Our health in balance
The more we learn about diet, exercise and lifestyle, the more we understand how our choices – what to eat, how we move, and how we live – determine how healthy and happy our life journey will be.
“I’d really mastered the smile,” says Allison Lansman. But no one knew how sad she was all the time.

The Iowa State University junior from Fort Dodge, Iowa, struggled with obesity most of her life. She describes her younger self as “a bit of an outcast” before joining 4-H. Through her involvement with the youth development organization, Lansman found her niche. She gained confidence and friends but still faced issues with her health and self-esteem through adolescence.

“I could barely walk up stairs and hated P.E. The social pressures of high school and keeping a smile on my face were so much work,” she recalls.

Unhappy, unhealthy and about to start college, Lansman decided to make a change – first to her diet, then to her physical activity. By the end of her freshman year, she had lost 50 pounds. With vigilance, she’s maintained her weight and healthy lifestyle.

“It’s a phenomenal feeling,” she says, one she’d like to see others experience.

“Love – helping people.” A century ago, this meant learning to be a teacher or homemaker. Today, the college’s array of sophisticated disciplines and robust extension and outreach programs reflect the complexity of our society and its concerns. Among these concerns is wellness, a key college initiative.

“We want to create an environment where people live a healthy lifestyle from the beginning, rather than having to be cured of illness or disease,” White says. “This includes eating a nutritious diet and incorporating physical activity throughout the day.”

Americans are failing on both counts. According to a 2013 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 80 percent of adults don’t meet the federal government’s overall physical activity guidelines, and most consume an unhealthy diet.

The result: a country entrenched in the physical and economic effects of obesity.

Linked to increased risk for Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, cancers and other illness, obesity has been described as the fastest growing public health challenge the nation has ever faced. If left on its current trajectory, says the 2009 report “The Future Cost of Obesity,” an estimated 103 million Americans will be obese by 2018, and obesity-related conditions will generate $344 billion in healthcare costs.

The good news is that many of these conditions can be reversed – especially Type 2 diabetes – through diet and exercise.

Clarifying weighty issues
Associate professor of food science and human nutrition Matt Rowling, whose research explores how diabetes affects vitamin D metabolism, says that people love – helping people.”

Understanding the consequences daily choices have on our wellbeing is key. Our focus is to provide objective, research-based information to consumers to build healthy, strong relationships.

Debra Sellers
Associate Dean and Director of Human Sciences Extension and Outreach

RUN FOR FUN
Running just 5-10 minutes a day, no matter your speed, can reduce your risk of dying from heart disease, says D.C. Lee, assistant professor of kinesiology.

FINDING THE PERFECT FITBAND
Not all fitness bands are created equal. A 2014 Iowa State study led by kinesiology professor Gregory Wek found that the BodyMedia FIT was the top performer, with a 9.3 percent error rating comparable to research models.

SAVINGS SENSE
Start a savings plan by setting a specific, attainable goal, says Jonathan Fox, director of Iowa State’s Financial Counseling Clinic and Ruth Whipp Sherwin Professor, such as paying off a credit card, starting an emergency savings fund, or increasing contributions to a retirement plan.

Plaque-fighting flax
Ingesting flaxseed can decrease high cholesterol and significantly reduce the risk of heart attack, heart disease and stroke, according to Suzanne Hendrich, university professor and Luna M. Lovell Fellow in food science and human nutrition.

A SMART START TO YOUR DAY
One thing anyone can do to be healthier: eat breakfast. According to food science and human nutrition clinician Sally Barclay, studies show that breakfast eaters have better success at achieving and maintaining a healthy body weight.

DO-_BE-DO YOURSELF SOME GOOD
According to Elizabeth Stegemoller, assistant professor in kinesiology, Parkinson’s disease sufferers can improve their pitch duration, vocal loudness and swallow control after just two months of singing – not to mention improve their quality of life.

LITTLE BITS HELP MOST
To limit excess weight gain during pregnancy, staying active throughout the day is more beneficial than a steady 30 minutes of exercise, says Christina Campbell, associate professor of food science and human nutrition, and Sandra S. and Roy W. Uelner Professor.

