

LIVINGSTON COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT 2025

MSU Extension Livingston County

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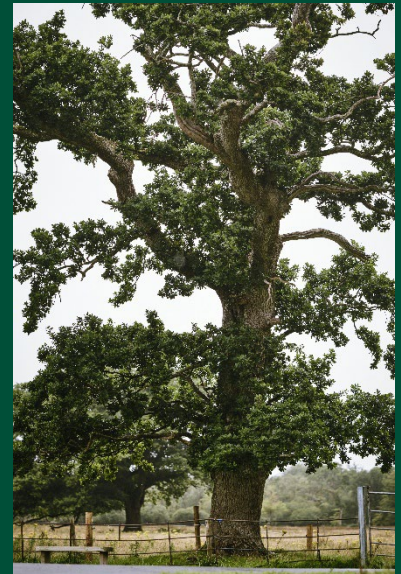


Photo by Valerie on Unsplash



Message from the District Director

The long-lived steadfast oak trees found throughout Michigan can live between 100 to 600 years. To thrive, the oak does more than endure change; the oak embraces it by making the necessary adjustments to maintain the lives it supports as well as prepare for new growth. Change is inevitable. Embracing it can lead to growth, resilience, and transformation. MSU Extension is no exception.

Throughout our 153-year history, we've seen lots of changes to our programs, and because of your support, we continue to bring you quality information, whether we must alter the format, content, or the method in which we bring it to you. In 2025, the National SNAP-Ed Program ended. That meant that we had to say goodbye to nearly 100 colleagues and friends here in Michigan. MSUE and families across Michigan felt the loss of the SNAP-Ed Program deeply. But like the mighty oak, MSUE is adapting to the change and continuing to share research-based information through a variety of other programs.

Our resilient staff are working hard to identify emerging issues and ways that we can provide value in the communities we serve. We are seeing individuals and families being strengthened by our health programs for chronic diseases, fall prevention, parenting, and food safety. Adults in various stages of their lives are participating in homeownership and financial webinars such as **"Thriving on a Fixed Income"** and **"Mortgage Foreclosure Basics."** Farmers and gardeners are benefiting from our programs on disease prevention, invasive species, and nutrient and waste management. Youth are participating in programs such as 4-H, financial literacy, and special interests that make them **"Beyond Ready"** for their future.

Groups such as non-profits, corporations, and governmental agencies also benefit from Extension's various educational opportunities. Entire departments in non-profits have taken mental health first aid training. Municipalities are leveraging science-based data on housing, tourism, and data centers from community and economic development tools to assist them in making decisions about how to shape their communities.

Whatever training or information you need to thrive in a changing world, whether you want virtual or in-person programming, it's very likely that, **Extension Does That!**



2,172 participants from the county attending programs



489 4-H enrolled youth

Overall Impact



268 staff/faculty residing in Livingston County



72,517 participants in Community, Food and Environment programs (STATEWIDE)



464 Statewide programs attended by participants from this county



313 client consultations



292 nutrition and physical activity participants hosted in the county



3,939 contacts through social media, web activity, e-newsletters, and handouts



213 Ask Extension questions answered



295 total volunteers

Economic Development, Environmental Conservation, and Agricultural Productivity



50 Master Gardener Volunteers



209 Total soil test samples processed



1,310 Master Gardener Volunteer Hours completed



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



\$43,191 Master Gardener hour value for Livingston*



142 participants in county agriculture programs

** Calculated at \$32.97/hour Michigan rate*

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.

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 and connecting farmers and their families with teletherapy programs.

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

LACASA Garden- Second year growing fresh herbs and produce

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, for the second year.

The objective of this project was to teach participants how to plant vegetables from seed and transplants, maintain a garden, and how to use the harvest in meals. The participants are short-term residents of LACASA who have recently left a stressful home or relationship. Having the opportunity to garden and be outdoors is one way to relieve stress and take some time to focus on something else.

Memorable moments: The success of this partnership was shared at the Livingston County United Way/ Hunger Council yearly "Spirit of the Community" and volunteer recognition breakfast for the whole community to hear.



Photo by Barbara Gregerson.



