

LIVINGSTON COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT 2024

MSU Extension Livingston County

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Message from the District Director

Thank you for another great programming year of partnership between Jackson County and Michigan State University (MSU) Extension! Because of your continued support, we've been able to make a difference in the lives of youth, families, businesses and communities. MSU Extension offers a broad range of research-based educational outreach to county residents. Our programs reach all audiences and age groups. From youth learning essential life skills and farmers exploring ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness, to older adults being able to access healthier foods and local communities discovering ways to increase economic impact.

Over this past year, we've empowered families and individuals to live healthier lives, supported new and local businesses, created opportunities for youth leadership development and career exploration, helped farmers with business management and mental health, and much more. Our staff live and work alongside county residents, are rooted in community relationships and are responsive to community needs.

The following pages highlight just some of the programming that staff delivered to Jackson County residents in 2024. We continue to provide our programs in a variety of spaces and delivery methods that are convenient for our participants to engage in and access. Our partnership with you makes this all possible. On behalf of the MSU Extension team serving the County, thank you for another great year! We look forward to your continued support and hope you will be able to join us during one of our upcoming programs..



2,129 participants from the county attending programs



204 Ask Extension questions answered



453 4-H enrolled youth



288 total volunteers

Overall Impact



247 staff/faculty in Livingston County



67,320 participants in Community, Food and Environment programs (STATEWIDE)



469 programs attended by participants from this county.



283 client consultations



268 nutrition and physical activity participants hosted in the country



3,263 contacts through social media, web activity, e-newsletters, and handouts.

Economic Development, Environmental Conservation, and Agricultural Productivity



47 Master Gardner Volunteers



167 Total soil test samples processed



1,485 Master Gardner Volunteer Hours completed



\$246.5 billion annual impact of food and agriculture on Michigan's economy (STATEWIDE)



\$447,727.50 Master Gardner hour value



136 participants in county agriculture programs.

Enhancing Agriculture and Agribusiness

MSU Extension educators in the field of agriculture and agribusiness work with farms of all sizes helping to positively impact individual farming operations. When those individual operations do well, their success helps to fuel state and local economies.

Farm Stress Management Taking care of crops and animals is hard on farmers. Caring for personal health and wellness in this high stress profession is often overlooked but is as critical as caring for the farm business. Agricultural professionals and their families face unique stressors and mental health challenges and often have limited access to mental health services. MSU Extension is a national leader in addressing farm stress and related mental health issues by providing farm business financial analysis to farms, connecting farmers and their families with teletherapy programs, 252 ASK EXTENSION QUESTIONS ANSWERED FOR LIVINGSTON RESIDENTS workshops, webinars and digital materials offering self-paced or interactive options.

https://www.canr.msu.edu/managing_farm_stress/index



Photo by Brian Jonckheere via drone

Community Garden

The Livingston County MSU Extension staff, along with the Livingston County Drain Commission staff worked to clean up the Livingston County building flower beds. We received education about invasive plants from GILLS CISMA

<https://www.geneseecd.org/invasives>.

With help, we created a plan on what to do about the invasive species in our native plant garden and those that are in the forest across the lawn.

We ended the day with a shared potluck meal.



Photo by Shelley Frazier

LACASA Garden

MSU Extension Consumer Horticulture Educator and MSU Extension Community Nutrition Instructor collaborated to provide a community garden and nutrition classes to LACASA Center, a domestic shelter in Livingston County.

Memorable Moment: At the end of the last day, one resident stopped me to say, "Thank you for planting the garden with us. I enjoyed going to the garden regularly to pick some fresh herbs and tomatoes for my salads. It is such a nice thing to be able to do and makes this place feel less like a facility anymore like a home."

Improving Health and Nutrition

When it comes to nutrition and physical activity, MSU Extension's team of experts brings evidence-based education into communities across the state. Our staff delivers educational programming to communities and helps create lasting healthy changes, from kitchen tables to school cafeterias.

Programming is supported through the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program–Education (SNAP–Ed).

Safe and properly prepared food can prevent foodborne illness, thus reducing healthcare costs and improving overall health and well-being. Whether for food entrepreneurs, volunteers preparing food for the community, childcare providers or consumers interested in preserving food, MSU Extension teaches a variety of classes to help everyone enjoy safe, healthy food. for keeping food safe.

MSU Extension offers high-quality, affordable programs that help Michigan residents learn the importance of safe food and water in their everyday lives. Our research-based programs help food handlers learn safe food preservation skills and techniques.



Photo from Michigan Fresh recipe card

More Peas, Please!

MSU Extension Staff and LACASA residents grew some peas in their community garden. MSU Extension Community Nutrition Instructor decided to show residents a few varieties of peas and different ways peas could be enjoyed.

Regular peas, snow peas and pea pods were sampled raw with ranch dip (although they like them so much, most didn't really eat the dip). Then, residents cooked the [Parmesan Pea recipe](#) that is part of the Michigan Fresh recipe collection. They loved them.

