



Otsego County

2015–2016 ANNUAL REPORT



MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

Hello from Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) District 14, which serves Alpena, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet, Montmorency, Otsego, and Presque Isle Counties. We want to thank Otsego County for another year of partnership. Together we bring dynamic and diverse educational events and programming to people right here in our communities.



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MSUE is the outreach and engagement arm of Michigan State University and brings the latest research from campus directly to you. We believe education and innovative solutions can help address many of today's complex issues. We look forward to our continued service to Otsego County and the State.

We hope you enjoy reading through the Otsego County MSUE annual report for 2015-2016.



ISSUE IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

In 2015-16, MSUE conducted focus group sessions throughout the state to determine where the people we serve felt our efforts should be focused. In January of this year, District 14 conducted two such focus groups; one in Alpena and one in Gaylord. The top ten issues identified are summarized below. These areas of focus will be combined with our statewide focus group results and will be used to prioritize our future direction and long-term planning. We are currently conducting additional focus groups and surveys to ensure Michigan's diversity is represented. These results will also be combined with the statewide efforts. Thank you to those who participated in this process—your time is appreciated and your perspectives are important to us.

Top Ten Issues Identified in District 14

Youth Development/Education (4H)

Agriculture

Community Development

Citizenship

Water Quality Issues

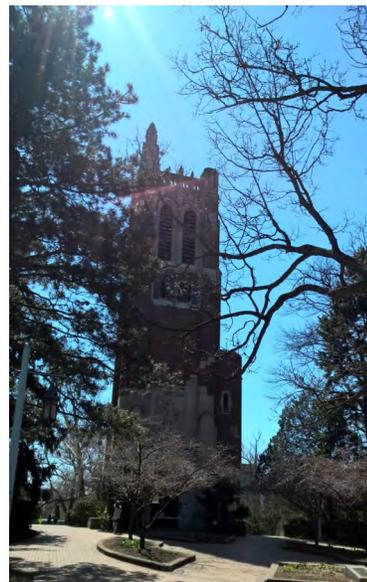
Life Skills

Farm to School

Nutrition

Race Relations

Bovine Tuberculosis Research



DEVELOPING YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES

When you support MSU Extension 4-H programs, youth participants learn life skills that prepare them for the workforce – especially for highly sought after jobs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Extension programs help children develop early literacy skills that support school readiness. They learn leadership and decision-making skills in 4-H that increase their likelihood of becoming civically active.

4-H'ers also demonstrate reduced high-risk behaviors such as drug use, and learn to complete tasks, solve problems and seek any help they might need from peers and adults. 4-H involvement also helps participants avoid or reduce involvement with the court system. This helps ensure more young people succeed in school, attend college and contribute to their communities. More successful young people in communities results in greater tax revenues and consumer spending and increases the likelihood that young people will stay in, or return to, their communities.

Supporting local youth while building relationships with community.

The Otsego County 4-H Council's Promotion and Community programming committee in 2015, offered a number of learning opportunities throughout the year. In April at the Family Fun Fair, youth participants learned how to plant a white pine sapling in a cup. They were able to take it home and replant it in their yards or fields. The 4-H teen leaders shared some fun facts about the white pine which is our state tree and shared resources one tree can provide. A total of 120 youth prepared a sapling to take home.



Another community program supported by 4-H Council is Spring Extravaganza. This program is held during our area's school's spring break. We offered a variety of classes and activities, most of which are free, for the families that will be staying in the area during this time and will have fun things to do. Our cooking class always fills up first! This year we had two separate classes. Youth learned about nutrition, and kitchen safety while cooking a

delicious meal! These classes were taught by 4-H volunteers.



During Spring Extravaganza 4-H partnered with Otsego County Soil Conversation to hold a class which made terrariums. The kids were taught why plants grew in a terrarium and the different soils and materials needed.

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From once-a-month family workshops and in-school science lessons to after-school technology training and classroom gardening, MSU Extension supplies Michigan schools and the families they serve with the support they need to be successful.

Developing Youth and Communities, continued

Another class taught by a 4-H volunteer was a class on how to make survivor bracelets. The kids learned how to tie different knots to make a bracelet that can be used for camping, hunting and emergency purposes when taken apart.

