



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

MSU Extension and Key Partner Awards



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Kellogg Center
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About the Awards Program

Michigan State University (MSU) Extension presents a variety of awards at Fall Extension Conference each year. The awards honor outstanding MSU Extension staff members, programs, key partners, and friends.

The selection committee for the MSU Extension administration awards is made up of Extension administrators representing institutes, district coordinators, and the Director's Office. While the winners of the Friends of Extension Award and John A. Hannah Award for Program Excellence are presented as part of the MSU Extension Administration Awards portion of the evening, they are chosen by Epsilon Sigma Phi and the Michigan Council of Extension Associations, respectively.

In addition to the administration awards, the professional staff associations and the MSU Product Center are given the opportunity to present the winners of one of their association awards to the awards dinner audience and list their other awards in the program. The professional associations are (in alphabetical order):

- Community and Natural Resources Development Association (CNRDA)
- Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP), Alpha Psi Chapter
- Michigan Association of Extension Agents (MAEA)
- Michigan Association of Extension 4-H Youth Staff (MAE4-HYS)
- Michigan Council of Extension Associations (MCEA)
- Michigan Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (MEAFCS)
- MSU Extension Specialist and State Staff Association (MESSSA)
– *Note: The MESSSA selection committee met after this program went to press, but they will present one award tonight.*



MSU Extension Administration Awards

Epsilon Sigma Phi Friends of Extension Award

Rollie Cramer & Kelly Lucas Strong Gladwin County Friends of Extension

Successful communities are made up of people who work together for the good of all. People like married couple Rollie Cramer and Kelly Lucas Strong.

When Gladwin County placed a millage proposal on the ballot to fund their MSU Extension program in late 2014, 4-H parents, volunteers, and stakeholders gathered to decide whether they wanted to move forward with a support campaign. At an organizational meeting, Rollie agreed to lead the Friends of Extension group through the campaign.

Rollie and Kelly aren't 4-H parents, they aren't farmers or Master Gardeners, in fact no one in the local MSU Extension office knew who they were until they stepped forward. Together, they turned into a dynamic duo who led a team of fantastic MSU Extension supporters. Through thick and thin, they never gave up. They were committed and persevered through all the ups and downs a campaign brings, always keeping their eyes on the prize – educating Gladwin County residents about the value of MSU Extension programming and passing the millage. The campaign was ultimately successful, with 57 percent of voters backing the millage.

Why did they do it? Their answer was quick and simple: "To make our community a better place." Kelly and Rollie are truly special Friends of Extension.

Key Partner Awards

Holly Brophy-Herb Human Development & Family Studies, College of Social Science, MSU

Professor Holly Brophy-Herb's work at Michigan State University has long included partnerships with MSU Extension. She truly embraces the key Extension concept of "bringing knowledge to life." Holly has been critical to the success of the Early Childhood Development-Building Early Emotional Skills (BEES) program, a parenting education project that is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Holly has worked tirelessly with MSU Extension staff on reviewing the grant application, adapting the curriculum to fit an eight-week delivery method, creating an evaluation that met the needs of both the program and the grant, and supporting the MSU Extension team as they implemented this project. Because of Holly's work, parents in Michigan who've completed the BEES classes have reported that they have learned how to handle their children's stress and tantrums and that they now know that it's normal for their children to feel angry and upset sometimes, and that parents have to help their children navigate those feelings rather than to try to stop them from being upset.

Holly's leadership on the grant is creating a sustainable program with positive outcomes for young children and their parents across the state. MSU Extension thanks our Key Partner Holly Brophy-Herb for her dedication to Michigan's children and her hard work with MSU Extension.



Ebels Meat Processing **Mark, Dawn, Tom, & Bob Ebels**

Family is a key component of Ebels Meat Processing, and each member of the Ebels family – Mark, Dawn, Tom, and Bob – brings different expertise to the business. The company is part of Ebels General Store, which also includes grocery, catering, and jerky processing operations. With more than 80 employees, the business is vital to the economy of Falmouth, a small town in Missaukee County.

The meat processing operation has grown tremendously since it started in the mid-1980s. The business offers custom processing services and a full line of processed meat products. It's one of the few meat processors in northern Michigan that harvests and processes meat under USDA inspection. This is a tremendous service to livestock producers in the area because it means the processed meat is legal for foodservice and retail sale.

The Ebels family and their company are committed to MSU Extension programs and projects. They have partnered on MSU and MSU Extension research and educational projects related to beef traceability, sourcing local beef, and improving the quality of grass-finished beef. They have also opened their doors to hands-on Extension programming designed to help livestock producers learn more about meat processing, meat quality, and where different meat cuts come from on a carcass.

The family is exceptionally generous about collaborating and sharing their time, expertise, and facilities with MSU researchers and Extension staff, and with Michigan livestock producers. The Ebels family and their company richly deserve the distinction of being named Key Partners of MSU Extension.



