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Newsletter  
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**ANNIE'S PROJECT**  
EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Annie's Project Educator's National  
Professional Development Conference  
September 22-24, 2015  
Iowa State University Memorial Union

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## Annie's Project Educator's National Professional Development Conference September 22-24, 2015 Iowa State University Memorial Union



"Annie's  
Project was  
a good place  
to get a lot  
of questions  
answered."

- Janice Porter,  
2014 Iowa  
Annie's Project  
Participant  
& Panelist  
at the 2015  
Annie's Project  
Educator's  
National  
Professional  
Development  
Conference



### **Kickoff - Honoring Beginnings** by Adriane Frauenholtz

The second Annie's Project Educator's National Professional Development Conference kicked off at the the Farmhouse Museum located on the Iowa State University campus on the evening of September 22, 2015. The Farmhouse is the site of the first building at the original Iowa State Agricultural Experiment Station created in 1860. Those attending this unique dining experience all were coming off of a big day of traveling and were ready to sit down to enjoy dinner and good company. Thirty people from several states fit around four tables on the three-season porch and in the living room. University Museums Interpretation Specialist David Faux led everyone on a tour of the historical farmhouse. Guests were surprised to learn about the home's connections to many famous agriculturalists like George Washington Carver and Henry Wallace.



### **Welcome Wednesday** by Lani McKinney

Learning officially began at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday morning with a welcome from Madeline Schultz, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Women in Agriculture Program Manager, and Ruth Hambleton, President and Founder of Annie's Project - Education for Farm Women. Attendees arranged themselves around the room from the west side of the room to the east according to their state as a way to get to know each other. It was exciting so see so many states west of





Ruth Hambleton and Madeline Schultz welcome attendees and get the conference started.

the Mississippi River. With 60 people attending, there were twenty-two states represented. They included Arkansas, Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

Ruth Hambleton introduced the outgoing Annie's Project National Leadership Team and the new Annie's Project – Education for Farm Women Board of Directors. She spoke about Annie's Project traditions, mission, principles and values. Iowa's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Coordinator, Linda Naeve, talked with attendees about the three pillars of sustainable agriculture – economic, environment, and social.

**Panel I: Incorporating Annie's Project into Career Pathways** by Adriane Frauenholtz

**Moderator:** Dr. Jason Johnson, Associate Professor and Extension Economist, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension; Texas Annie's Project State Coordinator

**Panelists:**

- Jenny Carleo, Agricultural Agent, Cape May County, Rutgers Cooperative Extension (NJ)
- Mae Smith, NW Area- Rangeland Resources Educator, Big Horn County, University of Wyoming Extension (WY)

Dr. Jason Johnson serves as the Annie's Project State Coordinator in Texas and led the first panel discussion on Wednesday morning entitled *Incorporating Annie's Project into Career Pathways*. He prefaced the panel discussion by noting there are two different ways to look at delivery of Annie's Project, either we are impelled or compelled. Both words describe a prompting to do something, but the difference lies in the reason, motivation or force behind it. If one is impelled to do something the motivation comes from within. If one is compelled to do something the motivation is spurred by an outside force. His aim was to have the panelists each discuss both approaches as it related to the panel discussion topic.



Mae Smith talks as a panelist to educator conference attendees about what works for her in Wyoming.



Jenny Carleo talks as a panelist to educator conference attendees about how Annie's Project participants are your biggest supporters.

Jason started the discussion questions with focus on the word impelled acknowledging with Annie's Project a lot of educators are impelled to do what they do because of an inside desire to reach out and help educate farm and ranch women. Jenny Carleo, an Annie's Project Facilitator in New Jersey, explained for her the key to feeling impelled is the loyalty of New Jersey's Annie's Project clientele. In her experience, the women taking Annie's Project were extremely helpful even to the point of helping them with funding the programs she delivered. Their support, financial and otherwise, impelled her to work hard to bring them the program. She also told educators in the room to ask participants and past participants for help. "Ask your women to help you... they are your biggest supporters," Jenny encouraged.

