

# Lapeer County

## 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

### BY THE NUMBERS

**100<sup>+</sup>** Over 100 years of serving Lapeer County



MSU Extension website received 11,056 visits from Lapeer County; 77.3% first-time visitors



\$72,047 spending with local businesses



3,046 youth in Lapeer County 4-H programs



304 Lapeer County students enrolled at MSU



MSU disbursed \$4,808,611 in financial aid to Lapeer County students



988 MSU alumni in Lapeer County



\$9,058,142 total economic impact in Lapeer County

### MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

Michigan State University (MSU) Extension is the delivery system that brings cutting edge knowledge directly to the citizens of our state. Over the past year, MSU Extension partnered with Lapeer 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 Lapeer County residents need it most.



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

We're passionate about serving Lapeer County and understand that equipping residents with knowledge helps them at home, at work and in their communities. Thank you for supporting MSUE and for partnering with us to make a difference.

Jerry Johnson, District Coordinator

### CONTACT



MSU Extension Lapeer County  
1800 Imlay City Rd., Ste. 1  
Lapeer, MI 48446



[msue.anr.msu.edu](http://msue.anr.msu.edu)  
[lapeercounty@msu.edu](mailto:lapeercounty@msu.edu)



MSU Extension District 10



810-667-0341



@MSUEExtension

# Supporting Food and Agriculture



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

MSU Extension Agriculture educators serving Lapeer:

**Phil Kaatz**—feed, forage and grazing

**Bob Battel**—field crops

**Martin Nagelkirk**—wheat

**Cory Clark** —business mgt.

**Michael Staton**—soybeans

**Marianne Buza**—dairy

**Jeannine Schwehofer**—Animal quality assurance & food safety

**Bob Tritten** - fruit

**Ben Phillips** - vegetables

## Vet to Vet / Farmer to Farmer Mentoring

A collaboration between Michigan State University Extension Educator, Phil Kaatz, and Lapeer County Department of Veterans' Affairs director, Ed Ronders, was developed to provide United States Veterans a chance to learn more about opportunities in agriculture from other farmer veterans who are full-time farmers actively involved in agriculture. The program called, "Vet to Vet / Farmer to Farmer Mentoring" was developed to provide underserved audiences (veterans) a chance to network with other veterans and provide feedback on what types of careers are locally available in agriculture.

Agriculture continues to expand in Michigan and this expanding agricultural industry is attracting more veterans who are returning from active duty. We recognized the need for more programs that focus on assisting veterans who are transitioning to agricultural careers. Local veteran farmers are volunteering their time and energy to assist their fellow veterans, mentoring them on what it takes to be successful in farming.

A series of four Lunch and Learn workshops were held at the Silver Grill Restaurant in Imlay City, MI. The workshops had the lunches funded through a grant from United Way of Lapeer County.

Highlights of the workshops included: information on field crops production, dairy production, vegetable production, USDA services and program availability, and a summary of the programs and services available to assist agriculture entrepreneurs and existing businesses through the MSU Product Center.

The participants were veterans of the Vietnam War, Desert Storm, and the Iraq War. A high level of networking between the participants was an excellent and unexpected outcome for the program.

Many individuals only attended one session and at the completion of the workshops eleven post evaluations were summarized and provided the following information:

- 91% (n=10) Indicated an increase in knowledge/awareness concerning Veteran opportunities in agriculture after the program conclusion.
- 100% (n=11) Indicated that their level of satisfaction of the program met or exceeded their level of expectation for the program.

As a result of the program, the knowledge, skills, or attitudes gained would result the following changes in practices:

- 28% (n=5) Increasing economic activity in ag, food, bio economy and/or natural resources.
- 11% (n=2) Improving production efficiency
- 28% (n=5) Business planning
- 33% (n=6) New job opportunities

# Supporting Food and Agriculture



Phil Kaatz

kaatz@msu.edu

Forage Management and Field Crops Educator

Commercial Agriculture

Food and Animal Systems

Forage & Field Crops educator

## Thumb Ag Reviews

The Thumb Ag Reviews are a series of educational programs designed to provide field crops producers with a summary of the latest 2017 research and demonstration trials held in MSU Extensions' District 10. These sessions were held in four regional locations representing the Thumb of Michigan.

The number of adults that attended these meetings was 135.