Scott Graham **Michigan Brewers Guild**

The Michigan Brewers Guild (MBG), under the leadership of Scott Graham, is a well-respected industry trade group that supports the Michigan craft beer industry. With over 150 breweries in production, the industry has been a tremendous asset to our agriculturally rich state. Craft brewers have long turned to the MBG for information on how to develop and market a product worthy of “The Great Beer State.” Consumers fueling the upward trend in craft beer consumption are seeking more locally sourced products. In response, producers throughout Michigan want to grow beer ingredients such as hops and barley to supply this demand.

Scott has long recognized the value in breweries sourcing local, Michigan ingredients. He has put this philosophy into practice as an enthusiastic supporter of MSU Extension programming on hops and barley. Scott supports the exchange of information and ideas while helping shape sustainable industries that are mutually beneficial to growers and brewers in Michigan. His interest and support legitimizes these new and emerging industries to brewers.

It is in part because of Scott's support that MSU Extension events related to the craft beer industry are well-attended, research programs are supported, and Michigan brewers have embraced the use of Michigan agricultural products. During his tenure with MBG, Scott has seen the Michigan hop industry grow from 0 acres to upwards of 800 acres, a rapid increase in malting barley acreage, and growth from one to six malt houses in the state.

MSU Extension, Scott Graham, and the MBG have forged a true partnership that promotes the use of Michigan agricultural products in Michigan craft beer.



Michigan Lake & Stream Associations

Michigan Lake and Stream Associations (ML&SA) is a nonprofit, statewide organization dedicated to the preservation, protection, and wise management of Michigan's vast treasure of inland lakes and streams. ML&SA supports riparian associations and the educational, stewardship, and conservation initiatives of its more than 100,000 collective members.

During its 50-year history, ML&SA has forged many collaborative partnerships that directly support the mission of MSU Extension. The organization has labored shoulder-to-shoulder with MSU Extension to provide key leadership to statewide initiatives.

One such initiative is the Michigan Inland Lakes Partnership (MILP). Facilitated by MSU Extension, MILP promotes statewide collaboration to protect and improve Michigan's 11,000 inland lakes. In 2014, MILP hosted the inaugural Michigan Inland Lakes Convention – a highly successful, three-day educational conference that attracted 400 participants and has become a biannual event.

ML&SA has also played a critical role in forming the Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership (MNSP). The partnership has trained more than 200 professional shoreline contractors on natural shoreline restoration techniques using curriculum developed by MSU Extension. ML&SA also administers the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program, which is the second-oldest volunteer lake monitoring program in the country. In 2015 alone, this program will engage more than 400 volunteers in monitoring over 230 Michigan lakes.



Donald Zimmer Chef

For the past 100 years, local and community partnerships have been essential to MSU Extension. Finding diverse ways to connect key community partners who actively support and reflect the mission of MSU Extension is also vital. In Mecosta County, Chef Don Zimmer is one such key partner.

Don has been a diligent supporter, volunteer, and key partner of the Mecosta County Extension program since 2010. He volunteers with several MSU Extension programs (including Disease Prevention Management, SNAP-Ed, and 4-H) that promote healthy living and support young people. Through his volunteer efforts he has helped improve the lives of more than a thousand Mecosta County residents.

At various times Don has served as the volunteer chef instructor for Cooking Matters classes and Dining With Diabetes (in person and online) workshops. He has bravely volunteered at 4-H Exploration Days, spending several days living in an MSU residence hall and supervising the boys in the Mecosta County delegation. Don is no stranger to the Mecosta County Free Fair, either. He has served for five years each as the photography superintendent and culinary arts judge at the fair.

In 2013 Don was inducted into the volunteer hall of fame for Cooking Matters and Share Our Strength in Washington, DC.

Don's eclectic interpersonal skills contribute greatly to the success of programs he works with. His masterful chef skills quickly inspire participants to lose their fear of food as they begin to explore and enjoy healthy eating options.

Although Don is only one person and not a large conglomerate, he is definitely a Key Partner in linking the MSU Extension network with Mecosta County communities.



Diversity & Multiculturalism Award

Imelda Galdamez

In her short time as an educator with MSU Extension, Imelda Galdamez has helped change the face of the organization's health- and nutrition-related programming. She has made a conscious effort to educate the diverse population of the metro Detroit area and of Michigan. In her multicultural subcommittee work she is leading the piloting of a culturally competent, evidence-based curriculum for the state's Spanish-speaking population. Imelda's leadership has helped MSU Extension expand our programming reach into minority communities in metro Detroit.

In MSU Extension we pride ourselves on our inclusiveness and the quality of our education and research efforts, and Imelda has been a leader in ensuring that we live up to our high standards in these areas. Our health and nutrition programs now have enrollment, evaluation, and educational materials available for use with a range of minority groups. Imelda has led our efforts to make MSU Extension the primary go-to organization for nutrition education among the Arabic-speaking and Deaf communities.