For Mae Smith, Annie's Project Facilitator in Wyoming, it was the desire to network with women impelling her. Mae intentionally used Annie's Project to get to know people in her new area. She said, "Finding strong networks really helps to grow Annie's Project." Mae also stressed the importance of targeting motivated and determined women. If we all try to go in open minded and determined, then we can succeed she says. While building the network is hard work, it pays off in the end. "You will find women will start attending these classes or join Annie's Project because of networking," said Mae. In her experience, she has found getting key speakers to come to the classes motivates individuals to come as well. "Sometimes to grow you need connections," she said.

Next Jason talked about how feeling compelled is another way to be successful in Annie's Project. Compelled is different



than impelled, he reminded us, in that we're being encouraged or forced to do something by an outside force, maybe when we don't have the push to do it ourselves. Jenny started her answer by stating for New Jersey Annie's Project facilitators to be successful, they need community support. The demand for Annie's Project is the outside compelling force driving her to continue to teach the program in her state. New Jersey has found they get long lasting support from people who heard of Annie's Project from publicity, such as social networks, which then was followed up by a good experience with the program. She also said she keeps supportive letters and e-mails to go back to and reread when she needs to feel encouraged. Jenny finds this an effective way to be compelled to move forward when she's not feeling impelled. Jason agreed. He also saves supportive letters and e-mails to revisit on hard days.

In Wyoming, Mae finds the fact Annie's Project is an established program to be compelling. "To get people, we need to have a stable program," stated Mae. She then reiterated she has found relationships, connections, and/or networking is a key concept to building the program both with participants and with extension colleagues. Annie's Project fosters all of these. When asked about how her participants like to be addressed, she admitted she has found ranch women are turned off by being called farm women so using "farm and ranch women" is a good wording change for reaching her audience.



Mae West (Wyoming) shares how Annie's Project being an established program compels her.

Jason concluded by saying, "Being impelled is nice because we are able to be self-motivated, but sometimes we need compelled people in our everyday lives."

Jenny and Mae received peer recognition for their outstanding extension work at the 2015 National Association of County Agricultural Agents conference last summer, earning the Distinguished Service Award and Award of Excellence, respectively. Annie's Project was a big part of that recognition.

**Lunch with Dr. Cathan Kress as Guest Speaker** by Morgan Ball

**Guest Speaker:** Cathann Kress, Vice President, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach



Dr. Cathan Kress joins the conference as a guest speaker at the event lunch.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Vice President Dr. Cathann Kress joined conference attendees for the first lunch of the conference as a guest speaker to verbally acknowledge and recognize the importance of what Annie's Project educators are doing across the nation. She started off by expressing her joy for Iowa State University and the "forward thinking" people who accompany it. Her main message centered around the word convocation. At Iowa State University, the students' convocation experience revolves around freshmen coming in and seniors graduating simultaneously. While their roles are different, the importance of their roles are equally valuable. Dr. Kress noted the same can be said about Annie's Project. She highlighted the 2015 conference launches many changes as Annie's Project national activities are moved forward to the non-profit organization. While positions might be changing, she reminded attendees the roles are maintaining their value. "Annie's Project will continue to embark on changes in the upcoming years," said Dr. Kress.

Dr. Kress also acknowledged the importance of Annie's Project and the impact it has made over the years. "Annie's Project has the numbers and data to back up their accomplishments," she said. There are 12,000 women nationally who have graduated from Annie's Project and the program was honored with an Iowa Governor's proclamation in 2013. These are real women facing real situations who are an underserved audience needing the opportunity to learn about risk management.

Dr. Kress concluded her talk by assuring attendees Iowa's intention is to continue involvement in Annie's Project. "Leaders secure commitment with commitment," she said. Iowa State University will continue to hold strong Annie's Project courses throughout Iowa.