Photo by Holly Livermore
Top- Walnut, Middle- Staghorn,
Bottom- Tree of Heaven

Livingston County Building Native Community Garden

Development and enhancement of the Livingston County Building native garden has been an ongoing project.

The MSU Extension Consumer Horticulture Educator has been encouraging Extension Master Gardeners to renew their involvement in maintaining the garden space. Additionally, the public has been invited to attend outdoor classes featuring hands-on activities and learning.

One popular class, Invasive Species ID, was held in partnership with our local CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area).

Improving Health and Nutrition

Michigan State University (MSU) Extension partnered with USDA and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to provide Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), a free nutrition education program to reduce hunger and food insecurity and promote healthy eating habits.

For 30 years, SNAP-Ed helped people build healthy eating habits and be more active on a limited budget. Following a federal decision to end funding, the program was discontinued after July 4, 2025.

Despite this loss, Michigan State University Extension continues to connect communities with research-based programs and resources that:

- Strengthen nutrition
- Support chronic disease and diabetes management
- Physical activity
- Promote food safety and preservation
- Social-emotional health
- Provide guidance for aging and caregiving

Great Start Family Coalition Picnic

During the Great Start Livingston Family Coalition Picnic, MSU Extension Community Nutrition Instructor did a lesson on physical activity. The kids made paper bird puppets, and they talked about flying like a bird!

Memorable moment: *"Flying like a bird is fun!"* said by a participating child

Memorable quote: *"Your bird-themed craft added such a meaningful and creative touch to the evening. It was wonderful to see families engaged, especially with how well your activity tied into the StoryWalk book, I am a Bird. Your presence helped bring the story to life and created a special moment for many of our littles and their grown-ups. We truly appreciate your partnership and the time and energy you bring to supporting families in Livingston County. We hope to collaborate again soon!"* – Family Liaisons for Great Start Livingston

The picnic included 37 families: 60 adults and 70 children.



Photos used with permission from the Great Start Livingston website

Fostering Strong Communities

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 Councils identify needs and wants of 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 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/>



Image from MSU Extension Citizen Planner Facebook post

Citizen Planner Online

Citizen Planner Online (CPO) is a fully asynchronous program housed in the MSU Distance Learning platform (D2L). Citizen Planner Online fills an important training role by offering 24/7 on-demand learning—particularly helpful for new staff and orienting new planning commissioners or zoning board of appeals members to their roles. A total of 218 individuals enrolled in CPO in 2025. There were 7 people from Livingston County who participated in the program.

When asked about the program's value for personal growth and professional development, responses were overwhelmingly positive. 93.1% of the respondents considered the program valuable or very valuable. These results highlight the program's perceived relevance and impact on participants' roles and responsibilities.

Your Money, Your Goals: Focusing on the Disabled Community

MSU Extension's Finance & Homeownership Educator partnered with Disability Network Washtenaw Monroe Livingston (DNWML) aimed to deliver a 'Your Money, Your Goals' train-the-trainer program, with a core focus on equitable access to financial literacy for the disabled community. The curriculum included state-specific information on ABLE accounts, disability benefits, and other relevant topics, while also focusing on how staff could equitably discuss financial matters with their clients, recognizing and addressing potential disparities.

The DNWML staff expressed significant enthusiasm for the training, indicating a high demand for the 'Your Money, Your Goals' curriculum and its application, and they also expressed a strong interest in receiving training on the 'Get Ready, Get Set, Get Going' program, which is specifically designed for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

This teaching and engagement will create a ripple effect, empowering DNWML staff to disseminate financial literacy skills within their community.

Preparing Children and Youth For the Future Through 4-H

Michigan 4-H is the youth development program of Michigan State University Extension. It provides fun, hands-on educational opportunities that prepare youth for life and work by helping them find their spark, build real world skills and become resilient, adaptable, lifelong learners.

In 4-H, youth learn about things that interest and excite them – be that animals or archery, engineering or entrepreneurship, leadership or learning to cook. No matter the topic, 4-H provides experiences that allow youth to practice and build foundational skills that ready them for what lies ahead. Whether at work, at home or in the community, skills learned in 4-H help youth become beyond ready for the future; ready to lead, ready to build, ready to serve and ready to contribute to the world around them.

