



# Kalkaska County

## 2019–2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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## FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR:

I'm delighted to share the results of another successful year of partnership between Kalkaska County and Michigan State University (MSU) Extension. Because of your continued support, we've been able to make a difference in the lives of youth, families, businesses and communities.



MSU Extension offers a broad range of research-based educational outreach to county residents. Over this past year, we've empowered families and individuals to live healthier lives, supported new and local entrepreneurs, created opportunities for youth leadership development and career exploration, helped farmers with business management and mental health, and much more. Our staff live and work alongside county residents, have established community relationships and are responsive to community needs.

Although this report is intended to reflect on the work we achieved collectively last year, I would be remiss if I didn't address the changes we have made as an organization as a result of the novel coronavirus. In order to keep our communities and program participants safe, MSU Extension has temporarily moved our educational outreach virtually both with individual clients and group programs. This online suite of programs has expanded the educational options offered to Kalkaska County residents because our programs can be accessed by anyone, anywhere. These changes have led to an increase in engagement of residents in our programs, many of whom are first time program participants.

Our partnership with you makes this all possible. On behalf of the MSU Extension team serving Kalkaska County, thank you for another great year. We look forward to your continued support and hope you will be able to join us at one of our upcoming programs.

Jennifer Berkey, District 3 Director

## MEASURING IMPACT:



**TOTAL SOCIAL MEDIA REACH**  
**March 17– Present..... 36,292**

**TOTAL PARTICIPANTS IN KALKASKA:**  
**2067**

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**Bethany Prykucki**  
Government and Public Policy Educator

**Karie Saxton**  
4-H Program Coordinator

**Lanae Bump**  
Community Nutrition Instructor

**Brandy DeBarr**  
4-H AmeriCorps STEAM

**Nickey Torrey**  
Office Manager



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# DEVELOPING YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES

## 4-H Mark of Excellence Essay Contest

The Mark of Excellence essay contest is a Michigan 4-H program for youth ages 11-12. The directions are simple: write an essay with the title “Because of 4-H I can.....” Annabelle Lobb, Kalkaska 4-H member, submitted the following essay that was entered into the Mark of Excellence History Book at the Michigan 4-H Foundation.



Because of 4-H, I can learn responsibility and be able to pay for some of my hopes and dreams. Because of this program, I was able to pay for my dream Pomeranian puppy named Zoey. I can also pay for my own livestock project every year.

I love being able to pick an animal and raise it to show at 4-H. I have been in 4-H for 6 years and this is my 7<sup>th</sup>! My first couple years I raised a pig and I showed my rabbit and chicken. Last year I raised a lamb for the first time and I loved it! I liked being able to walk her on a leash and bond with her. All of these animals are so different to raise and show, and I am still learning.

I love raising animals! I love showing animals! And I love learning and interacting with new animals. Because of 4-H, I can do all of these things on my own.

*Essay written by: Annabelle Lobb*

## Kalkaska 4-H staff assists in creation of online program for youth when school closed

When the effects of the novel coronavirus pandemic closed Michigan schools in March of 2020, a need quickly emerged: youth were now going to be out of school for an extended period of time, and likely that meant being home alone or home with siblings while the adults were gone at work or out doing essential errands such as grocery shopping. The Home Alone 4-H club had been created in 2019 by Kalkaska 4-H Program Coordinator Karie Saxton, as an in-person pilot program. With assistance from 4-H staff in four other northern Michigan and U.P. counties, Home Alone Safely was redesigned into a virtual program in just one week; the series was offered three times from March to early May, and reached over 300 youth across 17 states and Ontario. The program focused on areas that were applicable to all youth who found themselves home alone, including budgeting your time, first aid, home safety (fire safety, stranger danger), 911 (when to call, what to expect when you call, and a mock call demonstration), nutrition and food safety, physical activity, managing feelings (mindfulness), at-home science activities, and caring for younger siblings. A web page was created for resources, and surveys were sent out after the program to families to gain insight into effectiveness and potential improvements.

Typical 4-H in-person programs use hands-on learning methods and incorporate strategies to engage learners in movement activities. The need to engage youth virtually does not eliminate the need for youth to move and to take breaks from learning via screens.

**“I feel reviewing different situations they may encounter was extremely useful. As parents, we cover the basics but there are some things I didn’t think of discussing. My daughter is now able to assess what she would do and how to handle emergency situations effectively.”**

**—Parent of a participant in Michigan 4-H Virtual Home Alone-Safely program.**

## Developing youth and communities, continued.....

Each topic presented was no more than 25 minutes, with a 5 to 12 minute physical activity break between two topics daily. Youth learned how to use dice, decks of playing cards, and Uno cards to create their own physical fitness activities and completed them with staff members during the program.

