

THE 2023

MSU EXTENSION

ANNUAL REPORT

NOTE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Like many of you, I grew up singing the iconic lyrics of "This Land is Your Land." As we recall, it begins, "This land is your land, this land is my land." With that melody echoing in your mind, I am pleased to present not just your annual report, but also mine. Stepping into this role not too long ago, this annual report has been instrumental in deepening my understanding of the profound impact MSU Extension has had on our county over the past year. It is my sincere hope that this document serves a similar purpose for you.

In the forthcoming year, I eagerly anticipate actively supporting the educators, instructors, and coordinators of MSU Extension. By doing so, I will gain first-hand experience of the projects, programs, and initiatives that will be detailed in next year's annual report.

In the meantime, please feel free to reach out to me via phone or email with any questions about this annual report of MSU Extension. While I may not have all the answers, I am quickly learning that someone within MSU Extension likely does.

M. Scott Korpak, District 7 Director



BY THE NUMBERS

Served
5,103
Ottawa
residents

Answered
187 Ask an
Expert
Questions

Hosted 137
program
activities in
Ottawa
County

18
Commercial
Soil Test Kits
in Ottawa
County

127
Residential
Soil Test Kits
in Ottawa
County

27
Active
4-H Clubs



4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

4-H Way

4-H empowers young people with the skills to lead for a lifetime. It's a research-based experience that includes a mentor, a hands-on project, and a meaningful leadership opportunity.

The goal of the 4-H Youth Development model is for **4-H** to "provide kids with community, mentors, and learning opportunities to develop the skills they need to create positive change in their lives." You need to look no further than the amazing youth in the Ottawa County 4-H program. In 2023, Ottawa County had **27** active clubs with a total of **546** youth registered in club programs and **98** adult volunteers.

New 4-H Program Supervisor



Kellie Kieren, Ottawa County 4-H Program Supervisor

In 2023, MSU Extension brought on a new 4-H Program Supervisor, Kellie Kieren! Kellie began her 4-H experience at the age of 5 when she showed animals at the Newaygo County Free Fair. She continued her engagement in 4-H until she aged out of the program. Over the years she engaged in a variety of project areas including goats, rabbits, chickens, horses, pigs, and lambs. Kellie has spent the past 11 years as a physical education teacher and athletic director with Grand Rapids Public Schools where she coached volleyball, bowling, cross country, and track and field. She made the decision to leave teaching to pursue a leadership role outside the traditional education system while still being involved in youth programming. Kellie has experience building community partnerships and gaining support for programs. Please welcome Kellie to MSU Extension!

2023 State Horse Show

In August of 2023, 16 Ottawa County 4-H'ers participated in the State 4-H Horse Show. This three day event includes more than 275 classes of 4-H members and their projects competing on a statewide basis at the Michigan State University Pavilion for Agriculture & Livestock Education in Lansing. It even includes a photography contest!



New 4-H Club & Fashion Show



In 2023, Saugatuck Stitchers 4-H Club was formed, focusing on teaching sewing skills to youth. The club held a fashion show at the Felt Mansion in Holland on September 6, where sixteen youth were able to display the outfits they had made. There was a DJ, an announcer, and a number of guests gathered to view the work put into these fun outfits by each of the club members. Each of the youth took a turn walking down the runway to show off their outfit, and then were greeted by 3 judges who asked questions about how they created the pieces they were wearing. Each of the youth displayed pride while showing their outfits, and had a great time showcasing their hard work. Many of the youth mentioned they loved learning how to sew and making garments from scratch. We look forward to next year's fashion show.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Exploration Days

In 2023, 7 Ottawa County youth attended MSU Extension's 4-H Exploration Days event. Each year about 2,000 youth (ages 12-19) and chaperones from across Michigan attend. This fun MSU precollege program is designed to: increase responsibility, confidence, independence, accountability, problem-solving, decision-making and time management skills. It is also designed to increase communication, team work, citizenship, leadership skills, foster ability to meet new people and make new friends, develop and expand career and personal interests, increase college exploration and access to MSU campus and it's resources, develop social and academic skills needed for a successful transition to college and life as an adult. Exploration Days provides youth with opportunities to try new things that aren't available in their county.