Topics included: Corn hybrid trends; N rate studies; phosphorus rate trial; population trends; soybean yield and population trends; a five-year compost trial summary for corn and soybeans; cover crop trials to reduce the largest yield robber for soybeans; a review of 2017 wheat trial results; an evaluation of field crops production profit and loss; and a session for farmers to learn how to recognize the stressors associated with farming.

Participants estimated there would be \$129,525 of increased revenues or added savings in 2018.

- This represented \$8.36/acre of increased revenue or added savings.

## Restricted Use Pesticide Core Review

Jan-March 2018

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) require persons who apply restricted use pesticides (RUP) to be certified applicators. They must recertify every three years by either taking the necessary exams or by securing 16 recertification credits. The review sessions provides both commercial and private applicators with an overview of the required materials. Participants may be seeking recertification credits or information to help them pass the required exams.

Three RUP Core Review sessions were given prior to MDARD exams for recertification. Each workshop has three hours of education that qualify for three RUP recertification credits.



# Supporting Food and Agriculture



## Clean Sweep/Household Hazardous Waste Collection

The Lapeer County Commission, Lapeer County Michigan State University Extension, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), and all Lapeer County municipalities have formed a unique partnership to collect unwanted pesticides and household hazardous waste products that would otherwise go into area landfills.

During the collection, 113 vehicles brought materials for disposal. The total amount of material collected totaled 8,720 lbs.

The Lapeer Commission and the Lapeer County municipalities (townships, cities, villages) committed \$10,000 each to pay for the disposal of the unwanted materials. MDARD supplies a grant for unwanted pesticides to Tuscola, Lapeer, Sanilac, and Huron Counties and reimburses each county for all pesticides and the corresponding labor and freight associated with the collection.

My role in this has been to procure and manage the funds necessary for this initiative. I coordinate the planning, promotional materials, and promotion of the event. One of the primary parts of this initiative is to write a local news article that provides citizens with information about how unused products that end up in our landfills contaminate our groundwater and drinking water supplies. I am also responsible for the management of the materials collection by securing pesticide disposal vendors and volunteers to assist in the collection.



# Developing Youth and Communities



## 4-H Grows Confident Leaders

Lapeer County 4-H has much to offer youth ages 5-19, including clubs, workshops, scholarships to state and national 4-H programs, college scholarships, achievement awards and recognition. Youth can join any time of the year for one low fee and enjoy exploring virtually endless options of project areas. Lapeer County 4-H also offers partial participation fee scholarships for families needing financial assistance, ensuring that no child is not provided an opportunity to be a member.

## Growth in the Community

Lapeer County 4-H served 490 4-H members in 42 traditional, long-term clubs lead by 168 adult leaders. In addition to club efforts, 3,046 youth were reached in the community through a variety of educational experiences. This year, Lapeer County 4-H made efforts to reach out into the community, providing education to youth outside of the traditional long term clubs. 4-H attended local events, such as Lapeer Family Fun Days, Eastern Michigan State Fair and Project Red where youth gained knowledge in a variety of topics from wool spinning, crafts, animal education, and science projects, like making a Grass Head and learning what it takes to grow a plant from seed. Lapeer 4-H also provide school enrichment for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders at Chatfield School with an embryology project, hatching chicks later to be shown at the 2018 Eastern Michigan State Fair.



Short-term Special Interest Clubs (SPIN Clubs) were created to provide a 6-8 hour course on a specific topic. Local wool spinning experts lead a class to teach youth wool spinning from start to finish. A 4-H leader in the sheep project area also brought in sheep and demonstrated shearing. Youth were then shown how to clean and process the wool into a final product and potential entrepreneurship opportunity. Not only did these clubs educate the youth, but the skills learned in some clubs were shared with the community. The Dog Therapy 4-H Spin Club taught youth to train their dog to become a certified American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen. After passing the test, they and their canine companion worked together to become a therapy dog team, bringing joy into people's lives by visiting elderly in nursing homes. The Community Service 4-H Spin Club wanted to give back to the community and did so by helping Stone Soup Food Pantry sort food for clients, helped at the "Homeless in Lapeer" event, and provided much needed assistance in cleaning and feeding cats at Paradise Animal Rescue.

# Developing Youth and Communities

## Cloverbud Day Camp

It was important for Lapeer 4-H to reach out to the younger population and introduce them to all that 4-H has to offer. Cloverbud Day Camps were created, sharing the best of 4-H with 5-8 year olds. Youth in the community came to experience what 4-H is all about in a day filled with hands-on fun and learning through educational craft and science projects, as well as animals on site to learn about and enjoy, such as a calf, mini ponies, dogs and baby goats.



