

2024 FALL EXTENSION CONFERENCE



LISTENING, LEARNING AND LEADING

MSU EXTENSION AWARDS PROGRAM

GRAND RAPIDS | OCTOBER 16, 2024

**MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Extension

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ABOUT THE AWARDS PROGRAM

Michigan State University Extension presents a variety of awards at its Fall Extension Conference each year. The awards honor outstanding MSU Extension staff members, programs, friends, and key partners. The selection committee for the MSU Extension administration awards is made up of Extension administrators who represent institutes, district directors, and the MSU Extension Director's Office.

While both awards are presented during Fall Extension Conference, the winner of the John A. Hannah Award for Program Excellence is chosen by the Michigan Council of Extension Associations, and the winner of the State Friend of Extension Award is chosen by Epsilon Sigma Phi.

Since the last Fall Extension Conference, MSU Extension staff members who have reached significant years or service milestones, received MSU Extension Shared Values Awards and received awards from the following professional associations which are also listed in this book:

- » Community and Natural Resources Development Association
- » Epsilon Sigma Phi, Alpha Psi Chapter
- » Michigan Association of Extension 4-H Youth Staff
- » Michigan Association of Extension Agents
- » Michigan Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION IMPACT AWARD

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Impact Award is presented to an individual or team that has made exceptional efforts in supporting or fostering excellence in reaching new or under-represented audiences, promoting inclusion in program content or delivery, working in partnership with diverse communities or constituents, or performing other efforts that promote sustained relationship-building across differences.

Michigan Substance Use Prevention Education & Recovery Team

**Abigail Cudney, Tanner Derror, Lauren Kennedy,
Elizabeth Williams**

The Michigan Substance Use Prevention Education and Recovery, or MiSUPER, team has built a program that reflects MSU Extension's diversity, equity, and inclusion statements and the national Extension Framework for Health Equity and Well-Being. The team works to amplify the voices, lived experiences, and work of people who misuse drugs and of people who are their advocates. The team uses a harm reduction framework that honors the inherent value and humanity of people who misuse drugs and reinforces that they are loved in a world that usually rejects them.

In 2021, the MiSUPER team began partnering with Extension programs in other Great Lakes states on a hub for substance use disorder education and technical assistance. The coalition offers virtual training on how substance use is criminalized and punished, how that approach is worsening the overdose crisis, and how to provide the support that people need. They have also revamped a 60-minute training on opioids, the overdose crisis in Michigan, and evidence-based strategies communities can use to support people who misuse drugs.

The team has developed web content on responding to an opioid overdose and outlining Michigan's Good Samaritan laws. They also offer wallet-sized cards and keyring fobs with links to the website for easy emergency access.

The MiSUPER team is making a difference in attitudes and approaches toward dealing with substance use. The key tags are popular with partners as giveaways and the three-part training series is well attended in Michigan and across the Great Lakes region. Feedback from training participants, partners, and staff shows that the MiSUPER team efforts are broadening perspectives and reducing stigmas.

EMERGING ISSUES RAPID RESPONSE TEAM AWARD

The Emerging Issues Rapid Response Team Award recognizes the outstanding response of an MSU Extension team to an emerging issue. Teams must include members from at least two MSU Extension programming areas to be eligible.

Michigan Vaccine Project

Sylvia Benavidez, Lindsey Brownlee, Julie Chapin (coordinator), Dawn Contreras (coordinator), Angela Cook, Cheryl Eschbach (coordinator), Peter Havlatka, Jane Love, Maggie Magoon (coordinator), Becky McKendry, Amanda Smith, Jim Monohan, Erin Moore (coordinator), Katie Parr, Alyssa Picone, Alan Pilkenton, Maribel Richards, Carrie Shrier, Yolanda Thrash, Megan Wilczynski

Vaccinations are critical in protecting Michigan children and adults from life-threatening diseases like the flu, measles, and COVID-19. To help Michiganders make informed decisions about vaccination, Michigan State University Extension partnered with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to create the Michigan Vaccine Project, or MVP.

The project, which ran from spring 2021 to fall 2024, leveraged Extension's statewide network of county offices and community partnerships to provide trusted, evidence-based vaccination information. MVP also implemented a statewide outreach campaign using digital, radio, newspaper, and print materials—as well as in-person and virtual educational programming—to inform Michiganders' vaccination decision-making.

As part of the initiative, 30 4-H youth ambassadors were trained to offer peer-led education in communities throughout the state. The ambassadors also created a youth-led vaccine education program that aired on Detroit Public TV.

As of May 2024, MVP programming impacts had included nearly 519,000 impressions across eight social media platforms, 82 youth-focused events that reached more than 2,100 participants, 38 community events that reached over 20,000 people, 16 rural adult-focused presentations reaching almost 360 people, 30 trained youth health ambassadors, nine youth-led events reaching over 18,000 people, 48 MVP messages with Detroit Public TV that were seen by more than 48,000 viewers, 33 MSU Extension news articles, 32 radio ads and interviews reaching an estimated 4.67 million Michigan listeners, 15 webinars, 12 newspaper ads and interviews reaching about 853,000 Michigan residents, and 10 My Vaccine Story videos.

Thank you and congratulations to the team for this outstanding effort and award!

GORDON GUYER COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMMING AWARD

The Gordon Guyer Collaborative Programming Award honors teams that conduct high-quality, collaborative programming that contributes to the mission of MSU Extension, is developed through a process of issue and opportunity identification and clientele needs analysis, and demonstrates positive programming outcomes.

The award is named for former MSU Extension Director Gordon Guyer, who encouraged MSU Extension staff at all levels to develop evidence- and research-based, collaborative, and interdisciplinary programs to meet the needs of Michigan residents.

Emergency Response to Accidents Involving Livestock Team

Paola Bacigalupo Sanguesa, Madonna Benjamin, Beth Ferry (coordinator), Sarah Fronczak, Thomas Guthrie, Ana Heck, Jerad Jaborek, Mike Metzger, Katie Ockert, Cora Okkema, Meghan Honke Seidel, Casey Zangaro

Livestock, poultry, honeybees, and other animals are moved on Michigan roads every day. MSU Extension's Emergency Response to Accidents Involving Livestock Team, or ERAIL, works to train first responders and offer the specialized equipment they need to respond to accidents involving animals. The team offers in-person and virtual training, works with organizations that want to prepare for such accidents, and maintains a fleet of emergency response trailers.

