

MONROE COUNTY 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



The butterfly effect is an idea introduced by Edward Lorenz in the 1960s that small, seemingly insignificant singular events may ultimately lead to much larger outcomes. If taken on their own and independent from others in the community, MSU Extension workshops, programs, and publications may seem to impact only those individuals who experience them first-hand. However, for over 150 years, Extension has worked diligently to facilitate community partnerships and coalitions that broaden our education efforts and “Bring Knowledge to Life.” In addition to our county partners, Extension staff throughout



District 12 worked with 123 partners and coalitions in 2023 to expand the reach of our programs and education initiatives. Together, we are creating ripple effects, like the flaps of the butterfly wings, that stretch across the county and beyond. In the 2023 annual report, you’ll find success stories, participant feedback, event photos, program metrics, and much more about the impact that Extension is making in the lives of friends, family, and neighbors in Monroe County.

Want more frequent updates about future programs and impacts? Sign up here to receive our monthly Report to Our Partners e-newsletter.

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MSU Extension Monroe
963 S Raisinville Rd.
Monroe, MI 48161
Phone: 734.240.3170
Email: msue.monroe@msu.edu

Website: [MSU Extension Monroe County](https://www.msue.edu/monroe-county)

Follow us on social media:
[MSU Extension- Monroe County](https://www.facebook.com/MSUExtension-MonroeCounty)





DEVELOPING YOUTH & COMMUNITIES



Monroe County 4-H is one of the largest 4-H programs in Michigan. During 2023, the program had 1,251 youth participants from 96 active clubs. This represented a growth of 260 new 4-H members. 4-H's success is largely based on our volunteers' service. In 2023, Monroe County 4-H had 801 active volunteers supporting the 4-H mission.

During the 2023 program year, multiple educational programs were created or revived. The Green Thumb Expo educated youth in the horticulture area for the first time, 40 youth participants attended this program. Agriculture Awareness Day, a multifaceted agriculture and safety day, was an effort to reach second & third-graders in the community. This program hosted 450 youth, twice the previous year's attendance. Slow Spokes a 120-mile outdoor education program from Maybee to MSU was revived and had 17 youth participants. 4-H also hosted a scholarship program for seniors and college freshmen which invested \$9,850 in these youths' education.

Monroe County 4-H also actively fundraised to support youth educational programs within the county, state and nationally. The Monroe County 4-H Council raised over \$50,000 to support these efforts. Monroe County 4-H Junior Livestock & Small Animal Associations raised nearly \$1,000,000 to support youth animal husbandry projects in the county.

New projects added to Monroe County 4-H in 2023.

The first annual Green Thumb Expo was held, and 40 youth participated in the program. People came together for a day of planting and crafting. Each youth had a total of eight projects completed at the day-long event. Projects included patio garden tomato plants, geraniums, succulents, and scarecrows. This event was a great success and will be held on an annual basis.



Parents and caregivers are the first to influence a child's development and future academic success. To ensure the success of families across Michigan and to support children's school readiness, MSU Extension has invested in research- and evidence-based programming for the parents, caregivers, and early childhood educators who have the first opportunity to enhance children's skills and become their best resources and advocates. This program supports families while helping parents and caregivers increase early childhood science, math, and preliteracy skills and enhancing the social and emotional wellness of children and youth. By increasing parents' and caregivers' knowledge of child and youth development, Extension can help caring adults build a positive foundation for learning and lifelong success.



KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY & ENSURING SAFE FOOD

Regarding [nutrition](#) and [physical activity](#), MSU Extension’s experts in health and nutrition bring evidence-based education into communities across the state. Our staff delivers educational programming to communities and helps create lasting healthy changes, from kitchen tables to school cafeterias. Programming is supported through the [Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program](#) and the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program–Education \(SNAP-Ed\)](#).

