

MSU Extension-Oakland County

2008 Program Highlights



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Bringing Knowledge to Life!

Table of Contents

Message from the Director	3
Positive Youth Development	
4-H Youth Development	4
Environmental Stewardship	
Master Gardener Volunteer Program.....	10
“Don’t Guess...Soil Test!”	12
Septic Maintenance Education	14
Shoreline Management to Protect Water Quality	16
Addressing Obesity and Its Threat to Health	
Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program.....	17
Project F.R.E.S.H.....	19
Family Nutrition Program.....	20
Childcare Providers	21
Breastfeeding Mothers	21
Food Safety	22
Increasing Capacity for Economic Development	
Citizen Planner.....	23
Better Kid Care	25
Oakland County MSU Extension Educator Staff.....	26
FY2008 Oakland County MSU Extension Funding	27

Director's Message

MSU Extension has been a powerful, positive influence in the lives of people for over a century. As the outreach arm of Michigan's Land Grant University, Extension continues bringing the knowledge base, garnered through research, of Michigan State University to the residents of Oakland County through applied learning in subjects critical to the everyday lives of people. In 2008 the lives of families, young people, senior citizens, mothers with newborn babies, people with impaired hearing, those with emotional impairments and children in childcare settings were made healthier through Extension programs in basic nutrition, health, fitness, food safety, budgeting, breastfeeding and even safe food preservation.

Environmental stewardship in the county increased significantly through programs, workshops, classes and volunteers. The Master Gardener Volunteer Program, Conservation Stewards Program, Lakescaping for Water Quality programs and Citizen Planner Green Infrastructure programs equipped residents to share information in their communities, implement educational programs throughout the county, engage effectively in the green infrastructure planning in their communities and change their landscapes along edges of lakes, rivers and streams. Through education and promotion of environmental stewardship concepts, the number of residents getting their garden soil tested before adding fertilizers and other amendments increased significantly.

Through time, effort and commitment of volunteers, young people in every corner of Oakland County experienced public speaking, engaged in community service projects, gained leadership skills, practiced becoming entrepreneurs, mentored younger kids and got hands-on experience in video production, web design and performing arts.

Extension began with the mission of bringing critical knowledge to the lives of people for the purpose of increasing the quality of their lives, and that is the mission that will help take Michigan into a bright future.

Beverly J. Terry

MSU Extension helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities.



Positive Youth Development



Participants in 4-H Youth Development Programs build communication and problem-solving skills through hands-on activities.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

“I’m going to be a mechanical engineer.”

The words roll off the tongue of a 15 year-old who just minutes earlier was describing the merits of his favorite video game system. When asked for more details about his career aspirations, the teen explains that he thinks it would be fun to spend his time creating things. He reflects for a moment and adds, “That’s really what engineering is all about, you know. It’s using technology to solve problems by designing something new.”

That’s a fairly sophisticated perspective for a high school student, especially one who lives in a resource-challenged community and attends a school with a low graduation rate --- only 26 percent of the freshmen in 2004 walked across the commencement stage in 2008. With economic uncertainties and limited educational opportunities surrounding them, many young people have difficulty imagining their lives 5 or 10 years into the future.

But it’s imperative that they do.

Research conducted by the Search Institute has consistently demonstrated that young people who possess positive assets, such as a sense of purpose and a positive view of their personal future, are significantly less likely to engage in risk behaviors. Involvement in structured activities during out-of-school time can help build these assets, and empower youth to take responsibility for achieving their goals. As the 2007 Tufts University Study of Positive Youth Development notes, “early and ongoing involvement in youth development programs help children develop confidence and leadership skills where they learn what they like, are able to make choices, be leaders, and have their voices heard.”

In other words, these programs help low income, 15 year-old video game experts envision themselves as mechanical engineers, and develop a plan to reach that goal. The young man who possessed that vision was one of more than a hundred students participating in the Pontiac Neighborhood Youth Initiative, an innovative collaboration between youth-serving organizations and neighborhoods, led by MSU Extension and funded by the United Way of Southeast Michigan.