Since the program began in 2019, more than 700 people have received ERAIL training. After the training, 96% of participants reported increased skills. Over 90% said they were more comfortable around livestock and were more confident of having the skills to handle accidents involving livestock. All reported being aware of response resources available to them.

ERAIL response trailers are based in Berrien, Branch, Gratiot, Jackson, Monroe, and Otsego counties, with more to be placed across the state over the next three years.

The ERAIL team has earned praise from commodity groups, farmers, and first responders. They are steadfast in working to protect the safety of first responders and the traveling public at accident scenes while promoting the welfare of the animals involved and protecting the image of the animal agriculture industry.

As one farm family who has experienced a rollover accident with a load of pigs wrote, "Although no farmer wants to have their animals involved in an accident, it is refreshing to know that there are resources available through MSU Extension to aid with these chaotic events. Witnessing the trailer in use, [we] couldn't think of a better team to earn this award."

INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY AWARD

The Innovative Technology Award recognizes an individual or team that has used technology creatively and innovatively in delivering educational programs, in answering questions through the MSU Extension Ask an Expert service, or in other educational efforts.

Courtney Ross & Nicole Smith

Courtney Ross, geographical information systems research assistant, and Nicole Smith, GIS analyst, work with Michigan State University Extension's Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI).

With Courtney and Nicole's help, MNFI has made a significant shift to digital data collection, resulting in more efficient processes from data collection in the field to populating the Natural Heritage Database with information that partners can apply to biodiversity conservation. This shift has saved time, increased the accuracy of data collection, and improved the management and archiving of data. Courtney and Nicole have also used their knowledge to support similar efforts by the program's partners and Extension colleagues.

The duo worked closely with MNFI scientists to develop, field test, and refine electronic survey forms, maps, and apps tailored to collecting data on natural communities and rare animals and plants. They also organized staff and partner training sessions on using the new forms and processes.

The improved tools and processes have made it easier for citizen scientists to submit data to MNFI, increasing community engagement and excitement. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has benefited, too. DNR specialists use the data in planning and fulfilling Michigan's responsibility to regulate threatened and endangered species under state and federal law.

A DNR official wrote in supporting the nomination, "Courtney and Nicole are a great example of why the DNR looks to our great partners at MSU Extension and MNFI to collaborate on projects that serve the residents of Michigan and support biodiversity conservation within our great state."

Congratulations to Courtney Ross and Nicole Smith on earning this award!

INSTITUTE TEAM AWARD

The Institute Team Award recognizes the contributions to MSU Extension of an outstanding team from a single institute.

Sleep Education for Everyone Program (SLEEP)

Laura Anderson, Anita Carter (coordinator), Dawn Contreras (coordinator), Christi Demitz, Tanner Derror, Zelta Felix-Mottley, Kai Gritter, Naomi Hyso, Michelle Luttrell, Jacqueline Rabine, Miloni Rathod, Kris Swartzendruber, Lisa Tams, Holly Tiret, Robin Tucker (coordinator), Nicole Wethington, Elizabeth Williams (coordinator)

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that about one in three adults have trouble getting a good night's sleep. While a person may drag after a night or two of poor sleep, persistent sleep problems may increase their risk of developing chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, dementia, diabetes, and obesity.

In 2020, members of the Michigan State University Extension Health Work Team couldn't find comprehensive sleep educational materials to help their adult clientele. So the team developed the six-part SLEEp Education for Everyone Program, or SLEEP. The program is available in person and online, in English and Spanish. It includes instructor training sessions and an instructor FAQ.

SLEEP's goal is to help people improve their sleep and overall health. The SLEEP lessons are presented through professionally produced videos and interactive activities, handouts, and electronic slide decks. Participants receive monthly "sleep nudges" for six months after they finish the program to reinforce what they have learned.

Since 2020, the team has taught 72 SLEEP series (45 online and 27 in-person), reaching 905 adults. They have also made one-time presentations about the series to more than 950 adults. The SLEEP instructor training has certified 43 new instructors from Michigan and from the Extension programs in Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin.

Surveys have shown significant improvements in SLEEP participants' sleep quality and quantity immediately after and six months after completing the series.

We thank the MSU Extension Health Work Team for helping so many people improve their sleep, and in the process, their health and well-being.

MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARDS

The Meritorious Service Awards recognize outstanding individuals from each MSU Extension employee group. Nominees must possess the highest standards of integrity and character to positively reflect and enhance the reputation of MSU Extension. Awards are given in the following categories: administrative leadership; educators and supervising educators; Extension or academic specialists; program instructors, community nutrition instructors, and 4-H program coordinators; and support staff and supervisors.

Meritorious Service Award—Program Instructor

Anita Carter

Anita Carter, a Michigan State University Extension health and nutrition program instructor based in Gogebic County, has a great talent for identifying and collaborating with colleagues to meet the needs of Michigan residents. Her work in falls prevention has been so impactful that it has changed MSU Extension's core health and nutrition programming.

Nearly 10 years ago, Anita recognized the need for evidence-based physical activity and falls prevention programs. She knew that injuries from falls are a leading cause of death among older adults in Michigan and that physical activity improves strength, flexibility, and balance, which can help prevent falls.

Anita introduced the Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls Prevention program across the state. The program led to new partnerships with organizations that provide services to older adults, healthcare systems, and the MSU College of Human Medicine's Family Medicine Residency Program. She has led in-person and online classes, trained instructors, created demonstration videos for instructors and participants, and developed and led Community Practice and Play sessions for people who have completed a Tai Chi series. Today the Tai Chi classes are among the most popular health programs MSU Extension offers.

Anita has also helped to address the problem of poor sleep quality and quantity, which affects people's physical and mental health. She was highly involved in developing the nationally recognized SLEEP Education for Everyone Program, or SLEEP.

Anita's contributions have advanced the mission of MSU Extension and had a lasting effect on many people's lives. Her dedication and visionary leadership make her well deserving of this award.

Meritorious Service Award—Educator & Supervising Educator Christina Currell

Christina Currell is a Michigan State University Extension statewide cover crops and soil health educator based in Lake County. Christina is the mentor coordinator for MSU Extension's agriculture and agribusiness professionals, is a trusted resource on water quality and groundwater issues, and is involved with pesticide applicator training and sprayer calibration programs.

During COVID, Christina helped convert MSU Extension's review materials for the state's Restricted Use Pesticide Certification into an online course. Christina has been active in developing support for Michigan farmers working to earn RUP certification or recertification through the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). When MDARD moved all RUP training and testing online, she helped convince the department to continue offering some in-person training and testing to meet the needs of farmers who have limited internet access or other problems with online training and testing.

