Message from the District Coordinator

MSU Extension (MSUE) in Kent County continues to provide local educational programming and impacts to meet Kent County and Michigan’s needs. Extension staff members work diligently to maintain programming and reach as many residents as possible each year. Educators and paraprofessionals have worked hard to innovate with creative and inventive ways of providing programming at reduced costs.

This report provides highlights of MSU Extension’s work in Kent County during 2011 within the structure of our four programmatic Institutes:

- Agriculture and Agribusiness Institute
- Children and Youth Institute
- Greening Michigan Institute
- Health and Nutrition Institute

MSU Extension has changed in many ways since our beginnings in the early 1900’s. But we have not changed our focus of connecting education and research on campus to the people and businesses in the communities we serve. Thank you for your continued support of this critical partnership.

Betty Blase
District 7 Coordinator
Overview of Agriculture in Kent County

Agriculture, both food and non-food, is critical to Michigan’s economy and an increasingly important segment of the state’s budget. Agriculture is now the fastest growing sector of our economy and we must ensure it has a thriving knowledge base to become more competitive in local, state, national, and international markets making Michigan’s economy stronger.

According to the 2007 USDA Census of Agriculture, Kent County had 1,193 farms covering 170,117 acres. They produced a market value of crop and livestock sales over $194,700,000, resulting in a number 5 state ranking in value of crops including nursery and greenhouse, a number 11 ranking in value of livestock sold, with total sales dollar value rank of sixth in the state.

MSU Extension develops and delivers programming to ensure that agricultural businesses can stay competitive and profitable in the quickly changing business environment and provide the best product possible. In addition, there is increased interest in local food production, with resulting demand for education from non-commercial audiences.
Apples

According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture report, Kent County was the #1 producer of apples in Michigan. Although 2012 has been a disastrous year for the apple crop across the state, in 2011 the crop was huge, so apple maturity testing and reporting to growers was important. This testing is done by MSU Extension staff collecting apple samples from local farms and testing them for maturity pressure, starch, and brix (a guide for target sugar levels in fruit). To give you an example of information that is disseminated to growers to help them in their harvest decisions, here is a partial table from one of the weekly 2011 reports:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Avg. Ethylene (ppm)</th>
<th>% Fruits with Ethylene over 0.2 ppm</th>
<th>Color % (range)</th>
<th>Firmness lbs pressure (range)</th>
<th>Starch (range)</th>
<th>Brix (range)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imperial Gala</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>57% (40-80%)</td>
<td>15.4 (12.2-18)</td>
<td>1.7 (1-2)</td>
<td>11.4 (11-12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MSU’s Crop Advisory Team (CAT) alerts have been the Michigan source for pest and crop news for over 25 years. The information is written by MSU faculty and Extension educators and is now included with all of our news at: http://msue.anr.msu.edu

Pests that are a continued threat to local fruit crops include the Marmorated Stink Bug and the Spotted Wing Drosophila, shown below. Educators communicate with growers about critical insect and production issues 2-3 times per week April through mid-June, and weekly throughout the remaining growing season with electronic CAT alerts, Code-A-Phone telephone updates, email, and field visits.

Additional programs that MSU Extension staff Amy Irish-Brown, Phil Schwallier, and others provide include farm business management, ag labor updates, restricted-use pesticide educational sessions, and sprayer demonstration meetings. They also provide educational programs at the Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo held annually in December at DeVos Place in Grand Rapids. Over 4,000 industry people from 42 states and 6 Canadian provinces attended the 2011 Expo.

http://apples.msu.edu/index.htm
Weather in 2012—freeze and drought

The MSU Extension FRUIT and FIRM (Farm Information Resources Management) workgroups collaborated to survey and identify needs of individual farm producers impacted by the 2012 Freeze. The group also worked with the agricultural industry and farm groups to monitor and coordinate efforts to respond to this crisis situation. Response efforts will continue through 2013 as the financial loss of 2012 production will impact 2012 and 2013 cash flows.

Prior to Freeze Events:

In early March, Jeff Andresen, MSU Agricultural Meteorologist, forecast unseasonably hot conditions which would cause plants to begin growth very early. A conference call between fruit, landscape, nursery and consumer horticulture educators and specialists allowed them to prepare a course of action. Articles at MSUE News alerted growers to the unusual conditions and strategies they could use to reduce injury. Articles were published on the freeze tolerance of tree fruit, active (using sprinklers or cultivation) and passive frost control measures. Home owner articles dealt with impacts to home landscapes, turf and ornamentals. Fruit Educators had early grower meetings across the state: in West Central Michigan (Districts 5, 7, and 8) Amy Irish-Brown and Phil Schwallier had Jeff Andresen speak on freeze control strategies with wind machines.

