



# Genesee County 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



**\$180,900,548**  
Total Economic Impact



**2,065**  
Enrolled Michigan Students



**\$16,456,816**  
Spending with Local Businesses



**17,185**  
MSU Alumni in Genesee County



**\$40,949,071**  
Financial Aid Disbursed



**13,535**  
Youth in 4-H

## Message from the District Director

To say 2020 was an unprecedented year does not do it justice. Our nation, indeed the entire world, was thrust into the uncertainty and fear of battling an invisible enemy called COVID19. And everything changed – our normal activities, so long taken for granted, seemed forever altered. From grocery shopping to youth sports, from local schools to factories, from fairs to health clubs, from mass transportation to worship; nothing was left untouched by the threat posed by this virus. We had no choice but to reinvent methods of collaboration, education and community. We had to find new ways to deliver products, services and compassion to our families, our co-workers and our community.



I am proud to say that Michigan State University Extension was up to this challenge. We were prepared to move into the environment of virtual education and collaboration. Moreover, we ensured that our customers – the residents of Genesee County – were well served with the high quality, evidence-based curricula to which they have become accustomed. From stress management to disease prevention, from tourism to food insecurity, from nutrition to food safety, from livestock to field crops, MSU Extension hit the ground running – actually increasing our reach in the midst of this pandemic.

Thank you for supporting MSU Extension and for partnering with us to make a difference.

Mark J. Rankin, District 9 Director

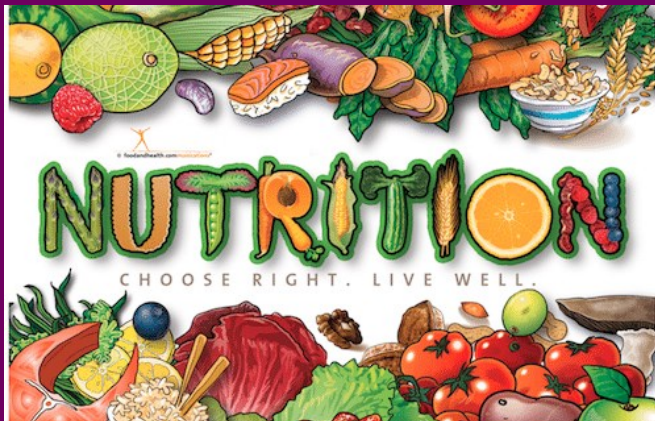
Serving Bay, Genesee, Midland, Saginaw, & Shiawassee Counties



# Program Highlights



**Michigan State University Extension** offered its first Master Gardener Program in 1978. Since this time, well over 40,000 residents from 80 Michigan counties have been involved in the MSU Extension Master Gardener Program.



**Cooking Matters** is a nutrition program where participants learn how to eat healthy, cook and grocery shop on a limited budget. This program is offered in the community for adults, families, and childcare providers.

## Consumer Horticulture/ Master Gardener Program

In 2020, Genesee County residents participated in 26 MSUE Consumer Horticulture programs ranging from online courses that covered home vegetable gardening to identification of Michigan native bees. Over the last year we have shifted our programming to an online format, which has allowed us to reach new demographics across the county.

**Our Extension Master Gardener Program** has continued to train new volunteers and is now offered in an interactive virtual format. We have also expanded our programming to the "Gardening in Michigan" Facebook page, which has included hosting weekly shows such as Cabin Fever Conversations, a weekly gardening talk show that also answers gardening and horticulture questions. County residents have continued to be served through the MSUE Lawn and Garden Hotline while Ask an Expert, our online tool, experienced a 45% increase in usage across the state from 2019 to 2020. All of this is in addition to working with local high schools, such as Goodrich High School, and non-profits, like Edible Flint, to provide horticultural education and instruction.

## Health and Nutrition

**The Genesee County EFNEP programs** had a very successful beginning of the 2020 year, which is not unusual. When COVID-19 sent everyone into quarantine, all programming stopped for a short time period. MSU Extension leaders quickly provided online curriculum and training for virtual programming. Because of the swiftness of MSUE leaders we were prepared to program with partners who reacted in the same way. Online programming began within two-three weeks of the quarantine.

**Officially Genesee County MSU Extension** have worked with 38 groups during the pandemic. We assisted Genesee Health Plan in writing a grant for the Cooking Matters at Home series, and they received the grant. This grant has allowed us to work with the Hispanic community, as well as provide take home groceries that Genesee Health Plan dropped off at the participants doorstep. Virtual Programming continues to increase and has opened doors to partners and collaborations, that we have not had in the past. Foster parent training is new programming being provided and offered to partners that we have never worked with before. The EFNEP programming will continue to increase and serve the Genesee County community.