Positive Youth Development

For students in Pontiac, one of the biggest obstacles to participation in out-of-school activities is a lack of transportation. Recognizing this challenge, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Programs facilitated a strategic planning session with local organizations and community members in the fall of 2007. The collaborators determined that the best alternative would be to bring high-quality youth development activities to local neighborhood centers. MSU Extension developed an outcome-oriented grant proposal to help bring the vision to life. The strength of the collaborative team and the comprehensive approach to Positive Youth Development resulted in more than \$200,000 in funding from United Way for Southeastern Michigan. These resources support volunteer-led activities that focus on homework help, resistance skills, career exploration, environmental science, creativity, leadership development, and more.

Engineers of Tomorrow is one such initiative. Every Saturday from October through June, 24 students engage in hands-on problem-solving activities that apply key engineering concepts to real-life challenges. A highlight of the program is a field trip to a local Engineering university, where the students gain a deeper understanding of the career options available, as well as the academic pathways to those careers.

It's not necessary to leave Pontiac to engage in positive youth development activities, however. Almost every day after school, 20 or 30 elementary-age students gather in the community room at Newman Court Apartments to receive homework help from volunteers.

Academic support is a key activity in these after-school programs, because the need is so great. According to the 2008 Michigan Educational Assessment Program results,



less than half of Pontiac's eighth graders met or exceeded the basic proficiency standards in Reading, Writing, Mathematics or Science. That's significantly lower than the statewide average, in which 74 to 77% of eighth graders in public schools demonstrated their proficiency in each of those academic areas.

Increasing the reading skills of tomorrow's 8th graders requires a concerted effort to support the academic achievement of today's elementary school students, and that's exactly what the Pontiac Neighborhood Youth Initiative does. Providing a consistent 2-hour block of homework help every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday greatly increases the likelihood that children go to school with their work completed, prepared to ask questions in the classroom and build on their knowledge.

Positive Youth Development



Janessa Black (left front) with a few of the students she mentors through PNYI and 4-H Youth Development.

It also ensures that they're building supportive relationships with caring adults. According to the Search Institute, young people who receive support from three or more nonparent adults possess a valuable asset that will help them grow up to be healthy, caring and responsible. If those adults happen to be neighbors, the young person receives a double-benefit, as the perception of a "caring neighborhood" is an equally important asset. In low-income urban communities, those kinds of supportive environments are more difficult to maintain, as a higher percentage of rental housing usually results in more transient populations.

The Pontiac Neighborhood Youth Initiative provides those consistent relationships in a supportive environment with clear boundaries and expectations. Because the activities in the neighborhoods ensure that youth are engaged in constructive use of their out-of-school time, they are truly asset-rich communities. To learn more about the impact of the Initiative, read "Janessa's Story" (at right).

Janessa's Story

When she walks into the room, a cluster of 8 year-olds immediately surround her, shouting her name with a level of excitement usually reserved for rock stars.

"Janessa's here!!"

The 18 year-old high school senior has been involved in the Pontiac Neighborhood Youth Initiative (PNYI) for a decade, beginning with 4-H club activities at the Walton Park Manor Cooperative. When her family moved across the city to a different neighborhood last year, she immediately became involved as a volunteer mentor to elementary-age students. It was an easy transition, because both communities provide PNYI programs.

Her decision to stay involved was based on her belief that the activities change lives. In her opinion, "If the after-school program did not exist, most of the younger kids would just be playing all day and not doing any schoolwork, and the older kids might get involved in drugs."

Being empowered to share her skills has helped Janessa chart a course toward a bright future for herself. "In five years, I plan to have a degree in Human Resources," she says confidently. "Ultimately, I'll have a career as a Social Worker." In the meantime, she's inspiring elementary-age kids to follow in her footsteps.

Positive Youth Development



PNYI youth show off the bird houses they constructed after learning about the different birds that live in Pontiac.

Helping communities intentionally create environments that contribute to Positive Youth Development (PYD) is a unique role played by the staff and volunteers of MSU Extension. It's not enough to simply know the elements of PYD or be able to name the 40 Developmental Assets. The power of those concepts is in their application. To that end, MSU Extension provides practical training for volunteers to help them design activities based upon the PYD and asset models. Volunteers who successfully create asset-rich environments are asked to mentor their peers. 4-H Youth Development staff demonstrate the power of these principles through county-wide initiatives.