Crop Management After The Freeze:

Even without a crop, fruit trees need to be maintained in good health to assure a good crop the following year. Fruit Educators developed plans for maintaining fruit trees and vines that had no crop. Amy Irish-Brown, Phil Schwallier and Bill Shane developed a plan for apples and Nikki Rothwell and Erin Lizotte developed one for cherries.

To dispel the impression that Michigan’s fruit crop was completely wiped out, educators promoted small fruit which were less severely impacted by the freezes. They are visiting growers to help them assess the damage, discuss their options and assess their emotional and educational needs. Educators are working with crop insurance loss adjustors and the USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) to expedite quick crop insurance payments. Farm Management Educators are developing programs to help economically stressed growers. The impact of these freeezes will linger for several years and MSUE Agriculture Educators are working hard to help producers maintain their livelihoods and Michigan’s economy.

For more information on the 2012 freeze, please go to: http://msue.anr.msu.edu/resources/fruit_freeze_resources
Drought of 2012 follows record-setting freeze

As of August 8, three-month precipitation deficits (since May 9) across Michigan ranged from 1 to 3 inches from central sections of Lower Michigan to more than 6 inches in southwestern Lower Michigan. Plant available soil moisture levels in the top 5 feet of the soil profile of this area were estimated by NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center from 1 to 5 inches below normal for that time of year. Assessment by the U.S. Drought Monitor placed just over 80 percent of the state in abnormally dry or some stage of drought conditions. Worst overall impacts in the state resulting from the drought were across the lower tier of counties of the Lower Peninsula. (Adapted from an article posted on August 9, 2012 by Jeff Andresen, and Aaron Pollyea, Michigan State University Extension, Department of Geography)

In response to the increasingly dry conditions throughout Michigan, MSU Extension Agriculture Educators created the Drought Resources webpage:

http://msue.anr.msu.edu/resources/drought_resources

This valuable resource is available to growers and the public with updated information on a variety of state crops and issues, including:

Weather
Field Crops
Forage/pastures
Christmas Trees and Nurseries
Fruit Crops
Education for small fruit growers on new invasive pests

Berry production is one of the most important small fruit components in Kent County. Most berries are produced commercially in U-Pick operations on small farms with few acres. However, it represents an important source of fresh fruits, and income for county residents.

In 2011, the presence of the Spotted Wing Drosophila fly (SWD) in Michigan’s small fruits affected drastically the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program of fields that suffered the attack of this new pest. The SWD is a pest of critical importance especially for small operations like U-Picks that lack the sophisticated pest control programs of larger operations.

The SWD is an invasive pest of berries, stone fruit, grapes, and some pome fruit crops. It is native to Asia, but was detected in North America for the first time in California during 2008. It has since spread throughout many of the primary fruit production regions of the country. In Michigan, the first SWD were found in blackberries, raspberries and blueberries in 2010. As of November 2011, the SWD has been found in 22 counties, including Kent. Controlling this new invasive pest may require growers to redesign their current IPM programs.

Carlos Garcia-Salazar, Small Fruit Educator for MSU Extension, addressed this issue locally by providing hands-on education. IPM programs are knowledge-based tools requiring precise information on pest biology and site-specific environmental information supplied by IPM scouts and Extension specialists. However, under the current conditions of limited resources and budget constraints, to develop an effective IPM program growers need to learn how to identify and scout for these new pests themselves. Uncontrolled, the SWD can cause up to 100% crop losses in most berry crops.

To prepare West Central Michigan growers to succeed in the management and control of SWD, in June 2011, MSU Extension offered training to teach growers to identify, monitor and control it. Classroom, laboratory and hands-on field training was provided. Growers received training materials with notes for further review in both English and Spanish. The target audience for these workshops was commercial growers including underserved and minority growers. They had the opportunity to observe and manipulate insect specimens using dissection microscopes and hand lenses. In the field they were also taught how to monitor and identify current key pests of blueberries and the new invasive species.
Caught You Looking:
Summary Report of Findings from 2011 Pilot Study using Eye-Tracking Technology

Condensed from the original report by
Bridget Behe, Allison Jones, Kristin Getter, Tom Fernandez, and Tom Dudek
Michigan State University
April 9, 2012

When garden retailers create displays of items for sale, what is the most effective arrangement that will catch the attention of consumers? With funding from Michigan Floriculture Growers Council and Metro Detroit Flower Association, and collaboration of Master Tag (Montague, MI) and six retail garden centers, eye-tracking data was collected from approximately 120 participants in May, 2011. Participants wore Tobii Eye-Tracking glasses (Figure 1) to perform simple plant selection tasks, and in some instances wore the glasses while shopping. Currently, the glasses lose ability to track the participants’ eyes in moderate to bright light and consumers wearing prescription glasses cannot wear the eye-tracking glasses at the same time. Indoor tasks are readily tracked.

