

MIDLAND COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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Message from the District Director

Our mission is to improve lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities. MSU Extension professionals reach people where they are – in their homes, farms, businesses and communities with evidence-based education. We offer a variety of programs and services to make a positive impact with the residents we serve. On behalf of MSU Extension staff, I would like to thank you for your continued support.

Mark Rankin, District 9 Director

Impact



\$29,030,863
total economic impact



\$4,666,936
spending with local business



\$4,294,799
Financial Aid disbursed



2,761 participants
attending programs hosted in
Midland County



322
County students enrolled at
Michigan State University



2,104
4-H youth in Midland County



20,788

Midland County residents contacted by our staff



6,840

volunteer hours in Midland County



1,535

programs, meetings, consultations



\$171,000

volunteer value to Midland County

4-H of Midland County

Midland County 4-H, with its office located in the MSU STEM building, continues to be a blend of the traditional agriculture/animal projects with weekend and Homeschool Fridays focusing on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math projects). Weekend activities this year have included such offerings as Sphero bolts, 3D printing, holiday art projects, Rube Goldberg Builds, sewing, wildflower/photography exploration, simple machines, etc.

Mindful Me remains a popular four-session class for many second-grade classrooms in Midland County. *Thinking it Through* and *Dealing with Feelings* are other programs that are being finalized to offer to the schools and after-school programs in 2025. All these programs address issues of social/emotional development at various grade levels. *Babysitting Basics* and *How to Be Home Alone & Safe* are also available for after-school programs and summer day camps. Traditional 4-H clubs continue to be popular among our youth and families, with thirty active clubs and three new clubs in process. Over **300 volunteers are active in the Midland program** as club leaders, instructors for weekend and special programs, support for *4-H Overnight Camp*, and always an extra set of hands and eyes to assure that youth involved in our 4-H programming are being supervised and supported in a safe environment.





820

4-H youth members in Midland County



42

4-H clubs in Midland County



2,104

participants attending 4-H programs in Midland County



285

4-H volunteers Midland County



To Make the Best
BETTER

Public Health, Nutrition, and Youth Programming

 **203** youth participants

 **372** adult participants



112 nutrition and physical sessions hosted in the county



575 county residents who participated in health and nutrition programs

PSE Success Story

Policy, System and Environment (PSE) enhancement efforts:

Mid Michigan Community Action (MMCAA) Coleman Early Head Start is motivated to make healthy changes. Changes will help to reduce health disparities by increasing healthy habits. The mission is to provide high-quality learning and physical activity experiences for children by increasing movement options and growing their own vegetables.

Children, particularly those with language delays, physical delays, self-help delays, autism, and food allergies – are directly benefiting from this effort. Many of the important changes will help future program attendees as well, the numbers are limitless!

The goal is to increase (and have available) physical activity choices that are safe in smaller spaces and appeal to a wide array of young children's needs, throughout the entirety of their day(s). Incorporating physical activity/reduced sitting during usual, ongoing site activities and functions for environmental physical activity.

We are also incorporating a mobile garden unit. Use of the garden is for nutrition education and doubles as a sensory outlet, including smell, sight, and touch. We added a necessary component of water filtration devices, so that access, taste, quality, smell, or temperature systems are controlled.

By having accessible activities that all children can participate in, this alleviates barriers and builds a sense of belonging and care. Those elements flow into the ability of the child to be more productive, stay focused, and be physically active, all while promoting basic motor skills and balance (just to name a few).

Physical activity supplies are self-sustaining and made of sustainable materials. The future of the portable garden will seek funding to improve or enhance as necessary with new or existing partners. MSU Extension will provide nutrition education to children and support the garden efforts as well for one year, at which time we will revisit needs.

MMCAA Coleman Early Head Start has identified many barriers, including shared indoor and outdoor facility spaces that hinder physical activity choices and abilities (although the classroom space itself is NOT shared). This has been an encouraging and heart-warming opportunity to learn more about MMCAA Coleman Early Head Start and their mission to the community they serve. We will continue to meet and perform a continuous quality improvement plan and evaluations.



HNI (Community Nutrition) for Midland County in 2024:

- Serving children, youth and adults
- **203** youth (under the age of 18), participating in program workshops
- **372** adults (over the age of 18), participating in program workshops
- Michigan State University (MSU) Extension offers a variety of free nutrition education programs, including online programs, workshops and classes. These programs are intended to help people make healthy choices and improve their overall health.



