



July 2022

## Summertime is Here!

Summer offers great opportunities to stay active and enjoy quality time outside with friends and family. This issue of the *Healthy State of Iowa Employees* newsletter highlights tips on staying safe in the summer sun and heat, as well as information about gardening, volunteering, and activities designed to get you outdoors and moving! Read more about these and other interesting summer topics below. Enjoy!

## Summer Fun and Safety

Summer means fun in the sun, splashing in water, and cookouts in the backyard or at the lake. Nothing squelches fun faster than heat illness, food poisoning, or an accident. Here are seven important basics of summer safety to consider:

1. Hydrate - Take a water break at least every 20 to 30 minutes, especially when active. Drinking eight glasses of water each day is a reasonable goal, but environment, health, and exercise will affect whether this amount is adequate.
2. Protect - When temperatures are extreme, avoid being outdoors entirely. Cover eyes and skin with sunglasses, sunscreen, broad hats and heat-appropriate clothing, and remember bug spray when conditions dictate. Watch for signs of heat illness, such as dizziness, nausea, fatigue, confusion, and headache.
3. Communicate - In case of emergency, ensure loved ones know who they may dial easily for help.
4. Prevent food poisoning - Keep raw or prepared foods on ice and avoid food sitting out for more than 60 minutes when outdoor temperatures are 90 degrees or higher. Use clean utensils and plates to serve cooked food, and discard plates, marinades, and tools contaminated by raw meat juices.
5. Prevent burns - Keep children and pets away from grills, campfires, and fire pits.
6. Prevent fires - Place grills and build fires in open areas and away from fences, walls, and other structures.
7. Prevent water accidents - Always supervise children around water. Beware of water activities when loved ones have consumed alcohol.



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## Staff Spotlight



**Name:** Cindy Houlson

**Current Position:** Safety Coordinator, Department of Administrative Services (DAS)

**Years with the State:** 25 years

**My Healthy Choice:** Gardening

"When my nest emptied, spending time outside and getting exercise became new goals for me. I started hobby gardening and it quickly evolved into a passion. I soon began dreaming about becoming a Master Gardener. My dream continued for years until I took a DAS Performance & Development Solutions (PDS) course called *Strategies for Achieving Life-Work Balance*. Through the motivation of that class, my dream developed into a new goal I achieved this year by completing the ISU

Extension and Outreach Master Gardener Program and Internship. It has inspired me to stay active and involved in the Polk County gardening community."

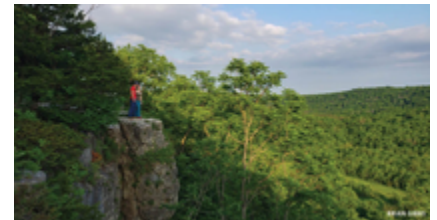
Visit (<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/become-master-gardener>) for more information on the Master Gardener program. Applications are being taken for the fall session!

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## Visit state parks. Check in. Earn prizes!

Looking for something to do this summer? Give your overall well-being a boost at any of Iowa's state parks! Make memories with family and friends as you explore Iowa's natural beauty and recreational opportunities. You can even sign up to win great prizes with a 2022 Iowa State Park Passport!

Start planning your state park adventures today with helpful information from the [Iowa Department of Natural Resources](#).



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## Next Step Challenge and Healthiest State Walk Coming Up!

It's time to get out your walking shoes and prepare for two great walking challenges offered as part of the Healthiest State Initiative. Join us for:

[The Next Step Challenge](#) September 12-October 21, 2022

Teams of two-10 Iowans compete in an active competition tracking the number of steps accumulated. Through an online dashboard, members report their step count in an effort to move their team up the challenge leaderboard. Participants have the ability to connect with Fitbit devices and Under Armor apps for easy tracking and reporting. Registration opens August 15, 2022.

[12th Annual Healthiest State Walk](#) October 5, 2022

The Annual Walk is an opportunity to join thousands of other Iowans statewide in a 30-minute walk. Workplaces, schools, organizations and communities are all encouraged to register starting August 1, 2022.

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## Iowa Veterans Home Supports Residents' Well-Being through Garden Box Program



As early as 1887, many residents of Iowa Veterans Home (IVH), previously known as the Soldiers Home, grew large plots of vegetables to provide food for the IVH community. Garden boxes were introduced to provide accessibility to those with different physical abilities, providing a great vehicle for both occupational and recreation therapy.

IVH has maintained garden boxes for many years, and currently has 65 boxes in its newly-renovated courtyard and 35 garden boxes outside of the Kenneth Ulery Building and Amos Fox Building. More than 70 residents currently maintain the garden boxes and are participants in horticulture therapy.

Horticulture therapy is a great therapeutic modality used to promote socialization and improve quality of life. Participants learn new skills or regain lost skills, providing a sense of well-being and improved self-esteem. The Iowa Veterans Home also has a greenhouse open throughout the year for residents to maintain plants and to start new seeds for the next spring planting season.

The program at IVH is maintained through donations for the purchase of flowers, plants, seeds, and other gardening supplies. Residents plant all types of flowers, plants, and vegetables, with the best reward coming when they harvest the flowers and veggies they grow!

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## Capitol Complex Farmers Market

The State Capitol Complex Farmers Market is back! Vendors and farmers will be on-site through September 27. See the [DAS website](#) for more information.



Not on the State Capital Complex? Check out [this list](#) of some other farmers markets in the state!

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## Giving Back Together: Volunteer as a Family!

Are you looking for something fun and fulfilling to do with your family this summer? Consider family volunteering! Whether it's with your kids, grandkids, or youth mentees, here are just a few of the many reasons to take time this summer to volunteer with your family or the kids in your life:

- Quality time. When you volunteer as a family, you strengthen family bonds while also teaching children important lessons about making valuable contributions to the community!
- Spark important conversations. When families who volunteer together are interviewed about the experience, they refer to the meaningful conversations they have with their children that wouldn't have happened otherwise and how this brings them closer as a family. Volunteering allows families a chance to talk about their own privileges and learn about important issues together.
- Develop lifelong habits of generosity and giving. Like most behaviors, service and volunteerism are learned behaviors. Kids who contribute learn early on that one small action can ripple out into big changes in the world and that mindset will stick with them as they grow, turning them into lifelong

volunteers.

To find family volunteer opportunities near you, search Volunteer Iowa's [statewide database of volunteer opportunities](#) and filter postings to include only "family-friendly" opportunities.

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## Do You Know?

- [SEHARC](#) (State of Iowa Health and Recreation Committee) connects you with offers for discounted tickets to area events and hosts fun activities throughout the year. If you are interested in receiving information on these opportunities, complete this [form](#) to be added to SEHARC's mailing list or follow them on Facebook!
  - [DAS Employee Assistance Program](#) (EAP) provides resources, monthly seminars, counseling services, and more.
  - For more great information, be sure to check out these Wellmark publications - [Wellmark Blue Magazine](#) and [Blue at Work](#).
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**To learn more about how Healthy Employees<sup>SM</sup> Powered by Wellmark is working with the State of Iowa to make the healthy choices easier for you, visit the [Healthy Employees website](#).**