Christina is a driving force behind the Soil Health Nexus, which is part of Extension's 12-state North Central Region Water Network. She works with Nexus professionals and faculty to develop written, video, and interactive educational tools, materials, and training in all facets of soil health.

In 2022 when the MSU Soil Test lab closed, Christina led the team developing a new approach to MSU Extension's soil testing program. They worked out how to market and sell soil test mailers through county MSU Extension offices and use existing software to process the commercial lab's soil test data and send fertilizer recommendations to clients.

Christina's adaptability, versatility, problem-solving skills, and service-first mentality make her an exemplar of meritorious service.

Meritorious Service Award—Administrative Leadership

Cheryl Eschbach

Cheryl Eschbach, Ph.D., is the director of Michigan State University Extension's Health and Nutrition Institute. In addition to overseeing the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, Cheryl has led HNI to be more responsive to emerging physical and mental health issues that can be debilitating to Michigan residents.

She is passionate about reaching all people, including underserved populations, with evidence-based health programming. Cheryl has woven diversity, equity, and inclusion professional development into institute conferences and meetings, created systems for health and nutrition professionals to more equitably access professional development, embedded DEI work teams into the institute's structure, and made diverse populations a priority in seeking new grant funding.

Cheryl has led or supported the development or expansion of MSU Extension programs such as:

- » Farm Stress and its *Managing Farm Stress* curriculum; this cross-institute program has been adopted by 23 states.
- » Michigan Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (MiSUPER).
- » Michigan Vaccine Project (MVP), a \$7 million, grant-funded vaccine education project with MSU Extension's Children and Youth Institute.
- » PATH (Personal Action Toward Health) self-management for chronic disease, chronic pain, and diabetes.
- » Powerful Tools for Caregivers.
- » SLEEP (SLeep Education for Everyone Program).
- » Stress Less With Mindfulness and RELAX: Alternatives to Anger.
- » Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention and A Matter of Balance.

As an extraordinarily talented administrator and an excellent leader, scholar, researcher, and mentor, Cheryl Eschbach is well deserving of this award.

Meritorious Service Award—4-H Program Coordinator

Dolores Howe

Dolores (Dee) Howe, Ph.D., is a Michigan State University Extension 4-H program coordinator based at the MSU St. Andrews STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) Center in Midland County. Dee's colleagues say she strives to provide positive, safe learning opportunities for kids, and "lives and breathes youth development in all that she does."

Dee excels at recruiting and training volunteers, encouraging parents and volunteers to learn how to work with kids based on the kids' assets, skills, talents, and interests. The robust Midland County 4-H program she leads boasts about 50 clubs, is supported by more than 200 volunteers, and reaches more than 3,000 youth through local schools.

Dee is well-connected in the Midland community and partners with local businesses; public, private, parochial and home schools; community organizations; after-school and childcare programs; faith-based groups; and nearly every youth-serving organization in the area. She offers programs at the local juvenile center and the homeless shelter, and for young people who have disabilities, and who are refugees.

When she moved to the MSU St. Andrews STEM Center, Dee expanded STEM programming in local elementary and middle schools and at the center. On Fridays and Saturdays throughout the year, she provides programming for young people who are home-schooled.

From robotics to engineering, and from photography to 3-D printing, Dee learns new STEM skills beside the kids, setting a lifelong learning example for them.

Dee Howe coordinates a strong and welcoming 4-H program that is responsive to the needs of the Midland community, and she is well deserving of this award.

Meritorious Service Award—Administrative Leadership

James Kelly

James Kelly is the District 5 director, covering Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana counties. James has never wavered from his commitment to contributing to the successful impact of Michigan State University Extension programming. As a district director, he has brought innovation, passion, thoughtfulness, and leadership to the organization.

James's leadership style is characterized by inclusivity, collaboration, and effective communication. He has a remarkable ability to inspire and motivate his team, encouraging innovation and creativity while focusing on results and continuous improvement. He has also been an effective and supportive mentor to newer district directors and works to build a sense of team within the district director cohort.

James approaches every challenge as an opportunity to educate stakeholders, coach and mentor staff, build his leadership skills, and promote the organization. In District 5, James is respected by staff, county leadership, and other partners. During assignments as interim director in districts 6 and 7, James worked effectively with staff and county partners and increased funding in all counties. James embodies the MSU Extension shared value of "We will show up."

James has had to address complex political challenges in his primary district and in his interim District 7 role. His approach to these situations is to maintain a calm and positive demeanor and use facts to dispel myths. He communicates effectively with everyone involved to avoid surprises or misinformation.

It is exceptional leaders like James Kelly who make MSU Extension, and ultimately MSU, a better organization.

Meritorious Service Award—Support Staff & Supervisors

Rebecca McKee

Rebecca (Becky) McKee, Michigan State University Extension editor, has served MSU for 39 years, starting out in Michigan 4-H Youth Development. Her meticulous editing and support during the editing process allows MSU Extension authors to end up with a high-quality, well-produced product.

Her many accomplishments extend past her role as editor. She has volunteered to take staff photos at New Staff Orientation. She has a unique ability to recognize copyright or intellectual property problems singling out cases of possible copyright infringement. Becky took part in a four-day design summit where she learned techniques for building accessible documents. She takes every opportunity to learn and improve her skills, sharing her knowledge with colleagues in direct support of MSU Extension's Core Competencies and DEI Dedication Statements. When authors revise existing publications, she develops a starter kit for the authors to ensure the manuscript retains the proper formatting and setup.

Becky notified MSU Extension DEI specialists of inconsistencies between the MSU Extension indicia and the MSU non-discrimination list. They recommended updating the indicia, recognizing its institutional value in light of the civil rights review. Becky then did meticulous research, outlining the inconsistencies so that the DEI specialists and the administrative team could use her findings to revise the indicia. Her response and involvement were key in bringing this issue to leadership's attention.

Rebecca McKee is an efficient, detail oriented, and logical person whose sense of humor and caring attitude uplift those she encounters. She is truly deserving of the Meritorious Service Award.

Meritorious Service Award—Community Nutrition Instructor

Vickie Pfeifer

Vickie Pfeifer is a Michigan State University Extension community nutrition instructor based in Lenawee County. Vickie continuously works in an outstanding manner with community partners to identify their needs and seek solutions that work for everyone.