Success Story

Participants who have the opportunity to attend these 6-week workshop series have sincerely benefitted and retained very useful information! Food is an important part of our lives, not just for essential nutrients but also because preparing and sharing food helps people feel included and social.

There are many circumstances, barriers, events and unforeseen obstacles that contribute to our ability to find, create and consume nutritious foods, including: funds, transportation, distance and even health.

Using evidence-based programs along with pre- and post-surveys, we can improve and refine the workshops to meet the goals of each group or site we partner with.

In Midland County; 83% of program workshop participants have reported that they are now eating more fruit and vegetables. 85% state they are cutting back on sugary drinks. And 92% are reporting that they are cooking more meals at home.

"Made a friend, learned more about what my body needs and getting recipes for using fruits and vegetables. I am walking more, I park further away from the front doors and when I shop I bend and reach for my own items. OH, and I am starting a garden!" – program participant



Food Safety Educators



2024 saw the addition of a food safety educator covering Shiawassee, Genesee, Saginaw, Bay and Midland Counties.



MSU Extension food safety educators work with local partners to provide educational sessions to the community on a variety of topics to prevent foodborne illnesses, including food preservation, cottage food law, ServSafe®, safe food pantries, emergency preparedness and more.



In 2024, over **15 programs** focusing on food preservation were offered in the Great Lakes Bay region, including three 3-class series on *Back to Basics of Food Preservation* and over **60 participants**. Hosted at local libraries and farmers markets, this series provides an introduction to water bathing and pressure canning, freezing and dehydrating.

ServSafe® Manager Certification Training was offered in multiple locations throughout the region. ServSafe® is a nationally recognized program that teaches food service workers how to prevent foodborne illnesses through topics such as cleaning and sanitizing, proper cooking temperatures, pest control and hygiene. Over **35 people were certified** in eight trainings in 2024.



Strengthening the Pipeline for STEM Inclusion – 2024 highlights



The summer research experience provided training for **15 high school youth**.

K-5 programming through 4-H continues to be highly successful, with **200 volunteers serving 600 children annually**.

Coding, The Vex IQ and V5 Robotics that had previously been purchased at St. Andrews were updated with new batteries and brains. A partnership with the 4-H Apple Educational Grant at MSU has given a template and support for teaching Everyone Can Code programming, provided 15 Apple iPads, and allowed us to add 30 Sphero Bolt robots, a fun programming avenue to spark youth interest. A partnership with Flint Science Fair will provide access to the Raspberry Pi system, which will allow more advanced high school youth to solve real-world engineering problems using sensors (such as light sensors, for example) and action triggers (for example, a sound buzzer). The impact of the coding programs is to serve teachers by providing in-class or field trip opportunities for their classes to use the technology; provide training opportunities for teachers, particularly at the middle school level; impact area youth with coding workshops, Coding Vex after school special interest (SPIN) Club, and Coding Club on Saturdays, including coding instruction coupled with career awareness.

Food Security MSU Extension now offers Food for Thought SPIN Club. Incorporating our newly acquired 3-D Chocolate Printer, adding chocolate cooking and entrepreneurship for high school students. We are providing support to local schools, both in the classroom and with after-school clubs, such as the Go Green Club at HH Dow High School. We also work to channel students' interests into solving real-world problems through the MSU 4-H Food Prize. The overarching World Food Prize is an international competition that challenges 7th-12th graders to engineer solutions to international food security issues.

Partnering with Axia Institute, we hosted a **2024 Holiday Open House** that was attended by approximately **60 community members**, many whom had never seen our facilities. Showcasing our research labs and teaching spaces, the Sphero Bolt robots and the Chocolate 3-D printer were the highlights of our show.