Not only is Imelda an exceptional leader, she is a phenomenal mentor and staff member. Her contribution to the work of our organization is extremely valuable and needed, and helps to make us a model for Extension work throughout the country. Imelda Galdamez is an extraordinary asset to the MSU Extension team and is more than deserving of the Diversity and Multiculturalism Award.



Gordon Guyer Cross-Institute Team Award

Poultry Exhibition Ban & Avian Influenza Response Team

In early June 2015, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) cancelled all poultry shows and exhibitions to help prevent a highly contagious, deadly strain of avian influenza from infecting the state's flocks. A team of ANR Communications staff and MSU Extension educators immediately began work on a comprehensive plan to address the ban's implications for Michigan 4-H'ers.

The plan provided alternatives for 4-H showmanship and breed classes that were no longer allowed at fairs, and offered additional educational activities to help compensate for the lack of live birds. They also worked through how to meet the complex regulatory and biosecurity measures that had to be followed to hold market bird auctions at fairs.

The team prepared a list of frequently asked questions for the general public, wrote talking points to help staff communicate with 4-H families, and created a poster to display in empty poultry barns at fairs. The team quickly distributed this vital information to MSU Extension staff and the public through a number of channels.

The information proved to be in high demand, with staff making contact with more than 30 media outlets across the state. The messages were seen by more than 20,000 people on social media, which in turn helped drive high volumes of traffic to the related MSU Extension web page (www.msue.msu.edu/poultryshows).

The response team adapted and continued its work when avian influenza was eventually detected in Michigan. The team provided MSU Extension staff, the 4-H community, poultry owners, and the public with additional relevant resources about the evolving situation.



Innovative Technology Award

Early Childhood Development: Building Early Emotional Skills Team

Parents today are busier than ever, and even if they want to attend face-to-face parenting classes, particularly those that meet several times, doing so can be a real struggle. MSU Extension's Early Childhood Development: Building Early Emotional Skills (BEES) Team has brought a new resource to Michigan parents with children from birth to age 3 – an 8-week online class.

The team adapted the face-to-face BEES parenting curriculum to work on the eXtension.org platform. Participants learn critical parenting skills, including how to listen and interact with their children, how to identify and label emotions, and how to support the development of behavioral regulation strategies in their children.

From the western Upper Peninsula to the Michigan-Ohio border, parents delve into course materials in their own time, without the additional pressures of arranging transportation, child care, family schedules, meal times, and more.

BEES participants have indicated that they enjoyed “the videos and following along with the webinars,” “[being able to] do it at my own pace,” and “interacting with others going through the same thing.” Preliminary course data is showing the largest effects in reducing parenting stress, and positive changes in the quality of parenting, including emotionally supportive parenting, knowledge about early social-emotional development and parenting, and parental functioning.



Institute Team Award

Farm Information Resource Management Team

The federal Agricultural Act of 2014 (more familiarly known as the 2014 Farm Bill) introduced major changes in risk management programs for corn, wheat, soybean, fruit, vegetable, and dairy producers in Michigan. These changes, combined with the bill's requirement that producers make irrevocable decisions for the 2014–18 crop years, and the increased uncertainty about the long-term outlook for agricultural commodity prices, added a unique urgency to the development of educational programming about the bill.

During 2014–15, MSU Extension's Farm Information Resource Management (FIRM) team developed and delivered comprehensive programming on the 2014 Farm Bill. The team collaborated with the USDA Farm Service Agency and many commodity organizations in Michigan to develop a one-stop source of information for producers and landlords.

The resources included a set of publications and decision-making software to analyze the financial consequences of alternative program decisions. The software integrated with advanced risk management tools developed at the University of Illinois and Texas A&M University. The team organized 110 local and regional meetings on the Farm Bill that reached 8,000 people.

Financial Homeownership Education Team

MSU Extension has a 20-year history of providing financial and homeownership education for Michigan residents. When the housing crisis of the Great Recession kicked into high gear in 2007, local MSU Extension offices were flooded with phone calls from residents who needed help to keep from losing their homes to foreclosure.



In addition to its devastating effects on families, foreclosure has dire social and economic effects on communities. These include increased crime, abandoned housing, and declines in neighborhood property values.

In response to the housing crisis, members of the MSU Extension Financial Homeownership Education work team became MSHDA- and HUD-certified housing counselors, identified and adopted statewide best practices for homeowner counseling, and developed new local and state partnerships with county treasurers, financial institutions, and Legal Aid attorneys.

The team's efforts have had a substantial impact in the state. For example, of the 257 households counseled by MSU Extension staff since 2014, 66 percent were able to keep their homes and get back on track with their mortgages, property taxes, or both. Twenty-four percent of the households who experienced foreclosure participated in educational programs designed to help them plan their next steps. Counties received more than \$3 million in local property tax revenue from delinquent homeowners who were approved for Step Forward Michigan assistance.

