

MONROE COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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MSU Extension-Monroe County



Photo taken 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!**

Overall Impact



23 community coalitions within the county that MSU Extension employees are members of



7 Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy System and Environmental sites receiving PSE education within Monroe county



5,241 participants from Monroe county attending programs



20 policy, systems, and environmental changes with those PSE sites



452 statewide programs attended by participants from Monroe county



214 client consultations in Monroe County



45 Residential and Commercial Soil Test Kits sold



60,910 contacts through social media, web activity, e-newsletters, and handouts

Economic Development, Environmental Conservation, and Agricultural Productivity



72,517 participants in community, food, and environment programs from across Michigan



476 virtual programs related to Financial Education, Food Systems, Water and Environmental Quality, Government and Businesses offered



623 Monroe County residents reached by agricultural education



\$246.5 Billion annual impact of food and agriculture on Michigan's economy-Statewide



11,944 people participating in Food Safety programs including ServSafe Statewide



926 Monroe county residents who participated in health and nutrition programs



760 nutrition and physical activity participants hosted in-county

Healthy Choices for Every Body

During our Healthy Choices For Every Body nutrition series at Paula's House in Monroe, a participant asked if she could share how helpful MSU Extension has been on helping her have a much healthier balance in her life. She shared a written letter that read:

"I just want to say that this program has been extremely helpful to my health. My weight is finally at a healthy balance instead of spiking up and down. I have learned to portion my foods, and that I can never have enough fruits and veggies. I also stopped drinking pop because I read the Nutrition Facts now. Thank you MSU [Extension]!

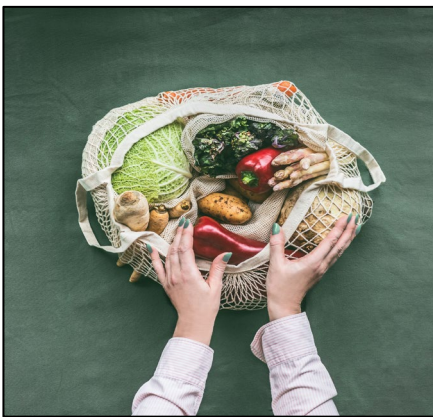
I don't even buy salt or pepper anymore. ALL Herbs! Also I drink no fat milk and no fat yogurt now. Thank you."

-Paula's House Resident



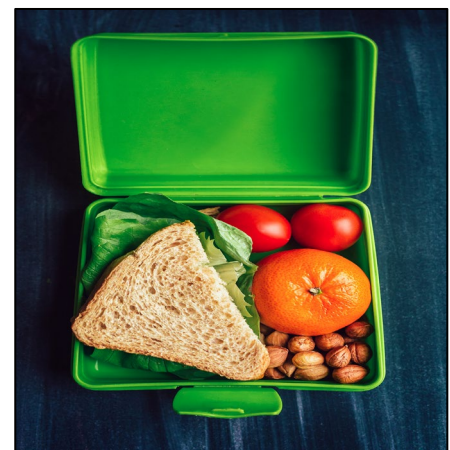
Parran's Farm Market

Strong collaboration and coordination across Monroe County Health Department, MSU Extension of Monroe County, and a local Greenhouse and Farm Market (Parran's of Monroe) occurred in 2025. Working together to promote new technology and upgrades to the WIC program, Parran's accessed the necessary equipment and training to accept the new form of benefit. Monroe County Health Department and MSU Extension Community Nutrition Instructor provided nutrition education, discussed how to use new benefits uploaded to their WIC benefits card, and participants were able to shop and use the benefits right on site. This allows an additional site for Monroe WIC families to shop for local in-season produce and is located right in the city of Monroe, making walking to the market much easier for many participants. Families increased their daily fruits and vegetables as a result.



"It's Only the Beginning!"

Carleton Co-Op Senior Housing provides learning opportunities for their residents, and the residents wanted to learn about nutrition. They reached out, and MSUE Monroe County was able to provide a Healthy Choices for Every Body series. As classes progressed ideas, recipes and information were shared, and participants began to tell stories of the changes they were making. They were moving more and making healthy changes in their lifestyles. Because their voices tell their stories best, staff asked participants to share what they were learning. With the excitement of what they have learned they wrote their own success stories!! One participant proclaimed, "It's Only The Beginning!"



Product Center

Starting A Packaged Food Business

The Product Center worked with the Monroe County Business Alliance to help the community learn more about Starting a Packaged Food Business. The seminar gave an overview of important topics such as formula development, food safety, packaging, labeling, licensing, production and marketing.