Asking study participants to complete 2-3 tasks, such as selecting the best or a favorite plant, took less than 5 minutes to complete. After the tasks, many participants were willing to wear the glasses during the remainder of their shopping experience. The results indicated that most participants viewed plants and displays from left to right (as Americans typically read from left to right). Few of the shopping participants looked at signs, and those who did look, saw them for a very brief time. Most shopping participants looked briefly at the end or edge of the bench, but not more than 1-2 feet in and only viewed more of the bench when there was something on the end to catch their eye. Also, an unusual element attracted more visual attention than a homogenous display of the same type of plant, even if they were of very high quality.

Figure 1. Tobii Eye-Tracking glasses and recorder.
Figure 2 shows a heat map created using the software after participants viewed a display. The darker areas of red show where more viewing occurred and the lighter shades of green show where there was less viewing. Areas where there is no color were not viewed directly by study participants.

While we consider this study to be preliminary (and are not drawing firm conclusions), we did secure additional grant funding and have since collected more data. Our findings indicate that the better plant material should be located to the left of the display to readily capture a consumer’s attention.

Greenhouse Cost of Production Software Training

MSU Extension educators Thomas Dudek, Roger Betz and Dr. Adam Kantrovich conducted three educational hands-on workshops during 2011 that enabled participants to learn how to use new MSUE greenhouse software.

The software was designed to enable small to medium size greenhouse growers to improve cost management and production efficiency. Accurate cost estimation helps growers set prices that enable them to recover costs and maintain profitability. This Excel spreadsheet-based program allows a grower to evaluate and compare up to 100 different plant products taking into consideration all fixed and variable cost aspects of growing these plants. This allows growers to evaluate pricing decisions and compare various input costs before implementing them in their production program.

Because of the three workshops, 46 producers from the West Michigan area were trained on how to use the software. Since the initial training, six have requested additional assistance on the topic, which was provided. An evaluation to determine impacts will be undertaken in 2012 to learn results from our efforts.
Consumer Horticulture

Reduced budgets and increased programmatic responsibilities challenge MSU Extension staff to maximize limited time and resources while meeting growing demands. The MSUE Consumer Horticulture Team faced the daunting task of delivering science-based, environmentally sound information to the 70% of Michigan adults who engage in yard and garden activities, almost 5 million people. With a firm grasp of the importance of technology and a collaborative spirit, they met their responsibilities and also won an award for their efforts.

The team received the eXtension Working Differently in Extension Award Oct. 2 at the National eXtension Conference in Oklahoma City. Rebecca Finneran, MSUE Horticulture Educator from Kent County, was a valued member of the winning team.

In 2010, the team launched the “Gardening in Michigan” website as a platform to offer a variety of online classes and resources. The website now serves thousands of people. In early 2011, the team decided to add an Ask an Expert (AaE) widget to the website’s front page. But before they put up the widget, they needed experts to answer the questions, so they worked to develop an AaE training process for Advanced Master Gardeners. Fifteen Master Gardener volunteers were recruited and trained online, and the widget was launched in June 2011. Through the widget, the team answered more than 700 questions in 13 months.

But the team did not stop there. Thinking a statewide hotline to answer gardeners’ questions a good idea, they used technology to link existing county hotlines, including Kent’s, together under one toll free number (1-888-678-3464) to provide the service to all counties. Having the hotline required more training for more volunteers. The training established uniformity and quality control. Within one year, calls increased by one thousand, and the hotline has served clients from 80 percent of Michigan’s 83 counties.

The team then created a soil test kit provided with a postage-paid return mailer consumers can purchase online from the MSU Extension Bookstore. The consumer mails the soil sample in to the MSU Soil and Plant Nutrient Lab. Once the folks at the lab analyze the sample, the consumer receives an email with results and access to an interactive website, which provides customized fertilizer calculations, instructions on correct application and links to AaE and additional resources on the Gardening in Michigan website.

