



Muskegon County

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

BY THE NUMBERS



Over 4,000 Muskegon County adults and youth participated in MSU Extension programs



1,615 youth participated in 4-H and school enrichment programs



1,476 youth and adults participated in health and nutrition programs



MSU Extension helped 182 community members with economic development, natural resources and local government education



1,197 Muskegon County residents participated in SNAP education programs



506 Muskegon County residents participated in agricultural and gardening services



More than \$5,101,321 was spent with local businesses



\$28,423,132 total economic impact in Muskegon County

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Once again I am delighted to share the results of another successful year of partnership between Muskegon 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 Muskegon 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 Muskegon 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

Program Highlights

PRODUCT CENTER COUNSELLING

Strong counties provide resources to assist entrepreneurial activity within the region. MSU's Product Center helps Michigan entrepreneurs and businesses to develop and launch new product and service ideas into the food, agriculture, and bioenergy markets. In Muskegon County, 72 client counselling sessions with 9 businesses totaled 215 hours of assistance. Four of these businesses launched in 2019, resulting in four new jobs being created. The businesses reported a total of \$38,000 in increased sales, and two businesses invested a total of \$55,000 in to their business in 2019.



Helping businesses plan for future success.

NUTRITION EDUCATION

MSU Extension's Show Me Nutrition program provides basic nutrition education and hands-on activities for all ages. Exploring new food types helps create healthy habits for life. 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 \$10 in long-term health costs. Almost 1,200 Muskegon County residents participated in Community Nutrition Programming in 2019.



Students experiment with spinach and cucumber.

FOOD SAFETY

Providing assistance to help residents and businesses keep food safe is a hallmark of cooperative extension services across the country. In Muskegon County, we provided ServSafe education for restaurant staff, classes in home food preservation (canning, freezing and drying), assistance to food pantries, and "Safe Food Healthy Kids" classes for childcare providers.



ServSafe participants learn how to help prevent foodborne illnesses.

Program Highlights



A 4-H Tech Wizards participant in Muskegon County holding the gift box they created.



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



Mentor training being put in to practice.

S.T.E.A.M. PROGRAMS

Multiple schools in Muskegon County took advantage of the 4-H Tech Wizards after-school program designed to foster bonds between mentors and mentees while developing an interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Architecture, and Math (S.T.E.A.M.) fields. Funded by a federal grant, programs ranged from geocaching and technology tear-downs to a herpetology hike. This youth mentoring program was successfully offered at 2 Muskegon County school sites in 2019.

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 Muskegon County MSU Extension office provides assistance to many customers with basic home gardening concerns. Additionally, 107 soil tests were completed for Muskegon County residents in 2019.

LEADERSHIP & MENTOR EDUCATION

MSU Extension's team of knowledgeable leadership and mentor educators share best practices with university-backed, research-based programs and resources to help Michigan youth navigate through whatever challenges life throws their way. In 2019, the team provided lessons from the Ready to Go Mentor training kit to multiple groups within Muskegon County, resulting in improved leadership/mentor skills and improved confidence levels amongst participants.

Program Highlights

FARM CONSULTATIONS

Providing support to dairy and beef farms in Muskegon County resulted in improved quality of livestock, savings on feed cost, and time-saving efficiencies, all of which result in better financial performance. Other farm visits in Muskegon 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

OSTEOSCHOLARS

Partnering with the West Michigan Osteopathic Foundation, MSU School of Osteopathy, and Mercy Health, MSU Extension has been supporting Osteoscholars in Muskegon County since it's inception. This program prepares students for a medical career by increased exposure to the healthcare system, hands-on training, guest speakers from the medical field, and an on-campus medical camp at MSU. All of these efforts occur with the goal of increasing the number of certified doctors that might one day look to return to their home community.



Youth explore what it takes to become a doctor of Osteopathy in the Osteoscholars program.

HEALTHY LIVING

MSU Extension helps people apply research to make positive changes in their lives. We empower individuals with the knowledge they need to make healthy choices. Programs such as the Matter of Balance program reduce the fear of falling and increase activity levels among older adults. Chronic Pain PATH (Personal Action Towards Health) introduces participants to various self-management tools which empower them to take an active role in managing their pain.



Chronic Pain PATH participants in Muskegon

Investing in Muskegon County Youth with 4-H

*According to research completed by the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University, 4-H'ers are **4X** more likely to make contributions to their communities, **2X** more likely to be civically active, and **2X** more likely to make healthier choices.*



In Muskegon County, we believe in the power of young people. By providing opportunities to learn and lead, 4-H helps youth become informed and engaged community members. While exploring new topics and activities in an experiential way, youth build the skills they need for life.

In 2019, Muskegon County 4-H had a total of 100 screened adult volunteers and 433 youth enrolled as 4-H club members. In addition, 930 children aged 5 to 19 took part in other learning opportunities with MSU Extension. Essential skills youth develop while participating in 4-H include problem solving, decision making, leadership, resiliency, and communication.

4-H is unique in that it offers experiences to young people who live in cities or rural areas by providing the opportunity to participate in community 4-H clubs, learning experiences in school classrooms, day and overnight camps, and other special interest events. One example includes MSU 4-H Exploration Days, a pre-college program where over 2,500 youth stay in MSU residence halls, take a variety of action packed classes, and experience other aspects of a major university. In 2019, 35 youth from Muskegon County attended MSU 4-H Exploration Days.

Beyond the excitement of learning something new through a project, youth have the opportunity to participate in leadership conferences, travel the world, become involved in their community through service, and meet new friends in a safe and comfortable setting. A young person's experience in 4-H makes a difference for a lifetime by allowing them to grow and appreciate the importance of being a good citizen, strong leader, and person of character.

Leaders also help youth achieve their personal goals and provide encouragement and a support system. The relationships built among adult volunteer leaders and youth also have lasting effects. From 4-H experiences, youth gain important leadership, citizenship, and life skills that can be applied to daily living, used in their community, in future jobs, or when they continue their education. Although it may be years before a youth realizes and truly appreciates the influence of the 4-H leader that served as positive adult role models, one can be certain that volunteer leaders are truly making a difference for life.



Jeff Dwyer, Director of MSU Extension waves off Muskegon County youth to MSU for Exploration Days!

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.

MUSKEGON COUNTY MSU EXTENSION STAFF

Lainey Burrese, Community Nutrition Instructor	burrese@msu.edu
Frank Cox, Career/Mentoring/Capacity Building Educator	coxf@msu.edu
Anna Eldenbrady, 4-H Tech Wizards Coordinator	wiescho1@msu.edu
Amanda Mcnerney, Extension Support Staff	mcnerne6@msu.edu
Karla Murphy, Community Nutrition Instructor	murph570@msu.edu
Tonya Pell, 4-H Program Coordinator	pelltony@msu.edu
Julie Hultzsich, Community Nutrition Instructor	rynbergj@msu.edu
Wade Syers, Food Safety Educator	syerswad@msu.edu

CONTACT



Muskegon County MSU Extension
209 E. Apple Ave
Muskegon, MI 49442



231-724-6361



msue.msu.edu
muskegon@msu.edu



Muskegon MSU Extension



@MSUEExtension

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