

Investing in Alcona County Youth with 4-H + MSU Extension:



According to research completed by the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University-

4-H'ers are **4X** more likely to make contributions to their communities, **2x** more likely to be civically active, and **2x** more likely to make healthier choices.

Kids learn by doing with positive adults and friends in a fun, safe setting. Whether coding, photography, stargazing, soccer, rabbits, robots, cultural diversity, dance, etc, there is a 4-H learning opportunity to engage in. A young person's experiences in 4-H makes a difference for a lifetime by allowing them to grow and appreciate the importance of being a good citizen, strong leader and person of character.

In Alcona County, the 4-H Soccer program remains a prominent youth activity and has engaged **over 120 Alcona County youth this past year**. They of course enjoy playing the sport and at the same time learn life skills such as teamwork, collaboration, sportsmanship, integrity, positive attitude and more. Many of these youth are first year 4-H members and the majority of them choose another club to participate in.



In June, the **Alcona 4-H Student Stewards** competed for the first time in the MATE ROV Great Lakes Regional contest held at the Alpena High School. The team, made up of elementary, middle and high school youth worked together to build and drive their ROV to success in the Scout Division of the annual contest. With the guidance of club leaders like MSU Educator Tracy D'Augustino along with John and Jodi Mann, students also created educational and promotional materials like posters and delivered verbal presentations to judges. In the three award areas, the team took all first place honors, and therefore **took first place overall for the contest**. In addition to their leader/mentors, the team (see photo) is made up of Dan & Grace Atkinson, Mindy & Shane Mendyka, Cecelia Spears, Alli Brandon and club helpers Juliet and John Mann. (Missing from photo is Robby Mills)



Beyond the excitement of team sports or competitions, Alcona youth have the opportunity to participate in leadership conferences, be a part of state & national competitions across many topics, become involved in their community through service and meet new friends in a safe and comfortable setting. Leaders mentor, provide encouragement and offer a support system. The relationships built among adult volunteers and youth have lasting effects. Although it may be years before a youth realizes and/or truly appreciates the influence of the 4-H experience and the adult volunteer, one can be certain that 4-H is truly making a difference for life.

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Alcona County 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

BY THE NUMBERS

100+ years of serving Alcona County



50+ Extension professionals providing education in Alcona County



871+ youth in 4-H, early childhood, or school enrichment programs



153 Alcona adults and youth in SNAP-Ed programs



372 local Alcona youth participated in STEM activities



MSU disbursed \$229,270 in financial aid to Alcona students



\$11,306 spending with local businesses



MSU Extension website received 1,944 visits from Alcona County; 81.8% first-time visitors



\$1,489,331 total economic impact in Alcona County

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

Over the past year, Michigan State University (MSU) Extension partnered with Alcona County to continue strengthening youth, families, businesses and communities. Your MSU Extension staff members, grounded in local relationships, serve by bringing the university's research and resources to provide outreach and education in the areas Alcona County residents need it most.



From agriculture to 4-H to gardening and home buyer programs and from youth to senior audiences, MSU Extension provides education to help Alcona County residents improve their lives. This report highlights just some of the work done last year.

We're passionate about serving Alcona County and are looking forward to a new year. Thank you for your continued support of MSU Extension, your leadership and for partnering with us to make a difference.

Mischelle Warner, District Coordinator

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Program Highlights



MSU Extension continues to partner with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan to serve 624 children in NE Michigan with the backpack program. 192 children from two Alcona County schools receive recipes, resources and information from MSU Extension to help them make healthier choices.



In August 2017, eight youth travelled to Bellevue, MI to compete in the state 4-H Shooting Sports Tournament in the 3D Archery division.



In April of 2017, a local Alcona County fish farmer needed assistance on what was causing mortalities at his trout farm. MSU Extension Educator Ronald Kinnunen was able to research & identify probable causes like unionized ammonia and chronic diseases like bacteria and fungi.

Family Health & Nutrition

MSU Extension offers programs to empower Alcona residents through evidenced-based education, skill-building and support to improve and maintain their health. For example, Eat Healthy Be Active and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). **153 Alcona residents** (youth + adults) participated in SNAP-Ed in 2017.

Three ServSafe certification courses were offered in Alcona County during 2017. These classes teach about foodborne illness, how to prevent it and how to train employees about the latest food safety issues.

Empowering Alcona Youth

From 4-H to Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM) Programs to livestock auctions and mock interviews, MSU Extension provides learning opportunities that help prepare youth for work, especially for jobs in STEAM.

40 Alcona County 4-H youth attended Exploration Days in June 2017. This program offers youth a chance to explore college life. They chose classes from 'Cooking Matters' to "Future Doctors' to "Social Justice" and everything in between.

Agriculture & Agribusiness

During the past year in Alcona County, MSU Extension provided farm support and agricultural education through individual consultation, workshops, research opportunities, evaluation of practices, articles and training for employees. Topics included field crop & pest management, Extension Master Gardener training, organic soybean and farm education, northern Michigan Small Farms Conference, Christmas Tree grower education and training on Bovine leukemia virus in cattle. **Over 81 Alcona County residents** attended, participated or consulted in these programs.

Program Highlights

MSU Extension & Place-based Stewardship Education (PBSE)

Over thirty four Place-based Stewardship Education Project Teams across eight counties including Alcona were active, supported through the regional NEMIGLSI (NE Michigan Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative) network, and directly engaged students in PBSE activities with community partners. PSBSE efforts provide opportunities for teachers and students, through their learning, to engage in and lead environmental stewardship projects in partnership with their communities.

Engaging Youth in Science

Research demonstrates that young people who participate in positive youth development programs are significantly more likely to exhibit academic competence. In May of 2017, **88 Alcona County youth** (K-6th grade) participated in a day-long exploration of water science and ecosystem studies at Harrisville Harbor. Sixth-grade students served as mentors to kindergarten students who also joined in exploring water science studies on this day. The kindergarteners discovered aquatic ecosystem life, enjoyed educational games and collected litter to help address marine debris pollution at the harbor and along the shoreline.

Community Development

MSU Extension offers community engagement education and government finance & policy education such as Current Issues Effecting Local Government webinars and workshops, Regulating Medical Marijuana Facilities education, Citizen Planner, Parliamentary Procedure, Public Policy and more. In 2017, many of these programs were available to and attended by Alcona residents via workshops, seminars, webinars, etc. These programs are open to everyone and often serve as a great resource for elected county and township officials.



Through MSU Extension 167 NE Michigan teachers were directly supported through professional development activities to help them to implement PBSE as part of their education plans. Eight local Alcona educators participated.



May 2017 photo shows a student using a dichotomous key to identify aquatic macroinvertebrates. Photo credit: Les Thomas.



MSU Extension works to teach citizens how to implement best practices in good governance that keeps communities solvent, productive and engaged.