



Mason County

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

BY THE NUMBERS



Almost 2,000 Mason County adults and youth participated in MSU Extension programs



1,465 youth participated in 4-H and school enrichment programs



418 youth and adults participated in health and nutrition programs



MSU Extension helped 178 community members with economic development, natural resources and local government education



359 Mason County residents participated in SNAP education programs



179 Mason County residents participated in agricultural and gardening services



More than \$34,443 was spent with local businesses



972 phone calls and walk-ins were assisted by MSU E Clerical Support

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Once again I am delighted to share the results of another successful year of partnership between Mason 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 services to County residents. Over this past year, we've empowered families and individuals to live healthier lives, supported new and local businesses, 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, are rooted in community relationships and are responsive to community needs.

Again this year, we've welcomed Mason County residents into our online community: we've offered online educational courses, answered questions on topics ranging from gardening to food safety, raised program awareness through social media, and provided a library of research-based resources they've browsed on our website.

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

James Kelly, District Director

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Extension

Program Highlights

GLOBAL & CULTURAL EDUCATION

Helping young people to explore and to appreciate what people around the world have in common and what makes them unique is critically important in society today. Michigan 4-H offers a variety of opportunities for kids and adults to learn more about our global community. In Mason County, multiple families participated in the role of international exchange host, sharing cultural experiences with students from Japan, Costa Rica, Korea, and Taiwan.



Delegates from Costa Rica, Norway, Korea and Taiwan.

GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC POLICY

Providing education and technical support to help create successful commissions and teams is the foundation of the work of MSU Extension's Government and Public Policy Educators. Mason County residents participated in New County Commissioner training, Ballot Proposal Education, Citizen Planner training, Planning & Zoning for Solar Energy Development training, and various webinars.



The Citizen Planner Program covers the fundamentals of planning and zoning.

FARM CONSULTATIONS

Providing support to dairy and beef farms in Mason County resulted in improved quality of livestock, savings on investment in feed, and time-saving efficiencies, all of which result in better financial performance. Other farm visits in Mason County focused on succession planning with farm financial analysis, Farm Bill education sessions, and Farm Stress consultations.



Beef and dairy farms benefitted from consultation visits from MSU Extension educators

Program Highlights



4-H Experimentation Station for county youth at the Mason County Fair.



One of the many plant disease samples brought into the Extension office for identification.



Children from birth to age 8 benefit from support to parents and care givers.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

4-H is the largest youth development organization in Michigan. Connected at the national level, MSU's program promotes traditional 4-H clubs as well as many other leadership and life-skills development opportunities for youth. 4-H provides experiential learning opportunities that allow youth to explore new interests and discover their passion. In 2019, Mason County had 63 screened adult volunteers and 146 youth enrolled as 4-H club members. In addition, 1,465 Mason County youth aged 5-19 took part in learning opportunities with MSU Extension, 16 youth from Mason County attended MSU 4-H Exploration Days in Lansing, and 3 attended National 4-H Citizenship Washington Focus.

GARDENING & CONSUMER HORTICULTURE

Homeowners often have insect infestations or plant diseases that they are unfamiliar with and need help addressing. MSU Extension provides soil testing, plant and insect identification, disease identification and treatment, Smart Gardening resources, and a toll-free Lawn and Garden hotline. The Mason County MSU Extension office provides assistance to many customers with basic home gardening concerns. Additionally, 47 soil tests were completed for Mason County residents in 2019.

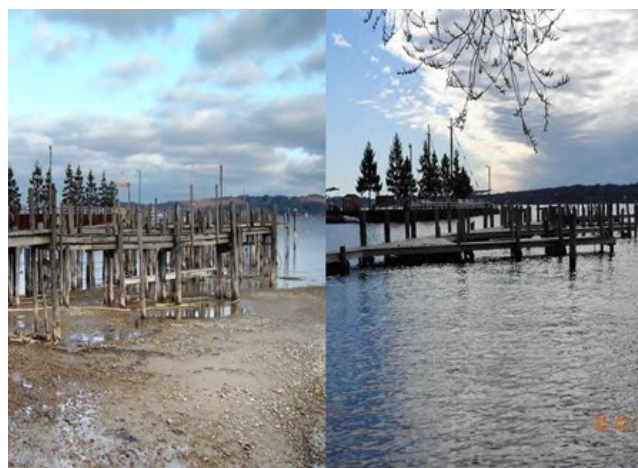
HEALTHY INFANTS & CHILDREN

MSU Extension is here to support parents and caregivers in ensuring young children learn to grow, thrive and contribute in a complex and changing world. In Mason County, residents participated in Childcare Provider education and parent/grand parent training workshops designed to equip them with the necessary tools to help children develop the skills needed to be successful in the future.