Vickie's programming with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities is changing the way MSU Extension health and nutrition professionals work with these audiences. Based on feedback from program participants, she has created new visual aids, props, and engaging, relevant activities that allow everyone to participate in whatever capacity they are able to. Community organizers have praised Vickie's ability to engage people in programs, including some who had previously just watched others participate. One person wrote, "Vickie is so positive and just has a way of making people feel included. They want to learn about better nutrition because of Vickie."

Vickie also strives to make sure that new and seasoned professionals with health and nutrition responsibilities are supported. She is an active mentor, welcoming new people to the team, inviting them to shadow her at work, and ensuring that they are ready to succeed.

When an instructor joined MSU Extension just as his supervising educator went on medical leave. Vickie gathered her colleagues and developed a team teaching and support approach to ensure that the person was contacted weekly, invited to shadow colleagues at workshops, helped with food prep before classes, and helped in identifying key community partners. This intensive support lasted about 10 months.

Vickie Pfeifer truly deserves to be recognized for all her hard work and dedication to positively reflecting and enhancing the reputation of MSU Extension.

Meritorious Service Award—Support Staff & Supervisors

Amanda Smith

Amanda Smith is a Michigan State University Extension secretary based in Muskegon County. Amanda has been providing outstanding customer service to staff and the community since 2019. She is dependable, reliable, and quality driven.

Though she has much on her plate—she also works with MSU Extension Communications and supports various Extension children and youth programs—Amanda is always willing to lend a hand to a colleague or community member. Colleagues report that Amanda promotes Extension every day with her “others first” mindset. On the phone, Amanda lets callers know their question is important and she'll do anything she can to help. She shows true kindness and commitment to her job.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Amanda began helping MSU Extension Communications with website management and content writing. Later, she took on social media posting for 4-H Exploration Days and social media and video posting for the Michigan Vaccine Program. Amanda dove into both projects without hesitation, avidly seeking the information she needed to understand the programs and create engaging content. With each task, Amanda has quickly learned new platforms, systems, and tools.

A multi-faceted self-starter, Amanda takes ownership of every project and ensures it is done on time and with engaging and quality content that benefits the public and Extension. Amanda has helped expand Muskegon County Extension's visibility with the local chamber of commerce and strengthened the relationship with the Muskegon Farmers Market.

Amanda Smith supports the MSU Extension mission, fosters a positive culture, and creates and supports new collaborations, making her very deserving of this award.

Meritorious Service Award—Educator & Supervising Educator

Janelle Stewart

Janelle Stewart is a Michigan State University Extension educator based in Lenawee County. Janelle also has statewide programming responsibilities in leadership and civic engagement.

Janelle's passion for helping young people succeed is second to none. She believes each youth who crosses her path has the potential for greatness, and she strives to give young people real-world leadership opportunities on councils, boards, and committees.

Janelle reaches diverse audiences and truly makes 4-H accessible for all. Her "Bloom Where You Are Planted" program helps integrate youth with different abilities into the 4-H program and has fostered empathy and even careers in the teen leaders who are paired as peer mentors.

She is 4-H's representative with the Michigan Association of Fairs and Exhibitions and partners with the Lenawee County Juvenile Court and Detention on programming. She also works with the Michigan State Fair on the Virtual Showcase.

Janelle is always willing to support her colleagues, her institute and the broader organization. She is a strong and effective mentor for new and experienced Extension professionals and makes herself available for both in-person and virtual consulting whenever needed.

Colleagues describe Janelle's "unwavering commitment to the safety and well-being of children and youth involved in MSU Extension programs" and her exemplary delivery of the full-day SAFE (Screening Applicants for Effectiveness) training. She continues this focus on youth safety and well-being in leading Youth and Teen Mental Health First Aid training.

Janelle Stewart works tirelessly to empower young people, colleagues, and community partners, embodying the spirit of service and collaboration that defines our organization and this award.

Meritorious Service Award—Support Staff & Supervisors

Loris Trailer

Loris (Lori) Trailer provides administrative support for the Michigan State University Extension office in Clare County and for Extension's District 6 (Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Mecosta, Missaukee, Osceola, and Wexford counties).

As leader of the district support staff team, Lori facilitates monthly team meetings and training on a variety of software programs and online tools. She is a mentor and friend and is always available to lend a hand, either in person or through technology.

Lori's colleagues describe her as organized, punctual, kind, considerate, flexible, dependable, committed to excellence, and willing to try any new process or procedure to implement positive change. Her colleagues appreciate her historical knowledge of MSU Extension and of district operations.

Lori uses social media to increase the visibility and reach of MSU Extension programs and materials among underserved populations and the broader community. When vacant positions in District 6 began attracting fewer applicants than usual, Lori started using job search sites like Indeed.com and social media outlets to connect with prospective employees. This approach reduced traditional search costs, increased the visibility of postings, and attracted an expanded pool of qualified candidates.

She has developed close working relationships with county commissioners, agricultural producers and growers, colleagues, community college presidents, vendors, Friends of Extension groups, business owners, and other stakeholders throughout District 6.

Lori Trailer helps MSU Extension realize its mission in rural Michigan by communicating and connecting with colleagues, volunteers, advisory councils, and other stakeholders, and by guiding them to the resources they need. She is indeed a worthy recipient of this award.

MCEA JOHN A. HANNAH AWARD FOR PROGRAM EXCELLENCE

The John A. Hannah Award recognizes superior Extension programs developed and carried out by MSU Extension professionals (campus-, district-, and county-based) appointed by the MSU Board of Trustees. This most prestigious award, named for the late MSU President John Hannah, recognizes the excellence of programs, not just individuals.

Facilitative Leadership Program

Katje Armentrout, Anne Baker, Kim Chung, Karly Creguer, Will Cronin (coordinator), Julie Darnton, Lindsey Gardner, Parker Jones, Meghan Loughlin-Krusky, Holly Madill, Andy Northrop, Georgia Peterson, Julie Pioch, Emily Proctor, Bethany Prykucki (coordinator), Rebecca Rogers, Marie Ruemenapp, Sandra Westover, Brian Wibby, Kendra Wills

In the more than 20-year history of Michigan State University Extension's Facilitative Leadership Program, over 1,400 people have completed the intensive, evidence-based program.

Facilitative Leadership evaluations consistently report that the program excels in delivering tangible benefits to participants, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to excel as facilitative leaders in their respective fields. The program has reached new and diverse audiences by moving the training to underserved parts of the state and offering scholarships to community organizations.