L to R: Madeline Schultz, Ruth Hamblen and Dr. Cathann Kress

To read her speech in it's entirety, please see (click on the link below):  
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/annie/2015KressRemarks.pdf>

## Panel II: Partnering with USDA by Morgan Ball

**Moderator:** Kelvin Leibold, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Farm and Ag Business Management Specialist; Iowa Annie's Project Facilitator; Vice President of Annie's Project—Education for Farm Women

### Panelists:

- Tammy Pruin, Executive Director, Wright County, IA, Farm Service Agency
- Duane Voy, Regional Director, St. Paul, Minnesota Regional Office, Risk Management Agency
- Nicole Williams, Resource Conservationist, Marshall County, Iowa, Natural Resource Conservation Service.



L to R: Kelvin Leibold, Duane Voy, Nicole Williams, and Tammy Pruin

On Wednesday afternoon, ISU Extension and Outreach Farm and Ag Business Management Specialist, Kelvin Leibold, acknowledged there are many opportunities that can come from partnering with the USDA, but then asked the question, "how do you make that initial connection?"

Three professionals joined the conference attendees on Iowa State University's campus – Tammy Pruin, Executive Director (Wright County, IA, FSA); Duane Voy, Regional Director (St. Paul, MN Regional Office, RMA); and Nicole Williams, Resource Conservationist (Marshall County, IA, NRCS). All three have been involved with Annie's Project in the past. Tammy has worked with Kelvin on an Annie's Project steering committee and as a speaker. Nicole has presented at two courses and hopes to use her resources to recruit more

women to Annie's Project, and Duane has participated in grant giving. "The RMA grant was one of the first grants Ruth wrote for Annie's Project," said Madeline Schultz, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Women in Agriculture Program Manager.

All three USDA employee panelists emphasized the importance to educator attendees of communicating with their local offices. "Outreach activities are a part of our goals and we would like to partner with women in agriculture," said Tammy of FSA. "A lot of farm owners are now women and it is important to make the resources available to them." Both parties benefit from joint partnerships. All three professionals are concerned about the welfare of their farmers and want to direct them to programs that best meet their needs. The USDA professionals appreciate opportunities to speak to women in their communities. "We can give you as many handouts as you would like, but local offices will have the best knowledge and will be able to answer more questions in person," said Nicole.

Attendees were encouraged to direct any further questions about partnering to local offices nearest them. They were also



invited to make that initial contact with the USDA offices and be prepared with questions.

## First Day Concludes with Tours and Cake by Lani McKinney

Conference attendees were served barbecue from a local favorite, Hickory Park, at the Iowa State University (ISU) Research Dairy Farm before going on a tour of the farm and nearby compost facility.

Longtime ISU Research Dairy Farm employee, Mary Healey, led a tour of the farm which opened in 2007 and includes free stall, dry cow and heifer buildings designed for young cows and cows preparing to calve. The milking center also houses offices, a classroom, milking parlor, and public viewing area. The state-of-the-art facility sits three miles south of central campus and houses 440 cows and 340 head of young stock. As a teaching facility, the farm employs 65 students part-time.



Mary Healey gives conference attendees a tour of the ISU Research Dairy Farm.





Steve Jonas gives conference attendees a tour of the compost facility near the ISU Research Dairy Farm.

Annie's Project educators also had the opportunity to tour the nearby compost facility. In 2008, ISU constructed the facility for composting organic waste materials from several campus sources. Steve Jonas, was hired to manage the facility and explained how he has learned to more efficiently produce the quality of compost desired. He led the group through large hoop houses where compost and equipment are stored. The facility was planned as part of the ISU Research Dairy Farm to handle solid dairy manure in an environmentally responsible manner. It can handle more than 10,000 tons of organic wastes annually. Organic wastes processed by the composting facility include manure and bedding from the ISU Animal Science Dairy, Beef, Sheep, Swine and Equine farms; campus yard waste; campus greenhouse materials; ISU Dining food waste; and biomass research wastes from the ISU BioCentury Research Farm.

