

See what's happening at Tollgate this month!



MSU Tollgate Farm March 2020



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Save the Date! Upcoming Events

Visit our events calendar for a summary of our 2020 programs



Tollgate programming and events during Coronavirus COVID-19

As concern about the novel coronavirus grows, Michigan State University Extension remains focused on the health

and well-being of its participants, volunteers and employees. MSU Extension and MSU Tollgate Farm have announced that all in-person programs, staff meetings, and any person to person interactions are canceled or postponed through May 15th. MSU Tollgate Farm wants you to know that we continue to monitor the situation and will notify you if any program cancellations beyond May 15th are needed.

The farm will be closed to the public until the end of the shelter in place requirement. Only essential staff will be onsite to care for the livestock and crops at the farm.

The various program leaders at the farm will be in contact about refunds, rescheduling, and any specific instructions for each program. We remain hopeful that our summer camp season will continue as normal, but we will continuously monitor the situation and in the unfortunate event that we do need to cancel our summer camp programming, full refunds will be provided.

We recognize that many children will be missing out on their normal school studies. The MSU Tollgate team has shared online video content on Facebook and will continue to share more resources on our social media pages. There are also many free resources available from Michigan State University Extension.

Thank you to our volunteers and staff!

During the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic our staff and volunteers have been working hard to maintain social distance while also providing care for our livestock and crops. We want to thank all of our staff (specifically Roy Prentice, Deanna Wagner, Rachael Moran, and Norb Leppanen) and volunteers (specifically the Hutka family) for all the work they do to provide our livestock with necessary care. We have had a busy kidding season and many have been working long hours taking care of the new arrivals. We would also like to thank our hard working sustainable agriculture staff (Will Jaquinde & Darby Anderson) who continue to work on preparing for the CSA program starting this May. Thank you to all who keep Tollgate operating during this challenging time.



Virtual Mornings on the Farm

We are excited to



announce the first of our series of Mornings on the Farm with sustainable agriculture educator Will Jaquinde will be **virtual** on March 29th. This first workshop focuses on

successful garden planning and transplant production. Will is in his 5th season managing the vegetable production at MSU Tollgate, which grows more than 150 varieties across 50 crops and three acres using organic growing practices for a community supported agriculture (CSA) program. In this series, Will shares his decades of plant experience to help you grow a low maintenance, productive vegetable garden!

The series will continue on May 31st, July 12th, and August 16th. If you have any questions about the series, please email Will Jaquinde.

For more information or to register, visit the event page.

Every day at Tollgate Summer Farm Camp is an exciting adventure!

A typical day will include making nutritious snacks in Garden Kitchen, caring for our farm animals, gardening, engaging in a creative week-long STEM project, and investigating the natural world of field, forest, and pond.

Campers gain a strong land ethic while caring for the farm, our animals, and the camp community.

Check out our exciting new and classic camp themes for campers ages 5 - 18 and reserve your spot and register here now!



Specialty Camps:



Adventures for Teens and Preteens

Specialty Camps offer opportunities for the slightly older camper to experience fun adventures while exploring new

ideas. Our 4th annual Tollgate/Kellogg Biological Station Winged Wonders camper spends 2 days at the farm and 3 days birding with Tollgate staff and educators at KBS.

Also available are Vet Science Camp, Outdoor Adventure Camp, Farm Market Camp, Coding Camp, and four weeks of Horse Camp! Several specialty camps include daylong bus trips. Ages vary based on theme.

Check out our blog Experience Tollgate for a sneak peek at Winged Wonders Camp.

Learn more or register here.

Stewards and Stewards-in-Training: Young Leaders

13-19 year olds mentor campers and assist young adult staff while gaining valuable life skills in our teen leadership program. Make new friends and keep the old during the overnight orientation and special teen only celebrations throughout the summer. Career speakers, team-building fun, and service learning round out the experience for these amazing teen leaders. To learn more or to register or apply, click [here](#).



New this year! MSU Stewards Sustainability Leadership Institute

The Stewards Sustainability Leadership Institute held June 15-20, 2020 is a fun and

challenging experience for a dozen 15-19 year olds who love adventure.

