As we move forward in 2009, we find ourselves in a national financial crisis that has had serious repercussions for many people in our community. Individuals, businesses, governmental units and agencies are struggling with growing challenges.

Kent/MSU Extension has provided educational programs to people in our community on important issues for many years. We work as a community connector and invested community partner.

Kent/MSU Extension is ready to connect education to life on issues including:

**Surviving financially in a tough economy**
- Our classes help people learn personal finance survival skills and how to create a future that will allow them to thrive.

**Managing stress while parenting**
- When stresses in families increase, incidence of child abuse also escalate; the current economic crisis and high unemployment rate are stressing families. Child care training through “Better Kid Care” can help parents to cope.

**Building health with good nutrition**
- Our programs help people to understand that we need to eat well to be well, and that they can do this on a very limited food budget.

**Agriculture: Michigan’s second largest industry**
- Agriculture and the food system contribute $63 billion annually to the state’s economy. Studies show that one in four Michigan jobs is linked to agriculture. MSU Extension programs support all sectors of the agricultural industry.

**Community development**
- Vibrant urban centers attract an educated workforce, essential to a healthy economy. MSU Extension connects campus resources with local needs to build stronger urban neighborhoods and communities.

**Local food supply**
- It’s important to our local economy, health, safety and quality of life. MSU Extension programs support local food systems, including farmland preservation.

**Helping youth succeed**
- Youth engaged in developing their talents indicate a community headed toward a thriving future. One indicator in determining talent is completion of at least a bachelor’s degree. MSU Extension programs introduce youth and adults to higher education and lifelong success.

**Support for local decision-makers**
- Local governments struggle to meet service needs on reduced budgets. MSU Extension programs are committed to providing free or low cost education and information to support local decision makers.

Kent/MSU Extension is addressing each of these issues through educational programs in Kent County. Please see the following page for details.
Surviving financially:
Extension educator Dave Treul provides:
- A 10-hour basic money management course called “Dollar Sense”
- A Train-the-Trainer workshop for those who work with others around the issue of money
- A monthly easy-to-read newsletter called “Cents Ability” which now reaches over 13,000 Kent County residents per month
Contact him at 336-3265 or treuld@msu.edu

Managing stress while parenting:
Extension educator Diane Blain provides Better Kid Care training, print and video resources for child care providers and parents throughout Kent County. Contact her at: 231-679-6783 or blain@msu.edu

Building health with good nutrition:
Extension educator Monica Smith provides:
- One-on-one nutrition education for limited-income participants in their homes
- Group nutrition education series emphasizing healthy eating on a budget
- Train the trainer monthly nutrition classes for agency staff working with low-income clients
- Breastfeeding peer education to encourage higher breastfeeding rates
Contact her at: 336-3265 or smit1159@msu.edu

Agriculture:
MSU Extension educators provide support to agriculture in Kent County across a wide spectrum. Staff contacts for information on the following areas:

Nutrient Management—Charles Gould, 616-994-4580, gouldm@msu.edu
Commercial Greenhouse/Nursery—Tom Dudek, 616-994-4580, dudek@msu.edu
Dairy—Bill Robb, 616-994-4580, robbg@msu.edu
Beef—Kevin Gould, 616-527-5357, Gouldk@msu.edu
Tree Fruit—Phil Schwallier, 1-800-767-1345, schwalli@msu.edu
Bioeconomy Development—Dennis Pennington 269-671-2412, pennin34@msu.edu
Tree Fruit—Amy Irish-Brown, 1-800-767-1345, irisha@msu.edu
Small Fruit—Carlos Garcia-Salazar, 616-994-4580, garcias4@msu.edu

Vegetables—Bill Steenwyk, 1-800-767-1345, steenwyk@msu.edu
Farm Management—Roger Betz, 269-781-0784, betz@msu.edu
MSU Product Center—Matt Birbeck 517-432-8753 birbeckm@msu.edu

Community Development:
Extension educator Carol Townsend supports neighborhood revitalization and business retention and expansion. Her work connects MSU resources to urban areas in Kent County, empowering people to build the future they envision. Contact her at 336-3265 or townse36@msu.edu

Local food supply and healthy eating:
Extension educator Rebecca Finneran helps people to develop their own green thumbs! MSU Extension Master Gardener programs for adults and youth teach skills in growing vegetables and other plants and gardening with fewer environmental impacts. In 2008, the value of time donated by Master Gardeners in Kent County was over $400,000. Finneran can be reached at 336-3265 or at finneran@msu.edu

Ensuring that local land remains available for agriculture is the goal of the Kent County Purchase of Development Rights program. Extension educator Kendra Wills provides education and support for this county program. She can be reached at 336-3265 or willsk@msu.edu

Helping youth succeed:
4-H clubs can be found throughout our county—77 clubs in all, and after-school programs with students from 35 Grand Rapids Public School buildings! 4-H Youth Development works to help youngsters build lifelong skills and see themselves succeeding in higher education, their community and in life. Trained volunteer leaders work with youth ages 5-19. For more information, call 336-3265 to talk to: Glenda Kilpatrick, kilpatri@msu.edu
Morgan Gudiño, gudinom@msu.edu
Farris Withers, withersf@msu.edu

Support for local decision-makers: Educated leaders make confident long-term decisions for their communities. For class information on Citizen Planner, county commissioner workshops or other decision maker training, contact Kendra Wills at 336-3265 or willsk@msu.edu