One boy, who said in the beginning, he wasn't sure he would like them because he preferred fruits, ate a bunch of them and asked the caseworker if they could put peas on the grocery list!

Memorable Quote: "I never knew peas could be so good!"



Photo by Jenny Speyer

Cooking with Kids

After conducting a survey, MSU Extension 4-H Program Instructor, discovered there was a need in our community for baking and cooking classes, specifically geared towards 8 to 12-year-olds.

Forming a collaboration with MSU Extension Community Nutrition instructor, they designed and conducted several series of free cooking class that have been well received in our 4-H community.

They also offered a gluten free and dairy free options knowing that many youth in our program have food allergies or sensitivities.

Staff are also looking to use suggestions from the youth in the program or solicit more suggestions to allow youth voices to pick the topics for future workshops. Cooking and baking are great life skills that many families in our community want their children to learn. We are happy to be able to offer these free workshops to local families and fill this need.

Fostering Strong Communities

MSU Extension Community Successful and thriving communities combine knowledgeable and engaged legislators, businesses, community groups and residents. By connecting these groups with the most trusted tools, MSU Extension helps enhance the quality of life in Michigan.

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/community/index>

MSU Extension Advisory Council identifies needs and wants of D12 citizens on which to base educational programming. They are ambassadors for communications/ public relations and marketing for MSU Extension programs and they advocate for the MSU Extension program with local, state and federal stakeholders.

MSU Product Center MSU Extension and the MSU Product Center assist entrepreneurs and businesses to develop products and services in the food and agriculture markets. Its team of experts consult with clients on a one-on-one basis, helping new entrepreneurs navigate from concept development to launch and beyond. The MSU Product Center also offers specialized services such as labeling, packaging, and nutritional analysis. If you are interested in business counseling from the MSU Product Center, please visit the website <https://www.canr.msu.edu/productcenter/>



Making Connections in the Community

Representative Jennifer Conlin was at the Community Connect event in Livingston county. She said that she wants to stay connected with MSU Extension because she was appointed to the agriculture committee, and she is interested in what programming we have with PFAS.

Representative Jennifer Conlin serves in the house representing parts of Livingston, Washtenaw and Jackson counties.

Photo from community member at Community Connect Event

Learning about PFAS

Livingston County MSU Extension 4-H Program Coordinator, provided a presentation on PFAS to the MSU Extension D12 Advisory Council Members. PFAS stands for per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances, which contain a strong carbon-fluorine bond that allows them to accumulate over time in the environment and in the bodies of animals and people, posing health risks. They are a group of manmade chemicals used in a vast number of consumer and industrial products. They're often referred to as "forever chemicals," because most don't break down. She was able to take this very complicated subject and make it understandable to the Council Members, while explaining how PFAS is impacting local farmers and what 4-H is doing to educate youth about it. The Council was extremely interested in the presentation and had lots of questions. The 4-H Program Coordinator fielded all of the questions appropriately and directed participants to additional resources as needed. This presentation sparked more engagement with the Council than any other presentation to date.

Memorable quote from an advisory council member, "PFAS is an important topic that has the potential to impact nearly every resident of Michigan. I'm so glad that 4-H staff are getting youth involved in conversations about solving this problem."

More information about MSU Extension PFAS Contamination in Agriculture can be found here: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/pfas/index>



Photo from MSU Ext website

Preparing Children and Youth For the Future

Parents and caregivers are the first to have influence on a child's development and future academic success. To ensure the success of families across Michigan and to support children's school readiness, MSU Extension has invested in research- and evidence-based programming for the parents, caregivers and early childhood Success! educators who have the first opportunity to enhance children's skills and become their best resources and advocates.

This programming supports families while helping parents and caregivers increase early childhood science, math and preliteracy skills, as well as enhancing the social and emotional wellness of children and youth. By increasing parents' and caregivers' knowledge of child and youth development, Extension is able to help caring adults build a positive foundation for learning and lifelong success.



Photo by Jenny Speyer

4-H Ambassadors: Youth Leadership

The 4-H Ambassadors, which are youth leaders in the 4-H program, ranging in age from 13- 19 years-old, worked on promotional videos, planning for youth activities at the Fowlerville Family Fair, and planning and running the County Awards Program. The Ambassadors also reviewed the previous years application and made edits and changes before it was distributed in the Fall of 2024.

They all helped advertise and spread the word about the 4-H Ambassadors program and also hosted an informal bonfire night with potential applicants. Once we received the applications, the Ambassadors also reviewed them looking for what each applicant would bring to the team and, also what they could gain from joining.

One of their biggest events the Ambassadors help plan is the County Award and in the Fall. At this program, both 4-H'ers and 4-H volunteers along with community supporters are recognized for their work over the previous program year.