Whether you are a restaurant that wants to sell your favorite dressing or an entrepreneur with a product that you want to see in the grocery store, the MSU Product Center is for you.



Photo taken by Diane Longanbach



22 Clients



\$19,817 Sales Growth so far

Agriculture and Agribusiness Institute

Block's Farmstand and Greenhouse

The owners of Block's Farmstand and Greenhouse invited the Michigan State University Extension Vegetable Educator to answer questions from the public about growing vegetables. Located near Detroit Metropolitan Airport, the Block family runs a bustling market, selling an array of ornamentals, fruit trees, gardening supplies, vegetable transplants, and produce. Customers are often full of questions, making it a promising place for MSU Extension to have a presence and connect with the public.

Partnering with a grower like this is mutually beneficial - they offer something novel and useful to their customer base, and MSUE is given an opportunity to connect with a new audience by listening to their experiences with growing vegetables and providing advice. Showing up in public spaces like this delivers education in a light, serendipitous way that introduces new people to MSU Extension and reminds others that we are still here to Help



Photo taken by Chris Galbraith



36 Homeowner Soil Test Samples sold



76 Commercial and Farm Soil Tests Samples processed

Youth Programming

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



Monroe County 4-H Volunteers

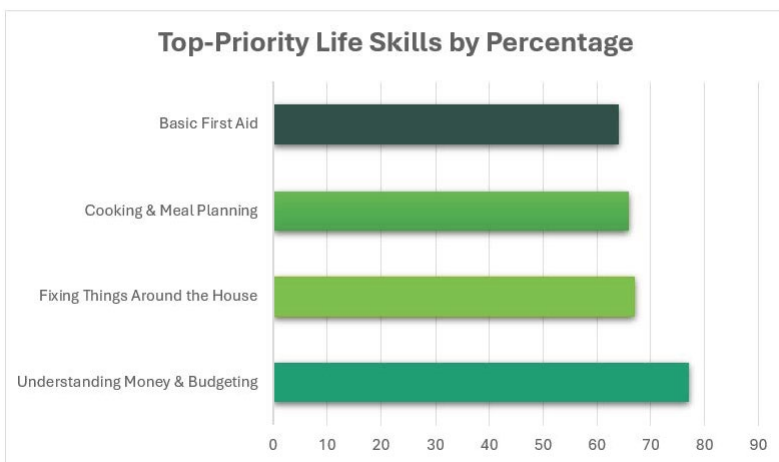
In addition to the services volunteers provide for the 4-H youth development program, there are numerous benefits. Overall, program quality is improved and strengthened through volunteer involvement. Volunteers bring unique perspectives and diversity to programs. The passion, support and involvement that they give are some of the volunteer’s most valuable contributions. Become a Monroe County 4-H Volunteer here:

<https://msu.samaritan.com/>

Monroe County 4-H program leads the way as one of the largest traditional 4-H programs serving 1,300 + youth annually. This program requires a large volunteer base to run effectively. In 2025 the Monroe County 4-H program had 670 Gold Level Volunteers and 395 Silver level 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.



1,065 4-H Volunteers



5,140 4-H youth participants in county programs



114 4-H Clubs

\$350,066 4-H volunteer hour value

Our Partnerships

Airport Community Schools	Monroe Public Schools
Arborwood South Elementary	Navarre Library
Carleton Co-op Senior Apartments	Niedermeier Elementary
Dundee Head Start	Niedermeier Head Start
First Merchants Bank	Parran's Greenhouse & Farm Market
Ida Head Start	Paula's House
Mason Consolidated Elementary School	Raisinville Elementary School
Milan High School	Salvation Army Harbor Light Rehabilitation Center
Monroe County Ag Advisory Council	Salvation Army Monroe
Monroe County Community College	Salvation Army Monroe Corps Community Center
Monroe County Fair Board	Salvation Army Schelter
Monroe County Farm Bureau	Selma Rankin Community Garden
Monroe County Head Start	Smith Road Elementary
Monroe County Health Department	Sodt Elementary
Monroe County Youth Center	The Hive at Macon Creek
Monroe High School	TOPS # 1648

A Statewide Network of Resources to Help You

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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 you to the information you need.

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

Pressure Canner Gauge Checks

Call your local MSU Extension office to schedule a free appointment. Monroe: 734.240.3182

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!



5,241 participants from the county attending programs



64 Ask Extension questions answered

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.



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.



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.



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