One such initiative is the use of service opportunities to give young people a sense that they are valued resources in the community. 2008 saw the launch of the **Summer of Service** initiative, which involved 8th graders in a series of projects at non-profit organizations around the county. By the end of the program, 92% of the participants stated that they “have the skills to make a positive difference in the community.” Service activities were a common theme across the county, with 81% of 4-H Clubs participating in some form of service in 2008.

These activities help young people build skills, self-esteem, and a sense of purpose --- three internal assets that greatly increase their prospects for building a life in which they find meaning and are healthy. The 2007 Tufts University Study of Positive Youth Development demonstrated that youth participating in 4-H have higher grades, school engagement, and expectations for going to college. Thanks to the efforts of energetic volunteers and communities, more than 12,000 Oakland County youth had those opportunities in 2008.



In 2008, 4-H celebrated 100 years of programming in Michigan.

Positive Youth Development

One of the greatest strengths of Positive Youth Development (PYD) practices is that they are beneficial to all young people, regardless of their age or community. That's why Michigan State University Extension embeds PYD in all of its youth programs across Oakland County. One of the key components is the encouragement of youth participation and leadership, so that young people play a significant role in planning and choosing the educational activities in which they engage.

In Oakland County, this youth empowerment is obvious in many places and programs, including:

- The **Me & Mai Cross-Cultural 4-H program**, developed by Hmong-American students who wanted to learn more about their families' journeys to America and share those stories with a diverse group of peers.
- **Youth Entrepreneurship 4-H Clubs**, which help young people learn basic skills in business planning and operation. Participants are empowered to act on their creative ideas and establish profit-making ventures of their own.
- **The 4-H Youth Leadership Institute**, a comprehensive series of workshops that challenges high school students to apply their skills to important community issues via meaningful youth-designed service projects.
- 4-H Clubs focusing on **communication skills and performing arts**, which empower young people to literally find their voice and express themselves.
- A wide array of 4-H project areas, from **web design and video production** to more traditional areas such as sewing and raising animals, all of which provide opportunities for youth to make decisions and take responsibility for project outcomes.



The **4-H Proud Equestrian Program (PEP)** provides therapeutic and recreational horseback riding opportunities for mentally and/or physically challenged young people. Under the guidance and leadership of specially trained instructors, riders work toward enhanced physical and emotional status and improved self image.

Positive Youth Development

\$294,000 =

Value of external grants leveraged to expand the capacity of MSU Extension's Youth Development initiatives during the 2008 program year.

154 =

The number of educational project areas that young people explore through MSU Extension.

328 =

Focused learning groups and school programs facilitated by MSU Extension staff.

By the Numbers:
how Oakland County MSUE impacts 12,000 young people annually

89 =

Unique community partners who support positive youth development practices.

68 =

4-H Clubs provided ongoing positive youth development activities across Oakland County communities.

\$3,236,220 =

Value of time contributed by MSU Extension's 655 youth development volunteers in 2008.

Environmental Stewardship

MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Master Gardener Volunteers were on a mission in 2008. They took what they learned in the Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program and shared their expertise with others throughout Oakland County. Scores of them were simply doing what they have done for years and others were new graduates of the winter and fall Master Gardener Volunteer Training Programs of 2008.

A retired Oakland County Public Health Nurse regularly worked with the Older Person's Commission in Rochester to teach adaptive gardening techniques so seniors were able to continue experiencing their connection to the soil and the earth. Another Master Gardener Volunteer worked with very young children in her school district and taught them how they could be environmental stewards now and into adulthood. Yet another Master Gardener Volunteer developed a proposal for Habitat for Humanity that resulted in supervising and assisting student volunteers in landscaping a number of Habitat homes during a *Landscaping Youth Blitz Build*.

2008 Statistics:

- 109 adults trained in two classes
- 14 youth trained in two Junior Master Gardener classes
- 543 active Master Gardener Volunteers
- 325 volunteered with youth, representing 1895 hours
- 26,013 total volunteer hours reported
- \$526,763 economic value to Oakland County
- Equivalent to 13 full-time employees



Lathrup Village Junior Master Gardeners busy volunteering.

They volunteered with young people through many venues and in countless places in the county. They connected with kids in the 4-H Youth Development Program, in schools, with Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, at the Oakland County Fair, at Crossroads for Youth, through Project Rural Education Days (RED) and the Junior Master Gardener Program.