SPIN Club

In 2023, Tyler Lidgard, 4-H Program Coordinator created the Understanding Water SPIN club for youth ages 14-19. This was a 5 week club that included activities such as water quality sampling at Hemlock Crossings Nature Center, cruise orientation at Annis Water Resource Institute, DJ Angus Vessel Experience (water quality sampling on Lake Michigan), a tour of the Lake Michigan Water Filtration Plant, and kayaking at Hemlock Crossings to survey for curly-leaved pondweed. One of the participants stated they want to major in biology and decided she wanted to take an aquatic biology class to learn more about the processes. One of our favorite quotes from participants is "Oh look at this little bug, it is so cute"!

Ottawa County 4-H Donates Property to Complete Idema Explorers Trail

Thanks to a donation from the Ottawa County 4-H Council, Michiganders will be able to experience nature close up between Grand Haven and Grand Rapids. The council recently gifted a parcel of land to the Ottawa County Parks Department that will help complete the Idema Explorers Trail, a 10-foot wide, paved trail that allows hikers and cyclists access to 9,000 acres of public lands along the Grand River Greenway.

"This generous gift will allow us to complete the trail so the area is fully open to those who wish to explore this area," said Jason Shamblin, Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Director.

Tyler Lidgard, Michigan State University 4-H program coordinator in Ottawa County, said that the 34 acres, valued at more than \$265,000, has been in the hands of 4-H since 1959 when the Eugene and Ida Ten Brink family deeded the property to the 4-H Youth Development program in the area. "4-H'ers used the land for rustic camping for many years, but it is now landlocked and difficult to access except by the trail," Lidgard explained. "The 4-H Council wanted to honor the Ten Brinks request that the land only be used for recreational purposes. Donating it so the trail can be completed seemed like a great compromise. Once completed, 4-H families and others can access the land and explore the area as the Ten Brinks envisioned."

Michigan 4-H Youth Development, a program of MSU Extension, is the state's largest youth organization. 4-H provides thousands of young people ages 5 to 19 opportunities to grow their leadership and life skills through experiential educational opportunities that help them explore new interests and find their passion.

SUPPORTING AGRICULTURE AND AGRIBUSINESS



Grain Bin & Manure Pit Safety

In 2023, 63 people attended the Grain Bin and Manure Pit Safety Program lead by MSU Extension's Charles Gould and Martin Mangual. Working around grain bins and manure pits can result in both fatal and nonfatal injuries. Understanding how to safely work in these environments is the purpose for this program.

111 attended the 2023 Michigan Manure Management Summit

Small Fruit Education

Another commodity that is crucial to the Agriculture industry of Ottawa County is blueberries. Last year, 164 growers attended MSU Extension Small Fruit programs to learn how to manage major production risks. A few of these programs were: Outreach and Assistance to Underserved Limited Resources Small Fruit Growers, the Spring Blueberry Webinar, IPM Toolbox, IPM Training, and Research and Extension Initiative to Improve Blueberry Pollination. In 2021, our MSUE Blueberry IPM program started developing biological control alternatives for fruitworm and SWD control using *Trichogramma* egg-parasitoids and entomopathogenic nematodes (EPNs). In 2023, we expanded those trials to commercial blueberry fields.



Dairy Education

In 2023, 22 farmers from Ottawa County attended Dairy Education programs held by MSU Extension Dairy Educator, Martin Mangual. These programs included Down Cow Training and Animal Handling Training. These trainings prompted the farmers to implement changes based on our educator's recommendations. According to a follow-up conversation with a farm, they reported that they are establishing a "Down Cow Kit". This will allow the farm to establish and organize all the equipment required to manage and respond efficiently to a Down Cow event. This training can potentially reduce the risk of losing an animal resulting in significant economic losses for the dairy farm.