Other partners for Spring Extravaganza were Otsego County Parks and Recreation at Groen Park where students tracked animals, and made birdhouses; Home Depot sponsored wooden projects; Gaylord Bowling Center offered free bowling; and Gaylord Cinema West had movie discounts and refreshments.

We had approximately 80 local youth involved in all the crafts, and fun activities during Spring Extravaganza

Preparing children for academic success

The Otsego County 4-H Council grants college or vocational training scholarships to graduating 4-H members who meet criteria for those scholarships.

The 2015 recipients were Kelly Furget and Brooke Pollaski, both girls attended local colleges. Funding for these scholarships are raised by the council thru the Father/Daughter Dance and the Ice Cream booth sponsored by the 4-H council at the Otsego county fair.



Youth influencing community decisions with support from adults

The Otsego County 4-H Council has increased their total membership from nine adults and three youth to twelve adults and twelve youth. Our goal is to have a youth driven council supported by the adult council members. The council gives youth opportunities to chair committees, make decisions and engage in leadership within council and to extend those skills outside of the 4-H community. Each year an outstanding 4-H'er, 15 years and older, that has stood out amongst their peers are nominated by leaders. This year's 4-H'er of the year was Grace Davis. Grace is an active member in her 4-H club as well and a council teen leader.

Other successes 4-H experienced this year was an active Horse Committee within the 4-H Council. They sponsored the twilight shows that helps prepare equine 4-H members for the 2015 riding season. The Proud Equestrian Program, which provides therapeutic riding for children with disabilities, ages 5 to 25 got off to a good start in the late fall of 2015. The therapeutic riding instructor began to recruit volunteers and their training to work with children with special needs. This is an area that is underserved outside of the formal educational setting. Funding for this special program was a gift from a local business several years ago. With promotional events in the Gaylord Herald Times, TV 9&10, and Eagles 101 we had enough volunteers to begin the youth recruitment for spring riding.

Otsego County 4-H Council, through a gift given by an anonymous donor, sent 5 youth to 4-H Summer camp at Ocqueoc Outdoor Center in Millersburg. This is a 5 county camp staffed by MSUE staff, 4-H teen leaders and local volunteers. This year's theme was fur, fins and feathers.



MSU Extension provides resources aligned with Michigan science education standards to teach confidence, leadership and responsibility related to STEM.



In the U.S. today, many job openings for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) -related positions go unfilled due to a lack of qualified applicants.

KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY

Fighting obesity through education

More than 1.7 million Michigan residents receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. SNAP-Ed is a federal/state partnership that supports nutrition education for persons eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). State agencies that choose to conduct nutrition education through their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program are eligible to be reimbursed for up to one half of their SNAP-Ed costs. State and local funding comes primarily from land-grant institutions which contract with SNAP agencies to deliver SNAP-Ed. They reach intended audiences by coordinating with state and local partners and with other contractors.

- ⇒ About 48% of all SNAP participants are in working families (USDA Food and Nutrition Service, 2011), and 22% of those who receive SNAP Benefits in Michigan are adults living with children (USDA Food and Nutrition Service, 2011).
- ⇒ Michigan has the 10th highest prevalence of obesity in the United States (Michigan Department of Community Health, 2011).

In 2015, MSU Extension SNAP-Ed programs were presented to 1247 adults and youth in Otsego County! MSU Extension's SNAP Education (SNAP-Ed) programs including Cooking Matters, Project Fresh, Jump Into Foods and Fitness, Healthy Harvest and Show Me Nutrition teach Bridge Card eligible adults and children how to make the most of their food dollars, by developing skills such as menu planning, understanding recipes, food preparation and keeping food safe.

- ⇒ 324 adults attended 19 presentations and three 6-week series for a total of 372 contacts
- ⇒ 886 youth participated in a 6-week series of programs; this represents 36 classes or groups. Presentations reached 37 youth directly, and over 300 indirectly.

Teaching valuable healthy-eating skills

MSU Extension is serving 544 children and families weekly in the Tip of the Mitt area through a partnership with Food Bank of Eastern Michigan. As part of the backpack programs of food distributed for the weekends, children and families receive recipes, resources and information to make a healthier choice an easier choice.

