



Message from the District Director

Once again, it is my pleasure to share the results of another successful year of partnership between Clare County and Michigan State University (MSU) Extension. With your continued support, our team at MSU Extension has been able to make a difference in the lives of youth, families, businesses, and Clare County residents through our broad range of research-based educational programs and services!

In 2023, our MSU Extension team worked to empower families and individuals to live healthier lives, supported new and local businesses, created youth development and career exploration opportunities, helped farmers with business management and mental health awareness, and much more. Our staff live and work alongside Clare County residents, are rooted in community relationships, and are responsive to community needs.

Our partnership with you makes this all possible. On behalf of the MSU Extension team serving Clare County, thank you for another great year. We look forward to your continued support and hope you'll be able to join us during one of our upcoming programs.

Eric Karbowski,
District Director



Clare County Staff

- Teagen Lefere–
Program Instructor for Financial & Homeownership Education
- Michelle Neff - 4-H Supervision Educator - Club Development
- Lori Trailer– Secretary
- Miranda Warmuskerken– 4-H Program Coordinator
- Jennifer Letterhart- Community Nutrition Instructor
- Danielle Schrock - Master Gardener Instructor

Contact Information:
 225 W. Main St. County Building
 Harrison, MI 48625
www.msue.msu.edu
msue.clare@county.msu.edu



[Subscribe to our district mailing list.](#)
 Scan the QR code to follow us on Facebook!

64

Extension Programs held in Clare County

2,159

People attended programs held in Clare County

1,601

Number of residents from Clare County that attended MSU Extension programs

213

Programs with residents from Clare County

15,600

Facebook page reach

4-H 2023 Program Overview

Exploration Days is an MSU Extension pre-college program that welcomes youth ages 12-19 to explore their future, try new things and experience college life. During this three-day event, youth will gain confidence and independence through hands-on learning and make friends for a lifetime. Quote about Exploration Days from a program participant “I am very thankful for my time at MSU Exploration Days. Not only has this program helped me find a career field I may excel in, it has also helped me learn to be independent. Teamwork is very important, and I was able to learn that in my classes. Living on campus has allowed me to grow and learn on my own. By starting my journey of independence now I can be better prepared in the future.”



*Michelle Neff –
4-H Supervision Educator
Club Development*

*Miranda
Warmuskerken
4-H Program
Coordinator*

307	83	286	19
Number of Youth Enrolled in 4-H	Number of Adult Volunteers	Organized Groups	4-H Clubs in Clare County

Beginner Grazing School

Kable Thurlow
Beef & Grazing Educator

The Michigan State University Extension Beginner Grazing School and pasture walks are educational opportunities designed to teach grazers how to manage those pasture acres better.



According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service 2017 Census of Agriculture, there are 523,905 acres of pastureland in Michigan. These pasture acres are often on marginal ground, which is minimally managed. As part of this program, our team works with farmers to support improved watering systems, longer rest periods for their pastures, rotation of their stock, and improved diversity in their pastures

Health & Farm Stress Update

Farming, ranching, and agricultural production are mentally and physically demanding occupations. MSU Extension’s farm stress team is committed to providing the agricultural community with education, tools, and resources.

Misty Oebel is a Health and Farm Stress Educator with MSU Extension that works alongside producers and key gatekeepers in Clare County teaching them the skills & knowledge necessary to recognize the warning signs of stress, indicators of suicidal ideation, and connects them with resources like MSU Extension teletherapy program.



*Misty Oebel
Health & Farm
Stress Extension
Educator*

Michigan Vaccine Project Overview

To help residents of Clare County make informed decisions about vaccinations, MSU Extension partnered with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to create the Michigan Vaccine Project (MVP). MSU Extension’s statewide network of county offices and community partners provided the residents of Mecosta County with evidence-based information about the role vaccinations play in helping protect Michigan’s children and adults from life-threatening diseases.

Through this initiative, Maribel Richards and the MVP team implemented a statewide campaign using digital media, radio, print materials, and in-person programming to help Michiganders’ make informed choices about vaccinations.

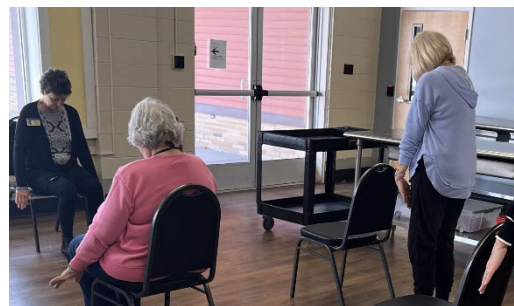


Health Educator Updates

Christi Demitiz, Health Educator



MSU Extension offers the diabetes PATH program. This program is a six-week self-management workshop designed to help people take an active role in managing their diabetes. The PATH program meets the American Diabetes Association’s Diabetes Support Initiative criteria, a measure of high-quality programming.