Cultivating Resilience Field Day

As Michigan agriculture faces continued challenges – from extreme weather events, groundwater shortages, development pressures, and more – cultivating resilience in our agricultural community is essential. In 2023, 81 Ottawa County residents attended this event which showcased both common and emerging practices that promote soil health, improve water quality, and give producers practical conservation knowledge that can be used to evaluate and enhance their operations. This event is hosted and developed by the Ottawa Conservation District. They partner with MSU Extension, ODC Network, Allegan Conservation District, Ottawa County Department of Strategic Impact and the Natural Resources Conservation Service for educational programming.



SUPPORTING AGRICULTURE AND AGRIBUSINESS

Smart Gardening Lectures & Outreach at Windmill Island Gardens



MSU Extension and Windmill Island Gardens (WIG) of Holland partnered up to offer three Smart Gardening lectures held throughout the season and additional outreach to residents. 155 Ottawa County residents attended these lectures in 2023, along with 129 non-residents. These lectures helped gardeners make smart choices in their own backyards. Because of this partnership, MSU Extension staff have assisted with several technical consultations with WIG staff and interns since 2021. They have helped re-create a badly neglected butterfly garden, offering poignant educational sessions, and directly reaching guests one-on-one, as well as providing recommendations for insect and pest control in the aging greenhouse and developing maintenance strategies for invasive plant problems.

Dig In! 2023 Series

Dig In is an online educational series of 10 classes for Extension Master Gardeners. This is provided so that all EMGs can complete their 10 hour continuing education requirement without cost, from wherever they are located. 1,322 people participated in this series in 2023, 34 of them were from Ottawa County. Sessions included topics such as Birds and Berries, Spotted Lanternfly and How not to Advance invasives, Where do Your Annuals Come From, Inviting Native Plants into your Garden Design, Waterfront Garden Design, Creepy Insects and Cool Pollinators, and more.



Ornamental Horticulture

The Ornamental Horticulture team hosted a number of in-person and virtual events in 2023, bringing in 339 Ottawa County residents and an over-all total of 4,950 people. Greenhouse and Nursery growers enjoyed sessions such as Abiotic Disorders of Greenhouse Crops, Root Zone Management, Michigan Plant Growers Co-Op Meeting, sessions at the Great Lakes EXPO and more. Christmas Tree growers were provided with learning and networking opportunities such as Ready Set Grow! Christmas Tree Plantation Establishment Webinar Series, Michigan Christmas tree meetings, and the Real Christmas Tree Board research update webinar.

Plantation establishment is one of the most crucial steps for a successful Christmas tree operation. Planted seedlings are vulnerable to a host of potential problems that can result in high rates of tree mortality. Challenges in tree survivability and growth can increase the length of time from planting to harvest. Christmas tree experts discussed site and species selection, insect and disease management, nursery production systems and soil fertility during the Ready, Set, Grow! webinar series.

273 Ottawa County Residents attended GLEXPO

990 attended the MI Ag Ideas to Grow With Conference

106 Ottawa residents participated in Bee Keeping Programs

33 Ottawa residents attended Pesticide Applicator Review Sessions

185 Ottawa Residents attended Virtual Breakfast weekly webinars

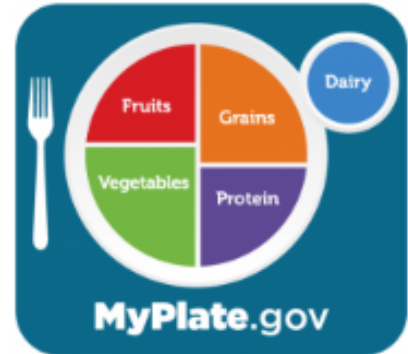
21 Ottawa residents completed Foundations of Gardening