Health and wellness goes beyond exercising and eating well. Wellness encompasses the psychological, emotional and even financial aspects of our lives. Here are just a few tips from Iowa State faculty experts for how you can be healthy, wealthy and wise.
with obesity are often malnourished, consuming foods that are high in calories but lacking micronutrients. Without nutrients and vitamins, the body can’t maintain muscle or bone density, resist disease or support a level of physical activity that promotes health.

So why not just eat healthier?

“Some people argue there is too much cheap, unhealthy food. But we also have access to healthy options,” says Ruth MacDonald, professor and chair of food science and human nutrition. “Is it the food system or personal choice? There’s no easy answer to that.”

With the department jointly administered by the colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences and of Human Sciences, FSHN faculty take a multi-faceted, hands-on approach to educating students.

“Our curriculum is heavily lab-based. Students have opportunities to learn about food preparation, assessing nutrient status, counseling people about nutrition, and producing and analyzing food,” MacDonald says.

Beyond campus, Human Sciences Extension and Outreach translates the college’s cumulative knowledge into consumer-centered programs aimed at helping Iowans live healthfully.

“Health and wellness are the foundation for everything we do throughout our lives,” says Debra Sellers, associate dean and director of Human Sciences Extension and Outreach. “Understanding the consequences daily choices have on our wellbeing is key. Our focus is to provide objective, research-based information to consumers to build healthy, strong relationships, families and communities.”

Programs such as Rising Star Interns (see p. 7) and several nutrition classes provide Iowans with healthy eating strategies, and child care nutrition training helps ensure children get a healthy start. Likewise, Living (well through) Intergenerational Fitness and Exercise, or LIFE, extends wellness programming to older adults—a particular concern, since older adults are at increased risk for malnutrition, chronic disease and loss of muscle mass, due mostly to physical changes and an inactive lifestyle.

“Human Sciences Extension and Outreach is a perfect match for addressing these issues,” says Sarah Francis, assistant professor in FSHN, and extension and outreach specialist. “We have experts in every area. For example, the LIFE program offers a balanced curriculum of nutrition education and physical activity.

As Rowling points out, “Exercise and nutrition are the cornerstones of good health. Having one without the other isn’t optimal. Even if you eat well, you still need the benefits of exercise.”

Moving toward health

In his lecture “Physical inactivity: Should we consider it a disease?”, 2015 Pease Family Scholar Michael Joyner cited research that found 30 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous exercise a day resulted in increased life expectancy. Yet most Americans fall short of even that.

“The amount of physical activity in our lives—throughout the day and year—has declined over the past several decades,” says Phil Martin, professor and chair of kinesiology.

Martin partially attributes our sedentary lifestyles to an automobile-centric culture, safety concerns, poorly designed communities and technical innovation. While a large problem, even small changes in behavior can make a positive impact, he says.

Associate professor of kinesiology

Students who come to [the College of Human Sciences] are passionate about what they do. They make a career out of something they love—helping people.

PAMELA WHITE  Human Sciences Dean’s Chair, College of Human Sciences

Rising Stars boost local foods

Chances are you’ve never seen a traveling vegetable garden—unless you encountered the Rising Star interns last summer.

Sponsored by Iowa State Extension and Outreach and the colleges of Human Sciences and Design, Rising Star interns work with extension staff to connect Iowans with Iowa State resources.

“Our goal is to benefit communities and provide meaningful educational experiences for students as they look for careers,” says Bob Dodds, interim assistant vice president for extension county services.

Created by students, the mobile gardens were part of an overall strategy to connect southeast Iowans to the benefits of local foods. Intended as traveling classrooms for schools, the gardens were first introduced at county fairs. Other projects included a community garden design and a garden recipe book for children, authored by Nina Streuslin, a junior studying dietetics.

“I developed my communication skills by explaining nutrition to people who aren’t in the field,” Streuslin says of her mobile garden experience. “It was challenging, but that’s my future career.”
Panteleimon Ekkekakis is exploring ways to achieve those changes in middle-aged, sedentary adults. An expert in exercise psychology, Ekkekakis says decisions around exercise rely heavily on emotion.

“It’s human nature to gravitate toward pleasure and avoid displeasure,” he says. “If people associate exercise with negative experiences, at some point they naturally avoid it.”