## Lapeer County 4-H Camp

Our camp is held at *Camp Lael*. Lapeer 4-H offers a day camp (K-1) and an overnight (grades 2 - 6), giving campers the opportunity to have fun through swimming, crafts, songs, games and special activities. All 4-H camp activities are designed for awareness and appreciation of nature and the world around us, focusing on personal development and FUN!

Not only does Lapeer County 4-H Camp provide a fun summer experience for the campers, but also provides 25+ hours of camp counselor training to teens (14 years and older). Teens give back to their community in their counselor roles while also gaining many valuable life skills, including first aid certifications, CPR training, youth development education, team building, planning, teaching, supervising and problem solving.



*A former counselor said it was her role as a volunteer 4-H camp counselor that influenced her to seek a full-time paid counselor position this summer between college semesters.*



# Developing Youth and Communities



4-H has different types of clubs, depending on a volunteer's interest and time commitment.

- **Community clubs** focus on multiple projects and involve members of a variety of ages and interests. Meet every month.
- **Project clubs** focus on one primary 4-H project. Meetings may be monthly or weekly.
- **SPIN clubs** combine concepts of special interest groups with the 4-H club model. Focus on one topic for a set length of time, perhaps 6 to 8 weeks.

## Taking 4-H skills and applying to our community and beyond

Young Pioneers and Country Kids 4-H Clubs worked hard at the annual Lapeer County 4-H Spring Auction's Pancake Breakfast fundraiser, and with giving hearts decided to donate all of the earnings to a worthy cause instead of saving for their own club educational activities that year. They learned of the hardships of the Kansas Wildfire's in Spring of 2017 and chose to utilize the knowledge gained in their club to purchase proper supplies and feed for animals suffering from the natural disaster. Not only did they purchase over \$1,000 worth of supplies, but also sought out donations for hay and dog food. It was important enough to them that members of the Young Pioneers 4-H club drove it down themselves in a convoy. They delivered it to the Orphan Calf Relief of SW Kansas 4-H group, which cared for animals affected by the fire. "I wanted our donations to support 4-H kids, because it's 4-H kids helping 4-H kids," Thresa Schumitsch, 4-H Leader explained.

As 4-H Challenged Me Club continues to grow, an amazing outcome is being seen. Some youth, who were once members of the club receiving coaching from other 4-H'ers, have now learned skills and have begun coaching other youth, who are also differently-abled. Some 4-H Challenged Me members have also gone on to compete in regular classes at the Eastern Michigan State Fair. It's a very exciting time to see the growth of the members, both teen coaches and members alike, and also the heart-warming support of the community during the 4-H Challenged Me special show during the fair.

MSUE 4-H staff serving Lapeer County:

Kathy George  
Program Coordinator

Jean Kreiner 4-H  
Program aide

One such special 4-H'er is MacKenzie Johnston, who was born 1lb. 4 oz. at 24 weeks. MacKenzie has an intellectual disability and struggles with social interaction. She was very shy, but with supportive leaders MacKenzie has stepped out of her comfort zone in the past 4 years with 4-H and has been able to talk with people more and more. With 4-H and working with the animals, which she loves, she has acquired the ability to be in front of crowds for the animal judgments. Not only that, she now coaches youth with special needs in the 4-H Challenged Me Club to be the best they can be, even though she qualifies to be a participant of it herself. The benefit of MacKenzie coaching others with special needs creates a unique perspective and empathy that others without special needs may not have.



MacKenzie Johnston with her swine project



Memphis Peel with his sheep project

# Developing Youth and Communities

The added bonus is that with Drew being involved with 4-H, we now get to see his grandparents and family in the bleachers again, where they cheered on "their show kids" for so many years. It was very satisfying for Michelle to watch Drew walk his hogs across the scale for his first fair, much like his grandfather did for her 30 years ago.