Program Highlights

NATURAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION

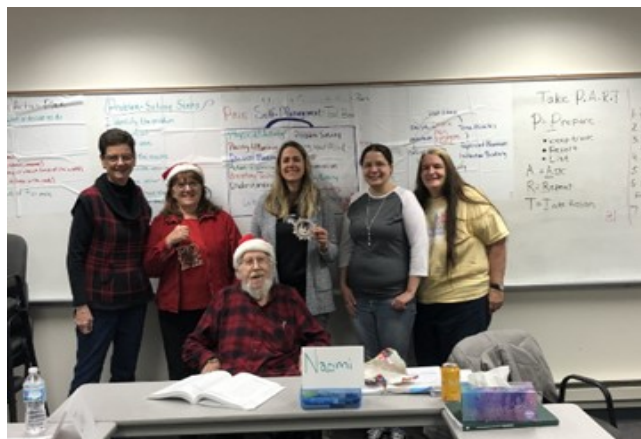
Our natural resources programs improve public understanding, help landowners and communities use those assets for sustainable long-term social and economic development and conserve natural resources for future generations. In Mason County those programs include water resource education, Lake Michigan water level presentations, Commercial fishery consultations, local lake studies to advise on plant and animal invasive species issues, and more.



Lake Michigan water level change in recent years.

ADULT HEALTH & WELLNESS

Access to high-quality and affordable programs such as those that MSU Extension provides is essential to saving lives, reducing disabilities, and lowering the costs of everyone's medical care. In Mason County, programs offered included Chronic Pain management, "RELAX: Alternatives to Anger", and "Powerful Tools for Caregivers". In addition, several adult groups participated in nutrition and cooking classes in a partnership with the Lakeshore Resource Network.



Chronic Pain Class participants

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Building strong communities through supporting economic development is a vital role of MSU Extension. In October, the Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities workshop drew 100 attendees from 50 Michigan communities to Ludington to participate in 22 workshops and 2 keynote speakers designed to encourage entrepreneurship.



"Probably one of the best conferences I've ever attended! Very informative and the people were super friendly! GREAT EXPERIENCE" ... 2019 Conference Attendee

Developing youth and keeping people healthy



Working to improve health in the community through nutrition and physical activity.

It is estimated that every \$1 spent on nutrition education saves as much as \$10 in long-term health costs.

In Mason County, we believe that an investment in youth is an investment that can transform lives. By providing opportunities to learn, be active, and to improve the quality of diets, MSU Extension is encouraging healthy behaviors that help reduce health care costs by preventing chronic health conditions.

In 2019, a collaboration between MSU Extension and Lakeshore Food Club in Ludington called "Eat a Rainbow" targeted children 4-7 years of age. The program met every other Tuesday throughout the summer at the Lakeshore Resource Network. The children planted, cared for the gardens, and harvested what they grew. They had the opportunity to learn about nutrition and the foods they grew through food demos, crafts, games, and hands on activities.

"This is a garden to table experience and students often take food home for their families to try," said instructor Kendra Gibson. "Twice this summer, participants were able to donate food to the food club. The students are so proud of what they have created and they start to learn early that they have a voice in their community. This garden has become an outdoor classroom, a playground, and community meeting space where friendships are made." There are plans to duplicate this program at multiple sites next year, such as at Mason County Eastern Elementary school.



Hands-on learning during the planting phase of MSU Extension's "Eat A Rainbow" program.

In addition our MSU Extension Community Nutrition Instructor taught classes to over 100 Mason County kindergartners at Mason County Eastern and Lakeview Elementary and delivered nutrition education to the Early Head Start socialization parent group in Mason County.



At Ludington High School, "MyPlate" lessons taught within home economics classes helped students understand serving size and food selection. Students were also challenged to work with their Home Economics teacher and Food Service Director to complete a cafeteria food waste study that lead to new menu selections.

Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives by bringing the vast knowledge resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities, and businesses. For more than 100 years, MSU Extension has helped grow Michigan's economy by equipping Michigan residents with the information they need to do their jobs better, raise healthy and safe families, build their communities, and empower their children to dream of successful futures. For more information about the programs we offer please refer to the contact information below.

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