Ekkekakis and doctoral student Zachary Zenko found that progressively decreasing an exercise session’s intensity makes people remember it more positively, which potentially could increase the likelihood that people would repeat the experience.

While getting adults off the couch is essential to the physical and economic health of our society, it’s even more critical to get our children moving. Currently, only one in three children is physically active each day, and as screen time increases and schools reduce physical education and recess time, decreasing activity levels hinder children’s physical and cognitive development.

Assistant professor of kinesiology Spyridoula Vazou is working to change this. Partnering with the Iowa Department of Education, Vazou developed Move for Thought, a program that integrates physical education and recess time, strengthening infrastructure to support healthy adults, carrying their healthy habits forward to create an improved culture of health for future generations.

Gregory Welk, professor of kinesiology, is also working to improve children’s health. Among his efforts is SWITCH, a collaborative project with Iowa schools that encourages kids to increase physical activity, decrease screen time and eat a healthier diet.

Such programs hold the promise for a brighter future, since healthy children are more likely to become healthy adults, carrying their healthy habits forward to create an improved culture of health for future generations.

Potential realized

As our nation’s health concerns escalate, so does the demand for people who are able and want to address them. If the College of Human Sciences’ booming enrollment is any indicator, such professionals will come from Iowa State.

“It’s exhilarating to be part of such a strong college,” White says. “But accommodating rapid growth poses some issues.” Issues that philanthropy has the ability to help solve. Whether strengthening infrastructure to support such growth, bringing in more experts similar to the Pease Family Scholar, or supporting unpaid internships, like Rising Star Interns, to help students get a head start in their meaningful careers, philanthropy enables students to harness their potential and put it into action.

As for Lansman, she’s already making a difference, sharing her story and contributing her skills as a youth ambassador to the National 4-H Healthy Living Management Team. Closer to home, Lansman aims to bring healthy living curricula to Iowa’s youth.

“This is something I am truly passionate about. It’s not just about things I’ve learned,” she says. “It’s coming from my heart.”

From PHILANTHROPIC GIVING

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The future health of our nation depends on the health of its people – a mission students in the College of Human Sciences are being equipped to undertake.

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TWO DECADES OF OPPORTUNITY

The Christina Hixson Opportunity Award program’s 20th anniversary is really a celebration of the realized promise of 2,000 Iowa students.

By Veronica Lorson Fowler | Photo by Christopher Gannon

Even after 20 years, Debra Sanborn says there’s still always at least one Christina Hixson Opportunity Award nominee that brings the selection committee to a halt.

“Going into it, you kind of steel yourself,” says Sanborn, director of the Iowa State University program. “You know you’re going to read difficult stories. Even so, there’s always one that just floors you.”

That’s saying something. For two decades now, the Hixson Awards have lent a significant helping hand to nearly 2,000 incoming Iowa State students, selected for both their remarkable promise and their often moving stories of coping with financial and personal adversity.

Students such as current senior Kat Mogongwa, whose mother, an immigrant from South Africa, raised him on Chicago’s rough South Side. She enrolled him in parochial schools until his sophomore year in high school, when she could no longer afford the tuition. Rather than put her son in public school, she sent him to Osceola, Iowa, to live with friends who had hosted her as an exchange student years ago.

Mogongwa had been hoping to afford a small, regional college. With the Hixson Opportunity Award to study at Iowa State, he is well on his way to his dream career in advertising.

The Hixson Opportunity Award, given annually to at least one student in each of Iowa’s 99 counties, has made a difference in the ability of hundreds of high school students like Mogongwa to attend college. These students face such challenges as loss of family farms, bankruptcy, serious illnesses, caring for sick parents, refugee status, devastating fires, and at times abuse situations.

“We are giving them an opportunity to get an education that they might not have had otherwise,” Sanborn says. The grant, which covers half of Iowa State tuition and fees, accounts for about $15,000 over eight semesters. More than 80 percent of students receiving the award complete their Iowa State degree, 72 percent of those have stayed in Iowa.