The program has gained a national reputation as a high-quality professional development experience, too. MSU Extension partners with Purdue Extension to offer the program nationally, and in 2023, Extension professionals from the two organizations teamed up to revise the *Facilitative Leadership Participant's Workbook*. The result is an even more robust and adaptable program.

The course offers high-quality content aimed at building and strengthening facilitative leadership skills. It covers topics such as leading group discussions, reaching consensus, encouraging creativity, and setting outcome-based goals. Participants receive plenty of hands-on practice, feedback, and coaching.

Kris Parker and Tamara Ogle, Purdue Extension regional community development educators and two co-authors of the revised workbook, are big fans of the Facilitative Leadership Program: "The Facilitative Leadership Program stands out as a beacon of excellence among leadership programs for its focus and its efficacy."

With its organizers' unwavering commitment to excellence, innovative approach to leadership development, and collaborative spirit, the Facilitative Leadership Program is having a positive impact and driving change across Michigan and beyond.

MSU EXTENSION DIRECTOR'S AWARD OF DISTINCTION

The Director's Award of Distinction is presented to an individual or team who has brought outstanding service, achievement, and most importantly, distinction, to Michigan State University Extension. Created in 2023, this is the highest accolade awarded by the director of MSU Extension for contributing to MSU Extension in a positive way by exceeding expectations to better the organization's ability to fulfill its purpose, mission, goals, and objectives.

Strategic Direction Team

Mary Bohling, Barry Bradford, Bert Cregg, Erin Daines, Christi Demitz, Mary Dunckel, Imelda Galdamez, Ehsan Ghane, Kai Gritter, Thomas Guthrie, Ana Heck, David Ivan, Betty Jo Krosnicki, Heidi Lindberg, David Lowenstein, Sulaiman Mansour, Becky McKendry, Brad Neumann, Bethany Prykucki, Jodi Schulz, Gwyn Shelle, Kelly Stelter, Jacob Stieg, Heather Triezenberg, Kathy Walicki, Vivian Washington, Ben Werling, Sandra Westover

Periodically, an organization like Michigan State University Extension must assess where we are, identify what we do well, and uncover opportunities for improvement. MSU Extension has just completed such a strategic planning process.

The work was led by the MSU Extension Strategic Direction Team, a diverse, dedicated group of MSU Extension professionals who hold positions and roles across the organization and come from all over Michigan. The team spent more than a year leading listening sessions across the state, conducting in-depth English- and Spanish-language interviews and surveys, analyzing the information they gathered—including more than 25,000 comments from nearly 700 participants—and writing a final report.

The work of the Strategic Direction Team will help ensure that MSU Extension continues to play a critical role in directly connecting the research, knowledge, and solutions of MSU scientists to Michigan residents, families, businesses, and communities. Thank you to the MSU Extension Strategic Directions Team for their hard work and congratulations on receiving this richly deserved award!

OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO EXTENSION AWARD

The Outstanding Service to Extension Award is the highest honor given to MSU Extension professional staff members. Nominees must have consistently exhibited leadership, service, and excellence in program planning, delivery, evaluation, or administration. This award is open to professional staff members who have had MSU Extension careers lasting at least 20 years.

Philip Kaatz

Philip (Phil) Kaatz is a senior field crop Extension educator based in Lapeer County who has been with Michigan State University Extension since 1999. Phil is a leader, mentor, innovator, and successful grant writer and fundraiser, and a trainer with international reach.

His leadership skills have contributed significantly to his success. Phil was the Lapeer County MSU Extension director for seven years, has chaired the MSU Extension Field Crops and Forage teams, served as president of the Michigan Association of Extension Agents, and been the interim director of MSU Extension's five-county District 10 in the Thumb. Phil has also been involved in MSU Extension's international outreach efforts in Ghana, Israel, and Ukraine.

Phil contributes to online courses, is the author or co-author of more than 130 MSU Extension News articles, and is the co-author, with Kim Cassida, of *Recommended Hay and Pasture Forages for Michigan*. Kim wrote of Phil's contributions: "His involvement in my applied research projects has been invaluable, from defining key issues for research to collecting and disseminating data to the farming community."

Phil started and has led the free Field Crops Virtual Breakfast online program since 2018. Each week during the growing season, nearly 200 field crop farmers and consultants receive live updates about rapidly changing crop, pest, disease, and environmental conditions. Participants in the live sessions can earn pesticide applicator and certified crop advisor recertification credits.

Whether he's working in person or online, in Michigan or abroad, Phil Kaatz is a respected MSU Extension professional who is greatly deserving of this award.

MSU DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC STAFF AWARD

Debra Barrett and **Dawn Contreras** received MSU Distinguished Academic Staff Awards in 2024. Thank you, Debra and Dawn, for your significant contributions to MSU Extension and to the university.

MSU EXTENSION SHARED VALUES AWARDS

The MSU Extension professionals listed in this section received Shared Values Awards during MSU Extension's monthly all-staff webinars from September 2022 through September 2024.

2022

Anne Baker, Erick Elgin, Kai Gritter, Erin Moore, Kea Norrell-Aitch, Jane Rapin, Keri Rowley, Megghan Honke Seidel, Ben Werling, John Wurm

2023

Chelsea Bancroft, Debra Barrett, Christina Curell, Julia Darnton, Naim Edwards, Sarah Eichberger, Sarah Faubert, RJ Gibbs, Cindy Hudson, Lauren Jescovitch, Eric Karbowski, Norma Lundeen, Sulaiman Mansour, Wendy Marek, Lori Martin, Becky McKendry, Dorothy Munn, Michelle Neff, Ian Sawyer, Richard Wooten

2024

Jill Connin, Mary Dunckel, Nonie Gross, James Kelly, Lindsey Kerr, Bob Krusky, Saneya Moore, Gwyn Shelle, Amy Shovels, Tiffany Stevens, Laura VanEtten, Kathy Walicki

PROMOTION

RJ Gibbs earned Step II promotion in 2024. Congratulations and thank you, RJ, for your significant contributions to MSU Extension.

MILESTONE YEARS OF SERVICE WITH MSU

The MSU Extension staff members listed in this section have marked employment milestones during this calendar year. We thank them all for their years of dedicated service to the organization.