From left to right- Kaleb Bickel, Drew Greschaw, & Drake Deshetsky



## Passing it on

One of the greatest satisfactions people share about being in 4-H is that they get to pass on what they learn to others and/or the younger generation, be it a project skill, self-discipline, problem-solving, being a humble winner or accepting defeat gracefully. Out of all of the reasons to volunteer or participate as a 4-H member, the ability to pass on what has been shared with you is the most popular answer to the question, "Why 4-H?" More often than not, what one learns is passed on to youth following in another's footsteps, generation after generation, sometimes spanning decades in families and friendships. It is not the livestock sale check that is most valuable, but rather the satisfaction one receives by being involved in something bigger than themselves and knowing the values and character taught are good and can change the trajectory of one's life.

One such example is Drew Greschaw, a 4-H'er, and Michelle Peel, his 4-H leader. Michelle Peel, had Drew's grandparents as her 4-H Leaders in the 80's. She learned so many skills from them, including patience with her swine project, animal selection, and other important factors when raising swine. Not only were they 4-H leaders, but Drew's grandfather was also a local agriscience teacher, FFA leader and well respected for his contributions to the youth in Lapeer County. When Michelle became a 4-H leader in swine, she began the 4-H Challenged Me Club, a special club, where 4H'ers are paired up with differently abled club members in order to build skills and work with an animal over the summer. When Drew became a club member, Michelle found great satisfaction in teaching Drew all that his grandparents had taught her when she was a kid. Drew has a rare brain disorder called agenesis of the corpus callosum which causes global delays, a seizure disorder and many autistic characteristics. The 4-H experience has allowed Drew to work on his responsibility and social skills all while feeling like an equal member. His confidence has soared as a result and he can't wait to have another pair of hogs next year.



# Developing Youth and Communities



## Locally raised funds utilized to better our youth

The 2017 Lapeer County 4-H Spring Auction celebrated its 31<sup>st</sup> year and the Celebrity Autographed Items 4-H Auction 24 amazing years, both of which provide nearly all of the funding to run Lapeer County 4-H program. In addition to supporting local club efforts, funds raised are strategically used to provide scholarships for excellent local, state and national educational opportunities:

**Citizenship Washington Focus**, *Washington DC*- an opportunity for 4-H'ers to learn how to be citizen leaders and make a difference in their communities. Participants enjoy a behind-the-scenes look at our nation's capital and the chance to meet members of Congress, develop communication, leadership and citizenship skills through hands-on learning and group activities and build new and lasting friendships.

**4-H Capitol Experience**, *Lansing, MI* - an annual four-day conference that helps prepare youth for active citizenship by focusing on civic engagement and public policy.

**National 4-H Congress**, *Atlanta, GA* - Five-day event that engages high school aged 4-H members in leadership, citizenship, global awareness, and inclusion. Participants not only have the opportunity to participate in state-of-the-art educational workshops and hear from world-renowned speakers, they also have the opportunity to network with other 4-H members from across the United States.

**Lapeer County 4-H Camp**, *Camp Lael, Lapeer* 4-H offers a day camp (K-1) and an overnight (grades 2 - 6), offering campers the opportunity to have fun through swimming, crafts, songs, games and special activities. All 4-H camp activities are designed for awareness and appreciation of nature and the world around us, focusing on personal development and FUN!

**Michigan 4-H Exploration Days**, *MSU campus* - three day campus-based pre-college program that is designed to help youth build the skills they need to successfully transition to college and to life as an adult. Youth participants stay on campus in MSU residence halls and attend action-filled classroom and field trip sessions on a wide variety of topics, including animal science, business & entrepreneurship, international language & culture, performing & visual arts, science, engineering & technology. Nearly 2,000 youth attended Exploration Days in 2017. Post-event evaluations revealed that participating youth gained important life skills like decision making, problem solving, and communication. Youth also reported feeling more prepared to attend college.



The 4-H Capitol Experience education issue group meeting with the Michigan Association of School Administrators to discuss education policy in Michigan.

# Developing Youth and Communities

Betty Jo Krosnicki  
810-648-2515 ext 309  
[nashbett@msu.edu](mailto:nashbett@msu.edu)

4-H Career Preparation  
and Academic Success  
Educator

Career Education/  
Workforce Preparation

Life Skills Development/  
Academic Success



## 4-H Treasurers Training

Research has shown that youth lack necessary financial skills to be successful as adults. MSU Extension has recently released new financial guideline resources for 4-H groups. Funding was acquired that allows staff to provide trainings in counties free of charge. This training was provided in Lapeer County to help adults and students provided an overview of the 'financial Manual for 4-H Treasurers'.