SSLI candidates will:

- Serve advanced leadership roles at select weeks of summer camp
- Develop new skills for a lifetime
- Have a mentor, be a mentor
- Take an all day excursion to MSU to explore fields of study
- Embark on a multi-day wilderness team-building adventure
- Complete a sustainability action project during camp
- Forge new strengths and develop new friendships
- Those completing the institute including a capstone sustainability action project are able to share about their service and leadership experience on their college applications.

For those interested in learning more or applying for this fun and exciting leadership experience, [click here](#).

Financial Aid is available and applications are reviewed based on the needs of the participants, potential impact on their learning, cost of the program, and potential for meaningful collaboration. For more information, visit our [financial aid website](#).

New! A Newsletter for the Tollgate Learning Community

Our new quarterly newsletter for educators is a place where formal and non formal educators can share ideas and best practices for teaching science outdoors and for connecting classroom learning to the place we know as Tollgate Farm.



Tollgate Newsletter for Formal and Non Formal Educators



Evenings in the Garden Series Cancelled

Our Evenings in the Garden series has been cancelled. If you have signed up and have questions, please contact Katie

Gallagher.

Registration for the 2020 Community Supported Agriculture program is now open!



CSA members join us for a 20 week adventure in seasonal, local, sustainably grown produce while supporting our beginning farmer programming. Explore new vegetables, cook exciting foods, see your farmers every week and more; learn about all the benefits of the CSA and how to sign up [here](#).



A Family Favorite Starry Night on the Farm June 12-13, 2020

This event continues to sell out each year as we combine adventure and learning with our annual family overnight on the farm. Enjoy astronomy action and night sky viewing with the Oakland Astronomy Club. Experience the Oakland County Parks. Explore the importance of agriculture and the sun in our daily lives, all at Tollgate Farm. Some tents, sleeping bags, and sleeping pads are available to borrow. For more information or to register, [click here](#).



Night Hike 2020 Series

Night Hikes on the Farm is a series of bi-monthly events that offer educational and recreational opportunities for visitors to venture the farm in the nighttime and explore fascinating natural science topics.



- June 26th: 8:00 p.m. - What's Abuzz?

For more information or to register visit the event page [here](#).



Volunteer Appreciation Picnic: August 22nd from 12-3 PM

The MSU Tollgate Farm staff will be hosting all site volunteers for a picnic lunch sponsored by the Americana Foundation. Yard games and other outdoor fun will be provided. Tollgate staff will also present on the amazing accomplishments and upcoming projects taking place at the farm.

All volunteers are welcome including those who support gardens, maple sugaring, events, 4-H Club, camp, educational programs, financial aid, or site operations during 2019 or 2020. Volunteers are welcome to bring their immediate families or one guest.

Pre-registration is required by August 14th, 2020 to ensure accurate ordering of food and

supplies. For more information, please email Mike Mathis or register [here](#).

The Americana Foundation will be supporting the cost of the lunch. We are proud to have the Foundation as a strong partner.

Volunteer Opportunities for Pumpkinfest 2020



As we plan our annual 2020 MSU Tollgate Farm

Pumpkinfest, we would love

your help. Because of the help

of our many volunteers, Tollgate is able to positively impact adults and children in our community in life-changing ways.

Tollgate's Pumpkinfest, sponsored by Vibe Credit Union and Barton Malow, is a family-oriented event open to the public 11:00 am to 5:00 pm on Saturday, October 3rd, and Sunday, October 4th. Click [here](#) for more information or sign up to volunteer.



Coming Soon! Volunteer Central for MSU Extension Volunteers

We are grateful and appreciate our volunteers at MSUTollgate Farm. Coming soon is a new

volunteer selection process called Volunteer Central which all volunteers with MSU Extension will be asked to complete. Watch for word from Tollgate staff or, if you are an Extension Master Gardeners, from your County Master Gardener Coordinator.

This Month's 4-H Newsletter is Here!

