

Harrisdale Homestead
Report to Wallace Foundation
2/28/2016
Ardyth & Gil Gillespie

Harrisdale Homestead Mission: *We seek to contribute to rural vitality and sustainability by facilitating activities that foster local food and agriculture, cultivate community, and promote democratic participation and leadership.*

We believe that we can support health and well-being in Cass County and Southwest Iowa through engaging with and being informed by local, regional, state, and global organizations.

Ardyth & Gil Joint Activities under Harrisdale Homestead:

- Southwest Iowa Food and Farming Initiative (SWIFFI): whose mission is “...to foster the social and physical infrastructure needed to realize its vision by acting as an information clearinghouse, educating and building relationships among producers, processors, distributors and consumers, and facilitating networks among food-related businesses.”
 - Participating to support local foods in SW Iowa through networking, joint projects, and assessing opportunities and challenges
 - Hosted February 2016 SWIFFI meeting
- Iowa Regional Food System Working Group (RFSWG; <https://sites.google.com/site/iowarfwsg/project-definition>): “maximizes the potential for community-based, economically sustainable, and environmentally and socially responsible food enterprises by supporting education, conducting research, and facilitating partnerships.”
 - Attending meetings, networking, and assessing local foods situation in Iowa
- Cass County Food System Action Coalition (led by ISU Extension & Outreach – Cass County as part of the Agricultural Urbanism Toolkit process sponsored by the ISU Community Design Lab): “. . . a PROCESS that promotes public interest design through ENGAGEMENT with community leaders, leading to a holistic design incorporating community values around food. We use AGRICULTURAL URBANISM TACTICS to promote local food system revitalization in communities. The Toolkit has the potential to improve food security, create resilient communities, promote social equity, increase environmental diversity, and build financial sustainability for individuals and communities.”
 - Supporting the project with our time and expertise

Ardyth Activities under Harrisdale Homestead:

- Healthy Cass County: Brings together health care delivery systems, public health agencies and community organizations to improve health in Cass County
 - Participated in developing the 5-year plan for Cass County Public Health
 - Participating in the infrastructure and communication steering committee to improve communication with Cass County residents and organizations
- Iowa Food Access and Health Collaborative Leadership Team: works toward “cultivating a diverse and just food system which eliminates hunger, increases access to nutritious foods and improves the health and well-being of all Iowans”.

- Facilitated strategic planning for the group
- Participating in the leadership team meetings for *thinking and linking*
- Thomas A. Lyson Center for Civic Agriculture and Food (<http://lysoncenter.org/>; formerly the Food Systems Development Project): *“To provide practical research-based information, tools, programs and services that lead to productive collaborations among people engaged in food systems development work, including food systems scholars and, at the local level, professionals, government officials and residents.”*
 - Co-chair of the Center Leadership Team
 - Co-chair of Leadership Team for the peer reviewed *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*
- Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society: An interdisciplinary professional organization focused on food systems
 - Board member
 - Co-chair visioning and strategic planning committee
 - Participate in annual meetings for networking and development
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Gil Activities under Harrisdale Homestead:

- Participating locally in local/regional foods initiatives
 - Facilitated the strategic planning process for SWIFFI for 2016
- Participating nationally in agriculture and food-based development through the Thomas A. Lyson Center for Civic Agriculture and Food (<http://lysoncenter.org/>)
 - Member of the Center's leadership team
 - Frequent manuscript reviewer for the Center's peer reviewed *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*
 - Founding member and active participant in the formation of the Center-sponsored North American Food Systems Network (NAFSN: *“...a professional development community of practice to promote skills and collaboration in food systems work.”*)
 - Founding chair of the NAFSN Mentoring Program and pilot mentor (designed to match organizations and individuals in food systems organizations with appropriately experienced experts)
 - Active member of the planning team for the NAFSN Food Systems Professional Certification Program that is being created for providing professional education and training opportunities for local officials and others related to community and economic development involving agriculture and food

Current and Potential Harrisdale Homestead Projects

- Current:
 - Continuing our process of assessing needs and envisioning what we might be able to contribute
- Under Consideration:
 - Developing programming for encouraging and supporting leadership by local people

relating to agriculture, food, health, and well-being

- A potential local foods education and demonstration project that integrates perennial & annual cropping systems
- In collaboration with another organization with more resources a small-scale farm start-up incubator located at Harrisdale