Households that have gone through foreclosure have few resources to help them make decisions on recovering financially and finding new housing. To expand their educational options, the Financial Homeownership Education work team worked with ANR Communications to develop the *Starting Over After Foreclosure Toolkit*.



Michigan Council of Extension Associations 2015 John A. Hannah Award for Program Excellence

4-H Capitol Experience

4-H Capitol Experience is an annual four-day conference that helps prepare Michigan young people aged 15 to 19 for active citizenship by focusing on civic engagement and public policy. Up to 100 teens from around the state converge on Lansing to experience state government in action and learn how they can influence policy issues. Participants interact with legislators, state agency staff, lobbyists, and other resource people to learn how policy is made. Attendees:

- Learn the responsibilities of a citizen.
- Explore different aspects of a policy issue that may affect individuals and communities.
- Explore various careers related to politics and public policy.
- Attend a bill-writing session.
- Have an in-depth meeting with someone in or involved with state government.

A program evaluation conducted over the past two years yielded positive findings in the program's four constructs of civic character: civic participation, communication, leadership, and facilitation skills. The selection committee noted that 4-H Capitol Experience is a highly visible pre-college program for MSU with a strong media package and new sponsorship from Michigan Farm Bureau. The program coordinators' outreach efforts with tribal [governments] and cross-institute collaboration are evident, the committee wrote, noting, "This program represents excellence."



Meritorious Service Awards

Educator

Gerald May

Since he began working with MSU Extension in 1999, Extension educator Gerald May has proven time and again his dedication to excellence. Though Jerry is based in Gratiot County, he has shown continued leadership in statewide programming efforts on pork industry issues, environmental and air quality issues, and more.

Jerry has been instrumental in bringing communities and producers together in a productive dialogue addressing their mutual concerns, but his community involvement doesn't end there. He offers his knowledge and expertise to 4-H youth through an annual Youth Pork Quality Assurance training. He also serves on the board of Greater Gratiot Development, the local economic development corporation.

Jerry's name and reputation are synonymous with integrity, character, and dedication.

Rob Serrine

Over the past 8 years, Extension educator Rob Serrine has worked with colleagues and community partners to develop high-impact educational programming in three major areas: hops production, the New FARM Program, and the Grand Traverse Food Innovation Hub.

Rob has provided statewide leadership for hops outreach, demonstration, and research efforts. As a result of Rob's and his MSU Extension colleagues' efforts, MSU is now recognized as the go-to hops information source outside of the Pacific Northwest, and Michigan is now the fourth leading producer of hops in the United States.



The Michigan brewing industry has benefited from Rob's efforts to increase the quality, supply, and market security of Michigan-grown hops, and to help hops growers better understand brewers' needs.

Rob has also worked with colleagues to secure a USDA grant to develop the New FARM Program, a two-year leadership program for 40 young farmers. The program featured a capstone educational tour of New Zealand. Many participants reported increased knowledge, leadership skills, and leadership positions from the program.

Rob has worked with food entrepreneurs and community partners in the Traverse City area to support the infrastructure and space needs of start-ups and existing agri-food businesses. He is a founding member of the Grand Traverse Foodshed Alliance, which secured state funding to create the new Grand Traverse Food Innovation hub. The hub has space for eight to ten small-scale food-related businesses and provides access to business counselors, other local food producers, and expanded markets.

Program Instructor, Associate, Assistant, & Coordinator

Lori Eccles

According to the colleague who nominated her, Lori Eccles is a perfect candidate for this award. Many of her peers and other colleagues agree. As a leader among MSU Extension nutrition program instructors, Lori consistently goes above and beyond her roles and responsibilities to achieve the best possible outcomes for her clientele. She is a dedicated, high-performing program provider who is committed to forming strong partnerships with stakeholders and other groups and to expanding her programmatic reach.



Lori volunteers for extra assignments such as mentoring and training new staff, serving on statewide work teams, piloting new curriculum materials, and working with the MSU College of Nursing on the Mothers in Motion research project. Mothers in Motion is an intervention program designed to help prevent weight gain among African American and white mothers ages 18 to 39 who receive WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) support and are overweight or obese. The program promotes healthy eating, physical activity, and stress management. Lori learned a new skill, called “motivational interviewing,” while working with the MIM project that has enhanced her SNAP-Ed programming skills.

Lori eagerly participates in new programs not only to improve her skills as a program instructor, but also to bring cutting-edge curriculum materials and programs to the residents of Antrim and Kankaska counties.

Support Staff

Diana Gilmore

Diana Gilmore has been the cheerful and friendly person at the front desk of the Emmet County MSU Extension Office for the past three years. She greets clients with a smile and makes sure they never leave without answers to their questions or information on how to proceed with their own investigations.

She has drawn on all of the resources of MSU Extension to compile a set of informational notebooks that staff and clientele can use to identify insects, invasive species, problems with trees and shrubs, and much more.