Oakland County 4-H Connections is a monthly newsletter for 4-H members,

families, and the general community with news and information about 4-H youth development activities in Oakland County.

March Newsletter



March is Reading Month: Early literacy skill-building begins at birth

Source: <https://www.earlychildhood.org/news/march-is-reading-month-early-literacy-skill-building-begins-at-birth>

Help your child be ready for kindergarten by beginning daily literacy activities in infancy. Did you know if you start daily reading at birth, and read with your child for 30 minutes a day, they will go to kindergarten with over 300 hours of literacy time? If you reduce that to 10 minutes a week, they lose over 750 hours of this critical "brain food" and go to kindergarten with just 130 hours of literacy time.

Developing early literacy skills makes it easier for children to read. These early skills, such as building vocabulary, rhyming, and book handling skills make it easier for children to learn how to read when they get to kindergarten. However, more than one in three American children are starting kindergarten without the essential skills they need to be ready to learn to read.

Make a commitment to help your child be ready to succeed in school and commit to engaging in 30 minutes of daily literacy skill-building time starting at birth. Here are seven tips from Michigan State University Extension and ideas to support your young child's literacy development.

1. Promote high-quality language interactions

Think of yourself like a sports commentator. You are providing the play by play for the infant or toddler in your life. Narrate the world around them, their interactions with toys, even diaper changes. Talk about what is going on, what you are doing, what they are seeing, etc. Research shows that when children have higher levels of language stimulation in the first year of life, they have better language skills, including larger vocabularies.

2. Make art a regular part of the day

In infancy and toddlerhood, young children are learning that their movements and motions can make the marks on the paper. An experience provides young children with the ability to practice gripping and holding a marker or crayon, learning to be purposeful in making marks on paper and phenomenal sensory feedback (feeling the paint squish between their fingers, smelling the crayons, etc.). Provide children with a wide variety of art experiences including, but not limited to, coloring with markers and crayons on heavy and thin paper, painting, finger painting, modeling paint and clay, etc. Consider using non-traditional paints like chocolate pudding or shaving cream for a fun sensory experience.

3. Read, read, read!

Build children's print awareness and book handling skills by reading to them every day and making books available for children to explore. Consider heavy-duty board books that

Tollgate News & Announcements



Now Scheduling Fall Farm Visits for Schools and Community Groups

Are you a K-12 formal or non-formal educator who would like to bring your students or group to the

farm to explore learning together through a variety of experiential learning journeys? Tollgate offers a way for you and your students to explore phenomena happening on the farm directly alongside our education staff of formal and non-formal educators. Come explore the importance of agriculture and natural resources through inquiry based farm visits aligned with ELA, math, social studies, and Next Generation Science Standards. To learn more, read our new quarterly newsletter for educators. Available programs are listed on our website.

For more information, fill out a farm visit reservation form and email Ellen Koehler.

Tollgate welcomes all to our programs and strives to provide opportunities for schools to experience farm-based experiential learning. Assistance is determined based on established need and schools are encouraged to apply here.

Tollgate Opportunities

Tollgate Farm Camp Summer Job Opportunities

Do you love spending your summers outside? Do you want to help make a difference in the world? Come join our amazing summer camp team and positively impact the lives of youth as you spend your summer teaching, playing, and learning alongside our campers in the great outdoors. View job openings [here!](#)



Rent the Tollgate Conference Center

The MSU Tollgate Conference Center, historic barn, and Americana boardroom are available for your next business meeting, bridal or baby shower, private luncheon, or special event. Our catering staff are available to meet your needs for your event!

To learn more about hosting your event at Tollgate, visit the [Conference Center Website](#).



**Coming soon in
2020!**

***Wedding Ceremonies and
Rehearsal Dinners at
MSU Tollgate Farm***

Contact our Events Coordinator Kari Heughens for more information:

248-347-3860 (x 205)

heughen3@msu.edu

MSU Tollgate Farm and Education Center offers programs throughout the year designed to allow adults and children to experience learning hands-on, explore the joys of gardening and the natural world, appreciate and promote locally grown food, and build community.

**MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY** | **Extension**

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