

Message from the District Director



Michigan State University Extension continues to work for Wexford County youth, adults, businesses and communities providing outstanding research-based education and community development programs. With the ever-changing world and needs of the people we serve, MSU Extension ensures that everyone can participate in our programming. Considering participants and their needs, many of our face-to-face programs provide both an in-person and remote option to participate. Our mission remains providing the knowledge and resources of MSU's campus directly to individuals, communities and businesses to help improve lives around Michigan.

Eric Karbowski, District Director

Wexford County Staff
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension
 Jessica Ackerson - Office Manager
 Erin Lizotte - Integrate Pest Management Coordinator
 Anna Kahmark - Community Nutrition Instructor
 Niki Schultz - MSU Extension Educator
 Katelyn King - 4-H Program Coordinator

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SNAP-Ed

128

residents served in SNAP-Ed Programming.

My Way to Wellness is a free online nutrition program available to individuals living in Michigan who are eligible for supplemental food assistance. Participants learn how to make healthy activity and food choices that fit into their budget and lifestyle.

In 2022, Wexford County MSU Extension partnered with District Health Department #10 and the Prescription for Health program to provide 80 online participants with instruction and opportunities for produce vouchers totaling up to \$100.

28

County partnerships

280

Extension programs with residents of the county

1544

Number of residents from county that attended MSU Extension programs



REPORTING

14

Volunteers

13,792

Facebook page reach

60

Youth enrolled in county 4-H



Our Staff Stories



Erin Lizotte,
Integrate Pest Management
Coordinator &
Senior Statewide Educator

Farmers in the Great Lakes Region of the United States produce a diversity of crops. This region also supports abundant wildlife populations. As a result, crop damage by wildlife is common. To help address these issues, the Agriculture and Wildlife Coexistence Working Group brings together researchers, regulators, conservationists, educators, stakeholders, and resources from across the region at one annual symposium as well as quarterly web-based meetings. There are currently 26 work group members representing faculty and staff at various agencies and universities, including from Michigan State University.

"This support is critical for growers in the region and I have observed substantial use of the resources created by this [Extension] team--particularly the management publications and web content," says a work group member.



Kara Lynch,
Food Safety
Educator

Lynch is a Registered Dietitian and has worked for Michigan State University Extension as a Food Safety Educator since 2014. In this role, Kara provides valuable educational programs to Wexford County including ServSafe, Michigan Cottage Food Law, Food Preservation, Safe Food = Healthy Kids and more.



Teagen Lefere,
Financial
Homeownership
Instructor

MSU Extension provides Financial & Homeownership training and resources, foreclosure prevention assistance, homeownership education, and money management for the residents of Wexford County. Lefere is a program instructor for the Financial & Homeownership group. She specializes in foreclosure prevention assistance and homeownership education.



Bill Lindberg,
Christmas
Tree
Educator

Bill Lindberg is an MSU Extension Christmas tree educator serving Christmas tree producers throughout the state. His workteam was in charge of the educational content for the MI Christmas tree summer meeting, in 2022. Among the hundreds of attendees, 93 percent said they would implement changes on their farms based on educational content learned from this conference.



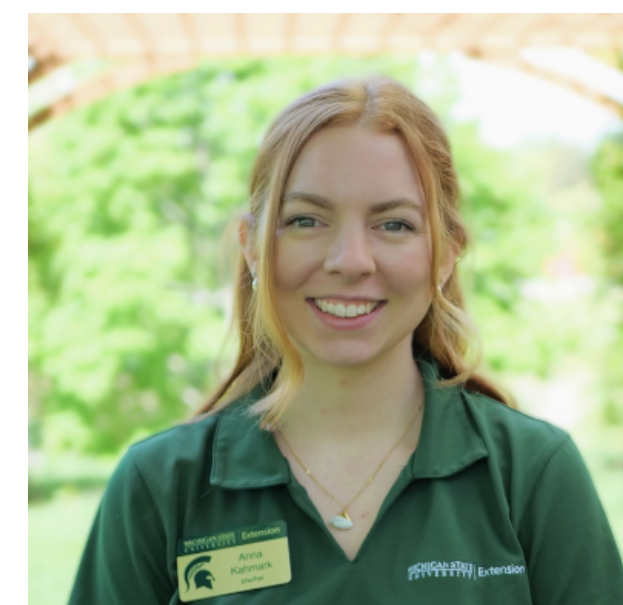
Niki Schultz,
MSU Extension
Educator

The Alliance for Economic Success is a 501(c)3 public-private partnership that collaborates across Wexford and Missaukee Counties to support a healthy, integrated prosperity ecosystem for the Greater Cadillac Area. In her role as the Executive Director, Niki Schultz will work side-by-side with residents and stakeholders to develop sustainable resources and supports centered around advancement and economic development.