Additionally, the team redesigned the Master Gardener program to reduce volunteer management time and create a statewide, easy-to-replicate program integrating a hybrid in-person and electronic delivery method. These efforts will lead to greater focus on the educational products, which translate to more trained Master Gardeners and increased involvement of those volunteers in local community development projects.
The Kent County Farmland Preservation program seeks to create a long-term environment for agricultural production. Kent County is home to some of the most prime and unique fruit growing lands in the nation. The county is the fifth largest producer of agricultural products and supplies some of the state’s leading food processing facilities such as: Gerber, Zeeland Farm Services, Country Fresh, Kellogg’s, King Milling, Michigan Turkey Producers, and Yoplait.

Four farms totaling 438 acres were permanently preserved in 2011 and January 2012. The total cost of preserving these farms was approximately $695,600 or $1,588 per acre. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of the total cost of preserving these four farms was contributed by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program, 31% from Kent County, and 29% from private sources.

The Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board is working to preserve four farms in 2012 totaling 300 acres. Once these farms are preserved, this will bring the total acreage of prime and unique farmland preserved through the Kent County Program Development Rights (PDR) Program to 2,283 acres since 2003 when the program was created. The total cost of preserving the 2012 farms is $498,500 or $1,662 per acre. USDA NRCS’s Farm and Ranchland Protection Program will be contributing 37% toward the total cost, 38% will come from Kent County, and 25% from private sources.
Kent 4-H member wins National 4-H Youth in Action Award

The National 4-H Council hosted the third annual 4-H Legacy Awards Gala in New York City on April 18, 2012 to honor those who exemplify the council’s mission to increase investment and participation in high quality 4-H positive youth development. This year, Kent County 4-H member Nate Seese was one of three recipients to receive this national honor.

Nate, a 15-year-old 4-H member from Byron Center, was recognized for making a difference in his community and embodying what it means to be a member of 4-H and an example of the Revolution of Responsibility.

Nate started his project to help others in need four years ago. Instead of simply raising 4-H livestock to be auctioned off at the fair, Nate came up with the idea to donate the meat to the Buist Community Assistance Center, a local food pantry. Engaging a group of local businesses and community members to buy the animals enabled him to donate the animals to a greater cause. In just two years, he has donated more than 1,000 pounds of meat to benefit those who rely on the food pantry.

The Revolution of Responsibility is a nationwide campaign to show the importance of positive change through community involvement. Nate’s project lives up to the goals of this campaign to improve America starting in his own community.

“I am delighted that Nate was recognized for his innovative approach to the traditional livestock sale at the county fair,” said Glenda Kilpatrick, MSU Extension Educator for 4-H Youth Development. “Nate reminds us all that anyone can start a change for the better in their community.” “Nate has inspired other Kent 4-H members and 4-H clubs to help their communities. The Revolution of Responsibility is rolling through Kent County!”

Nate is not only helping those struggling in his community. His father, Kevin, said Nate has changed as a result of this project as well. “I’ve seen Nate over the past four years personally grow, develop relationships, become responsible and care for others. It’s a real blessing.”

It doesn’t stop here: One corporate sponsor told Nate that he is the type of individual they want to hire out of college, and he should give them a call when the time is right.

In addition to 4-H, Nate is active in the jazz band and his local church. He also volunteers with a number of local organizations, including serving dinners and lending a hand at the Buist Community Assistance Center.
Science Blast: As Michigan looks to create a new generation of leaders, science must be at the forefront. The Science Blast in the Class curriculum was developed as part of MSU Extension’s “I Know MI Numbers” initiative to enhance science literacy and serve as a “go-to” resource both inside and outside the traditional classroom. It offers educators the opportunity to connect in-school learning with real-world experiences.

The Kent County 4-H Science Blast activity, “A Walk in the Michigan Woods,” was introduced through the WOOD-TV 8 June Miranda Park Parties held in Cedar Springs and Wyoming. Using only their sense of touch, 238 children tried to identify six common items seen on nature walks, including tree bark, mushrooms, and a seed pod of the gum tree, by feeling the items in boxes without seeing them. Survey results were outstanding with 88% of the children indicating that they had learned something new; 99% stating the science activity made them want to learn more; and 78% positive results that they want to get more involved in a 4-H science project or club.