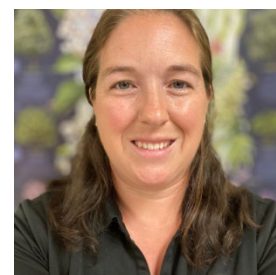


One participant shared, *“Both classes changed my life for the better because I now know that in order to have the kind of life I want to live, I must eat healthy and exercise. The two are like yin and yang. You can’t have one without the other. I feel like I have graduated from both classes. I feel confident going forward with how to live a healthy lifestyle.”*

Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls Prevention helps people with or without arthritis to improve balance, both mentally and physically, which helps significantly reduce the rate of falls experienced by older adults. Other benefits include improving relaxation, vitality, posture, and an improved immune system. Studies have shown that tai chi can reduce falls by nearly 70%. The program focuses on confidence building, which is linked closely to the reduced rate of falling.

Master Gardener Program

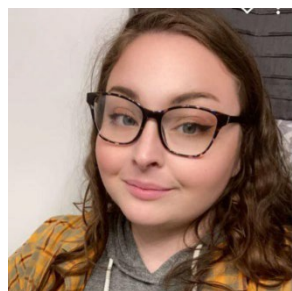
The MSU Extension Master Gardener Program is an adult horticulture and volunteer leader training program committed to improving science-based horticulture education for Clare County residents. The Master Gardener Program trains, supports, and certifies MSU Extension Master Gardeners. The groups of Master Gardeners educate communities on research-based horticulture science and spearhead local community gardening projects.



“As a graduate of MSU and former intern with MSU Extension, I’m thrilled about the opportunity to serve our local community as the Master Gardener Program Instructor. My strong local relationships and vested commitment to support sound horticulture practices, gets me excited for the future of the Master Gardener program in Mecosta.”- Danielle

Danielle Schrock
Master Gardener
Instructor

SNAP-Ed Updates



The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education Program (SNAP-Ed) teaches participants how to establish healthy eating habits and increase their time spent being physically active, while staying within a limited food budget. MSU Extension SNAP-Ed nutrition instructors teach youth, teens, adults, and seniors how to make health a priority through an instructional series. The SNAP-Ed program aims to increase the likelihood that those eligible for SNAP benefits will establish healthy eating habits and increase their time spent in physical activity while staying within their limited food budget.

Jennifer Letterhart,
Community
Nutrition
Instructor

“As a lifelong resident of Clare County, I’m elated to join MSU Extension as the Community Nutrition Instructor for Clare and Gladwin Counties. I’ve always had a passion for providing knowledge, resources, and education to those in need and this position will allow me to connect community members with the invaluable resources our programs provide.”

– Jennifer



Dairy Educator & ERAIL

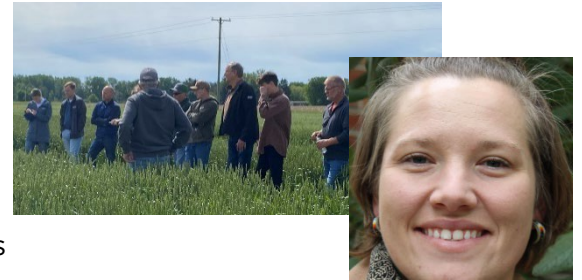
Accidents involving livestock occur throughout Michigan and preparing first responders to effectively respond to these accidents is a goal of MSU Extension's Emergency Response to Accidents Involving Livestock (ERAIl) team. Cora Okkema is a member of the ERAIl team with MSU Extension. This team provides tools and resources to help animal control officers and first responders in Clare County develop their skills in working with large animals. Often, first responders do not have experience working with large animals when responding to emergency situations therefore, MSU Extension has assembled several tools and resources to help first responders during these unforeseen circumstances.



Cora Okkema,
Dairy Educator

Field Crops Educator

Agricultural production is a leading industry in Michigan and MSU Extension provides research-based field crop production recommendations and resources to producers in Clare County. Monica Jean is a Field Crops Educator that assists farmers with a variety of commodity production expertise including corn, soybean, edible dry beans, potato, and integrated crop and livestock systems through educational programs, fact sheets, bulletins, articles, and individual contacts. Jean also supports the agricultural community with cover crop, soil health, nutrient management, and cropping system research projects.



Monica Jean,
Field Crops Educator

Financial Educator

As a HUD-certified counseling agency, MSU Extension provides potential, current, and future home buyers with education about the obligations and responsibilities of purchasing a home.



Teagen Lefere,
Financial Homeownership Instructor

Teagen Lefere is a Financial Homeownership Instructor who works side-by-side with Clare County residents to help them understand the complex home buying and renting process and teaches them the true costs of homeownership.

"Teagen, thank you so much for all of the help from the start and to the finish, with many phone calls and e-mails to you when needed, and keep up the wonderful work that you are doing because you are the very best at it! We need MIHAF, MSU and HUD all collectively CLONE YOU so that you can help so many other Homeowners in the same situation as I have been in for the last 2 years."

– program participant

Food Safety Educator



[ServSafe®](#) is a nationally recognized certification program for those working in the food service industry that is provided by MSU Extension. Kara Lynch is a Food Safety Educator who is trained and credentialed to teach the [ServSafe®](#) curriculum.

As part of her role, Lynch teaches Clare County residents about foodborne illness, forms of contamination, food safety management systems, safe facilities & pest management, cleaning & sanitizing, and how to train employees about the latest food safety issues.

"Thank you very much for a great class. Excellent presentation, well organized, great discussions, nicely paced, interesting real-life stories. You're a great ambassador for MSU and the Extension Service."

– program participant



Kara Lynch
Food Safety Educator