Kahmark works within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-Ed). She works directly with Wexford County residents to provide nutrition education.

Kahmark teaches 'Cadillac Senior Center: Cooking for One,' in partnership with Baker College of Cadillac. Kahmark worked to provide instruction for 12 participants in a fall 2022 series. One participant left the following comment:

"I am normally the type of person to question everything and to bring negativity to classes like these. However, I noticed how much you were dedicated to us as participants. Everyone here brought new ideas despite varied backgrounds and I appreciated the community this class has created. I actually ended up enjoying myself and have started doing many of the things taught in class."



**Anna Kahmark,
Community
Nutrition
Instructor**



**Katelyn King,
4-H Program
Coordinator**

In this role, King provides leadership and management of local 4-H programs, volunteers, and youth participants in Wexford County. She promotes and strengthens the Wexford County 4-H program by developing programs and partnerships, evaluating 4-H programs, and recruiting statewide opportunities and ensuring information is available to local participants.

Youth from Wexford and Missaukee 4-H joined forces to create bluebird nest boxes. Boxes were built and donated to the Missaukee Conservation District for their Bird Wall and Trail. Youth watched a video and learned about the importance of bluebird and habitat preservation before assembling the boxes for donation. Supplies were purchased with funds from Consumers Green Team and donated by Home Depot of Cadillac. Materials were cut and prepared by students of the Ag and Natural Resources Program at the Wexford-Missaukee Career and Technical Center in Cadillac. Event assistance was provided by Mark Johnson (CTC), Amanda Downey (Consumers), and Jennifer Grim (Consumers).

Crisis preparedness is an often-overlooked area of farm risk management; yet the risk here is loss of reputation and potentially, loss of market.

A farm crisis is an event that seriously disrupts the farm. Examples include: an environmental problem such as a chemical or manure spill, an animal abuse problem by employees or by a visitor, an employee injury or death by accident or intention, or a food product quality problem caused by accident or intention.

Cora Okkema, dairy educator, serves Wexford County and provides education on drafting a preparedness plan and crisis response education.



**Cora Okkema,
Dairy Educator**

Shooting Sports Program

The Michigan 4-H Shooting Sports program has been active for more than 20 years. Youth in more than 70 counties participate in a variety of shooting sports areas every year! Members can learn safety and shooting techniques for shotgun, rifle, air gun, muzzle loading, pistol, hunting and wildlife, and archery. They learn how to handle firearms responsibly and learn respect for the natural environment.

Below are quotes from program participants in 2022:

"Amazing. Taught well & excellent explanations."

"Very informative about safety concerns, usage & fun class."



Babysitting Club is Back!

Wexford County's 4-H Babysitting Club is a short-term, special interest program helping youth ages 11-19 understand the complexities of staying home alone while responsible for another child. In 2022, Wexford 4-H offered two of these short-term programs to 30 middle schoolers. Classes have been at Cadillac Wexford Public Library and Mackinaw Trail Middle School. Participants enroll for a six-hour course covering personal safety, emergency management, child development, infant care, family differences, nutrition, kitchen safety, and first aid. As part of the curriculum covered, youth learned "how to cook for picky eaters" and "eating with allergies: reading nutrition labels." Wexford-Missaukee Child Protection Council's Karen Staub gave lessons on safe sleep, PURPLE crying, and distracted caregiving. Youth also played games, created "boo boo bunnies," and conducted a market research survey to identify the value of their services.

After taking the course, one participant said, *"My cousin and I babysat our baby cousin who is three, all by ourselves!"*

Several participants have reported back that they have used their babysitting skills and even that the "handbook was a lifesaver."

30
participants

3
community
partnerships