Health Team

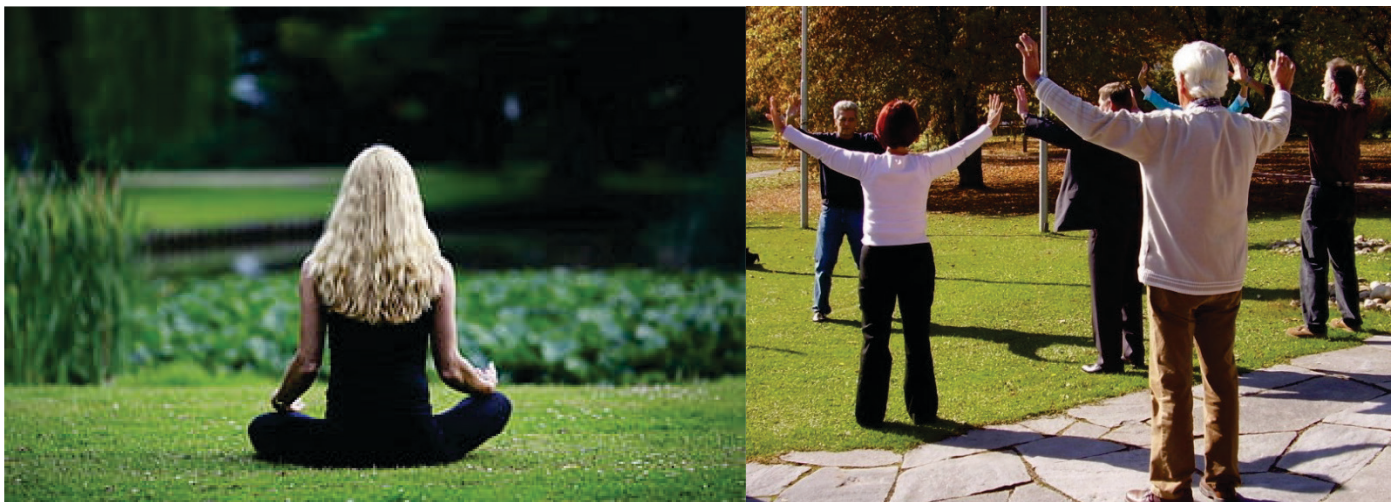
The MSU Extension Health Team promotes overall well-being by highlighting the connections between physical, mental, social, and emotional health. Through evidence-based programs, Extension educators continue to support communities with offerings such as *Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention*, *Walk with Ease*, *Personal Action Towards Health (PATH)*, *Sleep Education for Everyone (SLEEP)*, and *Stress Less with Mindfulness*.

Program Highlights:

The *Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention* program continues to thrive at local senior centers, with over **300 adults participating in an 18-session weekly program**. Recognizing its success, a weekly class has been established at a nearby senior center to allow participants to continue their practice. People from across the county come together each week to focus on physical activity, balance improvement, and socializing.

The Health and Nutrition Institute received a **three-year grant** from the **USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture** to address the opioid crisis in rural Michigan by exploring the connections between **sleep, pain and opioid use**. The project will focus on **public awareness campaigns, expanding access to health classes** (including new *Tai Chi and Mindfulness for Better SLEEP* bundled programs), **collaborating with healthcare providers** to connect individuals with sleep and pain management resources, and **training local volunteers and staff** to lead educational sessions.

Mindfulness programming and resources have expanded, including the new *Mindfulness for Better SLEEP* program bundle, updated webpage resources and new *Mindfulness for Better Living* YouTube and Spotify channels. **We developed over 20 videos and podcast episodes** covering a variety of mindfulness principles and practices that are available for everyone to access and enjoy, with many more on the way.



Health Team Success Stories

“During January and February 2024, I took Tai Chi for Arthritis and/or for Fall Prevention four days a week (Monday - Thursday). It allowed me to go to Honduras to participate in a birdwatching trip, to walk in different habitats, navigate stony rocky trails and roads (some steep), and climb in and out of boats (with a helping hand). Most astonishing of all was climbing up and down stone stairs (think archeological sites) without handrails! Without Tai Chi (and two lovely trekking poles), I would not have been able to participate at all in about a third of the group activities and participate only marginally in another third.” – participant quote



SLEEP Program Success Story:

“I just wanted to take a moment to thank MSU Extension for offering the SLEEP course. I am truly amazed at how much I have learned in this brief course and how much it has improved my sleep habits (and quality of sleep)..... I feel more refreshed and energized. I am thinking more clearly, my memory/attention span has improved, and my mood is consistent, whereas I had more ups/downs prior to taking the SLEEP course.”