Diana often goes beyond her everyday role as a creative, enthusiastic, tireless office manager. She makes sure all MSU Extension events are promoted in the local newspaper, on the Emmet County Facebook page, in the online MSU Extension calendar, and throughout the county.

Diana is always willing to try new things, take on new projects, and learn new technology. Her colleagues report that her enthusiasm and upbeat personality have been a welcome addition to their office.

Lori Mikek

It cannot be overstated how much Lori Mikek’s contributions have enabled Gratiot County MSU Extension programs to grow and thrive. Lori uses her great imagination and ability to think outside the box to solve problems. Her institutional memory, developed over 14 years as office manager, provides valuable insights.

The colleague who nominated Lori wrote that “it is because of Lori that the Gratiot County MSU Extension program is so strong and respected, and that the program staff . . . have been able to make such impactful contributions both locally and statewide.”

Lori is a walking, talking, living, breathing encyclopedia. When clients visit the office, she often helps identify the type of information they need and which program staff member can best help them.

Gratiot Extension has undergone dramatic changes in the last several years, including the statewide organizational restructuring, a successful special millage election to support the county program, and at the end of 2014, an office move. Throughout all of this, Lori has demonstrated her willingness to adapt and be flexible, all while using her tremendous skills to best support the programming staff.



Outstanding Service to MSU Extension Award

Jerry Lindquist

Jerry Lindquist joined MSU Extension as an agriculture agent in Osceola County in 1982, later became the county Extension director there, and is now a field crops and forages educator. Over the course of his 33-year career he has become the go-to guy for growers and media representatives in north central lower Michigan on many agriculture-related topics. He is always well-read and up to date on current issues facing growers, such as sale prices and leasing rates for agricultural land, hay prices, early frosts, too much or not enough rain, and soil health. Each year he works with various commodity groups and local partners to organize events such as field days, soil demonstrations, and grazing conferences.

Not only does Jerry provide exceptional service to Michigan agriculture, he is dedicated to MSU Extension's success as an organization. His long-standing relationships with county commissioners help ensure that they recognize the value of agriculture in the county and how the work of MSU Extension supports agriculture. He also contributes ideas on how MSU Extension can better serve counties that don't have agriculture educators based within their borders.

Jerry communicates well, keeping farmers informed of updates, programs, and events with the help of tools such as his regular e-mail messages to a large list of agriculture producers across the state. He takes reporters into area fields to share his knowledge and show audiences first-hand what a story is about.

Jerry is respected and approachable, often big-picture oriented, and truly concerned with both local and organizational success. He is the epitome of an excellent MSU Extension educator.



Promotions

The MSU Extension staff members listed here have earned promotions during this calendar year. Four have earned the rank of senior status, and six have completed the Step II process. We thank each of them for their significant contributions to MSU Extension.

Earning Senior Status

Rebecca Finneran
Brenda Long
Janet Olsen
Holly Tiret

Earning Step II Status

Diane Brown-Rytlewski
Dawn Earnesty
Glenn Pape
Emily Proctor
Curtis Talley Jr.
Brian Wibby



Milestone Years of Service

The MSU Extension staff members listed in this section have marked employment milestones during this calendar year. We thank them all for their years of dedicated service to the organization.

35 or More Years of Service

Terri Badgley
 Alicia Burnell
 Kathryn Cummings
 Thomas Dudek
 Ray Hammerschmidt
 Judith Lentz-Bishop
 Susan Monroe
 Janet Olsen
 Steven Poindexter
 Marian Reiter
 Thomas Schneider
 Stephen Stewart
 Annette Tijerina
 Robert Tritten
 Nancy Victorson

30 Years of Service

Norma Bermudez
 Bruce Mackellar
 Lori Martin
 Rebecca McKee
 Beth Waitrovich
 Mary Wilson

25 Years of Service

Randy Bell
 Teresa Clark-Jones
 Erwin Elsner
 Terry Gibb
 Diane Smith

20 Years of Service

Betty Blase
 Mark Breederland
 Carol Bublitz
 Merrill Gould
 Gail Hebert
 Linda Kline
 Lynn Krahn
 Debra Laws
 Katherine Lee
 Nora Lee
 Todd Martin
 Janice McGee
 Diana Miller
 Kathy Pennington
 Frederick Springborn
 Sienna Suszek
 Nancy Toben

15 Years of Service

Ann Arnold
 Peter Badra
 Robert Battel
 Lisa Bottomley
 Diane Brown-Rytlewski
 Joshua Cohen
 David Cuthrell
 Luann Doriot
 Ruth Doughty
 Kraig Ehm
 Helen Enander
 Phyllis Higman
 Amanda Hulet
 Daria Hyde
 Adam Koivisto
 Kraig Korroch
 Yu Lee
 Shannon Lindquist
 Laurie Messing
 Beth Noffze
 John Paskus Jr.
 Laraine Reynolds
 Suzanne Ridge
 Rebecca Rogers
 Diane Ruonavaara
 Edward Schools
 Leslie Thomas