Specific topics included:

- ◆ Responsibilities of a treasurer
- ◆ Budgets
- ◆ Fundraising
- ◆ Writing checks

There were 9 people who attended and two Lapeer County staff members.

You've Been Elected 4-H  
Club Treasurer

# Ensuring Safe and Secure Food



**MSU Extension efforts in ensuring safe and secure food lead to a healthy population, which in turn helps keep health care costs in check and our communities viable.**

**Christine Venema,  
Extension Educator**

Michigan FRESH fact sheets educate the public on the safe use, storage and preservation of Michigan grown fruits and vegetables. They were distributed through a local farm market, at Lapeer/MSUE office and at all food safety programs. Click here:

[Michigan Fresh Fact Sheets](#)

## Reducing foodborne illness through education

The National Institutes of Health estimates that every year, 48 million people in the United States become ill and 3,000 die from pathogens in food. Causes range from outdated home food preservation practices to unsafe sanitizing practices at public events and small businesses. Since 2013, MSU Extension food safety and preservation programs have taught almost 10,500 Michigan residents safe food handling and food preservation methods to reduce illness.

Participants include youth, nonprofit organizations that prepare food for the public and food preservers who want to create safe products for their small businesses.

**In Lapeer County**, Christine Venema, MSU Extension Educator for food safety, provides programming in the areas of Food Preservation, Cooking for Crowds and ServSafe manager training for adults. In 2017-18, she provided ServSafe manager education leading to certification for 30 foodservice employees in Lapeer County from local schools, restaurants and churches. This national certification program teaches about foodborne illness, how to prevent it and how to train employees on the latest food safety issues including:

- ◇ providing safe food,
- ◇ forms of contamination,
- ◇ the safe food handler,
- ◇ the flow of food,
- ◇ food safety management systems,
- ◇ safe facilities & pest management,
- ◇ cleaning & sanitizing.

Venema teaches local seniors about keeping the produce safe that they receive with their **Senior Market FRESH** coupons. When purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables at local farm markets, proper washing and storage of produce is critical; these messages are reinforced when seniors receive their coupons. In the summer of 2016, she reached 241 seniors, and 270 seniors in 2017.

# Keeping People Healthy

Senior Project FRESH/Market FRESH originates from U.S. Department of Agriculture funding. It is part of the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program in the Farm Bill.

## Improving nutrition for Michigan seniors

### Senior Market FRESH:

Senior Market FRESH/Project FRESH in Michigan provides seniors who qualify with unprocessed, fresh Michigan-grown produce from registered Farmers Markets and roadside stands throughout Michigan. In Michigan, Senior Project FRESH is managed by the Office of Services to the Aging. MSU Extension provides nutrition classes and distributes coupons. To qualify, a senior must be 60-years of age or older, have total household income of 185 percent of poverty or less, and live in the county where the coupons are issued.

Vegetables and fruits offer important vitamins and minerals to keep us healthy. Most of these foods have little fat and no cholesterol, and are a good source of fiber. Eating more fiber may help with digestion and constipation, and help to lower cholesterol and blood sugar.

Senior Market FRESH is free for seniors and for participating farm markets. It allows seniors to benefit from eating more fresh fruits and vegetables during the summer and helps boost Michigan's local economy. The coupons can only be used at Farm markets and not at grocery stores or supermarkets. Eligible items that can be purchased include any Michigan-grown fruit or vegetables such as strawberries, lettuce, cabbage, blueberries, cucumbers, peppers, carrots, squash, tomatoes, watermelon, apples, potatoes, onions, beans, etc., as well as honey and some herbs.

Thanks to the **Lapeer County Board of Commissioners**, additional funds were provided for the Market FRESH program for Lapeer County senior citizens. The funds were used to purchase additional coupon books, distributed to seniors in Lapeer County during July 2017. In total, 536 coupon books each worth \$20 were distributed to provide free, fresh fruits and vegetables for local seniors. These coupons provided \$10,720 in additional income for our local Farmers Markets and growers. Redemption rate for coupons for 2016 was over 91%.

A follow-up survey was sent to 270 seniors. 182 seniors responded. 92% of the Senior Project FRESH coupons were redeemed at the Lapeer County farm markets. As a result of receiving Senior Project FRESH coupons 99% were able to increase their average daily eating of fruits & vegetables by at least 1/2 cup serving.



### Comments from Seniors:

"These coupons are a God send!"

"Without the coupons I would not be eating fresh fruits and vegetables!"

