



# Clare County

## 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

### BY THE NUMBERS



Over 1,800 Clare County adults and youth participated in MSU Extension programs



Almost 1,200 youth participated in 4-H and school enrichment programs



More than 260 residents participated in health, wellness and nutrition programs



Over 70 residents participated in gardening programs and services



Over 150 community members helped with financial, homeownership, and foreclosure prevention education



MSU Extension helped bring in over \$39,000 in delinquent taxes



Over 200 residents participated in agricultural services and programs



MSU spent more than \$440,000 with local businesses in Clare County

### MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

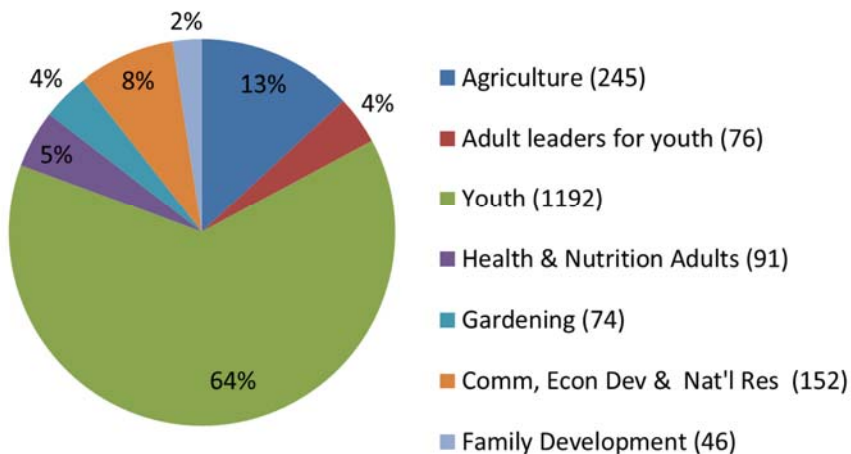
I'm delighted to share the results of another successful year of partnership between Clare County and Michigan State University (MSU) Extension. Because of your continued support, we've been able to make a difference in the lives of youth, families, businesses and communities.



MSU Extension offers a broad range of research-based educational services to county residents. 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

Shari Spoelman, District Director.

#### Numbers Served = 1,876



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# Program Highlights

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Budgeting classes help residents understand their limited resources and provide skills to help plan for homeownership.

## FINANCE & HOMEOWNERSHIP

MSU Extension's team of knowledgeable financial pros demystify common financial and homeownership best practices with university-backed, research-based programs and resources to help Michigan residents navigate through challenges life throws their way. In 2018, the team provided rental education, homeowner education, financial capabilities, foreclosure counseling and Step-Forward Michigan assistance in Clare County.



4-H campers and counselors enjoy time making friendship bracelets during Overnight Camp at Camp Neyati.

## 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

4-H is the largest youth development organization in Michigan. Connected at the national level, MSU's program promotes the traditional 4-H clubs and fair projects, as well as many other leadership and life-skills development opportunities for youth. 4-H provides experiential learning opportunities that allow youth to explore new interests and discover their passion. In 2018, Clare County had 22 4-H clubs serving 309 youth with 60 adult volunteers. The total number of youth served in the county was 1192.



One of the many insect samples brought into the Extension office for identification.

## GARDENING & CONSUMER HORTICULTURE

Homeowners often have insect infestations or plant diseases that they are unfamiliar with and need help addressing. MSU Extension provides soil testing, plant and insect identification, disease identification and treatment, Smart Gardening resources, and a toll-free Lawn and Garden hotline. The Clare County MSU Extension office provides assistance to many customers with basic home gardening concerns.

# Program Highlights

## AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESS

During the past year in Clare County, MSU Extension provided farm support and education through individual consultation, workshops, research opportunities, evaluation of practices, articles and training for employees. Topics included the impact of milking procedures on cows, disease control, finance management, breeding readiness, employee management and dealing with farm stress. Hundreds of Clare County residents attended, participated or consulted in these programs.



Extension Educator Kable Thurlow speaking to a crowd about grass-fed beef.

## NUTRITION EDUCATION

MSU Extension's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides basic nutrition education and hands-on activities for all ages. Core curricula are designed to help low-income families stretch their food dollars while maintaining good nutrition. Some instruction includes physical activity and cooking techniques that help instill life-long skills. It is estimated that every \$1 spent on nutrition education saves as much as \$10 in long-term health costs.



"Dr. Slime" at Community Outreach Day in Leota. MSU Extension provided nutrition education and physical activities for the kids.

## WORK FORCE PREPARATION

"Mock Interview Day" offers students the opportunity to practice interview skills and network with the business community. Students are expected to bring a completed resume, job application or portfolio, and dress appropriately for an interview. Students receive individual feedback from volunteers. They become more prepared for job-seeking as a result of this experience. MSU Extension works with Clare County youth at Harrison High School to prepare for this event held annually at Mid Michigan College in Mt Pleasant.



During a Mock Interview Day, youth pair up with adult volunteers and practice their interview skills.

# Teens Speak Out



Clare County youth represent 19% of the population and are leaders today as well as in the future.

MSU Extension is listening to the youth and making a difference in Clare County under the leadership of Michelle Neff from MSU Extension.

**Highlights of MSU Extension actions taken in 2018:** More than 540 teens in Clare County participated in a needs assessment survey that provides information about the needs of youth in Clare County. Seventh through twelfth grade students from Clare, Farwell and Harrison schools provided feedback and responses to an eight-question survey.

After sorting through pages of comments, it was clear that teens have some strong feelings about what the needs are in Clare County. One of the first questions asked focused on what one change would make Clare County better for teens. The most popular topic commented on was **school**. The academic stress, homework, bullying, more welcoming environment for learning, and more funding for all programs were the themes related to school. The second most popular topic commented on related to **support**. Help dealing with depression, anxiety, food at home, parental support, and someone to talk to that cares were important aspects to youth. Other topics shared for this question included getting rid of drugs, a community center/recreation center, more teen jobs, more kindness, and overall the idea that they want someone to listen to them.

Other questions asked in the survey related to programs and activities youth wanted to see in our county. Another question asked about plans after high school. The survey ended with an opportunity for youth to share general information related to what teens need.

MSU Extension, along with other community organizations, is working to help address the needs noted by teens in Clare County. Listening to our youth is important; but more importantly, taking action with them at the table will help to address their needs. MSU Extension gets youth involved in many different leadership roles and will continue to do so in the future.

## TOP 5 ISSUES THAT IMPACT CLARE COUNTY YOUTH

- ◆ Stress from schoolwork
- ◆ Stress from family issues
- ◆ College/future plans
- ◆ Pressure to succeed
- ◆ Depression/suicidal thoughts

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### MISSION:

**Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities.**

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