10 Years of Service

Bindu Bhakta
 Kittie Butcher
 Ryan Coffey
 Elizabeth Ferry
 Andrew Hayes
 Jane Higley
 Danica Howard
 Betty Krosnicki
 Bradley Neumann
 Katherine Ockert
 Bonnie Powell
 Renee Sanders
 Eric Scorsone
 Bradford Slaughter
 Beth Stuever
 Richard Wooten

5 Years of Service

Barbara Brow
 Stephanie Consford
 Susan Fenton
 Leah LaVanway
 Sabrina McGee
 Evaruth Napier-Beeker
 Alan Pilkenton
 Amy Prins
 Melissa Prohaska
 Erin Ross
 Edward Scott
 Renee Stacer



Community & Natural Resources Development Association Awards

Community Partnership

Michelle Walk

Michelle Walk is an Extension educator based in Chippewa County. Her early work in community food systems development with farmers and community partners in the eastern end of the Upper Peninsula laid the groundwork for a partnership between MSU Extension and the Marquette Food Co-op. The partnership eventually led to the creation of the U.P. Food Exchange.

Michelle's efforts included facilitating local public meetings, bringing the Marquette Food Co-op and Sault Tribe to the table, working with the Marquette Food Co-op and Northern Michigan University to develop a survey, and assisting with survey analysis. She also served on the leadership team for the project, and was a primary writer of the regional food systems grant.

Michelle also brought other MSU Extension educators and partners into the project. The primary partners are now MSU Extension, the Marquette Food Co-op, the Western U.P. Health Department, the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, and the Chippewa-Luce-Mackinac Conservation District. Many other organizations, farmers, and interested individuals have contributed in many ways as the project continues to grow. They have all helped the U.P. Food Exchange achieve its goals of seeing growers and food producers earning more from food production and making locally produced food more available to schools, restaurants, retail stores, and other institutions in the eastern Upper Peninsula.



Raymond D. Vlasin Award for Program Excellence

Dean Solomon

Dean Solomon is a senior Extension educator based in Charlevoix County.

He is recognized across the state as a trusted educational resource on local land use policy and natural resources protection. His effectiveness as an educator is based on his vast content knowledge and his ability to fully engage learners using a variety of adult education principles.

Dean's career with MSU Extension began in 1981. Since then, he has been an innovator with MSU Extension, spearheading and contributing to many programs, including the Master Woodland Manager Course, the Citizen Planner and Citizen Planner Online programs, Planner's Moments, and the Michigan Placemaking Curriculum. The hallmark of his career has been his ability to respond to community needs and develop easy-to-understand land management and land use educational materials for landowners and local government officials in convenient, accessible formats.

As a curriculum developer, Dean exhibits a unique ability to develop practical, hands-on educational activities for his programs that give participants the opportunity to apply the concepts they're learning. For instance, Dean was a codeveloper of the Citizen Planner Spartyville activities, which consistently receive top marks from program participants.

Dean's leadership skills are highly valued by MSU Extension and other organizations in Michigan and elsewhere. He is regularly asked to take on leadership roles on committees and boards. In fact he's currently the president of the national Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals.



Epsilon Sigma Phi Association Awards

Distinguished Team

Food Safety Team

Diversity & Multiculturalism – Individual

Eileen Haraminac

International Service

Larry Olsen

Meritorious Program Support

Katie (Frey) Nicpon

Mid-Career Service

Joe Bixler

For more than 15 years, Joe Bixler has conducted MSU Extension community and economic development programming. He has provided strategic planning and development programming with many community organizations and institutions, varying the approaches based on the need of those groups. His career has included time as a 4-H educator, as a county Extension director, and now as a district coordinator. He was a key contributor to the MSU Extension administrative team during the statewide reorganization of a few years ago.

Joe has demonstrated a sincere commitment to Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP) in Michigan and nationally. He has served on national ESP committees on public issues, been involved in discussions about advocacy work with elected officials at the state and federal levels, and been part of the national Extension PILD (Public Issues Leadership Development) program. Within the Alpha Psi (Michigan) chapter of ESP, Joe has worked on membership recruitment and development, professional development strategies, and fund-raising.

Kendra Wills

Kendra Wills has served as an Extension educator since 1999, and is based in Grand Rapids. She has worked on a great variety of projects and programs during her career. Kendra was initially hired to coordinate a grant-funded, coalition-building effort to tackle the issue of urban sprawl from both rural and urban perspectives. She has been successful in organizing coalitions, building capacity within nonprofit and township government organizations, and managing a county farmland preservation program. Over her Extension career she has written grant proposals that have resulted in almost \$3 million in program funding.

