

Message from the District Director



MSU Extension is a catalyst for creating lasting impact that ripples across the Upper Peninsula, the state, and beyond. Our programs reach all audiences and age groups. From youth learning essential life skills and farmers exploring ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness, to older adults being able to access healthier foods and local communities discovering ways to increase economic impact. The possibilities of making an impact with Extension are endless.

Through partnerships we can produce exponential ripples to change the lives of our neighbors, family, and friends. For over 100 years, MSU Extension's goal has been to "bring knowledge to life." By connecting with organizations and agencies across the U.P., we bring the knowledge and research from Michigan State University to our communities and empower them to improve their lives. Alone we can cast a small stone to create ripples. Together our stone grows to produce a larger impact than any one organization can create themselves.

I have been with MSU Extension for ten years, serving as a district director in the Western and Central Upper Peninsula. As I continue to work in this role, I am looking forward to exploring new ways to work with our partners as we create ripples of impact across Gogebic County and beyond.

Paul Putnam, District 1 Director

Gogebic County Staff

- Laurie Celeski, Community Nutrition Instructor
- Anita Carter, Program Instructor, Disease Prevention & Social Emotional Health
- Ashley Dennis, 4-H Program Coordinator
- Erin Ross, Supervising & Staff Development Educator

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73

EXTENSION PROGRAMS INCLUDED GOGEBIC COUNTY RESIDENTS

574

GOGEBIC COUNTY RESIDENTS ATTENDED EXTENSION PROGRAMS

Program Highlight

Senior Project FRESH (SPF), which is part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Bill, is a program designed to help older adults incorporate more fresh fruit and vegetables in their diet. Senior Project FRESH was created to assist older adults living on a limited income with a secondary benefit of supporting Michigan farmers.

"I was unaware of this program and I am looking forward to going to the Farmers Market." - program participant

37

Extension programs held in the county

517

People attended programs held in the county



REPORTING

26

Extension educators, specialists and program staff reported data for Gogebic County

309

county direct, one-to-one education contacts

The MSU Extension Lawn and Garden Hotline is a free, vital tool accessible to any Michigan resident with access to a phone and awareness of this service. The Hotline can be reached by calling 1-888-678-3464. The two most common topics discussed were trees/shrubs and lawn care. Four Gogebic County residents used this service in 2023.

222

Youth enrolled in county 4-H

335

Youth participants in 4-H



Program Highlight

Gogebic County Fair Livestock Auction Each year the Fair brings the award hopes and dreams of 4-H'ers that their carefully raised animal will win the coveted Blue Ribbon!

Favorite quotes from the auction: "Great Looking Animal;" "Great Job raising your animal;" "Way to Go;" "Nice looking Animal."

Staff Success Stories

As told by a 4 year old

"I had a parent of a four-year-old reach out to me after the first lesson on hand washing. 'Were you the guest speaker? Someone taught her hand washing yesterday. Was that you? I didn't put water on my hands before soap this morning and got lectured, Miss Laurie! But she knows to go between her fingers!'"

-Mom of Four year old girl testimonial.

"I ran into the same parent a month later and she said that her daughter was eating a hot dog in a bun and asked, 'Is this a grain?' It prompted a discussion on the food groups between the two.

"The little girl asked me every week to 'Bring that Sneezzer Guy back.' She was referring to the Fight Bac Puppet that I had used to demonstrate covering when coughing and sneezing. I brought it back for the last class and emailed her mom a picture of the puppet, the little girl said, 'I love that guy!'"



Laurie Celeski,
Community
Nutrition Instructor
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Tai Chi for Arthritis and Balance

Tai Chi is a gentle exercise combining slow movement, deep breathing and focused intention. Benefits include: increase in strength, balance and posture; falls prevention; improvement in mind, body, and spirit; reduction in stress and increased relaxation. Modifications were available for both seated or standing practice.

"There is something that is hard for me to define that happens during these exercises/practices. My mind and body go to "another" place that is soothing and healing for a lot of things. Once one gains a little skill with the moves, it can be self-empowering about learning something new." -program participant

Tai Chi for Life at the Ironwood Farmer's Market

Anita Carter offered free Tai Chi sessions at the Ironwood Farmer's Market. Tai Chi is an incredible way to relax the mind, tone muscle, improve balance and flexibility, hone focus and of course enjoy a group activity!

"These classes have really, really helped my feet (plantar fasciitis)!! I can walk so much further now and am pain free within my usual walking parameters. I am so thankful for you Anita and the extension classes offered." -program participant



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Babysitter's Class held in partnership with Gogebic Community College and the Gogebic/Ontonagon Intermediate School District

Over the course of five sessions, participants learned skills in babysitting basics, child development, entertaining children, the business of babysitting: including designing a flyer for their business using the iPads available for the Apple grant, nutrition, cooking, tai chi, safety, CPR and First Aid.

Ashley Dennis led the use of iPads in designing a flyer.

Anita Carter led the students in some basic tai chi.

Anita and Ashley led the cooking part of the class.

Amanda Sprague, as a partner working for **Gogebic Community College** and the **GOISD** taught the class CPR and First Aid.



4-H

Ironwood Area Schools Winter Fest

Ironwood Area Schools borrowed our snow shoes for their homecoming event. They offered free snowshoeing for youth in high school. This group had a very fun time.

"We are very thankful for the snowshoes, at one point all but two pair were being used."
- program participant



Ashley Dennis,
4-H Program
Coordinator
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4-H Continued...

4-H Market Livestock Clinic

This was a clinic for youth to come together to learn about showmanship, feeding and caring for their animals. They worked great together to make sure that all understood the information presented to them. Kendra VanOrder, 4-H Dairy Science Extension Educator, joined us for the clinic. The group sat and asked questions during lunch. They picked Kendra's brain for a variety of informational topics on how to get better. It had been a while since we had someone from down state come to Gogebic County to help 4-H youth become more successful in showing livestock. We even had a few participants from Wisconsin 4-H join us to learn about showmanship. This was a great experience and good way to show youth that others are doing the same thing they are just over the border in Wisconsin.



According to research completed by the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University, 4-H'ers are four times more likely to make contributions to their communities, twice as likely to be civically active, and twice as likely to make healthier choices.