



TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH HEALTH & NUTRITION EDUCATION

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HEALTHY?

Oftentimes, our health can be a source of great concern and even anxiety. Am I managing my diabetes well enough? How do I access and prepare healthy foods? Why am I struggling to get enough sleep?

But with the right support, our health can also be a great source of empowerment and joy. We can start to feel stronger, better rested, more resilient and more peaceful. We can build conflict resolution skills to heal and strengthen our relationships. We can master the techniques to cook nutritious, affordable meals for ourselves and our families. We can learn how to better manage our physical conditions.

We can show up more — for ourselves, our families, our workplaces and our communities.

That's why Michigan State University Extension is here to offer that support — through educational outreach, resources and programming.

Teaching refugees and immigrants the skills they need to work in the food industry. Inspiring children and adults with developmental disabilities to try — and love — new fruits and vegetables. Connecting farmers in crisis to lifesaving resources like teletherapy services.

Every day, in communities across Michigan and beyond, MSU Extension's health and nutrition staff makes the extraordinary possible, changing lives for the better.

A CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO HEALTH EQUITY

While the opportunity to be healthy *should* be freely available to everyone — regardless of their circumstances or differences — it is often not the case. As such, the mission of achieving equity serves as a driving force behind MSU Extension's health and nutrition efforts.

As we shape, deliver and innovate programming, we seek to understand how issues like racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, classism and ageism affect and impede our efforts. We also challenge the systems that uphold these inequities. MSU Extension remains committed to ensuring our programs are not just open to all, but that all people and communities feel welcomed, seen and heard.

MSU Extension's health and nutrition staff recently broadened its efforts in this area through the creation of the Health Justice and Equity Taskforce (H-JET). This group — made up



of diverse staff across different roles, work teams, locations, identities and backgrounds – focuses on putting *Cooperative Extension's National Framework for Health Equity and Well-Being* (apl.u.org/wp-content/uploads/202120EquityHealth20Full.pdf) into practice.

Although the group is less than a year old, H-JET has already made significant progress in moving the organization forward. Members have conducted internal surveys to understand how to better support their colleagues, presented on principles of health equity at MSU Extension's annual conference and more.

IN 2023 ...



155 staff comprised MSU Extension's Health and Nutrition Institute.



89,711 people participated in an MSU Extension health and nutrition program, either in person or virtually.



4,226 health and nutrition programs were delivered by MSU Extension, either in person or virtually.



2,086,139 people viewed food and health content on MSU Extension's website.



33,000+ people subscribed to MSU Extension's quarterly health and nutrition email digests, which feature upcoming events, educational articles, seasonal recipes, videos and more.

GET INVOLVED

To learn more about MSU Extension's health and nutrition programming, visit our Food & Health website at extension.msu.edu/health, or contact Cheryl Eschbach, health and nutrition director, at cheryl@msu.edu.

To explore stories about our projects, programs, staff and the work we do, visit extension.msu.edu/celebrateHNI.

And whether you're looking for tips to better manage a chronic condition or advice on how to preserve your garden full of produce, get upcoming classes and events, educational articles, seasonal recipes, videos and more – right to your inbox. Sign up for our quarterly seasonal news digests at bit.ly/MSUEdigest.



OUR IMPACT, THEIR WORDS

While this report covers a snapshot of the impact that MSU Extension has had over the past year, the most meaningful testimonials come from our participants and partners themselves:

“ Thank you so much. This series has helped me better let go of things that used to stress me out.. ”

— MSU Extension mindfulness class participant

“ We have increased the amount of fruits and vegetables the children are eating and decreased the amount of pre-fried foods served at snacks and meals. This Farm to Early Care program has taught me to shop for locally grown fruits and vegetables! ”

— Nutrition education partner in Montmorency County

“ I learned so much about the [Michigan Cottage Food] law, and I practice the things I have learned in the class to keep everybody safe. The inspector always tells me I'm doing great. ”

— Cottage Food Law class participant and food business entrepreneur

“ I tried the effective listening tips with my daughter, and it really helped! ”

— RELAX: Alternatives to Anger class participant

“ I wish we had MyPlate class every day! ”

— Elementary school student and Show Me Nutrition class participant

“ This program is such a help for those of us that need to understand how diabetes works. The handouts and the supplies and reading materials are very beneficial. ”

— Dining with Diabetes participant from the Grand Rapids African American Health Institute

“ Students who normally choose peanut butter and jelly for lunch are giving the new recipes a try, and trying more foods than they normally do. I also noticed that students requested and prefer more fresh fruits & vegetables. ”