Mindfulness Program Success Story:

After a guided mindfulness practice in our program, a participant reported, *“I was thinking about all the things I needed to do, then I noticed myself breathing, then towards the end I found myself relaxed and getting really sleepy.”*

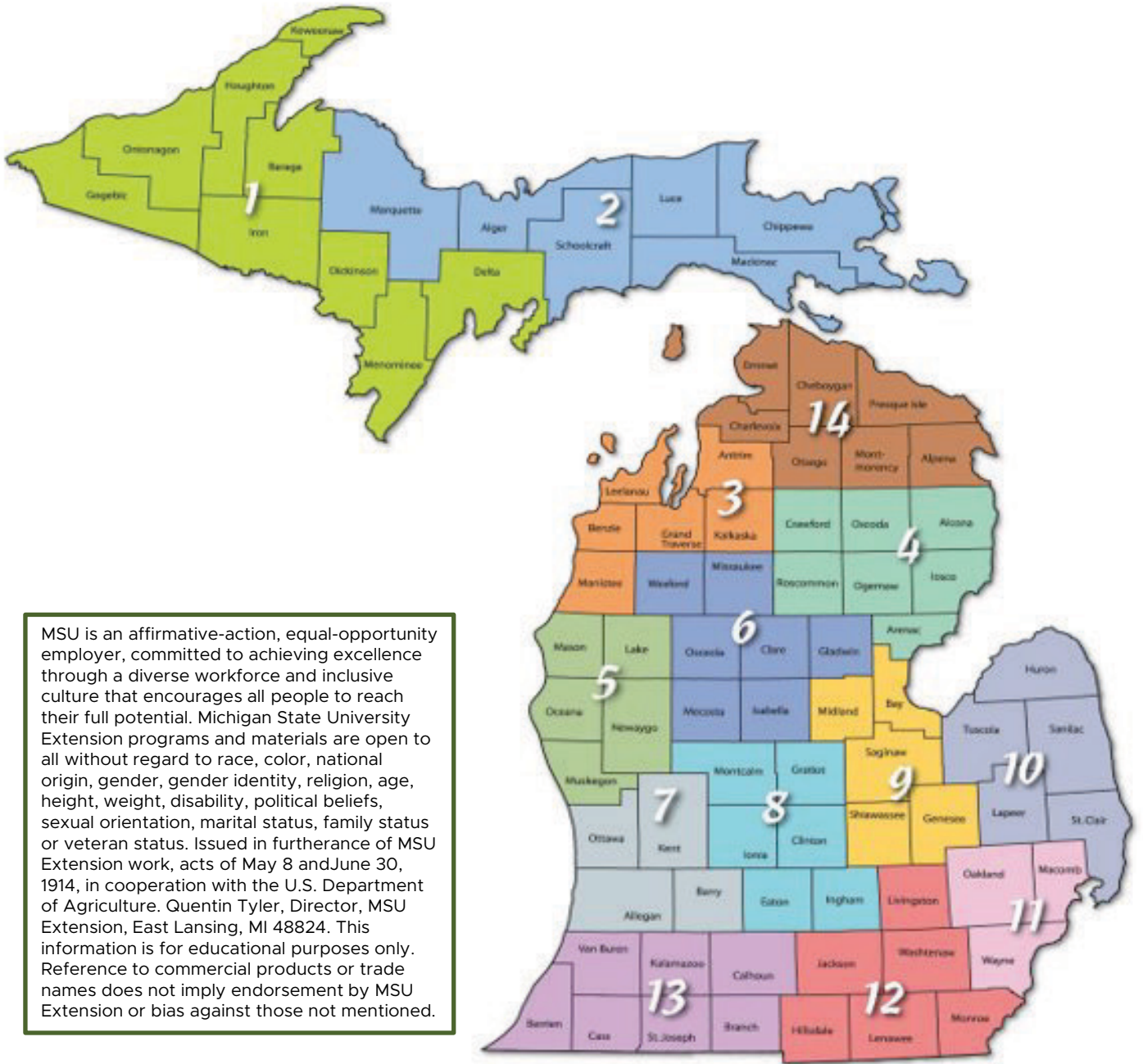
MiSUPER Success Stories:

Participants from our Reimagining Recovery training series reported that they learned new things and intended to apply that knowledge to their jobs.

One participant reported that the series caused them to *“uncover bias I had not considered before. There was material presented that made me pause, reflect and get curious.”*

Another participant stated, *“Day [one] I was just blown away with the information and statistics presented...”*

Participants stated they would be sharing and using this information while coordinating with local recovery courts, parole agents and clinicians. A participant even shared, *“I have already started incorporating some of the information into a presentation I am giving on Monday to the Attorney General’s office.”*



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