Data shows that compared to their peers, 4-H'ers are:

- 2x** more likely to have the goal of being a leader;
- 3x** more likely to participate in community service; and
- 2x** more likely to report living life with intentionality and purpose.

**Tufts University longitudinal study of Positive Youth Development, 2021*



Photo by Kat VanDouser

Building Leadership and Teaching Skills Through 4-H Animal Science Programming

The Livingston County 4-H Animal Project Committee is a youth-led county-wide committee that focuses on providing youth with animal-specific workshops and education. Two of the three youth officers (President, Vice President, and Treasurer) are new to the committee and have held limited leadership roles within their own clubs. Through this committee, youth form safe youth-adult partnerships and are encouraged to plan events and workshops that they believe would best benefit our county as a whole. For our Teen Officers, they were able to practice both public speaking and leadership skills, and were able to showcase their own skills and knowledge as a result of 4-H. These youth leaders left more confident in their knowledge, and better prepared for fair, while still providing the necessary information to the many youth in attendance.

Livingston Conservation District Partnership

In 2025, the Livingston Conservation District reached out again to see if Livingston County 4-H would help with their Livingston Conservation Field Day in September 2025. This event allows folks to come enjoy their Nature Center and learn about conservation and ways they can engage with nature and the outdoors in Livingston County. The Livingston County 4-H Program Coordinator and Program Instructor helped advertise this event on social media and sent it out to 4-H families. These 4-H staff, along with one of the 4-H Ambassadors, also hosted a table with a pollinator activity near our pollinator planting from 2023. The field day was a big success, and the Conservation District had over 130 people attend. This was a huge improvement from past years when they only had a few dozen people attend. Many of the attendees were 4-H families who had never been to the Nature Center before, and this was a great opportunity for them to learn about the Livingston Conservation District. We also passed out information about the MSU Extension Home and Garden Hotline and had a QR code with information for families who wanted to join 4-H. This was a successful event for both Livingston County 4-H and the Livingston Conservation District. These kinds of partnerships are what make MSU Extension and our partners stronger. When we work together, we can have a bigger impact and build stronger communities. We look forward to continuing this partnership and finding more ways we can support each other.



MSU Extension photo



Building Stronger Families

MSU Extension's child and family development services provide tools to help parents and caregivers. Our programs get children ready for school and promote social and emotional wellness and positive behaviors in children and youth.

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 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, MSU Extension is able to help caring adults build a positive foundation for learning and lifelong success.

Parliamentary Procedure Training Livingston

Each year, the MSU Extension Leadership Civic and Cultural Engagement Educator teaches a session on Parliamentary Procedure to Livingston County 4-H Youth. The program has been adapted over the years to include youth as co-presenters. This first started with the youth doing the welcome and the icebreakers. Then it included them presenting on their officer positions, along with assistance to show the personal impact on those positions. For the past two years, it has included youth actually teaching large sections of the class. An MSU Extension educator works with youth during face-to-face sessions to help them develop their teaching techniques and to fully prepare their hands-on learning sections that they are going to present. Then, during the event, the youth completely take over these sections, and minimal assistance is provided. So not only are we helping youth with their own development, but we are also developing youth to lead, advocate, teach, and mentor. We are really concentrating on many of the essential elements by empowering youth to lead in this way.

Introduction to the HOPE framework

Following a training on the HOPE Framework (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences), which the MSU Extension Early Childhood Educator presented, a participant followed up. She shared that she had never heard of ACES, PACES, or trauma. Learning more about the impact of ACES and trauma on the students in her program completely changed her perspective on students' misbehavior. She shared that learning how ACES impacts children has made her realize how infrequently children's behavior is "being bad" and how much their lives outside of school impact their behavior in school.

