



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Extension

MSU Tollgate Farm November 2020

Welcome to the New and Improved MSU Tollgate Newsletter!

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MSU Tollgate Farm Needs Your Help

Like many community organizations, MSU Tollgate relies on program and event revenue to make budget goals. With the many cancellations in 2020, it is likely MSU Tollgate Farm will miss out on almost \$600,000 - 50% of our annual operating budget - in revenue generated from our programs and events. MSU Extension supports our efforts through state and federal funding, but even at the highest levels there is uncertainty about our financial future. We need your help to ensure that the farm continues to operate in 2021. Please consider donating to one of our four giving funds. Questions can be directed to [Mike Mathis](#), MSU Tollgate Farm Director.

GIVE TO TOLLGATE

Upcoming Events



Holiday Lights at the Farm

Celebrate the holidays with a cruise at farm! Guests will enjoy holiday light displays built by volunteers and businesses from the comfort of their cars. Add to the fun by pre-purchasing a cookie and cocoa to-go box for your cruise. \$10 a car and all proceeds will support educational programming.

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Holiday Wreath Pre-Sale

Do not miss out on your chance to purchase a holiday wreath! Pre-sale is available now to reserve your wreath. We only have 100 available. These 22"-24" diameter Douglas Fir wreaths will be available for pick-up on November 20th. All wreaths come with a MSU Tollgate Farm wood ornament. Choose from a traditionally decorated wreath with a red bow and pine cones or an MSU themed wreath!



[SHOP THE FARM STORE](#)



Thanksgiving Produce Boxes Available

We are excited to announce that we will be offering a Thanksgiving-themed meal kit this year! Each meal kit box contains produce grown by local farmers and step-by-step directions (with pictures!) to create a Fall Salad, Mashed Potatoes, Garlic Butter Glazed Carrots, Herbed Stuffing, and Pumpkin Pie. Includes a dozen dinner rolls and a focaccia loaf for the stuffing from a local bakery. Feeds up to 6 people.

Limited quantities available, so don't delay! Pick up at Tollgate between 11 AM - 1 PM and between 4:30 - 6:30 PM on Tuesday November, 24th.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Engaging Community Partners in Your School or Community Garden: November 18, 4-5 pm

Formal and non-formal educators, are you interested in learning how to start and sustain a school garden? Join us Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 4:00 pm EST for the last in the Fall Virtual School Garden Education Series. Novi Community School District's Parkview Elementary has an amazing school garden, and teachers Renee Gantt, Carly Musa, and Tanya Jones will share with us how they gained the involvement and support of significant local partners to make the Parkview school garden a reality. With the help of strong community partnerships, this teaching team has been able to connect classroom learning to lessons in the outdoor living laboratory, help kids see first-hand where their food comes from, and engage students in place-based community service learning.



[REGISTER HERE](#)

A poster for 'Goat Story Time'. It features a woman sitting on a blue bench, reading a book to three goats. The goats are brown and white. The background is a grassy field with a fence. The text on the poster includes: 'SELECT FRIDAYS IN SEP, OCT, NOV', 'Goat Story Time', 'Register on our website!', 'We aren't "kidding" around about how excited we are to have you!', 'Ms. Sam, Ms. Sara, and all the goats', 'All ages welcome', and '\$10 a family'.

Goat Story Time

Join us this Friday from 4-4:45 PM for our final session of Goat Story Time for the year. For this weeks story we will be reading the beautiful story, "Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story" by the award winning author Kevin Nobel Maillard and the captivating pictures were illustrated by the talented Juana Martinez-Neal. This story is a love letter written to the Indigenous nations and is centered around 'fry bread', a simple food that represents survival and resilience. Join us and the goat doelings to learn about all of the things that "Fry Bread is..." and think about if there is a food comparable to fry bread in your family or community?

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Collaborative Teacher Support Network

Teachers and non-formal educators who want to explore place-based learning during this Covid-adapted school year, you're invited to join the Collaborative Teacher Support Network, a relaxing place for K-12 place-based educators who want to share ideas about the potential for experiential learning and outdoor education for students during the

COVID-19 adapted school experience. Experience grounding activities that you can repeat with your students. Explore ideas and best practices for outdoor education whether in-person, hybrid, or virtual formats. This virtual conversation is hosted by your friends from Michigan State University teaching facilities across the state: Kellogg Biological Station, Tollgate Farm and Education Center, and the Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center. When? December 14, 2020 3:00 PM to 4:15 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada) Questions? Email [Ellen Koehler](#).