In 2013, Kendra played a key role in the opening of the MSU Extension office at the Grand Rapids Downtown Market. This new office has given MSU Extension greater visibility in Grand Rapids and in the local food system arena. More than 1 million people have visited the Downtown Market since it opened, and hundreds of new contacts have been made through meetings, events, social media, and the MSU Extension kiosk in the Downtown Market.



Visionary Leadership

Julie Chapin

Julie Chapin began her MSU Extension career as a county 4-H agent. During her award-winning career she has overseen 4-H's animal science, science, and risk management efforts, among many other responsibilities.

In her 34 years of service she has been a youth specialist, program leader, and associate state leader for 4-H. She currently serves as the director of MSU Extension's children and youth programming and as state leader for Michigan 4-H Youth Development. She has been an active ESP member since 1989.

When asked to reflect on her accomplishments, Julie said she is most proud of the work that has helped people grow as individuals and professionals in Extension. As director, she has provided visionary leadership for the creation of a new operating and programming structure for MSU Extension's work in early childhood education and youth development.



Michigan Association of Extension Agents Awards

National Achievement Award

Adam Kantrovich

National Communications Finalist - Publication Category

Ashley McFarland

National Distinguished Service Award

Steven Poindexter

Steven Poindexter is a senior Extension educator based in Saginaw County who is an expert on sugarbeets and the Michigan sugar industry. Steve's leadership, research, and educational programming are credited with helping to revitalize the Michigan sugar industry.

In the mid- to late 1990s the industry was beset by production, disease, and pest problems. MSU, MSU Extension, and MSU AgBioResearch responded to the crisis by partnering with industry leaders to create the Michigan Sugarbeet Advancement Program (SAP) and to fund an Extension educator position dedicated to sugarbeet production. Steve and SAP have since helped producers greatly improve their sugarbeet yields, quality, and profitability.

Today the sugar industry has an annual direct impact of \$500 million on the state's economy, and the Michigan Sugar Company has become one of the most profitable sugar cooperatives in the nation.



Michigan Association of Extension 4-H Youth Staff Awards

National Achievement in Service Award

Darren Bagley

Darren Bagley has been with MSU Extension since 1998 and with Michigan 4-H since 2008. Darren has taken part in putting lake mud on the faces of teenagers, tromping through swamps filled with carnivorous plants, and presenting waste jokes to the Michigan Senate. He has contributed greatly to the 4-H Youth Conservation Council, 4-H Capitol Experience, 4-H Great Lakes and Natural Resources Camp, 4-H Citizenship Academies, and other programs.

Heidi Mudel

Heidi Mudel has worked with MSU Extension as a 4-H program coordinator in Genesee County since 2012. Her passion is to promote science education, 4-H camp counselor training, and livestock education. Heidi has been a consistent face for the Genesee County 4-H program over the past few years. In everything she does she brings a positive, can-do attitude and tries to find a way to support young people and volunteers so they can have the best possible 4-H experience.

In her time with Genesee County 4-H, Heidi has worked hard to push the program forward and reach new audiences, and she understands the importance of engaging youth in decision making. For example, the development of a youth 4-H livestock committee has been an important step in giving youth a true voice in the program. Heidi created this group, supported its members, and empowered them to be the leaders of the county 4-H livestock committee.



National Distinguished Service Award

Michelle Neff

Herself a product of Michigan 4-H, MSU Extension educator Michelle Neff is the embodiment of everything the 4-H clover represents. Michelle began her professional career with Michigan 4-H in 2001. Since then she has come to exemplify the tenets of 4-H through her community leadership and her statewide responsibilities in expanding positive youth development.

Roxanne Turner

Roxanne Turner is an Extension educator who coordinates the Livingston County 4-H Program. She has worked for MSU Extension for almost 15 years. Roxanne is a member of the leadership and civic engagement work team, which provides statewide programs on citizenship, leadership, and global education. She has served on the MAE4-HYS board twice in her career and is currently the association's past-president.



National Meritorious Service Award

Sheila Urban Smith

Sheila Urban Smith started her Extension career as a 4-H agent in Marathon County (Wisconsin), then served a three-year stint as a human development specialist with the University of Maine. Sheila joined MSU Extension's 4-H Youth Development on campus as an associate program leader in 1989 and is now a program leader. She has provided creative leadership to Michigan 4-H's programming in out-of-school time, youth development, experiential learning, grant management, and much more. At the state and national levels Sheila has served on and chaired task forces to enhance the quantity and quality of out-of-school youth opportunities.