40 Years of Service

Nancy Hampton

35 Years of Service

Amy Baker, Mary Pond

30 Years of Service

Julie Pioch

25 Years of Service

Darren Bagley, Carlos Garcia-Salazar, Kristine Hahn, Becky Henne, David Ivan, Angela Jernstadt, Philip Kaatz, Shelly Krueger, David Radloff, Kendra Wills

20 Years of Service

Lindsey Brownlee, Becky Heim, Kathy Jamieson, Nikki Rothwell, Brandon Schroeder, Megghan Honke Seidel, Erica Tobe, Phillip Tocco, Vivian Washington, Janice Zerbe

15 Years of Service

Christine Heverly, Sheila Salo, Michael Sanders, Jacob Stieg, Ben Werling, Brian Wibby

10 Years of Service

Mariel Borgman, Karly Creguer, Tracy D'Augustino, Christi Demitz, Sarah Eichberger, Kristi Evans, Kathryn Fischer, Georgina Guzman, William Hendrian, Aaron Kortenhoven, Kara Lynch, Nicole Wethington, Paul Putnam, Jane Rapin, Nicole Walker, Glenda Weiss, Elizabeth Williams, Jamie Wilson

5 Years of Service

Vanessa Armstrong, Nola Auernhamer, Lanae Bump, Geep Charlebois, Karen Collins, Michelle Eagling, Paige Filice, RJ Gibbs, Karlena Grenn, Kai Gritter, Ana Heck, Lauren Jescovitch, Eric Karbowski, David Lowenstein, Norma Lundeen, Michelle Luttrell, Patricia Makins, Becky McKendry, Sydney Miller, Michael Reinke, Ian Sawyer, Morgan Scharphorn, Renae Siler, Amanda Smith, Wade Syers, Rayshawnda Temple, Shelby Warner, Steven Whittington

EXTENSION PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION AWARDS

MSU Extension's professional associations have presented an array of annual awards to their members this year. We're pleased to recognize and congratulate these award winners in this program.

COMMUNITY & NATURAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION AWARDS

Community Partnership Award

Michigan Conservation Stewards Program

Tyler Bassett, Bindu Bhakta, Beth Clawson, Erica Clites, Josh Cohen, Ashley Cole-Wick, Julie Crick, Erick Elgin, Anna Ellis, Harmony Fierke-Gmazel, Paige Filice, Audrey Gagnier, Josh Gunn, Rachel Hackett, Kristine Hahn, Phyllis Higman, Ruth Kline-Robach, Misty Klotz, Yu Man Lee, Jesse Lincoln, Meghan Loughlin-Krusky, Norma Lundeen, Elliot Nelson, Dan O'Keefe, Georgia Peterson, Logan Rowe, Angela Scapini, Paul Schilke, Shelby Warner, Alexa Warwick, Lois Wolfson

The Michigan Conservation Stewards Program is a 10-week course for people interested in science-based ecosystem management principles. The program provides a balanced, integrated, and practical learning opportunity for people seeking information about ecosystems, conservation, and land management.

The program began nearly 20 years ago and is now taught in a hybrid format with online modules and in-person experiential learning opportunities led by MSU professionals and local conservation partners. Since the program began, there have been 37 regional learning cohorts and more than 800 participants.

Participants complete a capstone project in which they take what they have learned in the classroom and apply it to real-world needs in their communities.

MSU Extension staff provide state and local leadership for the program and partner with local and regional conservation organizations such as local parks departments, nature centers, conservation districts, and watershed councils. These partners provide critical support to the program and are keys to its success. They provide classroom space for in-person learning sessions, content expertise during presentations and field trips, and mentors for participants completing their capstone projects.

The Conservation Stewards Program continues to grow and reach new partners and diverse participants. In fall 2024, four learning cohorts will meet across the state with over 45 partners involved.

Innovative Program Award

Paige Filice

Plants and animals sold through the pet and garden trade can pose serious risks to the environment if they are released into the wild. Since 2015, Paige Filice, MSU Extension natural resources educator, has been empowering pet and garden retailers to make sound purchasing decisions and share handling and surrender information with their customers through the Reduce Invasive Pet and Plant Escapes (RIPPLE) program. Through RIPPLE, retailers across the state receive one-on-one education visits and outreach kits with regulatory guidance, identification resources, and items for retail display focused on the importance of not releasing species into the wild.

Over the past several years, Paige has also collaborated on a multistate effort to raise awareness of invasive crayfish among aquarium retailers. The project surveyed pet retailers' awareness of invasive crayfish and related regulations and developed a new and innovative educational product called the *Great Lakes Almanac to Invasive Crayfish*.

The Almanac addresses a significant gap in retailers' knowledge of regulated crayfish and helps remove barriers to identifying the animals through creative illustrations and easy to follow instructions. Developed in cooperation with federal, state, tribal, and county agencies across the Great Lakes basin, the Almanac is the first outreach product about invasive crayfish in the pet trade that applies to all states and Canadian provinces that border the Great Lakes. Over 25,000 copies are being distributed to pet stores in the U.S. and Canada.

Raymond D. Vlasin Award for Program Excellence

Katie Ockert

Chronic wasting disease is a fatal neurological illness that was first detected in white-tailed deer in Michigan in 2015. To connect with new audiences and increase chronic wasting disease awareness and prevention efforts, Katie Ockert, MSU Extension statewide CWD educator, conducted human dimensions research and developed education and outreach programs for hunters and outdoor enthusiasts. Her outreach and engagement efforts focused on ongoing disease research and what people can do to slow the spread of the disease. Katie collaborated with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to create, deliver, and evaluate various CWD educational initiatives.

In 2020, Katie worked with the DNR to publicize the need for hunters to collect and submit the retropharyngeal lymph nodes of the deer they harvested so the nodes could be tested for disease. At the time, this was a new concept. The initiative included attending many community events and producing and posting a video tutorial that has now been viewed over 57,000 times.

Katie and the program partners have created a variety of educational materials (like rack cards, news articles, web pages, and videos) to inform people about Michigan's deer herd and how they can help slow the spread of CWD and other diseases. The program has been highly successful, and in 2023, Katie received a grant to produce hunter field kits and share CWD information through radio and social media ads. Preliminary evaluations show that more than 50% of listeners implemented at least one mitigation practice and 79% visited MSU Extension's CWD website.

