



Ottawa County

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

BY THE NUMBERS



4,604 Ottawa County youth participated in 4-H youth programming



488 Ottawa County adults and youth benefited from health and nutrition programs



465 Ottawa County residents participated in agriculture or agribusiness related workshops or sessions



1,148 Ottawa County families utilized the MSU Extension Remote Learning resources website



44,408 MSU Extension webpage visits from Ottawa County residents

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Once again I am delighted to share the results of another successful year of partnership between Ottawa 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.



The 2020 programming year has been like none other. As the novel coronavirus entered Michigan and the state put protections in place in the form of the Stay Home, Stay Safe order, MSU Extension staff went to work to adapt their classes to a virtual setting. Within a week, MSU Extension launched the Remote Learning and Resources website and set to work to create resources that individuals, businesses and families needed. MSU Extension is proud to have continued its strong partnership with Ottawa County.

Local MSU Extension staff and the statewide network of Educators provided information and expertise to local farmers, government officials, local and state employees, as well as, county youth and adult residents. This annual report gives examples of some of MSU Extension's accomplishments and the impact that we continue to have in the County. Thank you for the opportunity to share our most valuable resource – our people who strive to provide answers to questions that help solve real problems right here in Ottawa County.

Our partnership with you makes this all possible. On behalf of the MSU Extension team serving Ottawa 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.

Erin Moore, District 7 Director

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Extension

Program Highlights



Wade Syers, joined the MSU Food Safety team this year and looks forward to growing partnerships in Ottawa County.



Learning lessons for healthy eating habits are invaluable and strengthen the foundation for a healthy lifestyle.



Community Nutrition Instructor, Christian Kleinjans, teaches youth skills in the kitchen and the importance of healthy choices by using the portable kitchen at Holland Middle School.

FOOD SAFETY

In 2020, MSU Extension brought on a new Food Safety Educator. Starting only a month before the state went into the Stay Home, Stay Safe order, Wade Syers was able to quickly adjust programming to an online setting. In Ottawa County, over 120 Ottawa County residents took advantage of the different courses that the Food Safety team had to offer. These course included cottage food law, cooking for crowds, waste reduction through freezing and, the most popular of all, home food preservation. With more time at home, Michiganders set out to preserve more of their summer harvest. The series brought over 3,800 residents of Michigan to its sessions.

SHOW ME NUTRITION

While 2020 brought new challenges for the cooking demonstrations run by our nutrition team, their passion for service did not falter. In 2020, Christian Kleinjans and Amy Prins served over 350 Ottawa County residents with nutrition education. Partners included Harbor House, Goodwill, Georgetown Senior Center, Love Inc., and Ottawa Area Integrated School District. During the year, MSU Extension adapted these nutrition programs to a virtual format. They were able to promote their programs to multiple partners through case coordinator meetings, Ottawa Food, and the Loutit District Library.

VIRTUAL SUCCESS STORY

One virtual success was when Community Nutrition Instructor Christian Kleinjans was able to successfully virtually train a crew of six middle school students on how to use and maintain the portable kitchen that MSU Extension assisted Holland Middle School in acquiring. Christian took these students from being quite raw in the kitchen, to doing presentations and food demonstrations for their peers! The students went on to train their peers with what they had learned. Not only was this an opportunity for the six students to practice their leadership skills, but the impact of this has the potential to effect all 250+ students in the school!

Program Highlights

GREENHOUSE INDUSTRY

Greenhouses were presented with tough challenges in 2020. Although the production and maintenance of plant material was allowed under the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order, wholesale and retail greenhouses were prohibited from selling product. Mid-March through June is a peak production period and their time is consumed by crop management and shipping activities. The MSUE ornamental horticulture team sought to preserve the industry by providing factually-supported information and recommendations that prioritized employee and consumer safety, promoting an empathetic social media marketing and communications strategy for retailers.



MSU Extension's educational and applied research programs help improve greenhouse crop production and business management by providing trusted information.