Before heading back to campus and hotels, attendees took a moment to celebrate Kelvin Leibold's 60th birthday milestone with a cow cake Madeline Schultz, cake baker extraordinaire, made and decorated herself the night before. Both Kelvin and Madeline have been leaders with Annie's Project in Iowa and nationally.



**Thursday's Highlight, the Annie's Project New Branding Roll Out** by Adriane Frauenhotlz

President Doug Jeske and Krissy Biesterfelt of Account Service with The Meyocks Group, an advertising agency based out of West Des Moines, Iowa joined the conference on Thursday morning to help unveil the new logo and marketing package they developed for Annie's Project - Education for Farm Women. According to Doug, Annie's Project is a genuine program, and The Meyocks Group really wanted to make a logo reflecting that and promoting empowerment of women. "Not only did we want to design a logo, but we wanted a logo that really fit Annie's Project well," he said.



President Doug Jeske and Krissy Biesterfelt of The Meyocks Group join the conference for the unveiling of the new Annie's Project logo and marketing materials.

Ruth Hambleton announced the new logo and said the theme is consistent with the values and direction of the Annie's Project – Education for Farm Women non-profit organization. "Our goal is to empower farm and ranch women through Annie's Project courses delivered in interactive, supportive learning environments focused on agricultural risk management," stated Ruth. "The new logo reflects the organization's values that women should have the knowledge and resources for any role they want to play in farm and ranch operations." The Annie's Project – Education for Farm Women leaders believe bringing women unbiased, research-based information about agricultural risk is key to successful ag business partnership and management.



"Not only did we want to design a logo, but we wanted a logo that really fit Annie's Project well." - President Doug Jeske

The logo reflects a contemporary design consistent with the role women have in agriculture today. It was developed from research with past and prospective Annie's Project participants, as well as key stakeholders. "We want to especially thank Doug, Krissy and everyone at The Meyocks Group for their leadership and skillful work in developing not only the logo, but many other branding images and guidelines," says Madeline Schultz. The Meyocks Group created the new brand identity on a pro bono basis for Annie's Project – Education for Farm Women.

Once The Meyocks Group developed some logo options and message strategies, Ruth Hambleton, Annie's Project – Education for Farm Women Founder and President, and her team sent out a survey to collect feedback. The survey was sent to past, current and potential future Annie's Project



participants, as well as interested agricultural industry representatives. Once the survey data was collected, Annie's Project team members used this feedback and their own reflections to choose the final logo.

The Meyocks Group initiated a banner template and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach (ISUEO) team members finalized the design and photos. A new banner was printed for all 34 current Annie's Project partnering states with support from the Farm Credit National Contributions program. The Meyocks Group, ISUEO, and Farm Credit National Contributions also partnered to produce and distribute flash drives for each state with electronic files that include logos, branding guidelines, and templates for brochures, posters and other marketing pieces. It is hoped these flash drives will help states begin to use the exciting new Annie's Project branding materials right away.

"Annie's Project is one terrific program. Now the image matches what we are all about," said Ruth. Thank you to The Meyocks Group from Annie's Project – Education for Farm Women. "Their hard work and dedication to the mission of the program to reach farm and ranch women across the nation is appreciated."

**Panel III: Annie's Project Participants as Pillars of Sustainability** by Lani McKinney

**Moderator:** Madeline Schultz, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Women in Ag Program Manager; Iowa Annie's Project State Coordinator

**Panelists:**

- Kellie Blair, Webster County, Iowa – 2010 IA Annie's Project Participant; Common Ground Volunteer and Water Quality Instructor
- Cheryl and Cassie Johnson, Woodbury County (IA) – 2013 IA Annie's Project Participants; Primary Operators of Family Farm after Husband's/Father's Accidental Death
- Janice Turner, Polk/Hancock Counties (IA) – 2014 IA Annie's Project Participant; Improved Farm Profitability through FSA Programs

Thursday's program continued with a panel featuring four Iowa Annie's Project participants talking about their experience with Annie's Project, what they learned and how it helped them. The women's experiences represented real-life examples of how Annie's Project enhances agricultural sustainability through increased profitability, improved natural resource management, and stronger social networks and farm families.