4-H club activity in Kent for 2011-12:
- 72 clubs
- 1,150 youth enrolled in clubs
- 262 adult volunteers
- Goal for the 2012-2013 year includes a 10% increase in youth enrollment and in number of new leaders
The focus of work in the Greening Michigan Institute is on leveraging natural and human assets for prosperity. This institute is comprised of four work groups:

◊ **Community Food Systems**
◊ **Natural Resources**
◊ **Government and Public Policy**
◊ **Sustaining Community Prosperity**

Kendra Wills, MSU Extension Educator based in Kent County is co-leader of the **Community Food Systems** statewide work group. The primary focus of their effort is to connect local food producers to local markets in order to increase the amount of Michigan grown and processed foods consumed by Michigan residents.

Wills is partnering with Grand Rapids Public Schools to provide education to students on the importance of eating locally grown fruits and vegetables. She is also working to connect local restaurants such as Brewery Vivant, Bistro Bella Vita, and Marie Catrib’s, as well as schools served by Chartwells dining services (Forest Hills, Godfrey-Lee, Lowell) with local farmers who sell products through West Michigan (WM) Farmlink. Wills worked with WM Farmlink on development of a grant proposal to expand the business reach to become a Food Hub. MSU Extension is hiring another educator in 2012 to focus on increasing the amount of locally produced and processed foods served by West Michigan hospitals.

MSU Extension is connected to the growing local food movement in Kent County. When the new Downtown Market opens in the summer of 2013, MSUE staff will provide education to producers, consumers, food business entrepreneurs, and youth at this location. Information for consumers on Michigan grown fruits and vegetables can be accessed through the new Michigan Fresh web site, Michigan Market Maker, or through:

http://msue.anr.msu.edu/topic/info/community_food_systems
Sustaining Community Prosperity

This MSU Extension statewide team is very diverse, with an overall objective of fostering development of sustainable communities that contribute to the economic, social and environmental health and well-being of people for generations to come. Their focus areas for this work include:

1. Decision Making for Sustainability
2. Placemaking for Sustainable Communities and Economies
3. Growing Entrepreneurs and New Businesses
4. Finance, Housing and Energy – MI Money Health
5. Community Engagement and Leadership

Programs include: Citizen Planner, Sea Grant, Financial Management and Housing, New County Commissioner Training, Conflict Management, and Natural Shoreline Management. This team was recently selected to host the 2014 National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals conference, which will be held in Grand Rapids, MI.

Kendra Wills, MSU Extension Educator based in Kent County serves as a member of the Community Engagement and Leadership Development Team. In 2011/12, this group partnered with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) to design and implement a collaborative process to redesign the state’s brownfield redevelopment program. The goal of this process was to work toward faster turnaround times for businesses and a streamlined regulatory approach for all parties. This work is being implemented by the MDEQ and through legislative changes. In addition, this team served as facilitators to develop a statewide Tourism Master Plan which will guide the state’s tourism efforts for the next five years.

“90% of students completing MSUE Money Management course in Kent expressed intent to increase their savings.”
— David Treul, MSUE Educator
The **MSU Product Center Food-Ag-Bio** assists county residents in developing products and businesses in the areas of food, agriculture, natural resources and the bio economy. Select MSUE educators around the state have special training as innovation counselors to deliver these services. Business counseling is conducted on a one-on-one basis and may take place at the MSUE office or the client’s home or business location.

The assistance provided is tailored to meet the needs of the client and may include things like developing a business plan, navigating the regulatory maze, accessing the supply chain or seeking funding options. The educator also assists clients in accessing specialized services they may need that are offered through Michigan State University like feasibility studies, nutritional labeling and packaging assistance.

**Impact data for Kent County:**

From 2004 to 2011 in Kent County, 854 counseling sessions took place to assist local entrepreneurs in starting new businesses and expanding existing businesses. Ten businesses were launched that resulted in 73 jobs created. Fifteen jobs were retained. New capital investment in these businesses totaled $21,990,000. The businesses reported $7,662,825 in new or increased sales. The partnership between MSUE and the MSU Product Center Food-Ag-Bio is providing support for entrepreneurs in supporting economic development across the state.

For information on food, ag, bio, and natural resources business development, please contact Joanne Davidhizar at: davidhiz@anr.msu.edu.

“**The MSU Product Center was instrumental in helping us form our cooperative and pulling all the resources together to make this venture a success.”**

John Gauthier, President
Meijer and the MSU Product Center promote small businesses with launch of Made in Michigan initiative

Meijer and the Michigan State University Product Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources teamed up to strengthen the state’s economy by supporting Michigan small businesses through a Made in Michigan initiative, launched in January, 2012.