APICULTURE EDUCATION

The MSUE Apiculture Team delivered a series of webinars for new and experienced beekeepers. The group reached over 2,000 people across the state of Michigan, including 113 in Ottawa County. The team covered topics such as preparing for swarm season, early season management, and first year colonies. MSUE provides robust education on beekeeping. The College of Natural Science runs the Michigan Pollinator Initiative which houses many resources for experienced and aspiring beekeepers. Additionally, all the MSUE webinars are housed with the initiative to provide continual and ongoing education for the growing interest in beekeeping.



MSU Extension Veteran Liaison, Adam Ingrao, holding up a hive. To access, please visit: <https://pollinators.msu.edu/resources/beekeepers/>

ADULTING 101

Adulting 101 programming allows youth and young adults to gain skills and knowledge of useful information that will help them to be successful in an everchanging world. This exciting series of Adulting 101 was offered for high school youth and with topics that included Household Tasks, Developing a Spending Plan, Cooking 101, Debt vs. Credit and Being an Informed Renter. This webinar series had multiple states represented with over 1,000 registrations and 20 Ottawa County residents participating. This program will continue to expand in 2021 and we look forward to continuing to prepare young people in our community for success with vital life skills.



The Adulting 101 program accommodated the need to offer this series via zoom. MSU Extension was able to reach young people in Ottawa County as well as in other states.

Featured County Story: Ottawa County Virtual 4-H Fair

With the cancellation of the Berlin Fair due to COVID-19, it was important to both the 4-H community and the fair board to provide an opportunity for youth to be able to showcase their 4-H projects. The 2020 Ottawa County 4-H Virtual Showcase - Berlin Fair took place from July 6-11. Over 225 virtual entries were submitted where youth could receive feedback from judges and receive awards for their projects. In addition to offering the virtual show, Ottawa County 4-H was the first county 4-H program in Michigan to provide the virtual auction offered and run by MSU Extension. Through the auction, 4-H youth sold their projects for a combined total of over \$26,000.

The Ottawa County 4-H Virtual Showcase was truly a partnership between 4-H Volunteers, the Berlin Fair Board and the MSU Extension Ottawa County 4-H staff. Many 4-H volunteers dedicated numerous hours helping to build the virtual platform and getting it ready for 4-H youth. Collectively, all parties involved helped to create a successful event for the youth of the Ottawa County 4-H program.

Stephanie Nelson, a mother of a 4-H participant said “I am a nurse who has been working crazy hours and my kids having something to work towards has been a blessing. I feel this was the true spirit of 4-H.”



Program Highlights



4-H is Michigan's largest youth development program serving over 200,000 youth each year.



This project allows Michigan anglers the opportunity to share information on the balance of stocked and wild fish showing up in the catch to researchers.



MSU Extension provides tools to help parents and caregivers get children ready for school and offer programs that promote social and emotional health in young children.

4-H LIVESTOCK LEARNING

Livestock Learning for the Ottawa 4-H youth was scheduled to take place in-person in the spring of 2020. As always, our 4-H community rose and met the challenges of 2020 with the same dedication and spirit as reflected in previous years of participation. 4-H leaders and educators were committed to offering programming to our Ottawa County youth and quickly adapted the training to virtual. There were 7 hour long sessions in total with 21 Ottawa County 4-H members attending. Topics included nutrition, showmanship, biosecurity, selection and daily care. 4-H participants throughout the state, moved through the year with resilience and adjusted to new virtual learning opportunities.

STEELHEAD PROJECT

In 2020, The Great Lakes Angler Diary was launched. The diary is a joint effort by MSU, Michigan Sea Grant and the Detroit Area Steelheaders. This project allows Michigan anglers an opportunity to provide important information on stocked and wild fish by registering and recording their catches in the diary. The DNR has been marking all stocked fish since 2018. Tracking those fish is an important step in learning more about the health of our Michigan rivers and Great Lakes as well as the balance between stocked and wild fish.

PARENTING EDUCATION

While there were many downsides to pandemic programming, the lack of geographic boundaries offered some upsides as well. In 2020, Ottawa County residents were able to access parenting courses that were originally only available in a face-to-face format. As these courses were adapted to a virtual setting, they became a popular option for parents, and childcare settings. Ottawa County residents took courses in "Building Early Emotional Skills (BEES)" as well as the "Guiding Principles for Highly Successful Parenting" series. In total, 23 people from Ottawa took these courses. These trainings will continue to be offered virtually.