# Program Highlights

## Early Childhood

**MSU Extension** offers a variety of training, curricula and materials to support early childhood development in Genesee County. Resources in this area focus on preparing for School Success in Early Childhood, Social and Emotional Health in Young Children and Family Education and Support.

**During the 2020 year**, early childhood staff provided programming in online formats, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, to over 300 parents, caregivers and early childhood educators. Many presentations including “Learning to Talk”, “Essential Skills for Learning and Life”, “Positive Discipline”, “The Importance of Learning Through Play”, “Mindfulness for Young Children”, “What Children Need to Know to Start School” and “Screen Time for Young Children” were offered in Genesee County. Beyond these presentations, early childhood staff also provided multiple five-week parenting series titled: “Guiding Principles for Highly Effective Parenting”. In Flint, staff especially focus on helping families to diminish the effects of lead exposure in overall child development including the areas of cognitive, social-emotional and motor skills. Our series includes topics of developing successful routines, handling behavioral challenges, being a calm and assertive parent, establishing supportive relationships and building resilience in young children. “Guiding Principles for Highly Effective Parenting” brings families together by offering parenting education and youth curriculum simultaneously with shared meal and activity times. As part of connecting with families, staff also provided Social Emotional Learning Kits to 150 families throughout the city of Flint. These kits included two age appropriate books, social and emotional development handouts, instructions and all supplies needed to complete four separate child-engaging activities.

**In 2020**, we pivoted early childhood programming to provide series, trainings and one-time presentations online to residents of Genesee County. As educators, we continue to promote the importance and understanding of early childhood development to those in the lives of children.



**MSU Extension** shines a spotlight on emerging literacy, provide tools to help parents and caregivers get children ready for school, and offer programs and events that promote social and emotional health in young children.



**Genesee County** online presentations included “Learning to Talk”, “Essential Skills for Learning and Life”, “Positive Discipline”, “The Importance of Learning Through Play”, “Mindfulness for Young Children”, “What Children Need to Know to Start School” and “Screen Time for Young Children” .

# Program Highlights

## Breastfeeding Program Updates

### Breastfeeding Education Programming

During the 2020 year several changes were made due to covid. In person home visits were offered virtually. Many of the moms and families that I assist are not comfortable with zoom or even familiar with it so to make things easier we simply use FaceTime. Moms are able to send me a message on Facebook to make appointments and also through email or phone. My services have been available 7 days a week.

Community partners that I've been able to continue to partnership with include

- SKIP
- Involved Dad
- Reach
- Traverse Place
- Stork Nest
- Baby Cafe

\*Attempting to build a partnership with Mid-Michigan midwives

Virtual classes educating moms and families on healthy eating habits, preparing homemade baby food and breastfeeding are offered for community partner's families.

At this time, we are discussing ways we can safely and effectively open Baby Cafe offering a virtual options for families.

The grant that I am funded by is Greater Flint Community Foundation Flint Kids Breastfeeding Initiative

### \*\*Success Story\*\*

When I was a new mom during a pandemic, I wasn't sure who to turn to for breastfeeding help. I was referred to LaTashia from a couple of different moms she helped in the past. I am truly grateful for her. She was easy to get in contact with and made time for me right away. Our FaceTime visits would sometimes go over the 2hrs and she never rushed me. My baby and I continue to successfully nurse 9 mons in and I know this is because of the help from LaTashia. She also checks in on us on a regular just to make sure things are still going well. Thank you so much.

-Charlene Boyd



Michigan State University Extension Educators provide breastfeeding mothers support so they are able to help them breastfeed as long as possible.



Michigan State University Extension Educators suggest that parents and caregivers consider making their own baby food. This can save them money and allow them greater control over what ingredients the baby is ingesting.

# Program Highlights

## Edible Flint

### Edible Flint Background

The mission of Edible Flint is to support community residents in growing and accessing healthy food in order to reconnect with the land and each other. Edible Flint grew out of efforts in Flint to address issues of food insecurity and challenged access to healthy food, increasing rates of health problems resulting from inadequate nutrition, and increasing amounts of abandoned property and vacant land. Early partners like the Ruth Mott Foundation, the Genesee County Land Bank, Michigan State University Extension, Genesee Conservation District, and countless others began collaborating and built a network that was called Edible Flint. MSU Extension has played a key role in the organization providing a point of contact, office space, and other collaborations.

Edible Flint's accomplishments in 2020 include:

### Garden Kits

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Edible Flint continued to work toward its mission to support Flint and Genesee County residents in growing and accessing healthy food in order to reconnect with the land and each other. The uncertainty about garden supply access and food availability in the Spring of 2020 led to an increase in demand for Edible Flint's Garden Starters Kits. The organization had planned to sell about 200 kits, and that number was quickly doubled to 400 when orders came flooding in. The volunteer-led Garden Starters Workgroup planned a socially distanced drive-through kit distribution event to distribute seeds, transplants, and growing information to Flint and Genesee County gardeners.