"These coupons help out so much!"

# Keeping People Healthy

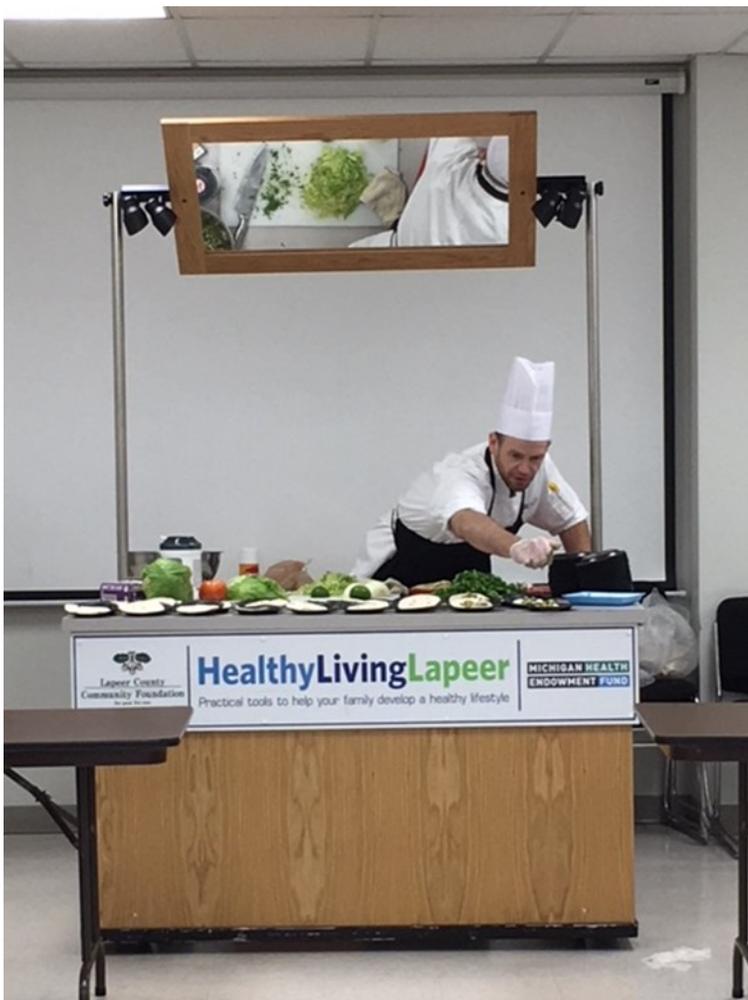
Jennifer McNamara

Karly Creguer

Extension Nutrition  
Program Instructor

## Teaching youth about choosing healthy foods through hands-on education

Michigan State University (MSU) Extension partners with Michigan Department of Human Services (MDHS) to provide Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), a free nutrition education program to reduce hunger and food insecurity and promote healthy eating habits. MSU Extension SNAP-Ed nutrition instructors teach youth, teens, adults and seniors how to make health a priority through an instructional series. The goal of the SNAP-Ed program is to increase the likelihood that those eligible for SNAP benefits will establish healthy eating habits and increase their time spent involved in physical activity, while staying within their limited food budget.



SNAP-Ed In Lapeer County has partnered with the Lapeer County Community Collaborative on the Healthy Living Lapeer initiative. We offer a monthly class targeted to low-income parents with young children in which we discuss various health and nutrition topics and a cooking demonstration. Participants also receive the groceries from the recipe of the month to take home, as well as other reinforcement items. This year a total of 47 participants were enrolled in the class. This initiative is funded by a grant from the Lapeer County Community Foundation, and includes collaboration between MSUE, McLaren Lapeer Region, Early Head Start, NEMCSA Head Start, Great Start Readiness Program, Stone Soup Food Bank, Historic Farmer's Market of Downtown Lapeer, and WIC, among others.

***"My doctor was really pleased with my A1C number and I was able to decrease some of his diabetic meds because of what he had learned in class."*** One participant reported.

# Keeping People Healthy

Encouraging healthy behaviors helps reduce health care costs by providing safe environments throughout a person's life span.

## Lapeer County WIC and Project Fresh

Jennifer McNamara and Karly Creguer worked with Lapeer County WIC this summer to distribute 200 Project FRESH coupon booklets, valued at a total of \$5,000. MSUE facilitated the nutrition education portion of the distribution, which occurred at the Historic Farmer's Market of Downtown Lapeer. WIC recipients can use these coupons to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers markets and roadside stands.