In a Meijer News Release dated 1-23-12, Meijer Co-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Hank Meijer stated that: “Meijer is always pleased to support Michigan businesses. Also, there is tremendous interest from our customers to buy local and to support local businesses. That is why we continuously increase the amount of products we purchase from local suppliers and companies.”

The Made in Michigan initiative launched the week of January 29 when 49 new grocery items – including marinara sauce, blueberry butter, gluten free baking mixes and gourmet seasoning – filled designated areas within 33 Meijer stores from Grand Rapids to Metro Detroit, and Gaylord to Ann Arbor. These new items joined dozens of other Michigan products available throughout the store, including locally-grown produce.

The initiative is expected to be an ongoing feature within the supercenter chain retailer, and is expected to have a $400,000 economic impact statewide, said Matt Birbeck, High Impact Venture Action Team project manager for the MSU Product Center.

“We couldn’t be more excited about this program,” Birbeck said. “Working with Meijer to implement a dedicated Michigan section for its customers is a win-win situation for everybody. MSU Product Center clients have a unique opportunity to be seen on a larger scale and increasing the selection of fantastic Michigan products at Meijer. Customers can truly buy local in their neighborhood Meijer stores.”
Improving health and nutrition for Michigan residents is the goal of MSU Extension staff members of the Health and Nutrition Institute. To this end, they have organized themselves into four statewide work teams:

- Nutrition and physical activity
- Social and emotional health
- Food safety
- Disease prevention and management

Nutrition and physical activity for adults:

During 2011 in Kent County, the MSUE adult nutrition education programs focused on becoming embedded in agencies that are routinely serving large numbers of individuals who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Our goal was that every individual who goes through designated agency programming with one of our partners like Project Rehab, Guiding Light Ministries, Goodwill Industries, Gerald R. Ford Job Corps, and Senior Meals has the opportunity to receive nutrition education that can help them and their families eat healthier on a budget.

MSU Extension in Kent is now the nutrition education provider for the culinary arts and the health occupations programs at Job Corps. We provide the nutrition education component of the wellness program at Guiding Light, and we serve all the adults entering Goodwill’s Achieve program. MSU Extension also reaches over a thousand seniors annually by providing the education component for Senior Project Fresh – a program that puts fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers into the hands of low income seniors. By focusing in this way we work to educate our participants about healthy and affordable nutrition, encouraging them to adopt eating habits that ultimately may help to improve their health.

Nutrition and physical activity for youth:

In an effort to reach ALL eligible Kent County citizens, a partnership has been made with Grand Rapids Public Schools and their Kent Vocational Options and Community Based Occupational Training program for adults 18-26 with developmental disabilities. An MSU Extension Educator provides a series of 8 nutrition lessons to all these classrooms throughout the community, reaching approximately 230 students. The lessons are adapted to fit the educational needs of each individual classroom and provide many hands-on learning activities to reinforce the concepts.
Social and Emotional Health work team:

The Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management series was taught in 2011 in Kent County by Holly Tiret, MSU Extension educator. This training focused on strengthening classroom management strategies, promoting children’s pro-social behavior and school readiness (reading skills), and reducing classroom aggression and non-cooperation with peers and teachers. The program can be useful for teachers, teacher aides, psychologists, school counselors, and any school personnel working with young children.

Participants in the series included 18 Americorps Vista Volunteers from Campfire USA’s afterschool program. The goal was to introduce good classroom management skills that promote pro-social behavior to this group of young people, many of whom had never worked with groups of children in an organized setting.

Topics included:
- Building Positive Relationships with Students and The Proactive Teacher
- The Importance of Praise and Attention and Motivating Children Through Incentives
- Ignoring and Redirecting and Using Negative Consequences
- Teaching Children Social Skills and Problem Solving

As a result of this program, participants increased frequency of positive teaching strategies such as using rewards for good behavior, labeling a child’s feelings, and commenting on a child’s good behavior. Even more, participants increased in perception of the usefulness of those strategies, which means they are more likely to continue to use them in the future. Participants increased use of limit setting strategies such as using nonverbal signals to redirect disengaged children, warnings of consequences for misbehavior and ignoring non-disruptive behaviors. They also showed an increase in perceived usefulness of the same three strategies, again making it more likely that they would continue to apply those specific techniques.

Other workshops taught by Tiret in Kent during 2011 included:

Nurturing Parenting, and
RELAX—Alternatives to Anger
- Anger triggers
- Calming Down
- Problem Solving
- Forgiving
### STAFF DIRECTORY

#### Administration:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Department</th>
<th>Email</th>
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#### Educators:

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#### Program Associates:

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<tr>
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#### On-Call:

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