Program Highlights

Extension Master Gardener

The MSU Extension Master Gardener Training Program is a long standing program that trains Michigan residents to share science-based, environmentally-sound gardening knowledge. In 2020, Ottawa County hosted its first training, which was made virtual due to the pandemic. Educators from around the state stepped up to teach the various classes virtually. These sessions included. plant science, soil science, integrated pest management, and water quality among others. The 2020 Ottawa County Extension Master Gardener Program had 30 participants who participated via the virtual format, 16 of which reside in Ottawa County.



Ottawa County is the home to a variety of beautiful gardens with residents learning from MSU Extension experts.

FINANCE AND HOMEBUYER EDUCATION

It was an economically tough year for many. In 2020, MSU Extension offered courses in financial management as well as homebuyer education. Ottawa residents took advantage of classes such as informed renter, money management, credit craze, tips for successful savings, retire on track and student loans. In all, 43 residents of Ottawa County took advantage of these courses. To learn more about the program offerings of the FHE team, please visit: mimoneyhealth.org



MSU Extension provides resources and education on money management, foreclosure prevention, buying your own home, retirement planning and more.

SMALL FRUIT EDUCATION

The MSUE Small Fruit Team hosted a total of three webinar series to update local growers on issues related to the early portion of the blueberry season. These webinars delivered information on research and extension subjects of interest during the pre-bloom, bloom and pre-harvest period. Topics ranged from Michigan pollinator protection plans and guidelines to insect pests and diseases. An exciting addition to the webinar was Dr. Marisol Quintanilla-Tornel, an MSU Entomology Nematologist. Dr. Quintanilla-Tornel provided direct assistance to the Michigan blueberry industry, specifically around nematodes. Nematodes are a serious problem of blueberries. In total, 60 Ottawa County growers participated in this series.



Michigan blueberry growers produce about 100 million pounds of blueberries every year, making Michigan a leader in blueberry production.

Program Highlights



MSU Extension has a menu of programs that offer education in mental health awareness, anger management and reducing stress.



Michigan Water School helps elected and officials increase their knowledge about water management and gain access to tools and resources to help impact their local economy.



Please visit: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/agriculture/Rapid-Response-for-Agriculture/covid-19-pandemic-response-for-agriculture>

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH

The need to work from home and keep our distance from others has put a strain on everyone's mental health. MSUE is very proud to have offered mindfulness, anger management and caregiver training to Michigan residents. Within a week of the Stay Home, Stay Safe state order, Holly Tired, MSUE Educator, was teaching virtual Mindfulness classes to not only residents of Ottawa County and Michigan but also reached participants around the country and even abroad. Her classes in breathing, laughter and anger management have been met with great success. In Ottawa County, 182 residents took advantage of classes such as Relax: Alternatives to Anger classes and Mindfulness. Overall, these classes reached over 3,000 Michigan residents.

MICHIGAN WATER SCHOOL

2020 saw the launch of the MSU Extension Water School. This program is policy-neutral, fact-based and designed to provide local decision-makers, appointed and elected officials, and municipal staff with critical, relevant information needed to understand Michigan's water resources. Topics covered include the fundamentals of water science, how to support sound water management decisions and awareness of current and future local and state water issues. The program had 116 registrants with 16 identifying as Ottawa County residents.

RAPID RESPONSE TO AGRICULTURE

At the onset of the pandemic in 2020, there were many unknowns in the Agriculture Sector. MSU Extension went to work to develop a resource page that housed a COVID-19 response for Ag producers. This resource page became a one stop place for Ottawa County farmers to learn how to adapt their businesses in the pandemic. Topics included translated information for the workers about stopping the spread, housing information for incoming migrant workers, a risk reduction tool, loan information and interpretation among many other issues.

MSU Extension staff located in Ottawa County

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Through successful partnership and collaboration with Ottawa County, MSU Extension is able to continue its local presence and to provide vital educational resources and programming in such areas as community and economic development, agriculture, land use, health and nutrition, and youth development.

Thank you Ottawa County!



MISSION:

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