- Alpena County- 6 schools- 268 children
- Otsego County- 1 school- 120 children
- Montmorency County- 2 schools- 72 children
- Presque Isle County- 1 school- 48 children
- Cheboygan County- 2 schools- 96 children

As a result of programming, the percentage of adults eating fruits and vegetables as snacks increased...

by 6.7% across the state of Michigan

by 10.0% within District 14 (Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet, Otsego)



MSU Extension reached more than 87,000 adults and young people across the state through programming. Nearly one-third of youth increased their level of physical activity and more than two-thirds of adults increased time spent being physically active, including three-quarters of older adults.

Keeping People Healthy, continued

Show Me Nutrition (SMN)

Show Me Nutrition (SMN) is a research-based curriculum that features six sessions to help kids in grades K to 3 learn the importance of nutrition, increased physical activity and food safety. SMN invites kids to participate in fun new physical fitness and nutrition activities that promote a healthier lifestyle! Kids have fun while they try new foods, learn, and exercise! SMN was offered in Otsego Co. as 6, thirty- to forty-minute sessions for kindergarten-3rd grade at North Ohio Elementary and South Maple Elementary schools.

Cooking Matters for Adults

Cooking Matters is a nutrition program where participants will learn how to eat healthy, cook and grocery shop on a limited budget. The program consists of six lessons, lasting approximately two hours each. With the help of an experienced chef and nutrition educator, participants gain the skills and confidence to make healthy, budget friendly meals for their family. Each week, participants receive take-home food, which they can use at home to practice a recipe they learned in class.

Class series are taught throughout the community, including but not limited to community centers, churches, schools and local MSU Extension offices. Group series are available and at least half of the group is Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligible.

Working to improve social and emotional health

Reducing anger, bullying and stress through social and emotional health programs

MSU Extension's RELAX: Alternatives to Anger program offers techniques for calming down and de-stressing, problem solving, communicating and letting go of the past. The program reaches low-income and racially/ethnically diverse audiences. As a result of the program:

- 70% now work hard to be calm and talk things through
- 66% reported trying to end on a positive note

In an effort to promote prevention of child abuse and neglect, MSU Extension Educators have offered Nurturing Parenting series throughout the state. As a result of the 10 workshops involved in this program:

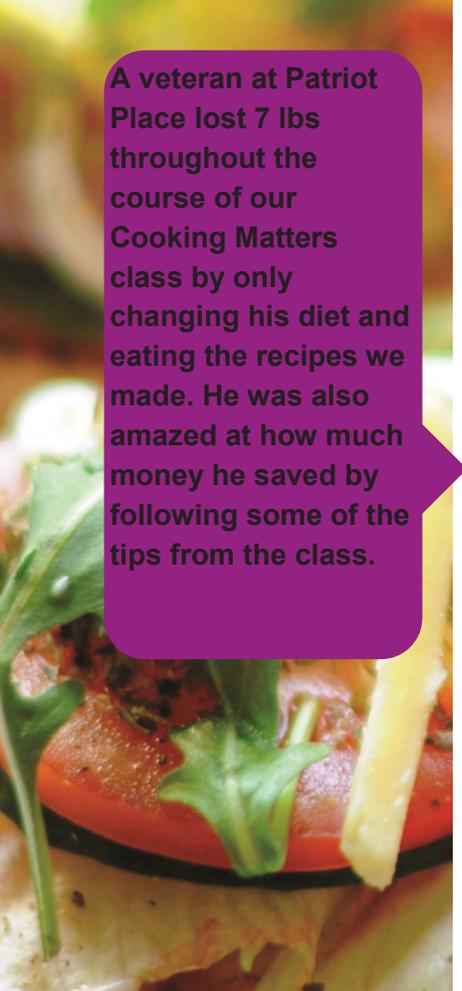
- 53% improved their adaptive skills and strategies to use in times of crisis.
- 41% of Nurturing Parenting participants improved their perceived informal support that helps provide for emotional needs.

"I learned some different ways to model self-control. I intend to take what we learned and apply it in my home."

RELAX Parent/Caregiver workshop participant



A veteran at Patriot Place lost 7 lbs throughout the course of our Cooking Matters class by only changing his diet and eating the recipes we made. He was also amazed at how much money he saved by following some of the tips from the class.