They’re alumni like Jami Haberl, a native of Lohrville, Iowa, and a 2000 graduate in community health education. The oldest of five children, she grew up on a farm and became the first in her immediate family to earn a college degree. Her younger sister struggled with a rare metabolic disorder requiring her parents to spend much of their time at University of Iowa Hospitals in Iowa City.

Haberl is now the executive director of Iowa’s Healthiest State Initiative, an appropriate way of giving forward if there ever was one.

“It wasn’t just the money,” Haberl said, “though that was important. The program also provided an opportunity right out of the gate for me to network with other students.”

Haberl met Christina Hixson, who makes a point to get to know the award recipients. The young woman was inspired by Hixson’s story, both of success and of giving forward. “We could only wish that we could be lucky enough to achieve what she has and give back the way she has.”

“A special celebration
In April, Hixson Opportunity Scholar alumni and current recipients came from around the country to re-unite with classmates, celebrate accomplishments, and show their gratitude to the person who set them on the path to success.

At one point a line snaked around the room as young people waited for their chance to thank Christina Hixson personally—and to snap a photo of themselves with their hero. As might be expected, many tears were shed, but there was also much laughter and joy among their “family.”

“We had a lot of Hixson couples in attendance, students who met because of the Hixson Program,” says Debra Sanborn. “It was a very special night for Christina and all of our Hixson Scholars.”

LEARN MORE
Learn more about the Hixson Opportunity Awards at www.dso.iastate.edu/hixson
LEARNING IN THE LAB

Undergraduate research awards give students the opportunity to connect theory with practice working alongside Iowa State’s leading research faculty.

By Thomas R. O’Donnell | Photo by Paul Gates

As an undergraduate researcher, Iowa State student Victoria Ridout constantly carries lessons from her classes into the lab and vice versa. This past academic year Ridout, a junior in biochemistry from Ankeny, Iowa, conducted research that may help understand certain human diseases. She performed her own study into the effect of phosphate concentrations and pH on the development of the model plant Arabidopsis thaliana – research that can inform other studies done on similar biological components found in the human body.

As a recipient of the Linder Family Undergraduate Research Fellowship, Ridout had the opportunity to not only conduct her study start to finish, but also earn credit hours for her work. She presented her research at meetings with the lab group overseen by Gustavo MacIntosh, associate professor of biochemistry, biophysics and molecular biology. This spring, she displayed a poster with her findings at a conference in St. Louis and at Iowa State’s Stupka Undergraduate Research Symposium.

“I’ve definitely learned how to apply the lessons from class in my research, and gained communication skills to explain my research,” Ridout says.

Her experience demonstrates how rigorous undergraduate research at Iowa State can be, says Guru Rao, Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust Professor and chair of the Roy J. Carver Department of Biochemistry, Biophysics and Molecular Biology. “This is not a trivial exercise for students.”

Most Linder Fellows coauthor scientific publications they can add to their resumes, boost their chances of success in graduate research or the working world.

William Jenks, professor and chair of the department of chemistry, says students often make noteworthy research contributions, but “the greater significance is the immersion experience in the laboratory preparing them to be really excellent when they head out to graduate school.”

In Jenks’ department, awards such as the Alice and Donald Hudson Undergraduate Research Scholarship provide majors with a stipend similar to what they might earn in part-time employment during the school year or full-time summer employment. “It allows them to essentially treat working in a lab like a job students would take to support themselves,” Jenks says. The goal is to give good students “the best opportunities for research experiences as they can get.”

Sometimes lab work teaches hard lessons about persistence. Stephen Todey, a senior chemistry major from Ames, began working with assistant professor of chemistry Javier Vela as a freshman. The opportunity for undergraduate research was the main reason he chose Iowa State, Todey says. But it was only as junior, when Todey was a Hudson Scholar, that his reactions to make nanoparticle precursors succeeded. “By then I had worked my way up to a degree of autonomy that was nice to have,” says Todey, who presented a poster at the American Chemical Society meeting in San Francisco last summer.

It was quite a change from his first semester, when he knew “literally nothing” about the research Vela and graduate student Sam Alvarado conducted. “They created a very good environment in which to learn.”

