



Program Impact Report



Michigan State University (MSU) Extension delivers affordable, relevant, evidence-based education to help adults, young people, and families in urban and rural communities be healthy. Programs focus on helping participants gain the skills they need to buy and prepare nutritious, budget-friendly foods; increase their physical activity; breastfeed their babies; and stretch their food dollars.

Dig It! Youth Summer Series 2022

Welcome to the Dig It! Youth Summer Series sponsored by U Dig It Community Garden (UDICG), AFFEW (A few Friends for the Environment of the World), MSU Extension, the Sable Dunes Audubon Society, and Lakeshore Food Club. This is a FREE interactive gardening experience focused on nutrition and creative nature exploration, in addition to hands-on planting and harvesting. Students will be designing journals to record weekly sightings out at the garden. This effort will help support healthy food access in Mason County. A portion of the produce participants grow will be donated to the Lakeshore Food Club, and some will go home to share with families.



About The Great Garden Detective

Discover what fruits and vegetables are sweetest, crunchiest, and juiciest through a series of

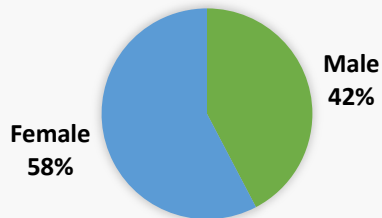
investigations and fun experiences connecting the school garden to the classroom, school cafeteria, and home. This curriculum for 3rd and 4th grades includes bulletin board materials, veggie dice, fruit and vegetable flash cards, and ten issues of Garden Detective News for parents/caregivers. (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/great-garden-detective-adventure>)

Below is a summary of the **Dig It! Youth Summer Series** that took place during the summer of 2022. Community Nutrition Instructors (CNI's) led youth through an 8-week nutrition education series aimed at improving dietary, physical activity, food safety, and food resource management related behaviors.

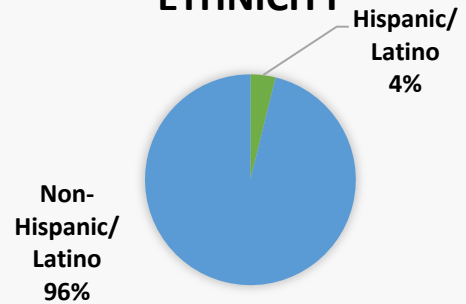
In total, the program hosted 26 youth participants from June to August of 2022.

Demographics

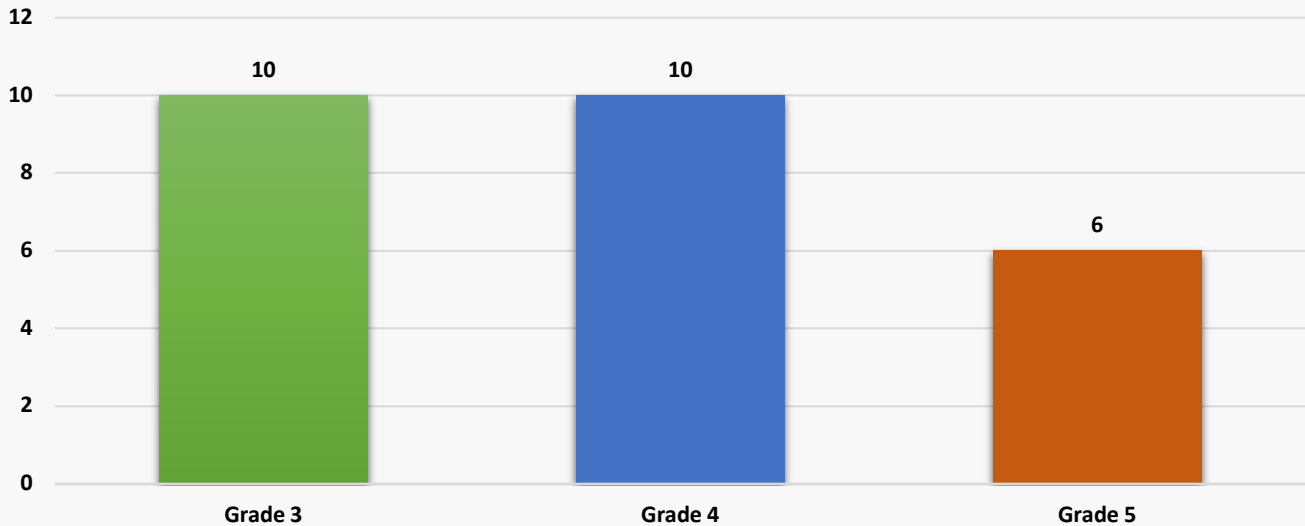
GENDER



ETHNICITY



GRADE



Results

Participants were asked to complete a pre/posttest behavioral survey at the beginning and end of the series, respectively. A 14-item survey was used to assess diet quality, physical activity, and food safety practices. The data included in this report represents participants that completed both a pre and a posttest survey; missing data was excluded case wise for each item listed below.

Food Safety Practices

- 42% of participants **washed fruits and vegetables before consumption** more often
- 29% of participants **put cold foods back into the refrigerator** more often
- 26% of participants improved **hand washing** behaviors



Diet Quality

- 38% of participants reported an increase in **vegetable** consumption
- 25% of participants reported an increase in **fruit** consumption
- 39% of participants reported a decrease in **sugary beverage consumption**
- 30% of participants reported using **nutrition labels to identify healthy foods** more often



Physical Activity

- 36% reported being **physically active more often (more days per week)**
- 29% reported an increase in **the amount (time) spent being physically active**
- 29% reported a reduction in **screen time activities**



Program Impact – Policy, Systems, and Environmental Changes

Beginning in 2019, the U Dig It Community Garden, previously known as the Lakeshore Food Club, has been focused on supporting food pantry donations, educating adults and youth on growing food, nutrition and physical activity. An organizational readiness assessment results showed that the site staff were ready and confident to make changes. The 59-bed garden provides an opportunity for youth and adult gardening and education through the Dig It! youth summer program, food preservation workshops and produce donations to the Lakeshore Food Club. Students explored MyPlate and toured the garden. They helped plant produce that will be used for tasting, for students to take home and for donating to the local food club.



In 2022, 4,202 adults and youth were impacted by the produce donation program. Five community workshops: vermicomposting, seed saving, organic pest management, freezing/ blanching produce, and tomato/ water bath canning had over 50 participants utilize these programs.

Changes made over the past years with assistance of MSU Extension:

- Implemented price manipulation/coupons/discounts to encourage healthy choices
- Initiated, improved, expanded, reinvigorated, or maintained edible gardens
- Initiated or expanded a mechanism for distributing produce to families or communities
- Initiated or expanded farm-to-table/use of fresh or local produce
- Initiated or expanded the collection or gleaning of excess healthy foods for distribution to clients, needy individuals, or charitable organizations
- Initiated, improved or expanded opportunities for parents/students/community to access fruits and vegetables from the garden
- Initiated, improved or expanded opportunities for parents/students/community to work in the garden
- Initiated or expanded mechanism for distributing seedlings and/or other materials to families or communities for home gardening



In 2022, a collaboration with 5th grade Math and Science students at Ludington Elementary School, twenty-five students helped pre-plant the youth garden for the summer program, prep ground for a larger pollinator garden, and spread mulch.