### Looking Ahead

In late 2020, the Edible Flint Leadership Board decided to hire the organization's first Program Director to further support Edible Flint's mission and oversee program development. In the coming year, Edible Flint will expand programming to support residents in growing and accessing health food in order to reconnect with the land and each other.

For more information about Edible Flint, visit [www.edibleflint.org](http://www.edibleflint.org)

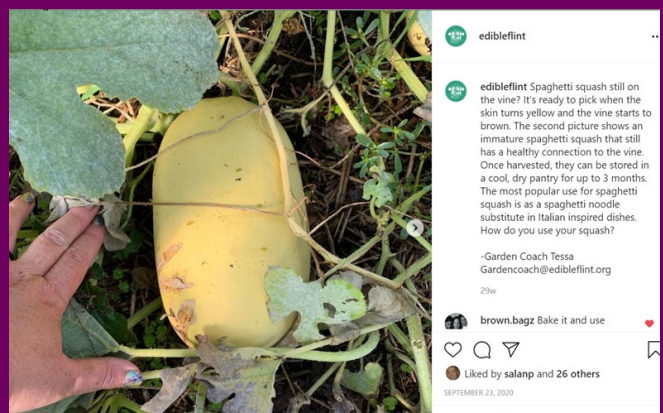


### Edible Flint Educational Farm

In 2020, a core group of volunteers supported work on the Edible Flint Educational Farm. Edible Flint donated over 3,000 pounds of food to community members and local food pantries. Volunteers worked to get the second hoophouse up and running and prepared additional garden beds for future planting.



### Volunteers at the 2020 Distribution Day



### Garden Coach

During the 2020 growing season, Edible Flint initiated the Garden Coach program, which provided one-on-one support to garden kit purchasers and shared educational information on social media and through Edible Flint communications. Through this program, experienced and first time gardeners were connected to gardening resources and support throughout the growing season.

# Program



Through **ServSafe**, participants learn how to help prevent foodborne illness throughout the flow of food and set up food safety management systems.



**Cooking for Crowds** curriculum is designed to show the food safety risks that can develop when preparing and cooking larger volumes of food and how to reduce those risks.



A **homeownership seminar** from MSU Extension will equip you with valuable information about the home-buying process that will help you navigate the technicalities and avoid costly mistakes.

# Highlights

## Food Safety during 2020

**Only two months** of face-to-face programming took place in 2020 in that time just a few face-to-face sessions took place, 3 ServSafe classes, reaching 17 participants, and 1 Cooking for Crowds, reaching 47 participants. March 13, 2020 began the requirement to work remotely and adapt our classroom programs to online programs.

**18 Safe Food = Healthy Kids** online programs were taught to childcare providers, reaching 902 participants in 2020. This program also provided continuing education credit through MiRegistry for those who are eligible and need these training hours for their home based and child center businesses.

**Ninety-nine** online food preservation classes were offered starting in April 2020. The sessions were offered every Thursday at 1 PM and 6 PM by MSUE, with local libraries and as part of a local college's lifelong learning series. The Food Safety Team quickly found themselves flooded with questions from consumers who were preserving for the first time ever, had seen something on the internet, and by people who wanted to refresh their knowledge. Each week our team put together slide shows with detailed pictures, videos and more to help the consumer get a better idea of how to safely preserve food, using pressure canning, water bath canning, atmospheric steam canning, blanching and freezing and dehydrating. The number of participants from these online classes was 8,649.

**Other programs** that have gone online and are continuing to grow in interest include Emergency Preparedness, Cottage Food Law, a weekly Food Safety Q & A, and an afterschool program introducing food safety and kitchen science. The team also covers a Food Safety Hotline (Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. EST) designed to answer consumer's food safety questions. The team fielded just under 200 calls in 2020. **A grant secured** by the team from Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development enabled the team to create food safety messages related to selling food at farmers markets on our Think Food Safety Facebook page and Instagram sight. The goal of this project was to create awareness about what can and cannot be sold at farmers markets without a food license while educating the consumer in the process to "Think Food Safety".

## Homeownership Education

**MSU Extension Genesee County** offers an online Homebuyer Education Class that is MSHDA and HUD certified. MSU Extension hosted 49 completed online classes with 83 individuals from Genesee County participating in 2020.

# Program Highlights

## Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series

**Every Thursday** during the growing season, farmers were able to access the most current information available for timely, relevant in-season crop and weather information from MSUE Field Crops Specialists and Extension Educators. Each 30-minute zoom session is divided into 15-minute segments for crop information and weather. This innovative approach using technology has provided growers from every region of the state the opportunity to participate in a live webinar via their computer, laptop, or cell phone. Each participant was able to ask questions of the specialists and educators during the live sessions.