Photo by Kat VanDouser

4-H Dog Program Showmanship Clinic

The Livingston County 4-H Dog program has seen significant growth in the past year, including the addition of the Dog program in two more clubs, and meeting club capacity in two others. Because of this, a need for a showmanship clinic was emphasized by 4-H leaders and youth across the county.

The Livingston County 4-H Dog program currently serves 40 youth across four clubs. This program served 7 youth in the county with a reach of 18% of the county dog program, including three youth who had never participated in the 4-H dog program previously.

Each youth was given hands-on, experiential learning opportunities with their dog alongside the clinician and 4-H staff. At the conclusion of the event, the four beginner youth could successfully perform a courtesy turn, down-and-back, -pattern, and triangle pattern, stack their dogs, and present their dog's teeth to the judge. For the advanced youth, they had the added knowledge of the T pattern, breed specific showmanship differences, and practiced example questions that a judge may ask in the showmanship ring.



Children and Youth Programming



213 4-H volunteers



\$64,219.50 4-H volunteer hour value



4,330 MI Stronger Family total online participants (STATEWIDE)



783 Total children and youth program participants



Photos by MSU Extension staff

Service Project

Each year as we gather to have our District 12 All Staff Civil Rights Training, we incorporate a service project that provides opportunity for team building while also allowing MSUE to give back to the community. This year's project included assembling 100 social emotional learning and literacy kits to be shared with our partner agencies and organizations who work in early childhood and identify children and families who would most benefit from them. The kits are at home learning kits that feature five to six early childhood activities with a focused learning goal (social and emotional health and literacy), and include supplies, a children's book, and an introduction letter to families to explain how to use the materials, and an evaluation. They are intended to support the development of children's critical social and emotional skills such as emotional literacy, self-concept and self-control. Agencies and organizations that the kits include Dexter schools, Livingston County schools, Great Start Livingston, LACASA, WIC, Community and Mental Health Agencies, MDHHS and more.

Children who exhibit positive social-emotional skills are better able to self-regulate, pay attention, follow directions, and get along with others, resulting in higher academic performance. (Raver, Garner, & Smith-Donald 2007; Eggum et al. 2011; Rivers et al. 2012). These skills develop rapidly in the early childhood years and are largely learned through interactions at home. The Social Emotional at-home learning kits help families support their children in developing these important skills. MSU Extension staff are proud to be a part of improving the social-emotional well-being of the community!

A Statewide Network of Resources to Help You

MSU Extension is the home of the latest in research, education and outreach covering a wide range of issues from agriculture & agribusiness, health and nutrition, youth education and outreach and community and economic vitality. If MSU Extension doesn't have an expert in your county to answer your questions, we can connect you to our statewide resources to connect you to the information you need.

Ask Extension offers one-to-one answers from MSU Extension experts and Extension Master Gardener volunteers on topics such as lawns, gardening, agriculture, nutrition and physical activity, food safety, food preservation, natural resources, community development, youth programming and more! Ask Extension: www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/ask-an-expert



Lawn and Garden Hotline:

888-678-3464 (press prompt 1)

Hours: M,W,F 9:00 am–12:00 pm (Year-round)

Crabgrass, brown spots, or powdery mildew, the Lawn and Garden Hotline can give you information on all your home gardening questions.

Soil Mailers: MSU Extension home lawn and garden and commercial soil mailers provide access to personalized fertilizer recommendations for thousands of Michigan residents every year. The home lawn and garden mailer can be purchased in person at MSU Extension offices or online from the MSU Extension bookstore. Commercial soil mailer are purchased in person at MSU Extension offices. Questions about soil results can be sent to MSUsoiltest@msu.edu.

Food Safety Hotline:

877-643-9882 Hours M/W/F, 9:00 am-5:00 pm

Do you have questions about food expiration dates, how long food will last or preserving foods at home? The Michigan State University Extension food safety hotline can help answer these types of questions and concerns.

MSU Extension Bookstore <https://shop.msu.edu/collections/msu-extension-bookstore>

Look for bulletins, publications and MSU Extension products at the Bookstore!



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Partnerships and Programs

2024 Clean Boats, Clean Water Grant Program Awardee

Great Start Livingston Collaborative

Foster Adoption Kinship Care of Livingston County

Fowlerville Family Fair Board

Fowlerville Family Fair Youth Show Committee

Fowlerville Schools

GiLLS CISMA

Hamburg Township Library

Howell Library

Howell Public Schools

LACASA

Livingston County Commissioners

Livingston County Community Mental Health (CMH)

Livingston County Libraries

Livingston County Public Schools

Livingston County Human Services Collaborative Body

MDHHS (Michigan Department of Health and Human Services)

Michigan 4-H Foundation

Michigan Department of Education

Mi Farm Bureau

Michigan Farmers Market Association

Pinckney Community High School 4-H Day of Wellness Partnership

Pinckney Community Public Library

Pinckney Community Schools

Portage Lake Restoration Team (Livingston County)

Southwest Regional Resource Center

Spicer Orchard

WIC (Woman, Infant & Children)

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