Extension Nutrition Program Instructor, Karly Creguer, applied for and received a \$2,000 grant through the Lapeer County Community Foundation to offer two Today's Mom series, nutrition education for pregnant mothers. This is a collaboration between WIC and Early Head Start. It will include education from a Certified Childbirth Educator and a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor, as well as a healthy cooking demonstration. All participants will also receive the groceries from the recipe to take home as well as other reinforcement items.

# Keeping People Healthy



## Stress Less with Mindfulness

Kris Swartzendruber, Extension Educator for Social Emotional Health in District #10 conducted a Stress Less with Mindfulness series at Hunter's Creek Conference Center, in Lapeer, on March 13 – April 24, 2018 for 31 adult participants.

Mindfulness means paying attention to the present moment without judgement. Research has shown that practicing mindfulness is effective in reducing stress-related symptoms such as worry, depression and physical tension, and may be helpful in managing chronic conditions such as cardiac disease and diabetes.

By offering adults alternative ways of relating to everyday life experiences, including thoughts, emotions, physical sensations and events, Stress Less with Mindfulness teaches and encourages the use of mindfulness self-care skills to help one feel better and enjoy life more.

The following are testimonials and comments from the participants that took this series:

*"This class was helpful in getting me to live in the present."*

*"I would recommend this class because it can positively change things in you and how you react."*

*"This class was enlightening!"*

*A participant shared that she lost 3 pounds in just one week by practicing the mindful eating techniques covered during this series.*



Kris Swartzendruber

[swartze6@anr.msu.edu](mailto:swartze6@anr.msu.edu)

Extension Educator

Disease Prevention and Management and Social and Emotional Health Educator

Chronic Disease

MSU Extension

**Mindfulness for  
healthy aging | MSU  
Extension**

# Greening Michigan

Michigan State University  
Extension tourism educator  
conducts follow-up  
evaluations to determine  
what actions and impacts  
come from First  
Impressions Tourism (FIT)  
assessments.

Andy Northrop  
northro5@anr.msu.edu

Extension Educator  
Sustainable Tourism  
Leadership and  
Community Vitality  
Greening Michigan  
Institute

## Four Michigan Thumb communities organize and take action after receiving results from tourists' first-impressions

Michigan State University Extension tourism educators partnered with Prosperity Region 6- a seven county partnership comprised of Huron, Tuscola, Sanilac, St. Clair, Lapeer, Genesee, and Shiawassee counties- to offer First Impressions: Tourism Assessments (FIT) to four separate communities during 2017. The communities were selected after reviewing their applications to participate in FIT during 2017 and included the Village of Elkton and the Village of Sebewaing (Huron County), Imlay City (Lapeer County), and the City of Marlette (Sanilac County). The partnership led to each community be awarded \$2,000 from Prosperity Region 6 to implement improvements of their choice based on the results from FIT.

All four communities completed the FIT program successfully by adhering to the program expectations and their roles and responsibilities outlined in advance. Accomplishments include: establishing a cohesive and committed Community Leadership Team (CLT), attending the required Zoom kick-off meeting with MSU Extension FIT tourism leaders, organizing and sponsoring a community report forum (CRF) open to all where results are shared in a location identified by the community, and being available for follow-up evaluation meetings six to nine months after program completion. In addition, Prosperity Region 6 had expectations that implementation dollars would be spent before July 2018, which all four communities have executed. As of mid-2018, FIT has proven to be an effective program for communities interested in improving tourism, place making and overall quality of life.

Each community identified either one large or several small projects to move forward with. A brief list of impacts as a result of FIT for each community is below:

- **Elkton** – Promotional social media videos, mural paintings in downtown designed to attract visitors, as well as student-to-business/entrepreneurial relationships established.
- **Imlay City** – Historical walking tour and website consolidations, as well as beautification programs for community members and private/public partnerships between the city and Vlassic.
- **Marlette** – Development and implementation of their first farmer's market being drive by a re-engaged Downtown Development Authority comprised of nine new members.
- **Sebewaing** – Successful completion of MSU Urban and Regional Planning program resulting in a new recreation plan and updates to master plans as a result of FIT, as well as the launching of a new farmer's market. Sebewaing has also developed their first Historical River District too as a result of participating in FIT.