LEARN MORE
Learn more about the importance of undergraduate research at www.undergradresearch.iastate.edu
Giving power of (and to) women

Not surprisingly, it was a woman who first lit the charitable spark in Tammy Stein. Now a committee member of Women & Philanthropy, the Iowa State University Foundation program to educate and encourage women to be charitable leaders at Iowa State and in their communities, Stein enthusiastically encourages other women to find their philanthropic voice.

How did you develop your philanthropic philosophy and interests? My mother was a nurse, and when my siblings and I were small she made us have lemonade stands. All the money we earned was given to a homeless shelter. Ever since then I’ve been helping people or giving my time. I’m a nurse like my mother, and so I think it’s just a part of the makeup of a person.

What areas do you give to at Iowa State? Even though I’m not a graduate of Iowa State, my husband, Jim, is, and we donate to scholarships in the veterinary medicine program. We’re always getting notes from students and have even met some of our scholarship recipients. It’s such a rewarding experience.

How long have you been involved with Women & Philanthropy? I’ve been on the program’s leadership committee for four years. Before I joined the committee, I had no concept of how much these women had accomplished. All the committee members have such varied interests and have done such wonderful things in their communities and all over the world. We bring in nationally recognized speakers to present at our annual event, and I always come away from that experience with so many things that inspire me.

What advice would you give to women about charitable giving? Search your soul. Gather ideas from other women on how you can give your time, talent and possessions to others. It’s about knowing what’s in your heart – a wonderful feeling to have.

Row 1: (l. to r.) Row 1: Ellen Moleculeson Walvoord, Order of the Knoll Cardinal and Gold Award; Thomas D. McGee, Order of the Knoll Faculty and Staff Award; Evonne E. and Thomas A. Smith, Distinguished Alumni Award; J. Elaine Hieber, Honorary Alumna Award.

Row 2: Larissa Holtmyer Jones, President and CEO, Iowa State University Foundation; Deloris R. Wright, Order of the Knoll Campanile Award; Dennis Muilenburg, The Boeing Company, Order of the Knoll Corporation and Foundation Award; Martha S. Robes, Honorary Alumna Award; Steven Leath, President, Iowa State University.

Row 3: Jeffery W. Johnson, Lora and Russ Talbot Iowa State University Alumni Association Endowed President and CEO; Maynard G. Hogberg, Order of the Knoll Faculty and Staff Award; Richard N. Jurgens, Distinguished Alumnus Award; Theodore M. Crosbie, Distinguished Alumnus Award.

Each spring the Distinguished Awards Celebration recognizes alumni and friends of Iowa State who honor the university through their contributions and successes. The 2015 honorees (in bold) are:

Distinguished by deed and dedication

Iowa State has once again been recognized as a “Community Engaged University” by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The 10-year reclassification recognizes Iowa State’s commitment to engaging with the community through teaching and learning, research, extension and outreach, and economic development programs.

Continuing commitment to the community

In a row!

Iowa State has captured its ninth LEED certification for green construction or building renovation, with the Jeff and Deb Hansen Agriculture Student Learning Center earning a Gold certification.

Fashionably great

Iowa State University is on trend. According to the independent fashion news website Fashionista.com, Iowa State ranks as the 20th best fashion school in the world. The ranking is based on tuition, famous and successful alumni, feedback from current students and alumni, and premier faculty.

In brief

Not surprisingly, it was a woman who first lit the charitable spark in Tammy Stein. Now a committee member of Women & Philanthropy, the Iowa State University Foundation program to educate and encourage women to be charitable leaders at Iowa State and in their communities, Stein enthusiastically encourages other women to find their philanthropic voice.
Marston Hall renovation digs up the past

Lunch pails, a ceramic plate and a Civil War-era cup are not exactly the kind of thing to bring the Smithsonian running. But these artifacts, found by the construction workers involved in the Marston Hall renovation, are valuable to Iowa State as symbols of the daily routines of the people involved in constructing the first of the iconic limestone buildings on campus in 1903.

“I love working in our oldest buildings because we find the most amazing pieces of day-to-day history in them,” said Kerry Dixon, facilities project manager.

The renovation has also led to the discovery of a wine barrel, a lard bucket and an inkwell. The inkwell, which would have held ink for a 19th century writer's pen, is believed to date back to 1890.

