



# Alger County

## 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

### BY THE NUMBERS



\$1,930,190 total MSU economic impact



892 youth participated in 4-H and school enrichment programs



7 Extension professionals based in the county and 50+ providing education



1,262 acres owned by MSU



1 MSU partner hospital



MSU Extension website received 5,606 visits from Alger County residents, 73% first-time visitors



MSU disbursed \$132,097 in financial aid to county students



More than \$65,041 was spent with local businesses

### MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR



During 2019, Michigan State University (MSU) Extension continued to partner with Alger County to strengthen youth, families, businesses and communities. In this report, we will highlight local and statewide programs that made a difference in Alger County residents' lives; including helping farmers with financial management and farm stress; providing opportunities for youth's career and leadership development through 4-H; teaching families how to buy, cook and eat nutritious food; helping communities grow their tourism and community development opportunities; and providing a suite of online resources and programs.

Because of your continued support, we are able to help Alger County residents improve their lives, their work places and their communities. It is an honor and a privilege to serve Alger County and we're looking forward to another successful year ahead.

Erin Carter, District Director

# Program Highlights

## NATURAL RESOURCES EDUCATION

As part of the outdoor and environmental education opportunities offered to Alger County youth, the Summer 2019 **Life of Lake Superior series** was a big success, with **175 youth participants**. Each day had a theme based around outdoor activities, including topics such as invasive species, historic pioneer days, forestry and forest health, and the nature of sound. During the pioneer history day, everyone got a chance to try horseback riding and go on a wagon ride. This day also included fishing, where the kids learned how to clean the fish they caught, which then became the evening's dinner.



**Above: Top Row L-R.** Creating water color paintings with Lake Superior Water. Exploring old growth hemlock and white pine.

**Bottom Row L-R:** Grilling the day's catch for dinner. Kayaking on Lake Superior.

## PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION

The **Market Walk program** promotes healthy living by walking and eating locally grown fruits and vegetables. Participants walk indoor during the winter months to earn a \$1.00 token for each mile walked. Tokens are redeemed during the summer months for whole fruits and vegetables at the **Munising Farmer's Market**. This program benefits local farmers through increased sales and foot traffic having participants use the tokens they earned during the winter for produce at the Munising Market.



This program has been offered since 2017 and will begin its 4<sup>th</sup> year in 2020. For the past 3 years **211 people have walked 2,432 miles with an 82% token redemption rate**. The Market Walk program received a **Building Michigan's Families for the Future Endowment grant through MSU Extension** which will make 2,000 tokens available for 2020.

The Market Walk program has been offered since 2017 and will begin its 4<sup>th</sup> year in 2020.

# Program Highlights

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RELAX Alternatives to Anger and Stress Less with Mindfulness classes were offered to Alger County residents in 2019 by Tracie Abram, Extension educator.



Tai Chi and Matter of Balance were offered to Seniors in Alger County in 2019.



Creator: Photographer: Callie Lipkin

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## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL HEALTH PROGRAMMING

MSU Extension Health Educator, Tracie Abram, continues to provide **RELAX** and **Stress Less with Mindfulness** programming series to help participants improve stress management, problem solving attention and focus. Residents of Delta, Schoolcraft, Luce, Mackinac, Chippewa, Alger and Marquette Counties have had opportunities to participate in these program series. Abram has offered these series as community-based programming as well as to students in high school health classes, seniors and recently in 2020, at the Delta County Jail. Tracie has also provided work-site wellness programming or one-time presentations in 2019 to Community Action Agencies, Great Lake Industries, Girl Scouts, Senior Centers, and 4-H and Civic Groups. Seniors or adults aged 55+ can participate in **Stress Less with Mindfulness** for **free due to grant funds**.

## SUPPORTING SENIORS

Tracie Abram, MSU Extension educator along with UPCAP Volunteers, provided falls prevention programming with the **Matter of Balance program and the Tai Chi program** in Alger County having full capacity classes. This series is free to seniors and provides skills and techniques to improve strength, flexibility and coordination and balance both physically and psychologically. This series will continue to be offered for free through 2020.