EPSILON SIGMA PHI AWARDS

Administrative Leadership Award

Cheryl Eschbach

Distinguished Service Award

Kara Lynch

Distinguished Team Award

Leah Christie, Shelly Krueger, Dorothy Munn

Diversity & Multiculturalism—Individual Award

Julia Darnton

Early Career Service Award

Ana Heck

Visionary Leadership Award

Becky Henne

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF EXTENSION 4-H YOUTH STAFF AWARDS

Distinguished Service Award (Michigan & National)

Veronica Bolhuis

In her 13 years with MSU Extension, Veronica Bolhuis has offered an array of youth programs at the local, state, and national levels. Veronica's programs include babysitting classes, pollination education, and all-species livestock meetings. She teamed up to launch a 4-H Ninja Warrior SPIN club, Passport Kitchen, and 4-H Wild Spartans. Veronica has collaborated with a military family to host a Boots-On deployment activity to introduce youth to military life and works with a team on the Month of the Military Child Goosechase.

She is known as a team player who can be counted on to help where needed at the local and state levels, which has involved teaching at 4-H Exploration Days and supporting the World Food Prize program, 4-H Veterinary Science weekend, and 4-H Animal Career Quest. Veronica works closely with both county fair and 4-H councils, including organizing a free book giveaway at her county fair.

Meritorious Service Award (Michigan & National)

Michelle Neff

Michelle Neff is a longtime member of MAE4-HYS and an active youth development professional with MSU Extension and Michigan 4-H. Michelle has a passion for providing opportunities for youth to develop the life skills that will help them be successful adults. She has served in a variety of positions over her 22 years with MSU Extension.

Currently, as a supervising educator, Michelle helps guide and develop 4-H program coordinators in District 6 and works on statewide 4-H club and group development resources for volunteers and staff. She wants to continue to help 4-H program coordinators strive to develop and maintain high-quality, impactful 4-H programs.

Notable Service Award (Michigan)

Kendra Van Order

After starting her first week with MSU Extension at the 2022 Spring Conference, Kendra Van Order finished her first month by rebuilding the partnership between Kent County 4-H and the Kent County Youth Fair. Since then, Kendra has developed new programs with new and existing partnerships that cover veterinary medicine, livestock, and animal science.

In less than two years, she has worked to present a total of 43 individual or collaborative program activities. Kendra has developed seven new partnerships and helped her county colleagues establish four others. Her first program as a 4-H program coordinator was a beef series that reached over 80 youth from more than 30 counties. Kendra also helped create and run the first ever 4-H Livestock Judging Camp that assessed a need for livestock judging programming for youth and volunteers. She provided both county and statewide programming and became the Michigan 4-H dairy educator in January 2024.

Colleague Award (Michigan)

Kari Verellen

Communicator Award—Social Media Package (Michigan)

Angela Cook, Alyssa Picone, Maribel Richards, Carrie Shrier, Megan Wilczynski

4-H Innovator Award (Michigan)

Laurie Rivetto

Excellence in Animal Science Programming (Michigan)

Kendra Van Order

Excellence in Citizenship Programming (Michigan & National North Central Region)

Geep Charlebois

Excellence in Communication & Expressive Arts Programming (Michigan)

Patti Errer

Excellence in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Programming (Michigan)

Kendra Van Order

Excellence in Healthy Living Programming (Michigan)

Angela Cook

Excellence in Natural Resources & Environmental Education Programming (Michigan)

Maggie Merchberger

Excellence in Peer Professional Development Programming (Michigan)

Christine Heverly & Janelle Stewart

Excellence in Shooting Sports Programming (Michigan & National North Central Region)

Sarah Griffin

Excellence in Teamwork (Michigan)

Christine Heverly, Michelle Neff, Laurie Rivetto

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF EXTENSION AGENTS AWARDS

Search for Excellence in Livestock Production (National Winner) Emergency Response to Accidents Involving Livestock Team

Paola Bacigalupo Sanguesa, Madonna Benjamin, Beth Ferry, Sarah Fronczak, Thomas Guthrie, Ana Heck, Jerad Jaborek, Mike Metzger, Katie Ockert, Cora Okkema, Meghan Honke Seidel, Casey Zangaro

According to the 2020 Ag Census, Michigan has about 3.26 million head of livestock, and thousands of those animals are transported over Michigan roads every day. Michigan State University Extension's Emergency Response to Accidents Involving Livestock, or ERAIL, program prepares first responders to encounter all kinds of livestock at accident scenes.

The ERAIL program has four parts:

- » In-person training for response and transportation professionals.
- » Virtual training modules that expand the program's reach.
- » Individual consultations for organizations, locations, and units seeking to prepare for animal transportation emergencies.
- » A fleet of emergency response trailers equipped with the equipment and tools responders need to address emergencies involving livestock.

ERAIL's effectiveness is shown in evaluation data, continued funding, stakeholder comments, and responses to emergency events. Over 700 people have been trained through the ERAIL program, with 96% of participants indicating an increase in their skill set and over 90% saying they felt more comfortable around livestock after the training and more confident in their skills to address accidents involving livestock. All participants have reported being aware of the resources that are available to them to help prepare for and respond to accidents involving livestock.

The ERAIL team will continue their efforts to protect the safety of first responders and the traveling public at accident scenes involving livestock, to promote the welfare of animals involved in accidents, and to protect the image of the animal agriculture industry.

Search for Excellence in Young, Beginning, or Small Farmers or Ranchers (National Winner)

DEMaND (Developing and Educating Managers and New Decision-makers) Series Workgroup

Jon LaPorte, Frank Wardynski, Steven Whittington

Every year, new farmers encounter roadblocks that can reduce profitability and restrict their farm's ability to grow. In 2019, Michigan State University Extension created Developing and Educating Managers and New Decision-makers, or DEMaND, to help these farmers navigate through the roadblocks. The cross-team series features educational publications, webinars, and videos on the financial and business strategies that beginning and small farmers need to succeed.

The DEMaND materials are created by MSU Extension professionals and reviewed by agricultural and agribusiness professionals. This combination of university and industry expertise provides up-to-date information on topics ranging from insurance to marketing, from land access to loans and credit, and from the cost of production to budgeting.

Between 2021 and 2023, the written resources were read online 9,217 times and downloaded another 1,472 times. DEMaND educational videos on financial statements and grain marketing were viewed nearly 3,150 times between 2022 and 2023. The live webinars averaged more than 27 participants each from 2022 to 2024.

In 2022, nearly 95% of post-webinar survey respondents said their knowledge had increased and 86% said they would use what they had learned in the webinars. In 2023, 65% of respondents reported gaining knowledge and said they intended to use what they had learned.

Whether participants are taking over a family farm, are moving from farm employee to farm owner, or are new to farming, DEMaND's fresh look at farm management helps people with all levels of farm business knowledge increase their ability to meet the complex needs and challenges of managing a successful farm business.