“Finding these artifacts reveals a glimpse into Marston Hall’s past. It makes you think about how construction has changed,” Dixon said. “These pieces were part of the day-to-day existence of craftsmen and students over 100 years ago. It makes me excited to see what else we find.”

Learn more about the renovation at www.engineering.iastate.edu/marston.

FOR VETS’ SUCCESS
Iowa State is 10th on BestColleges.com’s list of the 40 best colleges for veterans. The Iowa State profile notes the Student Veterans Center’s weekly dinners for students who serve or have served in the military and university support for veterans across several key areas.

AWARDING ACHIEVEMENT
Catherine Kling, Charles F. Curtiss Distinguished Professor of Agriculture and Life Sciences, professor of economics and director of the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development, has been elected to the National Academy of Sciences for her achievements in original research. She is the 11th Iowa State faculty member and first woman at the university to receive the honor, considered one of the most prestigious accomplishments among U.S. scientists and engineers.

YEARS STRONG
For nearly 70 years, Iowa State University’s Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory has helped keep the world’s food supply plentiful and safe by diagnosing diseases and other threats to Iowa’s $14 billion animal agricultural industries, with 25 faculty and more than 100 technical staff processing 70,000 submissions annually – about 1.5 million tests total – which is double the caseload from just four years ago.
GIVING FORWARD

CAPTURING THAT ‘MAGIC CONNECTION’

A commissioned painting captures the connection that yielded the legacies of George Washington Carver and Henry A. Wallace – connections still occurring at Iowa State today.

GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER was studying art at Simpson College in 1890 when his art teacher, recognizing his interest in plants, encouraged him to study botany at Iowa Agricultural College in Ames instead. There, he befriended his dairying professor’s young son, Henry A. Wallace, whom Carver took on botanical walks exploring the Iowa countryside.

The rest, as they say, is history: The seeds of ideas that Carver later used to revolutionize crops such as cotton and peanuts were planted in Wallace, who went on to commercialize hybrid corn seed as a founder of Pioneer Hi-Bred International.

Their relationship and mutual sense of wonder is captured in Do you Know What’s Inside This Flower? George Washington Carver Mentors a Young Henry A. Wallace by Iowa artist Rose Frantzen. A gift for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in 1978 Iowa State alumni Jim and Marcia (Henderson) Borel, the painting is layered in meaning – of minds meeting, relationships forged, and connections made that have touched the lives of billions of people worldwide.

“This painting opened my eyes to the story of these two extraordinary people,” Marcia Borel says. “One was a young man, one a child, when their paths crossed at Iowa State. One born to slave parents, one a son of privilege. Both were loners with a curiosity about nature. It is a story about learning – on many levels. It is a story about a teacher and a little tag-along student, and how the light of education can transcend all and lift the world to a better place.”

Wendy Wintersteen, Endowed Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, hopes the painting inspires faculty, students and staff as art created for the college has for decades: “The amazing legacy of Carver and Wallace shows the extraordinary potential of this college to help the students, the state and the world,” she says.

The Borels couldn’t agree more. “This gift is meant to honor the magic of that connection between teacher and student, academia and application, discovery and development, seeds and growth – and potential,” Marcia says. “You can see just how far that light of knowledge rippled through the mind of his young student, Henry Wallace, into a world fed by the science and the miracles and mysteries of the nature they both loved.”

A version of this story appeared in STORIES, the magazine of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in April.

Learn More

View this and other college works of art at www.stories.cals.iastate.edu

WAYS TO GIVE

The Iowa State University Foundation can help you give a gift that moves lives forward.

The Nairs

Our education and our relationships, both personal and professional, have been the foundation of our story. Iowa State provided us with great theory and practice. We became good engineers and, more importantly, good citizens. The generosity shown by Iowans helped shape our values and our long-term giving intentions. By including the university in our philanthropic plans, we hope future students are able to access the great education at Iowa State and to create the foundation for their own stories.

– JOE JOE CHACKO-NAIR, class of 1992, and BALAN NAIR, classes of 1989 and 1994. The Nairs’ giving at Iowa State includes current and deferred support to enhance the educational experience of students in residence life and business majors.

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