options differ as to whether the applicator is applying pesticides to agricultural commodities, and is considered “agriculture,” or whether they are “non-agriculture” (turf, ornamental, pest control, etc.).

Agriculture commodities. An online private pesticide applicator exam option is available to address pesticide applications made to agriculture commodities. This option only applies to private applicators and Commercial AG (Categories 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D and 1E) applicators. This new option, administered by IDALS, will temporarily allow individuals to take the private applicator test online

for the duration of the State Public Health Emergency.

A Private Applicator Study Manual is available from the ISU Extension Store to help prepare for the exam. After passing the exam, individuals submit their test results, application and fee to IDALS, and a private pesticide applicator certification is issued.

The new relief measure allows a certified private pesticide applicator to be employed as a commercial applicator and apply pesticides commercially to agriculture commodities if operating under the instructions and control of a certified commercial applicator. The supervising applicator is not required to be physically present.

Once the proclamation expires, commercial applicators must complete the commercial applicator testing requirements. This option does not apply to aerial applicators.

Non-agriculture. A second option applies to non-agriculture (e.g., turf, ornamental, pest control) applications. This option extends the timeframe for uncertified applicators to work under the direct supervision of a certified applicator.

Previously, the timeframe was 21 days from initial employment. The extended timeframe for uncertified applicators to work under the direct supervision of a certified applicator is through the duration of the proclamation. New applicators must

pass the appropriate certification exams once the proclamation expires.

In this case, direct supervision means the certified supervising applicator is physically present and in sight or hearing distance.

Questions regarding testing and certification can be sent to pesticides@iowaagriculture.gov.

More information is also available on the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Integrated Crop Management website, including some questions and answers that IDALS has received.

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Don't Go Hungry, Get Help

Resources are available to help older adults afford, access food

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to companies closing for the short term, the stock market falling and grocery stores running low on supplies. This creates a perfect storm for hunger and food insecurity, say nutrition and wellness state specialists with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

Even before COVID-19 more than 10 million older adults were going hungry, according to Sarah Francis and Ruth Litchfield. Now with social distancing, increased food costs and decreased food availability, the number of older adults who are at risk for hunger and food insecurity is even higher.

“Food insecurity means not having enough access to safe and nutritious food. Not being able to afford safe and nutritious food actually can age you! It can cause you to complete daily tasks at a level 14 years over your current age,” Francis explained.

“Being able to afford enough food is vital to keeping you, a loved one or friend healthy, strong and independent. If you or someone you know is having trouble affording food or accessing food, there are resources available,” Litchfield added.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In Iowa SNAP is called Food Assistance and provides support to households so that they may have access to nutritious foods. Food Assistance can be used to buy any foods and nonalcoholic beverages that are sold to be eaten at home. You also can buy

plants and seeds to grow food.

Amazon and Walmart now offer online options for Iowans using their Food Assistance EBT card to purchase food. This service is available statewide. Amazon will deliver to all Iowa ZIP codes. Walmart provides this service for all store locations that offer online grocery. Iowa Department of Human Services is exploring additional opportunities to expand this program to include other retailers. Food Assistance recipients will be able to use their benefits to purchase eligible food items but will not be able to use benefits to pay for service or delivery charges. For more information, please visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/online-purchasing-pilot>.

If you need help completing either the online or paper application, contact your local DHS office or call the Iowa Food Assistance Hotline to speak with someone who can help with the Food Assistance Application. The hotline 855-944-FOOD (3663) is open 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday with additional assistance provided after hours on high volume call days.

Spend Smart Eat Smart. Visit the Spend Smart Eat Smart website, <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu>, for tips from ISU Extension and Outreach on how to stretch your food dollar and for easy-to-prepare, low cost healthy recipes.

Home-delivered meals. All Iowa congregate meal program sites (for senior lunch programs) closed in response to COVID-19. These meal sites are now delivering meals. In Iowa, home-delivered meals are available to adults age 60 years or over, who are frail, homebound or isolated and, in some cases, their caregivers, spouses and/or people with disabilities. Due to the increased need for these services,

Iowa DHS requested federal waivers to expand home-delivered meals to certain Medicaid recipients. This will provide home-delivered meals for Iowa Medicaid members who are home-bound and for home- and community-based service waiver members if their waiver does not have meals as an allowable service.

DHS also expanded homemaker services that allow someone to come into the home to prepare meals for HCBS waiver members. Contact your local Area Agency on Aging (<https://www.iowaaging.gov/area-agencies-aging/find-your-local-area-agenc...> or call 800-532-3213) or LifeLong Links (866-468-7887) for more information.

Other resources. 2-1-1 is a one-stop source of information for people looking for health and human service programs, community services, governmental programs and disaster services. They connect callers to basic human needs resources (such as food pantries) and support for older adults and people with disabilities (such as home health services). Assistance is available in multiple languages, and services are accessible to people with disabilities.

LifeLong Links (866-468-7887) provides unbiased, reliable information and counseling to a wide range of customers. It is available to older Iowans of all income levels, individuals and caregivers so they can get the help they need while learning how to use their resources wisely.

USDA National Hunger Clearinghouse offers nutrition assistance programs, community food resources, and self-help resources through the English/Spanish USDA National Hunger Hotline (1-866-3-HUNGRY and 1-877-8-HAMBRE), which is open Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Central time.

Yard and Garden: Planting Rhubarb in the Home Garden

The tart stalks of rhubarb are used in pies, tarts, sauces, jams, jellies, puddings and punch. Rhubarb is easy to grow and long-lived. For more information on growing rhubarb and other vegetables in your garden, contact horticulture specialists with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. To have additional questions answered, contact the Hortline at 515-294-3108 or hortline@iastate.edu.