The truest way to evaluate a program's effectiveness is in application of the information learned. "I just wanted to tell you what the Home Alone class did for us. [My son] wouldn't even be in the house alone. If we went outside and he realized we weren't there he would fly out of the house in a panic. He has done things that are unsafe in a panic because he thought he was alone. Now he keeps telling me how much that helped him and how he feels safe to be alone and we have had no issues....I can't believe the difference, I had no expectations."

The team that created and delivered the Home Alone Safely program will receive the MSU Extension Institute Team Award on Sept. 28, 2020. "We want to honor and recognize your outstanding work in quickly turning an in-person 'Home Alone 4-H Club' program into an online program," said Jeff Dwyer, MSU Extension Director. "This rapid response during COVID-19 is commendable."

### Creating new ways to engage

The increased need for connection while staying home under the Governor's Stay Home, Stay Safe order allowed our office manager to get creative and think outside the box when it came to our social media accounts. No-Sit-Saturday and Tech Tuesdays, among other themes, were set up and posts created to engage families in new ways. Show and Tell, virtual field trips, new recipes, tech tips for parents, and lots of fun physical activity posts gave new life to our

4-H Facebook page.

### Livestock Shows and Auction held in an online format

The cancellation of in-person events did not diminish the effort and investment of 4-H members with livestock projects. The 2020 Up North 4-H Expo was a collaboration of several counties in the area, and provided an online format for youth to show and sell their market livestock projects. Youth entered photos and videos of their animals to be judged, and feedback was given to each participant, much like the feedback in a live show ring during a "normal" fair. The auction was open for 3 days for buyers to bid on quality swine, lamb, chicken and turkey projects. Still exhibit classes were created to give youth an opportunity to enter projects that reflected their hobbies and interests, such as painting, photography, gardening, baking, and Lego sculptures. It may have been a year of challenges and change, but youth and volunteers involved in the online fair really proved that they are committed to making the best, better.



50 New Members  
5 New Volunteers

Total 4-H  
Members: 209



Office Manager Nickey Torrey and her 2 kids, engaging in a nerf gun war for No Sit Saturday via our Kalkaska County 4-H Facebook page!

## 2020 Kalkaska County 4-H AmeriCorps

Kalkaska 4-H hosted a 20-hour per week AmeriCorps member for the 2019-2020 program year. Brandy DeBarr focused on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) programming and family engagement. Through several short term 4-H clubs and partnerships with area schools, Brandy was able to increase not only participation but awareness of Kalkaska County 4-H programs. New volunteers recruited have engaged in programming both in-person and virtually through 2020, and plan to continue to be engaged in new and existing clubs into the future.

- **New School Partners**

Through a unique opportunity at Kalkaska Middle School, 4-H staff and volunteers were able to teach several classes to 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> graders during Exploratory Wednesday. Topics and activities included fitness, budgeting, art, duct tape crafts, creating a wearable heartrate monitor, Christmas crafts, making cards for local Veterans, embryology, and even a 6-week babysitter training certification class. Forest Area SEEDS afterschool programs hosted a 4-H STEM club with 35 youth engaged in hands-on learning around science and technology for six weeks. The group completed fun challenges and tasks, but also incorporated teamwork activities and social skills.

- **Short Term Clubs: Lego Robotics and Christmas Crafting**

Our **Christmas Crafts and Baking** club dove deep into traditions like popcorn chains, gingerbread houses, cookie decorating, making ornaments, and of course, sampling their creations! Two separate **Lego Robotics** 4-H clubs met from January to March, with youth learning how to program a robot to do a task. The ultimate goal: build a Cow-Bot that could travel across a room, pick up a (cardboard) cow, and set the cow back down in another location. Problem solving is key when programming robots, and it's a project youth love to participate in.

- **School Closure Response**

When the pandemic closed schools across the state, Kalkaska 4-H AmeriCorps programs continued to engage with members in various ways. We had app based scavenger hunts, an online embryology club, and **Fun Fridays** that involved games and fun social interaction via Zoom. Book clubs look different online, but they still work! We hosted a summer book club and the youth involved loved the discussions, connections, and ability to remain engaged in learning through the summer. A **Babysitter Lunch and Learn** series also emerged for summer. Youth could register for a single topic or several, and were provided education on topics that helped them be more successful babysitters. Brandy worked with several other staff members to reach youth across the state.