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

1,509 Youth -
Seniors
attended Health
& Nutrition
programs in
Ottawa County

SNAP-ED

SNAP-ED Instructors, Amy Prins and Christian Kleinjans taught 478 Ottawa County children in 31 classrooms about food and nutrition. The Show Me Nutrition, My Plate and Healthy Eating Adds Up series help educate children about the importance of increasing their vegetable and fruit consumption, as well as increase their physical activity. The Grow It, Try It, Like It series is a garden-themed interactive/hands-on learning program for preschool aged children. The children learned about healthy eating, food resource management, physical activity and reduced sedentary behavior, healthy eating behaviors, and food resource management behaviors.



Amy and Christian also taught 1,031 adults and seniors about eating healthy on a budget, making healthy eating part of their lifestyle, physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight through a number of different programs. A few of these include: Food Club, Eat Healthy Be Active, Cooking for One, Food Demonstrations and Cooking Techniques, My Way to Wellness, Meal Planning, Senior Project Fresh, and more.

FOOD SAFETY

In 2023, 79 Ottawa County residents took classes and accessed resources from MSU Extension's Food Safety Team. These classes covered a variety of topics that helped residents gain the knowledge and training to prevent food borne illnesses. Some examples of the classes attended are:

9 Pressure
Canner
Gauges were
tested in
Ottawa
County

- Food Safety for Food Service Workers
- Michigan Cottage Food Law
- Safe Food = Healthy Kids
- Food Safety Q & A
- ServSafe
- Preserving MI Harvest
- D2L Food Preservation
- Women of the Wild
- Preserving Pheasant
- Pantry Food Safety - It's your job!

HEALTH & MINDFULNESS

In a continued effort to manage our physical and mental health in 2023, MSU Extension's Health team Educators reached Ottawa County residents by offering a number of session opportunities. These sessions explored mindfulness basics such as breathing, moving, eating, walking, thought surfing, taming your busy mind, and more. Research has shown that people who are more mindful are generally happier and report less anxiety, symptoms of depression, anger and worries. Some of the session topics were:

- Stress Less With Mindfulness
- Tai Chi for Arthritis & Falls Prevention
- Brief Practices in Mindfulness
- SLEEP series
- Begin with a Breath
- Helping Kids Manage Stress
- Mental Health First Aid
- Relax, Alternatives to Anger
- Wits Workout
- Caring for the Caregiver
- Importance of Adult Sibling Relationships
- Forgiving & Letting Go
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) training
- National Diabetes Prevention Program
- Personal Action Towards Health (PATH)
- Chronic Pain PATH
- Mindful Lunch & Learns
- Calming & De-Stressing
- Mindful Eating
- Changing Negative Self-Talk
- Diabetes PATH

268 Ottawa
County
residents
attended
Health and
Mindfulness
programs

MICHIGAN SEA GRANT

Michigan Sea Grant is a cooperative program of the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. We fund research, education, and outreach projects designed to foster science-based decisions about the use and conservation of Great Lakes resources.

Ottawa Sands Fyke Nets

In addition to work on GLAD and provisioning fisheries, we were able to expand both programming and capacity for fisheries monitoring at Ottawa Sands in conjunction with habitat work. Ottawa County purchased fyke nets for use at Ottawa Sands in 2022. Daniel O'Keefe and Katelyn Brolick worked with Ottawa County Parks employees in 2023 to deploy the nets and devise a monitoring plan. In addition to fyke net monitoring of bluegill, largemouth bass were sampled with hook-and-line in conjunction with field trips from two schools. Spring snorkel surveys were used for the recapture phase of population estimates. 2023 was the sixth year Daniel O'Keefe has been involved in pre-restoration monitoring at Ottawa Sands and he was able to purchase supplies to expand capacity in the future, including an Isomet low-speed saw, experimental gill nets, additional fishing poles for school groups, and two cameras for underwater video.