Michigan Achievement Award

Julie Thelen

Michigan Colleague Award

Nancy Thelen

Michigan Communicator Award

Matt Newman

Michigan Distinguished Service Award

Betty Jo Krosnicki

Michigan Diversity Award

Debra Barrett



Michigan Excellence in Camping Award

Leigh Ann Theunick

Michigan Excellence in Global Programming Award

Brian Wibby

Michigan Partnership Award

Genesee County Friends of Extension Committee

Jack White

Kent County 4-H Science Committee

Michigan Presidential Citation Award

Kristy Oosterhouse

Michigan Programming Expertise Award

Citizenship: Darren Bagley

Michigan Technology Award

Janis Brinn

Michigan Team Effort Award

The 4HOnline Task Force



Michigan Extension Association of Family & Consumer Sciences Awards

National & Michigan Clean & Healthy Families & Communities Award

Lisa Treiber

Continued Excellence Award

Joyce McGarry

Educator Joyce McGarry has been with MSU Extension for 17 years. She is based in Ingham County and supervises ten nutrition instructors in Extension's District 8, which covers seven counties in the central Lower Peninsula.

Her colleagues report that Joyce "has built a cohesive unit of nutrition instructors who provide education to a diverse set of clients." She is an active member of the food safety work team and the chair of the nutrition and physical activity work team. She also leads food preservation classes and ServSafe training. (ServSafe is a national certification program for people working in food service.)

On any given day Joyce may be teaching a face-to-face nutrition workshop or an online food safety class, making a food preservation video to post online, writing a news article on physical activity, or updating a Michigan FRESH fact sheet on rhubarb. She could be advising individual clients on functional foods or working with one of the nutrition instructors she supervises. Whatever the topic, whatever the format, Joyce's commitment to providing excellent Extension programming to the people of Michigan is always evident.



NEAFCS Third Place National, Second Place Region, & Michigan - Early Childhood Child Care Training Award

**Teresa Clark-Jones, Gail Innis, Carolyn Penniman,
Suzanne Pish, Holly Tiret**

NEAFCS National, Region, & Michigan - Extension Housing Outreach Award

**Jim Buxton, Moses Cantu, Teresa Clark-Jones,
Angela Miles Griffin, Lauren Hale, Bill Hendrian,
Khurram Imam, Sharon Jeffery, Jean Lakin, Brenda Long,
Scott Matteson, Julie Moberg, Pam Sarlitto, Beth Waitrovich,
Chris Venema, Vivian Washington, Rob Weber**

NEAFCS Third Place - Florence Hall [Emerging Issues] Award

Brenda Long

NEAFCS Second Place Central Region - Mary W. Wells Memorial Diversity Award

Eileen Haraminac



Michigan & National Distinguished Service Awards

Gail Innis

Gail Innis has been a member of NEAFCS for over 10 years. Housed in Sanilac County, she began working for MSU Extension as a program associate in 1991. Over the years Gail has filled a variety of roles in the EFNEP, FNP, Building Strong Families, Breastfeeding Initiative, and Better Kid Care programs.

Gail's current responsibilities include providing educational programming in multiple-session and one-time workshops on child development, school readiness, and social and emotional health (including anger and stress management). She currently supervises staff in Saginaw and Sanilac counties.

Gail describes her position with Extension as providing the best of both worlds, because she can draw on the resources of the children and youth and the health and nutrition areas of MSU Extension to serve families across the lifespan.



Brenda Long

Brenda Long is a senior Extension educator for family and consumer sciences who is based in Ionia County and provides programming for seven mid-Michigan counties.

In the past Brenda has been responsible for planning, promoting, conducting, and evaluating education programs in nutrition and health, chronic disease prevention and management, food safety, and food preservation. She is now focused on financial capacity, home buyer, foreclosure prevention, and health insurance programming.

As current cochair of MSU Extension's Financial and Homeownership Education work team, Brenda has been instrumental in developing and conducting regional and statewide training. She currently supervises three program instructors in three districts and has been the principal investigator for several federal grants.



MSU Product Center Award

Innovation Counselor of the Year

Micah Loucks

In the past year, Micah Loucks, innovation counselor for southeast Michigan, has worked with more than 200 entrepreneurs in start-up and existing businesses from his office in Detroit's Eastern Market. A relative newcomer to his position – he's been on staff since 2013 – Micah has a bachelor's degree in business and is a graduate of the MSU School of Packaging's intensive, three-day Food Packaging Basics Course. He has used his knowledge of food packaging to fill a critical need for his clients.

According to the 2013 MSU Extension Wayne County Annual Report, Micah recognized early on that in Detroit, one of the largest barriers to new business start-ups for food entrepreneurs is having access to licensed commercial kitchen space. He subsequently provided support to the Eastern Market Corporation in creating Detroit Kitchen Connect (DKC). The DKC program makes commercial-grade kitchen space available to local entrepreneurs who are working to become licensed to produce high-quality food products.

Brenda Reau, senior associate director of the MSU Product Center, lauds Micah's ability to work with entrepreneurs and assist them in overcoming barriers to making their businesses successful. Micah is a creative problem solver and puts extra effort into researching options for clients. One business that Micah helped launch in the past 18 months has already garnered sales in more than 1,000 retail outlets and created 25 manufacturing and 7 core team jobs.

Micah is well-respected by his colleagues and collaborators, and we're pleased to name him the Innovation Counselor of the Year.

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