



Mecosta County 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

BY THE NUMBERS



Almost 2,500 Mecosta adults and youth participated in MSU Extension programs



Over 1,600 youth participated in 4-H and school enrichment programs



1,336 adults and youth benefited from health and nutrition programs



Over 100 residents received consumer horticulture services and education



174 residents participated in agricultural services and programs

100+

Over 100 years of serving Mecosta County



MSU disbursed more than \$761,168 in financial aid for Mecosta County students



\$38,219 spent with Mecosta County businesses

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

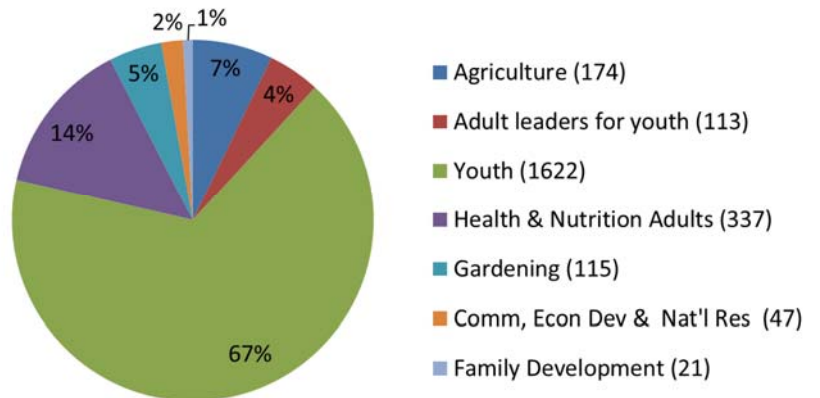
Michigan State University (MSU) Extension partners with Mecosta County to strengthen youth, families, businesses and communities. Your MSU Extension staff members, grounded in local relationships, serve by bringing the university's research and resources to provide outreach and education where Mecosta County residents need it most.



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

Shari Spoelman, District Director

Numbers Served = 2,429



Program Highlights



Field crops and forages are large agricultural crops in Mecosta County.



4-H youth learning archery skills at 4-H camp.



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

AGRICULTURE

During the past year in Mecosta County, MSU Extension provided farm support and education through individual consultations, workshops, field tours, and research opportunities. Topics included beef production, quality assurance, animal health and well-being, forages, cover crops, soil health, farm financial management, breeding readiness, and farm stress. The introduction of solar farms was a point of interest that MSU Extension responded to with education for land owners looking to lease portions of their property.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

4-H is the largest youth development organization in Michigan. Connected at the national level, MSU's program promotes the traditional 4-H clubs, as well as many other leadership and life-skills development opportunities for youth like financial literacy, career exploration, and science. 4-H provides experiential learning opportunities that allow youth to explore new interests and discover their passion. In 2018 Mecosta County had 32 4-H clubs with 113 adult volunteers. The total number of youth served in Mecosta county was 1,622.

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 Mecosta County MSU Extension office assists with homeowner questions and can connect gardeners to experts in the field as well as online to answer their gardening questions.

Program Highlights

WORK FORCE PREPARATION

“Mock Interview Day” offers students the opportunity to practice interview skills and network with the business community. Students are expected to bring a completed resume, job application or portfolio, and dress appropriately for an interview. Students receive individual feedback from volunteers. They become more prepared for job-seeking as a result of this experience. This program was started at Crossroads Charter Academy and served 149 Mecosta County youth.



During a Mock Interview Day, youth pair up with adult volunteers and practice their interview skills.

NUTRITION EDUCATION

MSU Extension’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides basic nutrition education and hands-on activities for all ages. Core curricula are designed to help low-income families stretch their food dollars while maintaining good nutrition. Some instruction includes physical activity and cooking techniques that help instill life-long skills. It is estimated that every \$1 spent on nutrition education saves as much as ten times the amount in long-term health costs.



Local Students Participating in a Nutrition Education Program.

PREVENTING & MANAGING CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS

Chronic diseases—such as diabetes—can be difficult to manage. To help residents be healthy at every stage of life, Michigan State University Extension delivers affordable, relevant, evidence-based education to serve the needs of adults, youth and families in urban and rural communities. Classes include Preventing & Managing Chronic Illness, Preventing & Managing Diabetes, Diabetes Food Skills, Fall Prevention, Tai Chi for Arthritis, and Caregiver Support.



Dining with Diabetes-Canadian Lakes, Mecosta Co.

Engaging Future Leaders



Teaching youth to be leaders through service to others is the theme of the annual 4-H youth service leadership project.

MSU Extension is helping to make a difference in Mecosta County.

Highlights of MSU Extension actions taken in 2018: 4-H Community Service Trip

For the last two years, Mecosta County 4-H has traveled out of state to complete a 4-H Community Service Project. In July of 2018, 9 teen members and 5 adult volunteers traveled to Verona, Kentucky to serve at New Day Ranch. New Day is a 501(c)3 program that specializes in equine assisted therapies.

While at New Day, Mecosta County 4-H members and volunteers helped with facility maintenance that had been neglected for several years. Tasks included building shelving units, painting the tack room, repairing stalls, painting stalls, helping with soil erosion and general cleaning.

This trip not only gives 4-H members the chance to travel out of Michigan but also the opportunity to see the value in helping others. These youth worked long days in the hot weather to complete projects that could have taken weeks. The trip also included a stop at the Kentucky Horse Park and the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force.



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | **Extension**

MISSION:

Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities.

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal opportunity employer, committed to achieving excellence through a diverse workforce and inclusive culture that encourages all people to reach their full potential. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Jeffrey W. Dwyer, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned. The 4-H Name and Emblem have special protections from Congress, protected by code 18 USC 707.