**The Virtual Breakfast Series** is a result of a focus group that included young farmers asking for opportunities to have fast-paced, video or Internet based, and unbiased research information during critical times of the spring and summer.

**A wide range** of topics was planned according to the seasonal issues that frequently occur at specific times. However, the series was flexible, adaptable, and had the ability to change quickly and effectively when unexpected issues arose.

**One** of the unexpected issues for 2020 was the flooding that occurred in the Mid-Michigan area. Due to the flooding, a special session focusing on nutrient losses for field crops was inserted into the lineup.

**Each week** field crop producers are invited by email to participate and a MSU Extension News article is written to encourage participation.

**This** was an example of how the MSUE Field Crops Team was able to provide information at the right time with an unscheduled topic.

### 2020 MSU Field Crops Team Virtual Breakfast Series

Virtual Breakfast Series	Live participants	YouTube Views	Facebook Views	Social Media	Article Page Views	Total Participants and Views
Total Audience	2,134	2,045	10,619	1,290	2,170	18,258
#/week	97	89	483	59	99	794

**Following** the presentations, participants have the opportunity to participate with MSU Specialists and Educators in a half-hour question and answer period.



**Extreme weather** events, such as flooding in parts of Mid Michigan in 2020 often put farmers in difficult financial positions.

# Extension Providing 4H Youth Development

Michigan 4-H is growing current and future leaders. The largest youth development organization in Michigan, 4-H provides more than 200,000 young people with experiential learning opportunities to explore new interests and discover their passion.



## 4H Youth Development Programs

In 2020, Genesee County 4-H currently has 22 traditional livestock and horse 4-H Clubs serving 335 youth members ranging in ages 5-19 years old with 120 adult volunteers. 4-H also reaches a great number of youths through its afterschool programs. During 2020, Genesee County 4-H SPIN Clubs and other short term education programs reached 5,389 youth virtually in Genesee County. All 4-H programs offer youth an opportunity to learn valuable leadership and life skills for the future.



*2020 4-H Show and Go - In partnership with the Genesee County Fair.*

## Urban 4-H in the City of Flint

Genesee County 4-H also focuses on education with Flint youth. In January, 2020, the Genesee County 4-H organized a diversity training for 25 City of Flint youth. Throughout the past year Genesee County 4-H offered 15 virtual programs in which 200+ youth was served. Topic areas include but not limited to Science, Nutrition, Fitness, Personal Hygiene, Arts & Crafts, Black History and Music Appreciation.

Four Youth from Genesee County attended the National Youth Summit Series as Heathy Habits Ambassadors in February, 2020, in Maryland. One youth was a presenter. Genesee County 4-H has partnerships within the Flint Community that include YMCA Safe Places, Broome Center and Flint Cultural Center Academy.



*Genesee County 4-H provides a variety of youth enrichment programs throughout the City of Flint.*

## Children and Youth

**MSU Extension** partners with the Flint River Watershed Coalition and others to get youth from across the watershed to test the Flint River and its tributaries. That data is used by the Genesee County Drain Commissioner for their Phase II Stormwater requirements. Youth are paired with environmental professionals from General Motors and other organizations to learn about STEM careers. Youth then share their data in a public presentation with peers and some take on action projects to improve the community. This project provides an impact in multiple areas – hands-on science education, career exploration, and life skills around presentation and civic engagement. In 2020, we expanded the program to include afterschool time, which reached 25 students and 11 educators at 4 sites. For our traditional programs, we reached 406 students and 15 teachers. These numbers are low due to covid complications

**The entire CYI Institute** sought input from the public with a series listening sessions to learn how we could help children and families during this pandemic. From April 22-May 1 we held 21 listening sessions around specific topic areas with over 1,400 registered participants, including 56 from Genesee County. This allowed us to better respond to the crisis.

**MSU Extension** created resources for youth and families to use during the crisis, including icebreakers for online meetings and science activities that can be done at home. Those resources received over 20,000 pageviews.

**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY** | Extension

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer, committed to achieving excellence through a diverse workforce and inclusive culture that encourages all people to reach their full potential. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Jeffrey W. Dwyer, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned. The 4-H Name and Emblem have special protections from Congress, protected by code 18 USC 707.

"Michigan State University occupies the ancestral, traditional and contemporary lands of the Anishinaabeg – Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi peoples. In particular, the university resides on land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw. We recognize Michigan's 12 federally recognized Native Nations, historic Indigenous communities in Michigan, Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and those who were forcibly removed from their homelands. In offering this land acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty, history and experiences."