Through MSU Extension's Be SAFE: Safe, Affirming and Fair Environments initiative, young people and adults learn ways to reduce and prevent bullying and harassment behaviors. As a result of the education:

98% gained understanding about different types of bullying behaviors and how they can affect those involved.

Stress Less with Mindfulness introduces participants to the experience and practice of mindfulness to reduce stress. Mindfulness can be defined as paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally. As a result of the training, participants showed improvement on these key outcomes:

78% can describe how a mindfulness perspective changes reactions to daily stressors.

75% use mindful awareness when eating.

Helping Michiganders prevent diabetes

Dining with Diabetes

In 2015 there were two DWD classes offered: one took place at St Andrews Church in Gaylord and the 2nd one was at the Alpine Haus in Gaylord. There were a total of 12 Otsego county residence in both classes and they all participate the full five weeks.

Walmart of Gaylord was very generous and donated \$25.00 of exercise weights and stretch bands to assure the Alpine Haus residence will keep up their exercise.

The MSU Extension Disease Prevention and Management Master Trainer Team in coordination with NEMSCA has hosted Leader training in PATH. Otsego County residents have been trained in Matter of Balance and PATH classes. The Otsego County community has more availability to programing.

In Gaylord the MSU Extension Disease Prevention and Management team has been active with the Gerad Meteyer Foundation. We are working on bringing Diabetes Education to the schools.

Additional Disease Prevention and Management programming and partnerships:

Chronic Disease PATH (Personal Action Toward Your Health)

MSU Extension hosted one class at Otsego Hospital. The program had six Otsego County residents participate.

Matter of Balance

MSU Extension hosted two classes (8 sessions each) at the Alpine Haus, in Gaylord, MI. There were a total of 8 residents that took the two classes. The group has continued to exercise as a group as MSU Extension goes to the home every month.

Otsego participants' comments:

"I feel I can cook healthier for my husband."

"I feel more energized and can deal with my health issues"

Throughout 2015, MSU Extension partnered with the Chronic Disease and Obesity Initiative led by Jane Sundmacher from North West Michigan Department of Health. Through the hospitals, schools, healthcare providers, and Health Department we wrote successful grants for community education and awareness. Due to the Initiative, residents in Otsego and surrounding counties are healthier and have more options for health education.

MAKING THE MOST OF OUR NATURAL ASSETS

When you support MSU Extension's natural resources education programs, participants learn about income-generating opportunities, ecological principles, natural resource issues and the role of natural resource professionals.

Northeast Michigan Great Lakes Stewardship Initiatives: Engaging Youth in Coastal Community Development through Place-based Education

Collectively, our Northeast Michigan Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative (NEMIGLSI) network, NOAA B-WET water education partnerships, and Center for Great Lakes Literacy trainings have invested in promoting Great Lakes Literacy and supporting a growing place-based education network and culture among our Northeast Michigan schools and communities. To date, in total, our network programming has now engaged 13,266 youth in place-based stewardship education opportunities!

Projects specific to Otsego County as a part of the NEMIGLSI network include: Gaylord High School, Otsego County watershed studies, Johannesburg-Lewiston school yard forest project, and the support of the Otsego Conservation District, Otsego Conservation Days for 7th and 8th graders. To date for 2015-2016, 819 youth are engaged in these projects in Otsego County. 6 Otsego County teachers are either participating in professional development or fielding place-based educational projects with their students.

Julie Crick, MSUE Natural Resources Educator also serves on the Advisory Committee of the Otsego County Conservation District Forester. MSUE also takes part in the National Geographic Bioblitz event organized by the University Center for the last two years. A Bioblitz is part festival, part educational event, and part scientific event in which teams of volunteer scientists, families, students, teachers, and community members of all ages work together to find and identify as many species of plants, animals, microbes, fungi, and other organisms as possible. Extension staff serve on the steering committee for the Bioblitz event, Julie Crick hosts the tree identification station, and Brandon Schroeder, MSUE Sea Grant educator, is key in organizing a professional development opportunity for educators. Bioblitz is scheduled for July 23rd, 2016 and held at Treetops Nature Area on Whitmarsh Road in Vanderbilt – bring your family and friends and enjoy with us! Thanks to the University Center for bringing this event to Otsego County.