# Program Highlights

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**578 Alger County Residents including about 200 youth, participated agriculture-related MSU Extension programs in 2019, including:**

**MSU Extension 2019 Beginning Farmer Webinar Series solves an issue:**

Michigan citizens interested in engaging in new agricultural enterprises sometimes lack knowledge, experience and technical support to get started. Extension educators and specialists receive numerous contacts from such people seeking basic, start-up information. The Michigan State University Extension Beginning Farmer Webinar Series was developed in response to this need.

The series continued for its eighth year in 2019. The 2019 series featured twelve evening webinars on topics of interest to beginning farmers. **Twelve presenters, including 9 MSU staff and 3 private or agency professionals were involved.** The series was promoted through MSU Extension local channels, MSU ANR Communications and eXtension. **Two hundred eighteen participants registered for 2,050 webinar views, including 160 people from 55 Michigan counties and 58 people from 22 states outside of Michigan and three other countries participated.**

**What difference did it make - public value?**

New and expanding farm businesses provide jobs, income, increased economic and social stability, and increased food security to rural and other communities. Providing a realistic overview of small farm realities and basic, practical information on sound production practices, business management and marketing to people interested in, or already engaging in, new and expanding farm enterprises of any size helps these small businesses succeed.

## PROMISING FUTURES

### PARTNERSHIP

The **Promising Futures Partnership** seeks to expand and strengthen existing learning opportunities enhancing the social and emotional health of children, families, and communities. MSU Extension collaborates with schools in Marquette/Alger Counties and the community at-large to create and sustain a continuum of learning opportunities leading to positive social, emotional and academic outcomes.

**Participation in Alger County: 307 PreK-5th Grade students receive Social Emotional Learning 40 Min/Week: Mather Elementary, Munising, MI**



Planting flowers at "triangle" intersection, M-28, Munising

# Program Highlights

## Land-Based Learning Center: Healthy Soil Hayfield Project with Superior Central and Log Cabin Livestock

Students and farmers have teamed up to work on sustainable agriculture issues through on-farm projects through a SARE-funded project. Students take an active role in problem solving, learning about the food system, and discovering careers in agriculture.

Students from Tim Bliss' classes worked with farmers Ben and Denise Bartlett to develop best practices for hay fields that are too remote from the farm to be grazed. This issue, which relates to ecosystem health and farm financial sustainability, led to an investigation of the relationship between soil microbial activity, soil health, and crop yield.

Students designed an experiment to examine four different treatments and set up test plots on land that had been hayed consistently for several years without being fertilized or grazed. Intern Beau Rondeau collected data over the 2018 and 2019 growing seasons.



**Top Left:** Superior Central student researcher **Beau Rondeau** conducts a species count at the **Healthy Soil Hayfield project** plots in Eben Junction to study best practices for soil health with cooperating farmers **Ben and Denise Bartlett**.

**Top Right:** Superior Central students take soil samples to learn about the relationship between life underground and crop yields with project design help from MSU Extension Field Crops educator **Jim Isleib**.



**Top Left -** Farm Manager Paul Naasz introduces environmental science students to pasture management on a hayride.  
**Top Right -** MSU Extension intern Amanda Kosal introduces youth to concepts and tools for raising cattle through a memory game.  
**Bottom Left -** Pre-service teachers at Northern Michigan University develop hands-on agriculture, food, and natural resources activities in collaboration with UPREC to host a field trip at NMU Hoop House.

# Program Highlights

## HANDS-ON AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND NATURAL RESOURCES EDUCATION

In 2019, MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center (MSU UPREC) **facilitated learning for 1,321 K-12 students** and their teachers, who participated in hands-on Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) activities connected with Next Generation Science Standards in a mix of on-farm visits and classroom visits. Students visited the MSU UPREC facility in Chatham, MI for experiential learning activities pertaining to food systems, careers in agriculture, and the history of land use in the Upper Peninsula. Volunteers, Extension, interns, and land management staff supported these activities.