Madeline Shultz moderates a panel of Iowa Annie's Project participants on the final day of the conference.

Cheryl and Cassie Johnson who farm in Woodbury County found themselves in an unanticipated position in the fall before they took Annie's Project when they lost their husband/father in a farm accident. Even though they were involved in the farming operation, they still found themselves scrambling to try to make sense of it all and make farm decisions. Cassie had been helping her father with the cattle, but Cheryl confessed, "This farming thing was foreign to me." Taking Annie's Project less than six months after her husband, Dan's, death "was a salvation for us" she said motioning to her daughter, Cassie. Melissa O' Rourke, the Iowa Annie's Project educator who facilitated the class added, "They were involved (in the farm business), but when this happened they HAD to make the decisions."



Cheryl and Cassie Johnson exchange a grateful glance when talking about what Annie's Project did for them in their farm situation.

The Real Colors personality assessment held on the first night of class "was huge for us" added Cheryl. "Cassie and I probably benefited more than anyone else in class." In completing the assessment they found they were two different personality types - Cheryl was a gold personality and her daughter, Cassie, was an orange personality. Knowing and recognizing the difference in their personality types helped them "to understand how to communicate" said Cheryl.

Both Cassie and Cheryl felt having an all-female classroom was important. Cheryl



says she felt “really comfortable” to ask whatever questions she wanted or needed to with only women in the room. Not very long ago she had a negative experience speaking with someone from a local agriculture office where, in Cheryl’s own words, “He made me feel stupid.” This was not the case in the Annie’s Project classroom.

Janice Turner, a landowner with farms in Hancock and Polk Counties, agreed. “Annie’s Project was a comfortable environment where everyone could ask questions,” she said. One of the highlights for Janice was how she benefited from learning in class about Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs available to her. Empowered with the knowledge of what she had learned in class, she got all her resources together, called her tenant to go with her to the FSA office, and walked into the office with all the data she needed in hand. Janice, they informed her later, was the second landowner in her county to complete the program sign-up last fall.



Janice Porter talks about how much she enjoyed the welcoming environment of her Annie’s Project class.

“We’ve diversified and grown since Annie’s Project,” Kellie Blair of Webster County stated. For her the biggest benefit of Annie’s Project was the networking and the access to resources. “I didn’t know they (the resources) were available to me. I knew they were available to my husband, but not to me,” said Kellie. “A lot has happened” since she took Annie’s Project in 2010 Kellie says. Besides making a great new friend, the networking that took place really opened doors for her. Kellie has become heavily involved with conservation, become active with a group called Common Ground, started a blog ([www.homeagainfinnegan.blogspot.com](http://www.homeagainfinnegan.blogspot.com)), is now on the Webster County Extension Council, and has been a speaker at an Annie’s Project class to talk about water quality. Their farm has grown, too. “We’re thinking about hiring a full time person in the next couple of years,” said Kellie. “My husband and I are better business partners because of the class.”



Kellie Blair talks about how the things she learned in Annie’s Project class empowered her to have more meaningful conversations about the farm with her husband at home and get more involved in agriculture related activities and causes around the state.

“You really need to know the people coming to your program,” Cheryl advised the educator attendees. She and Cassie found the women at Annie’s Project to be “nice, welcoming and understanding” which was really helpful considering not much time had passed since they had experienced loss. “There were two older ladies in their 80’s and they were awesome,” said Cassie, further explaining they were of full energy and eager to learn. Cheryl added, “I wanted to say to the young women, ‘Take this seriously because this is so important.’” She noted there are so many misnomers needing to be cleared up - things women need to understand regarding the death of a spouse with reference to debt and the

existence of wills. “There’s nothing like making a decision totally on your own,” said Cheryl with a satisfied smile.