# Greening Michigan



## Four Michigan Thumb communities organize and take action after receiving results from tourists' first-impressions (cont.)

FIT2017 communities continue to work diligently towards meeting goals identified during the FIT program. A majority of communities have used the \$2,000 implementation money to receive additional grant dollars for funding more projects. This successful model has influenced Prosperity Region 1 in adopting a similar funding model across the Western U.P. As a result of these four FIT programs in 2017, the program has received statewide attention from [Michigan Economic Development Corporation](#) and individual Michigan communities interested in funding their own FIT community assessment

This successful community partnership endeavor has to lead to another round of FIT programs across Prosperity Region 6. Marine City in St. Clair County and Cass City in Tuscola County were both selected for FIT2018 in District 10. Both communities have begun the FIT process as of mid-August and will work directly with Andy Northrop, Tourism and Community Vitality Educator, throughout 2018 and 2019.



## Extension Educators Serving Lapeer County

### MSU Extension Staff Serving Lapeer County

Name	Role	Phone	Email
Karly Creguer	Nutrition Program Instructor	810-667-0341	<a href="mailto:oberski9@msu.edu">oberski9@msu.edu</a>
Kathy George	4-H Program Coordinator	810-667-0343	<a href="mailto:george92@msu.edu">george92@msu.edu</a>
Sarah Graver	4-H Auction Coordinator	810-667-0343	<a href="mailto:graversa@msu.edu">graversa@msu.edu</a>
Leigh Hauxwell	4-H Secretary	810-667-0343	<a href="mailto:hauxwe10@msu.edu">hauxwe10@msu.edu</a>
Tina House	Office Manager	810-667-0341	<a href="mailto:houset@msu.edu">houset@msu.edu</a>
Phil Kaatz	Educator, Forages	810-667-0341	<a href="mailto:kaatz@msu.edu">kaatz@msu.edu</a>
Brandon Kreiner	4-H AmeriCorps Volunteer	810-667-0343	<a href="mailto:kreine18@msu.edu">kreine18@msu.edu</a>
Jean Kreiner	4-H Program Aide	810-667-0343	<a href="mailto:kreiner@msu.edu">kreiner@msu.edu</a>
Jennifer McNamara	Nutrition Program Instructor	810-667-0341	<a href="mailto:mcnam123@msu.edu">mcnam123@msu.edu</a>
Christine Venema	Educator, Food Safety & Nutrition	810-667-0341	<a href="mailto:venema@msu.edu">venema@msu.edu</a>
Turina Zimmer	4-H Supervising Educator	303-981-7201	<a href="mailto:zimmer@msu.edu">zimmer@msu.edu</a>

### Additional MSU Extension Staff Serving Lapeer County

Name	Role	Phone	Email
Bob Battel	Educator, Field Crops	989-315-4221	<a href="mailto:battelro@anr.msu.edu">battelro@anr.msu.edu</a>
Marianne Buza	Educator, Dairy	989-269-9949	<a href="mailto:mbuza@anr.msu.edu">mbuza@anr.msu.edu</a>
Cory Clark	Educator, Farm Management	989-758-2500	<a href="mailto:riscacor@msu.edu">riscacor@msu.edu</a>
Martin Nagelkirk	Senior Educator, Agriculture	810-648-2515 x304	<a href="mailto:nagelkir@msu.edu">nagelkir@msu.edu</a>
Andrew Northrop	Educator, Greening Michigan	810-989-6935	<a href="mailto:northro5@msu.edu">northro5@msu.edu</a>
Ben Phillips	Educator, Vegetables	989-758-2502	<a href="mailto:phill406@msu.edu">phill406@msu.edu</a>
Brandon Schroeder	Educator, Michigan Sea Grant	989-354-9885	<a href="mailto:schroe45@msu.edu">schroe45@msu.edu</a>
Jeannine Schwehofer	Educator, Meat Quality	810-989-6935	<a href="mailto:grobbej@msu.edu">grobbej@msu.edu</a>
Mike Staton	Senior Educator, Soybeans	269-673-0370	<a href="mailto:staton@msu.edu">staton@msu.edu</a>
Kris Swartzendruber	Educator, Disease Prevention	989-672-3870	<a href="mailto:swartze6@msu.edu">swartze6@msu.edu</a>
Bob Tritten	Educator, Fruit	810-244-8555	<a href="mailto:tritten@msu.edu">tritten@msu.edu</a>

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