ACES= adverse Childhood experiences

PACES= positive and adverse childhood experiences



MSU Extension photo

Children and Youth Programming



275 4-H volunteers



4,534 MI Stronger Family total online participants (STATEWIDE + beyond)



\$90,392.50 Total 4-H volunteer hour value *

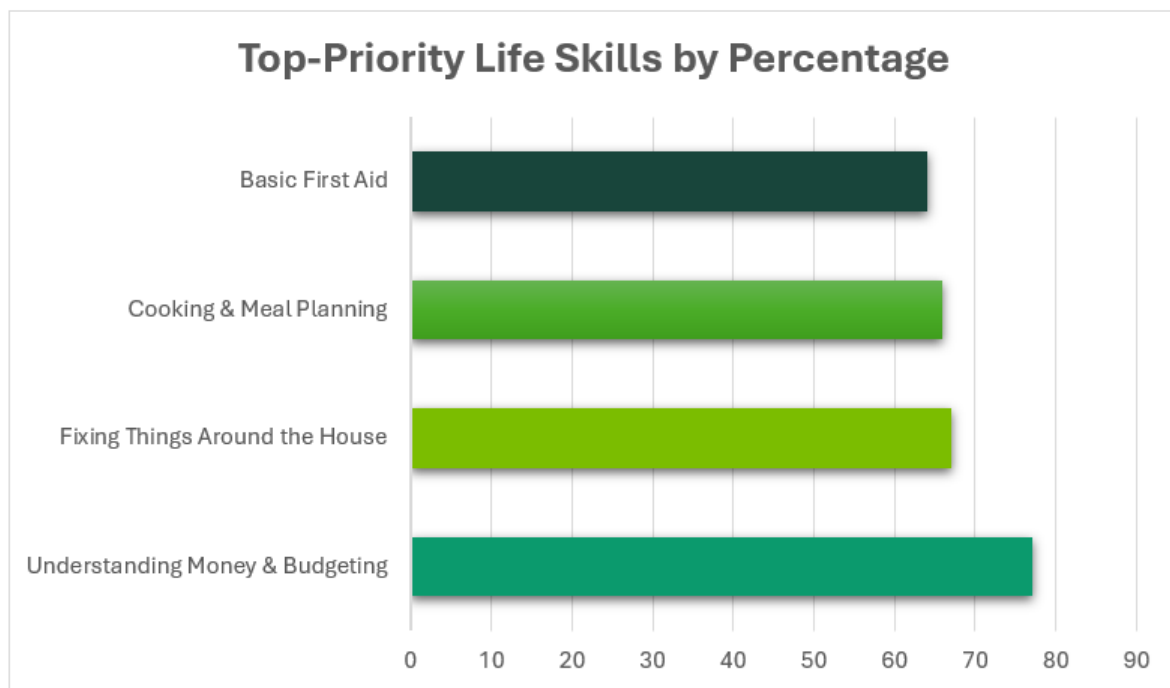


1068 Total children and youth program participants

** Calculated at \$32.97/hour Michigan rate x 10 hours/ volunteer x # of volunteers*

2025 4-H Needs Assessment Survey

A total of 659 individuals participated in the statewide survey, including 295 parents/guardians, 231 volunteers, and 37 youth representing 61 counties. 96 youth participated in dot voting at events.



A CYI (Children Youth Institute) Needs Assessment was created to help guide both county and state programming. The survey was sent out to all 4-H members for the 2024-2025 program year.

Graph data credited to Kathy Fischer, MSU Extension Educator

Service Project

Each year, as we gather to have our District 12 All Staff Civil Rights Training, we incorporate a service project that provides an opportunity for team building while also allowing MSUE to give back to the community. This year's project on November 5th was to make cat and dog toys for the Jackson County Animal Shelter. Toys were made from recycled items staff brought from home, including old socks and jeans, empty water bottles, and toilet paper rolls. Staff made over 500 toys that were then donated to the shelter.



Photos by Mary Bohling and a volunteer from the animal shelter

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 get the information you need.

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.

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



MSU Extension Master Gardener Program®

The MSU Extension Master Gardener Program is a horticulture education and volunteer training program dedicated to enhancing Michigan communities. Volunteers are committed to improving the quality of life through horticulture-based service, environmental stewardship, food-security initiatives and community beautification efforts across the state.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION



Have a home gardening or lawn question?