**AmeriCorps member Brandy DeBarr working with a student at Kalkaska Middle School during weekly Exploratory Wednesdays.**

I have had a lot of fun during my service for Kalkaska County 4-H. I did a lot of things that I would not have had the opportunity to learn about or experience... I think my favorite thing was learning about embryology and then hatching eggs in the incubator with an online club."

-Brandy DeBarr, Kalkaska County 4-H AmeriCorps Member

# KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY & ENSURING SAFE FOOD

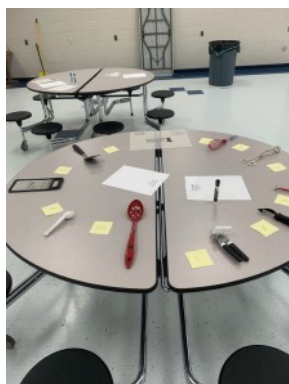
When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn safe food handling practices, increase their physical activity and improve the quality of their diets. Extension programming also helps decrease incidents of violence and bullying. Encouraging these healthy behaviors helps reduce food and health care costs by helping prevent chronic health conditions and providing safe environments throughout a person's life span.

## Fostering Health through Nutrition and Physical Activity

Michigan State University Extension supports individual and community level, or public health approaches, to prevent obesity. Through the United States Department of Agriculture Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), we provide a combination of educational strategies, accompanied by supporting policy, systems, and environmental change interventions aimed to increase likelihood limited resource youth, adults, and seniors can make healthy choices.

### Healthier Lives through Nutrition Education

MSU Extension Community Nutrition Instructors work to make nutrition and physical activity relatable and easy for those of all ages using a variety of curricula. MSU Extension facilitated an engaging series with youth at Kalkaska Middle School. Students were able to develop new cooking and leaderships skills each class and were encouraged to have an adventurous attitude towards new foods. Community Nutrition Instructor Lanae Bump noticed students becoming more confident around knife handling, measuring, and following recipes. "I loved having students ask for increasingly complicated recipes as the weeks progressed."



Preparations for a weekly nutrition class with students at Kalkaska Middle School



## Keeping People Healthy, continued

### Making the Healthy Choice Easier— Supporting Changes to Policies, Systems, and Environment (PSE)

“MSU Extension has been partnering with Kalkaska Public Schools for several years. I have had the opportunity to work closely with many staff members through different programs such as Fuel Up to Play 60, and Teen Cuisine. These programs have been very beneficial for our students at Kalkaska Middle School. Students have learned the value of healthy eating, and have found ways to get healthy snacks into the hands of their classmates through building a snack cart. They have also been able to encourage more physical activity through the installation of an outdoor volleyball court, and 2 new basketball half courts. It's been a wonderful experience working with the staff at MSU extension.”

*-Heather Reust, Kalkaska Public Schools Middle School Teacher*

#### Schools

PSE Changes are a way of making sustainable changes within our community to policies, systems, and environments so that healthy choices are feasible options available to all community members. In Kalkaska County, this is happening through the Fuel Up to Play 60 program. This free, in-school nutrition and physical activity program allows teams of students to make PSE changes that encourage other students, staff members, and administrators to lead healthier, active lives. The changes within our schools cause a ripple effect of positively impacting our communities as students incorporate their leadership skills to motivate and encourage family and community members to properly fuel their body so they can be active every day.

#### Kalkaska Middle School

For the 2018-2019 school year, Kalkaska Middle School (KMS) was awarded \$3,979 in Fuel Up to Play 60 grant funding with assistance provided by MSU Extension. To help encourage their peers to make healthful food choices, the student leadership team decided to use funding to build a mobile snack cart. The snack cart is open to students in the afternoon so that students may purchase healthy snacks to keep them fueled through the rest of the school day.



**Grant funds to  
Kalkaska County  
Schools through  
Fuel Up to Play 60:  
\$ 3,979**



## Keeping People Healthy, continued

Students worked together to build the snack cart and consulted food service staff to learn more about Smart Snacks. Students also worked together to determine pricing of snacks with the goal of making sure healthier snacks were affordable. Any money generated by the cart goes right back in to purchasing more snacks for students. They also decided to continue their efforts in making sure all middle school youth have options for being active before, during, and after school. Using grant funding and a generous donation of materials and time by Buck's Roofing, KMS now has a brand-new outdoor basketball court. The team also purchased another outdoor permanent volleyball net and poles, badminton set, and wiffle ball and baseball materials. All new equipment has really ramped up free-time for these Blazers.