REGISTER HERE



Developing Teen Leaders Through MSU Tollgate Farm Stewards Program

Stewards Teen Leadership Program and a Winter Virtual Stewards Series (Ages 13-19)
With the 2021 camp planning underway, watch for registration for the Stewards (15-19) and Stewards-in-Training Teen Leadership Programs soon. Also, watch for our Winter Virtual Stewards Series, designed to provide a safe space for peer-to-peer conversation, resiliency, skill-building, and fun!
Contact [Ellen Koehler](#) if you would like to join other teens in leadership roles.

Stewards Sustainability Leadership Institute: A Workforce and Career Pipeline for Teens (Ages 15-19)
The Stewards Sustainability Leadership Institute (SSLI) is a workforce development program that provides 15-19 year-olds from Tollgate Farm a chance to gain career and workforce preparation in fields related to sustainability. Through a tiered mentorship model which includes professional adult volunteers, MSU Extension faculty, and younger campers, the 4-H teen stewards will execute place-based capstone projects. The program will place an emphasis on improving the communities where participants live, gaining mastery in important career skills, serving others through mentorship, and being a leader at camp. This experience includes in-depth training, campus visits, a wilderness trip (if in-person programs are possible), and a leadership role in the Tollgate summer camp program. Interested in becoming an SSLI steward? Email [Ellen Koehler](#).

Virtual Goat Experiences

Last time we checked goats can't use phones very well,

but luckily our MSU Tollgate staff can! Want a personal goat encounter? Sign up for Goat to Meeting or Goat Shout Outs!

[LEARN MORE](#)



News & Announcements



Decorators Needed for Holidays Lights at the Farm

We welcome individuals, families, community organizations, businesses, non-profits, and government organizations to select a display location at the farm to decorate in a theme of their choosing.

Decorators provide all their own decorations, lights, artificial or live cut trees, extension cords, and any other supplies and will set up and take down their display in the designated time frame. Event and lead sponsors are able to decorate a large display area of the farm, place their own signage within the display, and be cited in extensive event marketing. Interested in decorating? Click the button below to get more details.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Holiday Light Decorations Begin

We have been busy getting the farm decorated for Holiday Lights at the Farm. Thank you to all the volunteers who came out to help. We cannot wait for our visitors to see MSU Tollgate Farm decorated and lit up. To see more of our volunteers helping hang lights and decorations, click on the button below.

[READ MORE](#)



MSU Tollgate Farm Adapting to Meet Our Educational Mission Through Virtual Programming

How is MSU Tollgate Farm adapting to meet our mission through educational programming



during these difficult times? In response to school closures and safety restrictions caused by the pandemic, we knew we needed to try to help teachers and families by providing students with an opportunity to still connect to and learn from the *place* called Tollgate Farm. Tollgate has recreated school and community programs in an interactive virtual format bringing the farm to students in new ways. One of these programs was a series called The Secret Life of Trees which met for five weekly 45 minute virtual interactive sessions filled with experiential learning and connection for area kindergarten students. We visited students from the arboretum, the forest, the orchard, and the great Dawn Redwood tree shown above. Check out the [blog](#) students followed along with and a [video](#) about this program.

[READ MORE](#)

MSU Tollgate Virtual Farm School: Learning Fresh From the Farm

A virtual classroom series with MSU Tollgate Farm and Education Center is designed for students to explore the outdoor world with interactive experiential hands-on learning. Aligned with literacy, math, and Next Generation Science standards, programs utilize inquiry place-based learning and action projects. Life cycles and systems interdependency are revealed as students virtually visit the fields, forest, greenhouse, and farm animals to investigate science phenomena taking place on the farm. Reservation for these interactive virtual series are being scheduled now for February through June 2021. Programs include interactive sessions, recorded virtual farm visits, accompanying journal pages and blog. Choose from Winter on the Farm, Maple Sugaring, Sheep to Sweater, Plants and Their Partners, Follow the Nutrient Trail, and Vet Science. Depending on the program, series are made up of 4 – 5 weekly sessions. A Tollgate financial aid process is [available](#). For questions or to tailor a program to meet your teaching goals, please email [Ellen Koehler](#).

[LEARN MORE](#)



[CSA Team Plants Cover Crops](#)



Our cover crops are emerging! We and many other farms, organic and conventional, use cover crops as a winter cover on our fields. Cover crops are crops grown for reasons other than profit, such as building soil health by fixing nitrogen and adding organic matter, reducing erosion and improving water filtration. Different mixes of cover crop varieties can be used for different soil benefits and times of year. We find that incorporating cover crops into our yearly rotations is an easy way to greatly increase soil fertility for the next year! This year we were able to plant about 30% of our fields with cover crops; the remaining fields either still in fall crops or have been covered with a layer of leaf mulch to protect the top soil for the winter.