Home and Garden Hotline
M,W,F 9am-12pm
1-888-678-3464

Ask Extension
<https://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/ask-an-expert>

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

To become a Master Gardener volunteer:
https://www.canr.msu.edu/master_gardener_volunteer_program/join-us/

A Statewide Network of Resources to Help You

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.

Pressure Canner Gauge Checks

Call your local MSU Extension office to schedule a free appointment. Livingston: 517-546-3950

ServSafe

D12 Food Safety Educator is Mary Donaldson and she can be reached at morrism4@msu.edu

MSU Extension Bookstore

<https://shop.msu.edu/collections/msu-extension-bookstore>
Look for bulletins, publications and MSU Extension products at the Bookstore!



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension Operating Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Call 877-643-9882

FOOD SAFETY HOTLINE

Ask Extension <https://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/ask-an-expert>

The graphic features a collage of food safety images: jars of preserves, a digital thermometer showing 138.0, a pressure canner gauge, and various jars of jams and pickles.



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

Did you know?
Dial gauge pressure canners need to be tested annually to ensure dial gauges are accurate.

MSU Extension can help!

The graphic shows several jars of preserves and three close-up images of dial gauge pressure canners.



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

ServSafe

EARN SERVSAFE MANAGER CERTIFICATION WITH HELP FROM MSU EXTENSION.

This class is designed for anyone working in the food service industry, including non-profit organizations.

Contact your local MSU Extension Food Safety Educator for more information.

The graphic features a chef in a kitchen setting, wearing a black hat and white uniform, preparing food.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension **BOOKSTORE**

MICHIGAN 4-H LICENSE PLATE
SUPPORT 4-H AND
SHOW YOUR 4-H PRIDE!

AVAILABLE AT
THE MICH. SOS



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension

Michigan 4-H License Plate:

The Michigan 4-H license plate is a great way for members of the Michigan 4-H community to show their 4-H pride while supporting 4-H youth development programming. The plate prominently displays the signature 4-H clover and part of the proceeds from every sale and renewal will go to support Michigan 4-H youth.

Learn more:

https://www.canr.msu.edu/4h/Support_Michigan_4_H/michigan-4-h-license-plate

CWD Pick-up site

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a contagious neurological disease that has been found in deer, elk, and moose – collectively called cervids.

According to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), CWD can be transmitted through direct animal-to-animal contact or contact with saliva, urine, feces, blood, and/or certain carcass parts such as brain tissue and spinal cord of an infected animal. It is caused by prions and can remain in the environment for more than 10 years.

Hunters play an important role in limiting the spread of chronic wasting disease. This year, the Livingston County MSU Extension office was asked by the Michigan DNR to be a pick-up site for hunters to receive a free CWD self-mailing testing kit.

Hunters extract the lymph nodes themselves and submit them to Michigan State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (MSU VDL) for CWD testing.

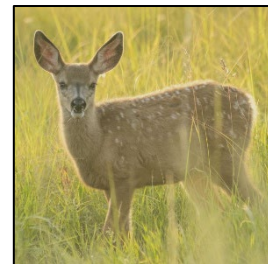


Image from CANVA



Organizations We Partner With

Child Care Network	CISMA	Down on the Farm Preschool	Foster Adoption Kinship Care of Livingston County	Fowlerville Agricultural Society
Fowlerville Family Fair Board	Fowlerville Family Fair Youth Show Committee	Fowlerville FFA Advisory Committee	Fowlerville Schools	Great Start Livingston
Hamburg Township Library	Howell Library	Howell Public Schools	LACASA	Livingston Conservation District
Livingston County Commissioners	Livingston County Health Department	Livingston County Libraries	Livingston County Public Schools	Livingston Hunger Council
Livingston Land Conservancy	MDARD	Michigan 4-H Foundation	Michigan Department of Education	Michigan DNR
Mi Farm Bureau	Michigan Farmers Market Association	OLHSA Grandparents Raising Grandchildren	Pinckney Community Public Library	Pinckney Community Schools
Round Elementary (Hartland)	SELCRA (Southeastern Livingston County Recreation Authority)	Southwest Regional Resource Center	Whitmore Lake Area Human Services (Livingston)	

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