— Elementary school cook

“ I found the last calming jar we made very helpful during the past year... I can't wait to make another one. ”

— Participant in Saginaw County Stress Management for Seniors class

“ Everybody said that was the best presentation they've had here. ”

— MSU Farmhouse Fraternity member, after a food safety education presentation

“ During your thought-provoking lecture, I learned that water-bath canning is an inexpensive way to can high-acid foods, and all vegetables, meats, poultry and soups must be pressure canned in order to avoid botulism... it was an honor to partner with MSU Extension for this life-enriching learning opportunity. Thank you for sharing your passion for food preservation. ”

— Lenawee County librarian, after partnering to host an MSU Extension food preservation class



SAFEGUARDING & PRESERVING OUR FOOD & WATER SUPPLY

From aspiring entrepreneurs to canning hobbyists, people of all interests, backgrounds and abilities benefit from MSU Extension’s food safety and food preservation programming and resources. Our committed team of food safety and preservation experts offers a variety of virtual and in-person trainings, all supported by evidence-based information and informed by unique community needs.

IN 2023...



8,963 people participated in MSU Extension’s food safety and food preservation programming.



433 programs and events were held by MSU Extension food safety and food preservation staff.



20+ consumer questions received each month, on average, on MSU Extension’s Food Safety Hotline (1-877-643-9882).

KEY PROGRAMS & OFFERINGS

ServSafe. The food industry can be a path to economic stability for many, but to ensure public health, it is critical for workers to know about foodborne illness, how to prevent it and how to train other employees about the latest food safety issues through classes such as ServSafe. In 2023, MSU Extension trained 1,114 people in ServSafe.

MSU Extension is also committed to reducing barriers for participants and empowering everyone to get the most out of this food safety training. Instructors have adapted to provide materials and exams in Spanish for participants who may find English to be a barrier, and MSU Extension even incorporates ServSafe into bundled programming for refugee and immigrant communities. With this approach, the class is combined (or “bundled”) with various nutrition education and food safety classes into one convenient, comprehensive program tailored for refugee and immigrant participants.

Eager to learn about food safety, one participant in a spring 2023 ServSafe class had never worked in the food service industry and was taking the class and exam for the first time. Convinced that he was not



Educator Ghaida Havern (left) and instructor Sulaiman Mansour (second from right) delivered a bundled food safety and nutrition program to refugees and immigrants at Zaman International, an organization that brings education and resources to women. Photo: MSU Extension.

going to pass the first time, he still wanted to take the exam for practice and then attend another class. To pass the exam, participants need to receive a 70%, and he received an 81% and passed.

After the MSU Extension instructor mailed him his results, he messaged them back to tell them that he



A group of students in an MSU Extension St. Clair County food preservation class learn how to measure correctly to make strawberry jam. Photo: MSU Extension/Chris Venema.

Home Food Preservation. Preserving food cuts down on food waste, encourages gardening as a way to stay active, allows control over the ingredients and preparation of your own food, and stimulates the local economy by supporting locally grown foods for individuals and families. But to avoid dangerous, life-threatening contamination, it is critical to know how to safely preserve food. Guided by evidence-based information, MSU Extension’s food preservation programming teaches participants many facets of preservation, including freezing, water-bath canning, pressure canning, dehydrating and more.

In 2023, more than 3,300 people participated in an MSU Extension virtual or in-person food preservation class in 2023 — 277 of whom completed the free Online Home Food Preservation self-paced virtual course, which covers seven modules ranging from pickling to dehydrating.

Other programs and offerings include:

- **Safe Food = Healthy Kids**, an interactive food safety workshop for childcare providers. Additionally, to help meet the unique needs of expectant parents and infants under age 1, MSU Extension also launched the Safe Food = Healthy Babies resource library in 2022. Featuring food safety information specifically tailored for infant care, Safe Food = Healthy Babies contains recipes and informational articles. The popularity of this new resource library continues to grow, and in 2023, almost 10,000 people had viewed Safe Food = Healthy Babies content online.
- **Pantry Food Safety—It’s Your Job!** Taught by MSU Extension food safety experts, this free, self-paced, virtual course series covers everything from cleaning and sanitizing to repackaging bulk foods. A certificate of completion is given to participants who complete all course requirements. In 2023, 205 people attended MSU Extension food pantry food safety training.
- **Think Food Safety resources.** Launched in 2020, Think Food Safety (TFS) began as a food safety awareness campaign to educate the public on safely purchasing from food vendors and to encourage prospective entrepreneurs to safely launch their Cottage Food businesses. Throughout the year, TFS further strengthened its social media presence with in-demand content, from authoring original food preservation articles to sharing critical, timely food recall information. In 2023, the TFS Facebook channel’s annual reach exceeded 340,000 and increased its reach on Instagram by more than 400% year over year.