Ottawa Sands Fisheries & Field Trips



In May 2023, 122 youth joined MSU Extension's Dan O'Keefe as he hosted four days of field trips for two schools at Ottawa Sands. These provided a great opportunity to get students outside, both for fishing and to contribute to citizen science efforts to document fish populations before habitat enhancements begin. During the field trips and other citizen science sampling, 96 largemouth bass were caught and tagged. Bass were also weighed and measured to calculate condition, which showed that small bass are in better condition than larger bass (which seem to be growing slowly due to lack of larger prey items). Fyke nets were utilized to help monitor how fish populations respond to habitat improvement.



Birding 101

In 2023, 19 Ottawa County residents attended MSU Extension's Michigan Birding 101 online series which covers foundational topics like choosing and using binoculars and guidebooks, best locations for spotting seasonal migrations, adding bird-friendly plants and yard features, and more. This state-wide program attracted over 750 registrants! A follow-up survey reported new bird conservation practices in their own yards, such as better management of feeding areas, keeping cats indoors, adding native plants, and reducing pesticide use.



Introduction to Lakes

In 2023, Introduction to Lakes online course was utilized by a number of Ottawa County residents. This course is designed for interested individuals, decision makers, local leaders, resource professionals, and lakefront property owners interested in gaining knowledge about inland lakes and connecting with others who have a similar interest. In this introductory course, participants increased their knowledge and understanding of the following topics: lake ecology, watersheds, shorelines, aquatic plant management, Michigan water law and community involvement.



OTTAWA COUNTY 2023

FINANCIAL LITERACY

In 2023, Ottawa County residents attended a variety of financial literacy webinars. MSU Extension provides resources and education on money management, foreclosure prevention, buying your own home, retirement planning and more to help residents and their families be more financially healthy. Some of the webinars Ottawa County residents attended are:



- Homebuyer Education
- Every Penny Counts
- Wealth Building
- Surviving & Thriving on a Fixed Income
- Navigating Money Challenges
- Make a Spending Plan Work for You
- Retirement Myths and Facts
- Savvy Tips for Starting a Small Business
- Your Money Goals
- Tips to build & Protect Your Credit
- Property Tax Foreclosure Basics



MICHIGAN APPLE CRUNCH

The Michigan Apple Crunch is an annual event hosted by MSU Extension and the Michigan Farm to Institution Network to promote National Farm to School Month and celebrate the iconic Michigan Apple. Thousands of participants from K-12 schools, Early Care and Education sites and other institutions and organizations across the state and Great Lakes Region register to crunch into a local Michigan apple on Crunch day. Apples provide a great way to get local schools and institutions excited about supporting local farmers and they are a nutritious snack that is available in Michigan eleven months of the year. In 2023, 6,516 Ottawa County Residents participated in the Apple Crunch, including the MSU Extension office. A total of 255,834 Michiganders participated in this event.



MAKING IT IN MICHIGAN CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW

Making it in Michigan is a premier food trade show and networking conference hosted by the MSU Extension Product Center. In 2023, 367 food business owners, retail buyers, and affiliates (16 Ottawa County) attended this event for educational sessions and buyer interaction to expand their food and agricultural business. The event took place at the Lansing Center on April 20, 2023.



PRODUCT CENTER

The MSU Extension Product Center in partnership with Muskegon Community College talked about career opportunities such as fruit and vegetable production, agriculture operations, landscape management, urban forestry and food processing to 380 Grand Haven Public School students on October 10. They are already in the planning stages of providing this information again in 2024.