**FUEL UP TO PLAY60**

### Fuel Up Cart PRIDE!


**Prepared:** Know what you would like to purchase, take it off the cart to the cashier.

**Reflective:** You are fueling your body with healthy foods!

**Involved:** Know how much you will need to pay, have it ready for a speedy checkout.

**Discipline:** Throw away trash, take PRIDE in our school, clean up after yourself!

**Effort:** Following all of this and having Blazer Pride will keep our cart going!



# MILK

## MEANS MORE

United Dairy Industry of Michigan



# SUPPORTING AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESS

## Supporting Fruit Production

### Tree Fruits

Growing tree fruits has continued to be a challenging endeavor in northwest Michigan. To help growers address critical issues faced by the industry, the tree fruit **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** program led by MSU Extension Educator, Emily Pochubay, offered two key programs for growers in Antrim, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Benzie, and Manistee counties in 2019.

- **2019 Tree Fruit Management School**

Attracted 130 stakeholders for two and a half days of education on horticultural practices, pest and disease management, and invasive species. While many of the attendees were local, we were pleased to host out-of-state participants from as far as Iowa and Oregon. A post program survey indicated that 98% of participants improved their knowledge of practices that reduce production risks, and 91% planned to change practices to reduce production risks.

- **Tree Fruit IPM Updates**

Series was offered in Antrim, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, and Benzie-Manistee that provided 328 growers and crop consultants with timely pest and disease information related to fruit production during the 2019 growing season. A post program survey polled 40 participants who represented approximately 931 acres of apples and 3,925 acres of cherries in northwest lower Michigan. All participants reported that attending IPM Updates improved their knowledge of practices that helped them to reduce production risks.

### Wine Grapes

During the past year, multiple presentations were held for local wine grape growers and producers to meet the unique needs for northwest lower Michigan.

- **Spotlight into Wine** - This program involved 80 Grape and wine producers in the Northwest Michigan region. The world-renowned viticulturist Richard Smart, author of the seminal grapevine canopy management publication, “Sunlight into Wine,” presented a seminar and an in-vineyard demonstration to 80 grape producers to introduce and review cool-climate viticulture techniques for canopy management, and trunk diseases on multiple training systems.

When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn profitable and efficient business and production practices.

## Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

### Home Horticulture

Through volunteer outreach, Extension Master Gardeners share science-based gardening knowledge, engaged citizens and empowered communities in environmentally responsible gardening practices, improving food security, improving community, and developing youth through gardening.

#### Plant & Pest Diagnostic Services

Other Consumer Horticulture programming services available for residents of Kalkaska County include:

- Gardening Hotline
- Gardening in Michigan website
- Ask an Expert online system
- Smart Gardening programming
- Soil tests for home gardens, yards and landscape plants



This past year, **Master Gardeners** volunteered more than  **22 hours** on various projects in Kalkaska County including environmental stewardship and community beautification

### Assistance to support beginning farmers across MI

The MSU Product Center Food-Ag-Bio assists county residents in developing products and businesses in the areas of food, agriculture, natural resources and the bio economy. The innovation counselor has special training to deliver these services to local residents. Business counseling is conducted on a one-on-one basis and may take place at the MSU Extension office or the client's home or business location. The assistance provided is tailored to meet the needs of the client and may include things like developing a business plan, navigating the regulatory maze, accessing the supply chain or seeking funding options. The innovation counselor also assists clients in accessing specialized services they may need that are offered through Michigan State University like feasibility studies, food processing, nutritional labeling and packaging assistance.



40 Counseling Sessions



New Sales: \$205,000



New Business Launched: 2



New Jobs Created: 3



New Investments: \$47,000

## Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

### 2020 Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference

The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference was held on January 24-25, at the Grand Traverse Resort and Spa at Acme. Over 714 Farmers, growers, food enthusiasts from all around the State, Midwest and Canada took part in numerous activities which included 3-intensive pre-conference sessions, 35 main conference workshops, and a large trade show. Topics covered included: Financing your Farm Business, Crop Rotation Design for Vegetable Growers, Setting up your Maple Operation, Food Sovereignty and Agriculture, Farm Stress, and Solar Panel Growers Panel. Conference attendees also enjoyed great local food, with both lunches and dinner menus featuring 70% or more of ingredients originating from Michigan farms. Of the 85 menu items offered during the 2-day event, more than ½ were sourced from farms less than 125 miles from Traverse City. No small feat for a conference that takes place in the heart of a Michigan winter!

The Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference has deep roots with MSU Extension, starting as a University-led grazing conference in 2000. This past year, 11 Michigan State University staff along with MSU Extension Educators and staff led workshops and educational tracks. In addition other University and Extension staff answered questions and provided resources as a part of the Trade Show. Three MSU Extension staff help to coordinate the conference through their year-round participation in the Conference Planning Committee.

In 2020, Kalkaska county had five farmers who attended the Northern Michigan Small Farms Conference.



# FOSTERING STRONG COMMUNITIES

When you support MSU Extension, participants learn how to implement best practices in good governance that keeps communities solvent, productive and engaged; learn effective conflict management skills that help leaders and residents work collaboratively on complex issues; and engage youth leaders in decision-making. In the personal finance area, MSU Extension helps youth and adults alike learn the skills they need to increase their savings, manage their spending avoid predatory lending and reduce mortgage defaults. All of these outcomes help lower the cost of governmental services and lead to personal and community stability, strong neighborhoods and safe communities.

- Twenty-four members of the Kalkaska Village Council and other village boards and committees participated in an MSU Extension workshop on making meetings more effective. Participants had a significant opportunity to get their questions answered and to discuss what they had heard as the Q&A lasted nearly as long as the presentation.
- The **Northern Michigan Counties Association (NMCA)** continues its long history of being a place where county commissioners from across the northern lower peninsula gather 8 times each year for lively discussion; sharing successes and concerns, learning from each other, and from guest speakers on topics selected by the commissioners who participate. MSU Extension provides the educational staff support for NMCA. Kalkaska County is welcome to participate. Contact John Amrhein for more information.
- **Fiscally Ready Communities** is a joint effort of the Michigan Department of Treasury and MSU Extension designed to provide education on many local government financial topics. The 2019 program was an overview of budgeting and financial policy basics. Nine local government leaders from Kalkaska County participated. The 2020 program focuses on Capital Asset Management and Planning.
- **Opportunity Zones**, what they are and how local communities can increase their chances of benefitting, was the subject of a training presented by MSU Extension in cooperation with MI State Housing Development Authority and MI Economic Development Corporation. Kalkaska County was represented.
- **MSU Extension Government and Community Vitality** Educators presented an interactive program on Capital Improvements Programs at the four Michigan Association of Counties Summits in 2019. Kalkaska County was represented.



## Fostering Strong Communities, continued

The Kalkaska Conservation District updated their Strategic Plan, which focuses on leveraging their strengths to grow programs, services and initiatives that address both conservation opportunities and challenges. The Board Members and staff along with Director Mark Randolph were lead by Bethany Prykucki through a facilitated process that discussed the ways a land purchase could support their mission and what the criteria should be for that land purchase. They generated ideas, identified criteria and prioritized that criteria. They discussed this supplemental plan to look to the future as an opportunity, donation, or other circumstance arise that could meet KCD long-term plans.

It is important in today's polarized society and stressful workplaces to develop and maintain positive relationships by gaining skills to handle conflict competently. It became especially important during Stay-At-Home orders as families were struggling to work from home, raise and school children, and/or care for others: that MSU Extension's **Communicating through Conflict** workshop could provide participants with tools and techniques to handle heated situations and interpersonal conflict more effectively. On March 27 Bethany Prykucki hosted **Communicating through Conflict at a Distance** online with 15 Kalkaska participants, along with approximately 100 others from around the state.

During this session participants:

- Achieve a deeper understanding of the causes of conflict
- Apply methods to slow a conversation and reduce stress responses
- Gain skills to create a safe environment for continued dialogue and shared understanding
- Practice active and generous listening skills to recognize interests behind strongly held positions
- Learn how to give and receive feedback clearly to reduce defensiveness
- Receive a handout with easy-to-follow steps for Communicating through Conflict.

On average, employees attend 62 meetings every month and it is estimated that we spend approximately 31 hours every month in unproductive meetings. According to nationwide studies, 50% of meetings are considered time-wasting and almost half of employees rank meetings as the biggest time waster. 68% of professionals in the U.S. lost time because of poorly planned meetings. And this was before the pandemic. MSU Extension Educator Bethany Prykucki knew that it would be critical for employees to have the skills to lead and attend online meetings. On April 27, she led **Facilitating Effective Online Meetings** for our six county district. 12 individuals participated in the recording live and to date over 300 individuals have viewed that recorded content available to watch at the MSU Extension website.



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