GET INVOLVED & LEARN MORE

To learn more about MSU Extension’s food safety programming, visit our Safe Food & Water website at extension.msu.edu/foodsafety. To learn more about MSU Extension’s food preservation programming, visit extension.msu.edu/foodpreservation.



NAVIGATING CHRONIC HEALTH CHALLENGES & BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

All across Michigan, MSU Extension’s health experts offer a diverse set of classes and resources to meet the needs of participants looking for support in chronic disease management and social-emotional wellness. Our program topics include aging, caregiver support, chronic disease and diabetes prevention and management, vaccine education, anger management, sleep hygiene, mental health and stress management, and much more.

IN 2023...



20,889 people participated in MSU Extension’s health and chronic disease management programming.



216 referrals were received through MSU Extension’s online health program referral form.



343 different mental health and stress programs were offered by MSU Extension staff, many that are multi-week series, lasting four to 16 weeks.



10 health programs were available for adults at no cost, with new health classes scheduled every month.

KEY PROGRAMS & OFFERINGS

Mental Health First Aid. When someone’s in distress, a quick and compassionate response is just as important for mental health as it is physical health. That’s why MSU Extension offers Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), a program that teaches people how to support others who may be undergoing a mental health crisis and connect them to vital resources. MHFA is offered in modules specific to adults and youth. Trainees learn to use a five-step action plan to help someone experiencing a mental health issue and connect them to the care and resources they need to recover.

MSU Extension has offered MHFA since 2017 and has continued to grow the success of the program annually. 2023 marked the most successful year of the program ever:

- The team expanded its number of trained instructors in 2023, now comprising seven instructors of the adult module of MHFA.
- The team offered 36 total courses and trained more than 500 people annually (564) in MHFA.
- To date, MSU Extension has now trained 2,074 adults in MHFA.



MSU Extension farm stress specialist Remington Rice (second from left) met with State Rep. Betsy Coffia (left) to discuss supports for agricultural workers. Photo: Betsy Coffia.



Managing Farm Stress resources.

Combining farm business management guidance with mental and behavioral health expertise, MSU Extension’s team of more than 20 dedicated professionals provides innovative resources and support to the agriculture community — from teletherapy and financial services to free online education and community presentations.

In 2023, MSU Extension’s farm stress specialist Remington Rice also appeared in several key media outlets to promote resources for farmers, including Michigan Ag Today, UpNorthLive, WPBN-TV, the AgriSafe Network’s Talking Total Farmer Health podcast and more. As a result of this publicity, several new farmers have reached out to access MSU Extension resources.

Rice cherishes many of the stories of individual farmers he and MSU Extension has helped, including a recent meeting with a Michigan fruit farmer:

" I journeyed to his farm, expecting a brief conversation, but what unfolded was a three-hour revelation. This farmer, disenchanted with his vocation and contemplating selling his farm, was recently divorced, and felt hopelessly adrift. We explored the roots of his passion for farming - pride in his work, cherishing public interactions at his farm stand and stewardship of the land. As he recounted his story, he rekindled his love for farming and found new meaning and purpose. Today, his farm flourishes, and he passionately advocates for the MSU Farm Stress Program, sharing his story at Research Station events and among fellow farmers. His transformation is a beacon of hope for all."



Kids stop by the MVP table to learn about the spread of germs during Detroit Public Television’s Be My Neighbor Day. Photo: MSU Extension.

Other programs and offerings include:

Health program referrals. MSU Extension’s health program referral form (extension.msu.edu/healthprograms) aims to ease the barriers in connecting potential participants with the right resources and programs. In 2023, more than 200 people utilized the MSU Extension health program referral form — connecting loved ones, patients or themselves to the right resources for them, from falls prevention programs to caregiver support classes.

Michigan Vaccine Project. Immunization has the potential to save lives, prevent suffering, reduce stress on our healthcare system and lower the overall cost of medical care for many. The Michigan Vaccine Project, or MVP, leverages MSU Extension’s statewide network of county offices, community partnerships and online platforms to deliver a statewide immunization education campaign that includes social media, web, radio and print materials — as well as in-person and virtual education programming. In 2023, MVP health educators hosted ten educational webinars and authored 15 educational articles, available on extension.msu.edu/learnaboutvaccines.