**90% of teachers “strongly agreed” that the field trip resulted in student learning** about agriculture, food, and natural resources. 70% “strongly agreed” the field trip helped them meet their objectives as an educator. 90% “strongly agreed” they would recommend farm field trips to other educators. 60% of teachers indicated they **received travel funding through CUPPAD or Growing UP Ag Association** making the field trip possible.

Volunteer Lucy DeDecker asks students to look at the food system from a bee’s perspective in a pollinator relay race.



MSU Extension UPREC Director Dr. James DeDecker teaches the basics of Integrated pest management with mock pest scenarios at the North Farm’s transplant greenhouse.

# Investing in Alger County Youth with 4-H

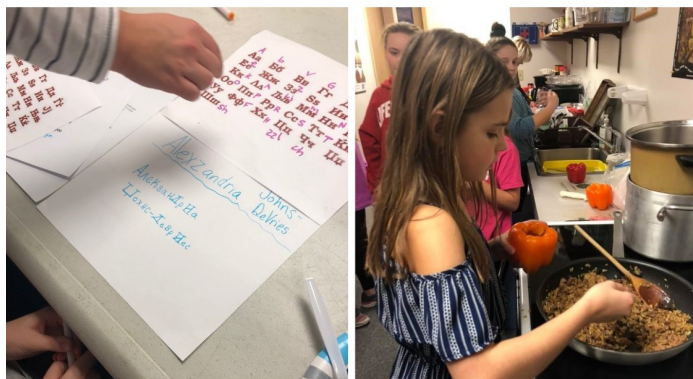
According to research completed by the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University, 4-H'ers are **4X** more likely to make contributions to their communities, **2X** more likely to be civically active, and **2X** more likely to make healthier choices.



2019 was a great year for 4-H programs in Alger County. We had **202 youth** enrolled in established community clubs in the 2018-2019 4-H year. These clubs ranged from crafting, community service, sewing, cooking, baking, livestock showmanship, and more. **Alger County 4-H had 22 adult volunteers** serving in a variety of capacities.

Two 4H programs to be highlighted are: First, the **Teen Wilderness Leadership Expedition** finished its second year. This 6 day 4-H program takes teens on a **42 mile backpacking trip** through **Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore** teaching them wilderness skills and ethics as well as providing an opportunity for them to grow as leaders. This program was awarded **Michigan Association of Extension 4-H Youth Staff Excellence in Camping Award** in 2018 and the **Beyond Youth Leadership Award** in 2019. This trip has also been the **recipient of funds** from the **Building Michigan Families for the Future Foundation**. This grant has allowed Alger 4-H to purchase high quality backpacks, tents, cook gear, and sleeping bags for youth to use. Youth participated in this trip mentioned the trip was “amazing”, “life-changing”, and “one of the best things I have ever done.” One youth stated after the trip, “I want to keep doing things like this for the rest of my life.”

The second club highlight is the **Spice Up Your Life 4-H Club**. This club focuses on cooking and baking, and this year they decided to “Cook Around the World”. At each one of their meetings, they cooked a famous dish from countries such as Columbia, Israel, the United Kingdom, and Poland. At their final meeting, they invited a community member who grew up in Macedonia to teach them to cook. Ms. Ana and Ms. Gordana taught the youth how to make “baburi” or stuffed peppers. She also taught them how to write their names in Cyrillic, the Macedonian alphabet. This direct connection gave youth a first-hand look into what it was like growing up in another country



Alger County Spice Up Your Life 4-H Club.

Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives by bringing the vast knowledge resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities, and businesses. For more than 100 years, MSU Extension has helped grow Michigan’s economy by equipping Michigan residents with the information they need to do their jobs better, raise healthy and safe families, build their communities, and empower their children to dream of successful futures. For more information about the programs we offer please refer to the contact information below.

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