The cultivars Canada Red, Crimson Red, McDonald, and Valentine have attractive red stalks and are good choices for Iowa gardens. Victoria, a green-stalked cultivar, is another reliable performer.

Where should I plant rhubarb? When planting rhubarb, select a site that receives at least six hours of direct sun each day. Avoid sites near trees and shrubs. Rhubarb will have a difficult time competing for sunlight, water and nutrients when planted near trees and shrubs.

Rhubarb performs best in well-drained, fertile soils that are high in organic matter. Heavy soils can be improved by incorporating organic matter, such as well-rotted barnyard manure or compost. The organic matter improves drainage and reduces the chances of root rot. Work the soil deeply (12-15 inches) and add liberal amounts of manure or compost before planting.

Spring is the best time to plant rhubarb in Iowa. Plants can be purchased at garden centers or from mail-order catalogs. Digging and dividing large existing plants is another source of plants.

Plants growing in pots should be planted at the same depth as they are currently growing in the pot. Bare-root plants should be planted with the buds 1-2 inches below the soil surface. Space plants 3 feet apart.

When should I harvest rhubarb? Do not harvest rhubarb during the first two years after planting. This allows good crown and root development. During the third season, harvest for a four-week period. In the fourth and following years, rhubarb can be harvested for eight to 10 weeks, ending in mid-June.

For more information on growing rhubarb, download “Rhubarb in the Home Garden” from the Extension Store.

Program Helps Parents Teach Children Home-Along Skills

“Child saves the day by calling 911” can be a true story when children have adequate education from parents, teachers and community partners in caring for themselves when they are home alone.

During this time when many parents are working from home or families are isolated at home, they may have more time to help their children build skills. That is why Iowa 4-H is offering free, hands-on learning experiences to help parents help their children gain confidence in staying home alone. 4-H is the youth development program of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

On Their Own and OK is tailored for parents and children in fourth through sixth grade and registration is online. Families have until April 23 to register, says Ann Torbert, 4-H program specialist. Then, every Thursday from April 23 through May 28 they’ll receive, via email, directions for hands-on family learning using materials typically found at home. They’ll also receive a free parent guide to help them support their children staying for short amounts of time on their own.

In addition, families will have opportunities to contact 4-H youth program specialists to share reflections and ask questions.

Parents who enroll their family will learn how to teach emergency tips and home safety, help their children handle boredom without technology, assign age appropriate chores, and plan a family celebration to continue to strengthen family relationships.

“Youth left home by themselves without self-care skills may find ways to occupy their time that grownups in the home may not like. Some young people may truly be fearful staying home alone. These classes build skills in youth, as well as incorporate ways for grownups in the home to support this step toward independence,” Torbert said.

Torbert shared U.S. Census data that 7 million school-age children across the nation are left home alone during summer months. Fifteen states have laws defining a set age or age range for when a child can be left home alone. Iowa has no set age, Torbert added.

According to National SAFE KIDS Campaign, the nationwide childhood injury prevention program in the United States focusing on preventing unintentional injuries to children ages 14 and under, the general rule is that most children under age 12 are not mature enough to deal with emergencies. Much of this decision for a parent relates back to the maturity of the child.

“To know if children are ready for time at home alone, parents need to understand their children’s physical, intellectual and social/emotional maturity levels,” Torbert said.

Water Rocks! Increases Online Environmental Learning

Two streaming video programs are available from Water Rocks!, the statewide water education program based at Iowa State University.

“Water Rocks! Unplugged” is a weekly studio session featuring Water Rocks! music and associated lessons. “Water Rocks! Out of the Box” is a series of short natural resources lessons with at-home activities.

Both programs leverage the science education content typically delivered through the Water Rocks! classroom visits and assemblies, which have been put on hold this year by the COVID-19 pandemic. The video programs are available on the Water Rocks! Facebook and YouTube pages.

“The unprecedented closure of schools across Iowa led us to brainstorm some new ways to use technology and remote learning to continue delivering our natural resources and water quality content and lessons to youth around Iowa,” said Ann Staudt, Water Rocks! director at Iowa State University. “Our e-newsletter, ‘The Monday Mix,’ has been well received, and these new streaming options will give teachers, parents and kids some new options to have fun while learning — all while keeping natural resources,

water quality and the environment around us at the forefront.”

Water Rocks! Unplugged features Water Rocks! music frontman Todd Stevens, performing acoustic versions of hit songs from the Water Rocks! catalog. Each performance is accompanied by a quick lesson highlighting the key science elements related to the song. New videos will be released every Tuesday and Thursday at 1 p.m.

Water Rocks! Out of the Box is a series of virtual video lessons featuring student intern Emma Flemming, sharing fun, hands-on, at-home adaptations of classroom lessons and interactive activities from the Water Rocks! classroom visit program. Each lesson runs 5-10 minutes, and a new video will be available every Wednesday and Friday at 1 p.m.

Aligned with the new normal of working from home and learning from home, these video projects are being recorded and produced in the performer’s homes.

“Flexibility and innovation are watchwords right now, and Emma and Todd have both come through with creative ideas, effort and content for today’s youth,” said Staudt. “Emma has shown great ingenuity in adapting the Water Rocks! activities for at-home use. Building on her experience visiting classrooms in our Water Resources Internship Program last summer – she’s truly driving

the Out of the Box project. We are excited to launch both of these new video series.”

All Water Rocks! programming is correlated to the Next Generation Science Standards adopted by most Iowa school districts.

Teacher, parent and student links to music, videos, games and educational resources are available free of charge at www.waterrocks.org.

Follow these links:

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/WaterRocksISU)

WaterRocksISU

[https://www.youtube.com/user/](https://www.youtube.com/user/WaterRocksISU)

WaterRocksISU

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