Achievement Award (Michigan)

Jeremy Jubenville

Audio Recording (National Finalist)

Martin Mangual

Distinguished Service Award (Michigan)

Mike Metzger

Educational Video Recordings (National Finalist)

Martin Mangual

Event Promotional Package (Regional Winner)

ERAIL Team

Learning Module/Notebook (Regional Winner)

ERAIL Team

Newsletter (National Finalist)

Monica Jean & Casey Zangaro

Poster (National Finalist)

Casey Zangaro

Publication (Regional Winner)

Jon LaPorte

MICHIGAN EXTENSION ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES AWARDS

Educational Curriculum Package Award (1st Place Regional)

SLEEP: A Program Helping Adults Get More & Better Sleep

Laura Anderson, Anita Carter, Dawn Contreras, Christi Demitz, Tanner Derror, Christopher Drake, Cheryl Eschbach, Zelda Felix-Mottley, Kai Gritter, Naomi Hyso, Jacqueline Rabine, Miloni Rathod, Kris Swartzendruber, Lisa Tams, Holly Tiret, Robin Tucker, Nicole Wethington, Elizabeth Williams

The SLEEP Education for Everyone Program (SLEEP) curriculum is a six-week, online or in-person program that provides adults with tools to improve the quality and quantity of their sleep. The curriculum was developed from 2020 to 2021 through a collaborative effort by Michigan State University Extension, a sleep researcher from the MSU Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, a certified sleep medicine specialist from Henry Ford Health System, and older adult volunteers.

The curriculum package includes electronic slide presentations with scripted notes and embedded videos for each lesson, handouts, materials for a “Session Zero” recruitment class, and a facilitator’s guide. The facilitator’s guide contains weekly lesson plans, six post-program “sleep nudges” with embedded videos, and an instructor FAQ.

More than 1,000 adults have participated in SLEEP, and evaluation results have shown that participants make statistically significant and clinically meaningful improvements in their sleep duration, quality, insomnia symptoms, and sleep behaviors. Research has also shown that the improvements participants experience right after completing the program are retained six months later.

SLEEP received this award because of the comprehensiveness and versatility of the facilitator’s guide for virtual and in-person classes, and for the curriculum’s sleep nudges and other components that promote long-term retention of behavior changes in sleep quality and quantity.

Innovation in Programming Award (1st Place Regional)

Rural Opioid Misuse Prevention Program: Virtually Based Education Helps Rural Adults Reduce Their Risk of Opioid Misuse

Laura Anderson, Anita Carter, Dawn Contreras, Abigail Cudney, Danielle Dalimonte-Merckling, Christi Demitz, Tanner Derror, Cheryl Eschbach, Zelda Felix-Mottley, Kai Gritter, Georgina Guzman, Sheilah Hebert, Naomi Hyso, Lauren Kennedy, Kristine Swartzendruber, Holly Tiret, Nicole Wethington, Elizabeth Williams

To help address the public health crisis of opioid misuse in rural America, in 2020 Michigan State University Extension and the MSU College of Human Medicine teamed up to develop an opioid misuse prevention initiative for rural adults. The initiative dealt with the rural barriers of limited transportation and inadequate health care resources by offering online educational programs on how to cope with the physical and mental pain associated with anger, stress, and illness. The program objectives were to:

- » Design and launch an online system through which rural residents could be referred to opioid misuse prevention programs.
- » Deliver virtual opioid misuse prevention classes to about 3,000 rural residents over 3 years (2020 to 2023).
- » Evaluate the effectiveness of virtual-format opioid misuse programs in facilitating changes in the self-efficacy and frequency of using non-pharmacological methods to cope with the physical and mental pain associated with stress, anger, and illness.

Comments from the awards review committee included: “Definitely a hot topic.” “Good impact data.” “Great information about opioids in rural communities and how [people] are even more at-risk in these areas.” “I learned a lot by reading your application.”

Marketing Package Award (3rd Place National, 1st Place Central Region)

Increasing Recruitment & Registration of Adults Into Community-Based Free Online Health Programs Using Online E-Referrals

Andrea Aguila-Corrales, Laura Anderson, Anita Carter, Dawn Contreras, Abigail Cudney, Danielle Dalimonte-Merckling, Christi Demitz, Tanner Derror, Cheryl Eschbach, Zelda Felix-Mottley, Kai Gritter, Georgina Guzman, Sheilah Hebert, Naomi Hyso, Becky McKendry, Nicole Wethington, Jacqueline Rabine, Miloni Rathod, Kris Swartzendruber, Lisa Tams, Holly Tiret, Elizabeth Williams

As more Michiganders are diagnosed with chronic health conditions every year, the need to recruit and enroll participants in community-based health programs like those offered by MSU Extension has never been more critical. Therefore, MSU Extension's Health Work Team created and evaluated an online program referral system for its programs. The system features a QR code, web content, an e-referral site, and information on 10 free online health education programs. The group also developed marketing items like a referral card, brochures for healthcare providers and patients, and a poster for display in clinics and other community agencies.

When the system receives a referral, it emails the potential participant a marketing flyer with registration links for upcoming health programs so they can register for programs that interest them right away. Evaluation results have shown that the referral system has helped increase referrals and registrations for MSU Extension health programs. A study of participants completing the referral form assessed the classes they chose and attended and their readiness to change health behaviors.

Between May 2022 and May 2024 the system received 358 referrals with a total of 1,241 requests for specific programs: Stress Less With Mindfulness (196 requests); RELAX: Alternatives to Anger (160 requests); Personal Action Toward Health, or PATH, and SLEep Education for Everyone Program, or SLEEP (406 requests); Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention, A Matter of Balance, and Walk With Ease fall prevention programs (323 requests); and Powerful Tools for Caregivers (135 requests). The health programs drew nearly 5,900 participants combined over the same period.

Communications Television or Video Award (2nd Place Regional)

Keeping Food Safe Videos

Kellie Jordan, Kara Lynch, Laurie Messing

Family Health & Wellness Award (2nd Place Regional)

Virtual Delivery of a Lifestyle Behavior Education Program Increases the Self-Efficacy of Participants With at Least One Chronic Illness

Laura Anderson, Anita Carter, Dawn Contreras, Abigail Cudney, Danielle Dalimonte-Merckling, Christi Demitz, Tanner Derror, Zelda Felix-Mottley, Kai Gritter, Sheilah Hebert, Nicole Wethington, Holly Tiret, Elizabeth Williams

AUTOGRAPHS & NOTES



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