527 residents were assisted by the Product Center in 2023

OTTAWA COUNTY SUCCESS STORIES

2023 Meritorious Service Award for Off-Campus Support Staff

Ottawa County MSU Extension's Kelli Headley was awarded the 2023 Meritorious Service Award for Off-Campus Support Staff at the annual Fall Extension Conference. MSU Extension has more than 85 support staff throughout the state. Kelli's pro-active approach is a valuable asset as she helps to ensure that program resources and processes are in place prior to program delivery. Her efforts strengthen our programs and enhance customer satisfaction. The Meritorious Service award is an opportunity to acknowledge her numerous contributions.



Planting Seeds for Health

I partnered with Love Your Neighbor for six sessions of Planting Seeds for Health with Adults. Bonnie has never grown a plant, let alone a garden. She was convinced she couldn't do it. Planting Seeds for Health has given her the confidence to be successful and grow healthy vegetables so she can make salsa. She grew what she knew she would eat and enjoy. She has learned the garden basics about soil, planting space, physical demand and the benefits of eating fresh home grown vegetables. - Submitted by Amy Prins. Amy's favorite quote from the class is "You have to have patience to grow a garden".

Mental Health First Aid Training put to good use

A Mental Health First Aid class participant reached out two weeks after their training to let me know that they had shared the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline number with a neighbor in a mental health crisis. Based on the training, the Mental Health First Aider asked direct questions about suicide and provided the helpful 9-8-8 lifeline number. Their neighbor was grateful for the resource and the class participant wanted us to know that they put their training to good use. - Submitted by Kai Gritter

Podcast continues to grow

In 2023, the Virtual Coffee Break podcast had a total of 1,684 plays, and published 8 new episodes; accounting for 806 of the 2023 downloads.



New Partnership Formed

I recently connected with Herrick Library's North branch and taught Brief Practices in Mindfulness. Participant engagement was high and they were very appreciative of the content. The librarian reached out after the session and said "I wanted to once again thank you for the Brief Practices in Mindfulness program you presented last night here at the North Branch. You did a wonderful job and it looked like all of the attendees were engaged and learned something. I look forward to hopefully working with you and MSU Extension going forward". - Submitted by Kai Gritter

Cooking Club Formed

Coopersville Senior Center has established a cooking club after participating in a Cooking For One class. They meet once a month and cook recipes to be shared and taken home for future meals. They share the cost of the ingredients and preparation for the recipes which takes place in a community kitchen. This club is a direct result from the meal planning lesson. The seniors decided they could have less waste and healthier meals if they share and cook together. - Submitted by Amy Prins

CONTACT US:

12220 Fillmore St. Suite #122
West Olive, MI 49460

Phone: (616) 994-4580

Facebook: facebook.com/District7MSUE
Instagram: @msuedistrict7

STAFF LIST:

M. Scott Korpak
District 7 Director
616-994-4573
korpakmi@msu.edu

M. Charles Gould
Bioenergy Educator
616-994-4547
gouldm@msu.edu

Mariel Borgman
Community Food Educator
616-994-4571
mborgm@msu.edu

Daniel O'Keefe
Sea Grant Educator
616-994-4572
okeefed@msu.edu

Martin Mangual
Dairy Educator
616-994-4581
carrasq1@msu.edu

Christian Kleinjans
Community Nutrition Instructor
616-994-4549
kleinj22@msu.edu

Heidi Lindberg
Greenhouse Educator
616-994-4701
wollaege@msu.edu

Carlos Garcia
Small Fruit Educator
616-994-4545
garcias4@msu.edu

Vacant
4-H Program Coordinator
616-994-4582

Bill Lindberg
Christmas Tree Educator
616-994-4543
lindbe35@msu.edu

Katelyn Brolick
Research Administrator
616-994-4542
brolickk@msu.edu

Kelli Headley
Senior Extension Clerk
616-994-4544
kheadley@miottawa.org

Kai Gritter
Health & Nutrition
Educator
616-994-4703
grittern@msu.edu

Amy Prins
Community Nutrition
Instructor
616-994-4541
prinsamy@msu.edu

Taci Casey
Extension Clerk
616-994-4548
tcasey@miottawa.org

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