- **Mindfulness education,** through Stress Less With Mindfulness and the Mindfulness for Better Living suite of programs. Modules are tailored for specific audiences and needs (such as Mindful Educators and Mindful Eating). In 2023, more than 2,000 people participated in Stress Less With Mindfulness, either in person or virtually.

GET INVOLVED & LEARN MORE

To learn more about MSU Extension’s social-emotional health programming, visit our Healthy Relationships website at extension.msu.edu/healthyrelationships. To learn more about MSU Extension’s health programming for chronic disease and diabetes prevention and management, visit our Chronic Disease website at extension.msu.edu/chronicdisease.



CHAMPIONING WELLNESS WITH NUTRITION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

MSU Extension is committed to helping people feel healthier through good nutrition and physical activity. Our team of passionate educators and instructors are at the forefront of delivering innovative, evidence-based nutrition and physical activity education to communities all across Michigan.

Supported by the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed), MSU Extension helps create long-lasting, positive changes – from community gardens to childcare homes and beyond.

IN 2023...



40,680 youth were reached through SNAP-Ed community nutrition and physical activity programming.



MSU Extension collaborated with 945 partners and 168 coalitions throughout the state for SNAP-Ed programming and outreach.



372,083 adults and youth were reached through indirect education activities, which include listening to educational podcasts, reading nutrition fact sheets on MSU Extension's website and more.

KEY PROGRAMS & OFFERINGS

Cultural adaptations to nutrition education.

Representation and cultural relevancy in nutrition education and resources is critical, especially considering that Michigan is home to 12 federally recognized tribes that are sovereign nations, each with its own history, customs, governance system and food traditions.

Until recently, however, Anishinaabe ways of eating healthy and staying physically active have not been well represented in SNAP-Ed health education programming. Most of the curricula approved for use in the federally funded SNAP-Ed program was not developed with Anishinaabe food preferences and traditions in mind. For example, the SNAP-Ed Toolkit offers educators a collection of 146 different evidence-based programs to help communities eat healthy and stay active, but only four indicate they were developed with or for Indigenous audiences, let alone Anishinaabe communities. In fall 2022, MSU Extension educators worked with tribal health staff to adapt and implement four Share Our Strength Cooking Matters programs. To include more



Community members prepare a recipe at the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Government Center. Photo: MSU Extension/Jane Sherry.

traditional Indigenous foods in Cooking Matters recipes, MSU Extension nutrition educators worked with staff from the Bay Mills, Hannahville, Pokagon and Little Traverse Bay tribes.

Overall, this programming reached 30 adults and their families across four communities.

extension.msu.edu/nutrition
extension.msu.edu/physicalactivity

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension



Additionally, in 2023, MSU Extension launched a digital collection of recipes using Indigenous ingredients, available at canr.msu.edu/nutrition/indigenous-recipes. The recipes in this new digital collection have been viewed over 500 times since its launch in summer 2023 and have been highlighted both on social media and in seasonal email newsletters.

Policy, systems and environmental changes. What if the environments where we lived, worked and played made it simpler for us to choose healthy options? That's the driving force behind policy, systems and environmental changes (PSEs).

Throughout the 2023 fiscal year, MSU Extension helped implement over 400 different PSE changes at 254 sites across Michigan, reaching more than 64,000 people.

MSU Extension's work on PSE change supports our organizational goal of pursuing health equity because we understand that making healthy choices is more than an individual's willpower. It reflects the choices available each day in our environments and settings such as schools, workplaces and neighborhoods. We work to make the healthier choice, the easy choice.

GET INVOLVED & LEARN MORE

To learn more about MSU Extension's nutrition programming, visit our Nutrition website at extension.msu.edu/nutrition. To learn more about MSU Extension's physical activity programming, visit extension.msu.edu/physicalactivity.

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. Quentin Tyler, 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.



A young participant at a Cooking Matters for Teens class at a tribal community center learns how to chop tomatoes. Photo: MSU Extension/Caitlin Lorenc.

Other programs and offerings include:

- **Cooking Matters**, a nutrition program where participants learn how to eat healthy, cook and grocery shop on a limited budget.
- **Show Me Nutrition**, a nutrition education program taught at schools where at least 50 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. This program for pre-K through eighth-grade youth promotes healthy eating, positive body image, physical activity and food safety.
- **Eat Healthy, Be Active**, a six-week class for adults that teaches how to make physical activity and nutrition part of daily life. Eat Healthy, Be Active is also available virtually in American Sign Language.
- **My Way to Wellness**, a free, online self-paced nutrition program available to individuals living in Michigan who are eligible for supplemental food assistance.
- **Peak Health and Performance**, a program that helps young athletes receive sound nutrition education to improve their athletic performance and overall health.