Nutrition Programs include:

- [Cooking for One](#)
- [Cooking Matters](#)
- [Eat Healthy, Be Active](#)
- [My Way to Wellness](#)
- [Peak Health and Performance](#)
- [Show Me Nutrition](#)
- [Teen Cuisine](#)



“My son attends Monroe Public Elementary School, and has participated in the MSUE Show Me Nutrition series. We always reviewed the papers he brought home each day and is always excited to share what he learned. He continues to insist on using the (MyPlate) plate to make sure his meals consist of the five food groups. He wanted to share this picture with you. Thank you for helping us make healthy choices at home!

Thank you MSU Extension!”

- Stephanie B.

Safe and properly prepared food can prevent foodborne illness, thus reducing healthcare costs and improving overall health and well-being. Whether for food entrepreneurs, volunteers preparing food for the community, childcare providers, or consumers interested in preserving food, MSU Extension teaches various classes to help everyone enjoy safe, healthy food. for keeping food safe. Extension offers high-quality, affordable programs that help Michigan residents learn the importance of safe food and water in their everyday lives. Our research-based programs help food handlers learn safe food-preservation skills and techniques.

Food Safety Programs include:

- [Cooking for Crowds.](#)
- [Cottage Food Law](#)
- [Home Food Preservation](#)
- [Safe Food = Healthy Kids](#)
- [ServSafe](#)

105
HNI PROGRAMS
HOSTED IN
COUNTY

830
RESIDENTS
PARTICIPATED
IN SNAP-ED
PROGRAMS

950
RESIDENTS
PARTICIPATED IN
HEALTH &
NUTRITION
PROGRAMS

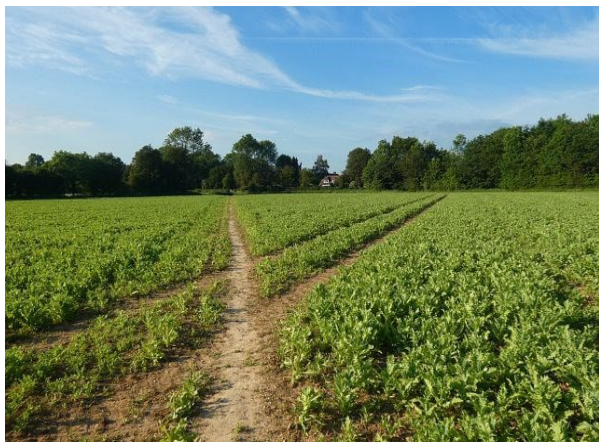


ENHANCING AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESS

MSU Extension educators in the field of Agriculture and Agribusiness work with farms of all sizes helping to impact individual farming operations positively. When those individual operations do well, their success helps to fuel state and local economies.

Farm Stress Management

Taking care of crops and animals is hard on farmers. Caring for personal health and wellness in this high-stress profession is often overlooked but is as critical as caring for the farm business. Agricultural professionals and their families face unique stressors and mental health challenges and often have limited access to mental health services. MSU Extension is a national leader in addressing farm stress and related mental health issues by providing farm business financial analysis to farms, connecting farmers and their families with teletherapy programs, workshops, webinars and digital materials offering self-paced or interactive options.



Gardening Successfully MSU Extension educates Michigan residents about gardening practices that diversify landscapes, reduce chemical inputs and enhance edible food production. To ensure resources are provided equally in Michigan, educators use a variety of methods. Extension extends the capacity of educating Michigan communities about sustainable gardening by recruiting and training volunteers to serve on a diagnostic responder team or as an Extension Master Gardener. These volunteers are pivotal in reaching a much broader audience. Master Gardeners are equipped through advanced training to help disseminate research-based gardening education to residents. Whether serving as a diagnostic responder or sharing Smart Gardening advice at a public event, the team of nearly 2,000 statewide volunteers multiplies the efforts of every team member.

Irrigation Efficiency Irrigation plays an important role in Michigan agriculture. High-value crops are nearly 100 percent produced under irrigation and requires an irrigation system upon contract. MSU Extension uses a variety of methods such as in-person and recorded presentations, articles, websites, field demonstrations, and conferences to educate irrigators and policymakers. Educators also provide awareness and education on large-volume water use registration and reporting in irrigation-related education meetings.