The NEMIGLSI has also supported Huron Pines in securing a \$90,000 grant from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative Fund to expand place-based education efforts with inland schools. The projects titled, Woodlands and Waters – Three Tiers of Stakeholder Engagement in the Heart of the Great Lakes, seeks to engage 6 new inland schools as part of NEMIGLSI through 12 new place-based stewardship projects. This effort will reach 150+ students!

Better land stewardship benefits communities by protecting and enhancing Michigan's natural resource assets.



Michigan Sea Grant Extension offers expertise to coastal communities and partners interested in developing and enhancing water trails.

SUPPORTING FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Michigan agriculture continues to be a diverse and thriving segment of the state's economy. When you support MSU Extension, you help producers develop efficient farming practices that optimize the use of inputs to enhance productivity while protecting soil and water resources. This education leads to better use of time, money and human capital, which helps retain and create agricultural jobs.

Aerial Cover Crop Interseeding

MSU Extension, in partnership with three Michigan Conservation Districts, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and local field crop producers received \$29,810 in grant funds from the Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) Partnership Grant Program to investigate and demonstrate cooperative aerial seeding as a method of timely cover crop establishment on Northeast MI corn and soybean acres.

Cover crops contribute to cash crop production through improvement of soil health and fertility, pest management and water availability. Keeping the soil covered can also reduce erosion and increase nutrient cycling on farmlands, thereby decreasing the soil and nutrient loads entering our waterways. However, timely cover crop establishment on local farms is frequently precluded by harvest operations that carry-on into November and poor late-season field conditions.

Alternative seeding technologies (aerial and high clearance ground equipment) are available to address this barrier by overseeding a cover crop prior to fall harvest of corn or soybeans. Our Northeast Michigan Aerial Cover Crop Seeding Demonstrations project used aerial overseeding to establish cereal rye, an oat-radish blend and winter wheat in 662 acres of corn and soybeans across Presque Isle, Montmorency, Alpena and Otsego Counties prior to harvest in 2015. 400 acres were managed as research and demonstration sites highlighted by a comprehensive outreach campaign and series of four extension events designed to educate producers on the potential benefits and challenges of aerial cover crop overseeding.



“This program gave us an opportunity to use a technology that we were interested in, but could not previously justify given our small acreage.”



46% (n=13) of those responding to our evaluation survey reported that they increased their use of cover crops by an average of 22 acres each as a result of participating in our Aerial Seeding project.

Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Forty-seven gardeners are now certified MSUE Master Gardeners. They volunteer and spread gardening knowledge in our communities!

In December, 47 trainees completed their Master Gardener coursework. While the majority of the trainees were from Otsego County, seven other Northern Michigan counties were represented. Master Gardener trainees must successfully complete 45 hours of class time with a 14-session curriculum that covers horticulture training based on university research. Class topics include plant and soil science, integrated pest management, annuals and perennials, woody ornamentals, vegetables, small fruits and tree fruits and gardening practices to protect water quality.

To become a Certified Extension Master Gardener, trainees must also complete 40 hours of horticulturally-related volunteer service in their local commodities. Volunteer trainees will be offered science-based guidance for lawns and gardens, work closely with the Otsego Conservation District with its demonstration garden and community service projects, offer gardening workshops for adults and conduct outreach. Another program the trainees will work on is the Junior Master Gardener program which brings environmental education about growing food, flowers, recycling and composting to school-aged children.

While completing their 40 hours in the local and surrounding communities, these 47 trainees will volunteer a total of 1,880 hours, which holds over \$40,000 in value. After initially being certified, each MSU Extension Master Gardener continues to give back to their community in subsequent years and re-certify by offering 15 hours of volunteer work and five hours of continued education annually.



How to Keep the Family Farm in the Family

In November, commercial agricultural producers from four counties met in Gaylord to take part in two workshops to teach them how to begin the process of transitioning the farm to a family successor(s) or a non-family successor, such as a key employee. One of the presenters was Curtis Talley, MSU Extension, Farm Business Management Educator.

Extension Educators Serving Otsego County

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