PAR Garden Donates to Feed the Need Novi

Thank you to our Plant a Row for the Hungry (PAR) Garden volunteers for successfully donating almost 1,000 lbs of produce to Feed the Need Novi. Since 2002, the MSU Tollgate PAR Garden has donated an average of 2,400 lbs of produce to Forgotten Harvest and other local organizations. The PAR Garden team includes many MSU Extension Master Gardeners who earn EMG hours for their work. When this year's pandemic prevented volunteers from being on the farm until mid-June, they pitched in for a 4-day marathon of planting to ensure a bountiful harvest to benefit the food insecure in our community. This year's harvest included garlic, onions, potatoes, winter & summer squash, pole beans, cabbage, beets, turnips, and carrots. Thank you to this year's super hardworking and dedicated team which includes, Kathryn Fitzpatrick (PAR Garden Leader), Mary Bohner, Deborah Fedor, Dorothy Schmidt, Lynette Leroux, Angie Carter, Nancy Powell, Theresa Bridenbaugh, Lenora Woloszyn, and Mary Ann Chadwick!



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.

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Oakland County
Youth & Families
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension November 2020

STRATEGIES TO COPE WITH FAMILY STRESS

Strategies to cope with family stress

Holly Tapp and Sean Kozicki, May 26, 2020
Updated from an original article written by Terry Clark-Jones.

Coping strategies to guide you and your family when dealing with everyday stress and crisis situations.

Stress is a normal part of life. We all encounter stress in a variety of different situations, forms and amounts. What causes stress for one person may seem like no big deal to someone else.

Stress can come from seemingly small events like heavy traffic or a long line at the store, or it can be the result of a crisis event, like the loss of a job, a death in the family, a pandemic such as that caused by the novel coronavirus, the virus that causes the infectious disease COVID-19, or the catastrophic flooding experienced in mid-Michigan.

The most important thing to do is to recognize, accept and manage your stress to avoid negative physical and emotional consequences. Stress that is not managed can manifest into chronic stress. Chronic stress has been shown to suppress your immune system, increase blood pressure and blood sugar levels and exacerbate underlying conditions like anxiety and depression.

Figuring out what stress management tools work best for you can be a process. While there is no perfect way to

manage stress, here are some tips that may work for you and your family:

- **Know your own stress cues.** For example, when you're stressed, do you become irritable, short-tempered, clumsy or something else? Think about what gets your attention the most. Observe your kids and other family members for signs of stress and ask them to do the same for you. Sometimes other people notice our stress before we do.
- **Take time to do something that is meaningful, relaxing and fun for you and your family.** There's a touch, all on the porch and enjoy the scenery, enjoy coffee with a friend, or have a family movie or game night.
- **Practice deep breathing or mindfulness.** When you start to become anxious and extremely stressed, try sitting and breathing for a minute or so. It helps if you actually say to your mind, "I am breathing in, and I am breathing out." If you don't say it, but I keep your mind focused on something you can control your breath. It helps to quiet your mind and help you relax. Teach kids how to use their breath to calm down. Incorporate family breathing breaks throughout your daily routines. The more you practice this when you are not stressed, the easier it is to tap into when you need it the most.
- **Get enough sleep.** Most health experts recognize that individuals who get at least 8 hours of sleep are less stressed, less sad and can manage anger. Try an afternoon nap to supplement your sleep needs, if available. Some people find that even a 15-minute "cat nap" can feel very refreshing, just try not to sleep the afternoon away so you can still feel alert at night. Make

Opportunities and Spotlights

Staff and Volunteer Spotlights November 2020

Curious about everyone who works at MSU Tollgate Farm? Every Monday on our Facebook and Instagram we feature a staff member or volunteer. The last month we have featured Gwen Klenke, a 4-H alum and livestock volunteer, Gwen Schaller, our CSA Production Assistant, Marilyn Alimpich, a garden volunteer, and Jenny Speyer, Educational Program Leader.

[READ MORE](#)

MEET OUR VOLUNTEERS



Gwen Klenke



Interested in Volunteering at Tollgate?

We are grateful and appreciate our volunteers at MSU Tollgate Farm. Would you like to volunteer at Tollgate? Check out the steps to become part of the Tollgate volunteer team.

[READ MORE](#)

MSU Tollgate Farm and Education Center
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