MSU Extension's Emergency Response to Accidents Involving Livestock (ERAIL)

Programs focus on the safety of first responders and the public traveling Michigan roads and highways. ERAIL trains first responders, animal haulers and others how to properly respond when animals are involved in a traffic accident; provides access to equipment that will aid in the accident response; and creates a network of trained responders throughout the state.



FOSTERING STRONG COMMUNITIES

What can the MSU Product Center do for you?

[MSU Extension](#) and the [MSU Product Center](#) assist entrepreneurs and businesses in developing products and services in the food and agriculture markets. Its team of experts consults with clients on a one-on-one basis, helping new entrepreneurs navigate from concept development to launch and beyond. The MSU Product Center also offers specialized services such as labeling, packaging, and nutritional analysis. If you are interested in business counseling from the MSU Product Center, please visit the [website](#).



Government & Community Vitality

Are you a government official or urban planner looking for guidance? We offer training on a wide range of public policy topics. We facilitate meetings and promote good governance and we offer *Citizen Planner* training and timely webinars. Government and Community Vitality Education provides community development expertise to local governments to “thrive locally” by working with communities using data and tools that support the efficient delivery of critical public services that

safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of Michigan residents. Land use education and training to locally appointed and elected planning officials throughout Michigan teaches the fundamentals of roles, responsibilities, and best practices for planning and zoning in the state. More information regarding citizen planning and local government/housing education can be found under the full program list to the left.

- Full Program List:
- [Great Lakes Leadership Academy](#)
 - [Citizen Planner](#)
 - [Tribal Education](#)
 - [Livable Communities](#)



Monroe County Staff

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Role</u> | <u>Phone</u> | <u>Email</u> |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Chelsea Butler | 4-H Program Coordinator | 734.240.3174 | butle301@msu.edu |
| Chris Galbraith | Vegetable Educator | 734.240.3178 | galbra53@msu.edu |
| Jean Genaw | 4-H Program Coordinator | 734.240.3188 | genawjea@msu.edu |
| Heather Hampel | Community Nutrition Instructor | 734.240.3171 | hampel@msu.edu |
| Diane Longanbach | Product Center Innovation Counselor | 734.240.3170 | longbach@msu.edu |
| Sarah Rhinehart | Secretary I / Support Staff | 734.240.3182 | rhineha5@msu.edu |
| Allen Russell | Community Nutrition Instructor | 734.240.3175 | russe414@msu.edu |

A Statewide Network of Resources to Help You

MSU Extension is the home of the latest in research, education, and outreach covering a wide range of issues from agriculture & agribusiness, health and nutrition, youth education and outreach, and community and economic vitality. If MSU Extension doesn't have an expert in your county to answer your questions, we can connect you to our statewide resources to connect you to the information you need.

Ask Extension offers one-to-one answers from MSU Extension experts and Extension Master Gardener volunteers on topics such as lawns, gardening, agriculture, nutrition, physical activity, food safety, food preservation, natural resources, community development, youth programming, and more! **Ask Extension:** www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/ask-an-expert

Lawn and Garden Hotline: 888-678-3464 Hours: M, W, F 9:00 am–12:00 pm (Year round)
Crabgrass, brown spots, or powdery mildew, the Lawn and Garden Hotline can give you information on all your home gardening questions.

Food Safety Hotline: 877-643-9882 Hours M/W/F, 9:00 am-5:00 pm
Do you have questions about food expiration dates, how long will last, or preserving foods at home? The Michigan State University Extension food safety hotline can help answer these types of questions and concerns.



MSU Extension Bookstore <https://shop.msu.edu/collections/msu-extension-bookstore>
Look for bulletins, publications, and MSU Extension products at the Bookstore!

Soil Mailers MSU Extension home lawn and garden and commercial soil mailers provide access to personalized fertilizer recommendations for thousands of Michigan residents every year. The home lawn and garden mailer can be purchased in person at [MSU Extension offices](#) or online from the [MSU Extension bookstore](#). Commercial soil mailers are purchased in person at [MSU Extension offices](#). Questions about soil results can be sent to MSUsoiltest@msu.edu