Kellie said, “I benefited from the networking and the empowerment that what I learned in class gave me. It enabled me to go home and ask a lot of questions.” These things created great conversations. “We still have our disagreements about what my role is,” laughed Kellie, “but we’re working together... my husband and I have a lot better relationship about farm things.” She liked that the class gave her knowledge to know what questions to ask. Kellie joked, “I don’t know if he (her husband) was happy he sent me to Annie’s Project or not.” Cassie chimed in, “Most of our speakers were women... it was easier to ask a woman.” Kellie laughed and agreed. For sure, they all agreed on one thing. “Annie’s Project was a good place to get a lot of questions answered,” Janice said, as the other panelists nodded.



Panelists Kellie Blair and Janice Porter share a laugh.

At the conclusion of the panel, Kellie advised educators to give their participants homework. “Empower your students to go out and do something outside of class,” she said. “That ripple effect is important.” Cheryl added, “For me, it’s ‘what’s next?’ because if you have it, I’m coming.... everything was so wonderful. It was a salvation for us.” She pauses before adding, “Really.”

## Annie's Project Program Training by Madeline Schultz

Mixed in between the panels, guest speakers, and tours was the core training on how to develop and deliver Annie's Project courses. The trainers were experienced Annie's Project educators and Annie's Project National Leadership Team members including Karisha Devlin, Agribusiness Specialist, University of Missouri Extension; Dr. Jason Johnson, Assistant Professor of Economics, Texas Agri-Life Extension; Kelvin Leibold, Farm and Ag Business Management Specialist, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach; Madeline Schultz, Women in Agriculture Program Manager, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, and Mary Sobba, Agribusiness Specialist, University of Missouri Extension. The team was also joined by Dr. Mandi Anderson, Research Scientist, Research Institute for Studies in Education, Iowa State University.



Dr. Mandi Anderson talks with educators about evaluation.

The training centered around program development process and included instruction and discussion on assessing needs and the educational resources and partners available to meet those needs; developing curricula; designing and marketing programs; implementing programs; and evaluating and reporting program results. Just like in an Annie's Project course, there was great interaction and discussion on key topics as audience members were encouraged to share their experiences with each other.

## The Future of Annie's Project by Madeline Schultz



Annie's Project - Education for Farm Women Founder and President Ruth Hambleton talks to conference attendees about her vision for the future as the

Ruth Hambleton wrapped up the conference by sharing her future vision of Annie's Project. The Annie's Project – Education for Farm Women non-profit organization has an eleven-member board. In addition, Claudette Roper serves as the Director of Administration. The board is organized with committees on financial stewardship, educator partners, marketing, program impact, and other key tasks. Over the past couple of years, the board of directors has worked hard to prepare the organization to reach its goals of supporting educator partners and providing education for farm and ranch women. The transition of national Annie's Project activities from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach to the non-profit will be completed on November 1, 2015. As the organization grows and takes on new challenges and responsibilities, they plan to stay true to the original mission of Annie's Project to empower farm and ranch women to be better business partners through networks and by organizing and managing critical information.

## Special thanks to our sponsors:



**And we would like to also say a special thanks to others who made this professional development conference a success:** (L to R) Dr. Jason Johnson (Texas), Mary Sobba (Missouri), Morgan Ball (Iowa), Madeline Schultz (Iowa), Lani McKinney (Iowa), Adriane Frauenholtz (Iowa), Karisha Devlin (Missouri), Lisa Scarbrough (Iowa), and Kelvin Leibold (Iowa).



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The team welcomes comments on the newsletter and article submissions. You can find past newsletters and other information about Annie's on our website:



<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/annie/index.html>

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