In 2008 adult Master Gardener Volunteers conducted two Junior Master Gardener programs in Oakland County. These 6-week courses targeted 3rd through 5th graders and were science-based like the adult version. The Junior Master Gardener Programs were planned and taught entirely by the adult volunteers. The curriculum consisted of Plant Science, Soils, Water, Insects, Diseases, and Volunteerism. Following completion of the classes each young person volunteered 10 hours to achieve Junior Master Gardener certification.

Environmental Stewardship

Project RED, a Michigan Farm Bureau program, helped kids gain an appreciation for the way our food, fuel and fiber are produced and the importance of agriculture to their everyday lives. During the day small groups of 3rd graders moved among a variety of “learning stations.” The stations had a variety of games, discussions and “hands – on” experiences. Many stations included information for the teachers to take back to the classroom.

In 2008, six school districts sent 487 3rd graders to Project RED. Twenty-one Master Gardener Volunteers were involved. Master Gardener Volunteer, Margy Truza, took leadership for a station on seed germination.



Margy Truza, Master Gardener Volunteer teaching youth about seed germination

She made wonderful posters, gathered all the supplies needed and trained other Master Gardener Volunteers to help teach the hands-on planting activity.

From spring through fall Master Gardener Volunteers were busy at farmers markets around the county giving information and enthusiastically providing answers to the gardening questions of crowds of market patrons. Since the “eating locally” movement has been in full swing Master Gardener Volunteers were even more busy than in past years.

Many Master Gardener Volunteers taught vegetable gardening classes for local garden clubs, while one did numerous native plant presentations at libraries, for watershed groups and garden clubs, and at the MSU Tollgate Education Center in Novi.

In addition to expanding MSU Extension’s purpose of providing informal educational opportunities to local residents and communities they generously helped others through community service projects. Master Gardener Volunteers in Highland and White Lake Township served on their townships’ Beautification Committees. Others worked on the Brandon Township native plant grant project helping to write the grant proposal, select appropriate plants and then supervising and helping to do the actual planting. One group of Junior Master Gardeners volunteered to maintain the Lathrup Village Children’s Garden, and helped install a Rain Garden in that community. Another group of Junior Master Gardeners volunteered at Earthworks Urban Farm in Detroit helping to maintain vegetable gardens grown to help feed the hungry.

Environmental Stewardship

“DON’T GUESS... SOIL TEST!”

Who wouldn’t want lawns, landscapes, flower and vegetable gardens to be lush, green and producing lots of fresh fruits and vegetables? Who wouldn’t want to minimize the use of fertilizers, insecticides and herbicides in the process? In 2001 after asking themselves these questions for a few years Oakland County MSU Extension (MSUE) and the Southeast Oakland County Water Authority (SOCWA) staff teamed up to create the “Don’t Guess...Soil Test!” Program (DGST) designed to promote the practice of soil testing in the spring by gardeners and landscapers. The outcome intended was decreasing the use of unnecessary fertilizers.

Soil testing kits were sold at local retail stores during the month of April. The cost included organic matter analysis as an intrinsic part of the soil testing package.

The samples were picked up from participating retailers and taken to the Michigan State University Soil and Nutrient Testing Laboratory. The soil was tested at the lab and results sent back to the MSU Extension office where horticulture staff reviewed the results and made recommendations on soil amendments. This special spring program created an opportunity for retailers to incorporate a value-added service into a “one-stop” shopping experience for their customers. The first year the program was offered in Southeast Oakland County through a small number of locally owned retailers.



Bordine’s team member Rock Blanchard promoting a “Don’t Guess...Soil Test!” kit.

Because Oakland County is home to over 1400 inland lakes and headwaters of five rivers, fertilizer containing phosphorus gained much notoriety. In 2008 more partners joined. DGST included MSU Extension, SOCWA, the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program, Master Gardener Volunteers, garden centers, hardware stores and the MSU Soil and Plant Nutrient Testing Laboratory. MSU Extension Oakland County and its partners increased awareness of the environmental, economic and horticultural benefits of soil testing.

Environmental Stewardship

In 2008, the number of retail locations participating in Oakland County in DGST rose from 16 to 38. ACO Hardware's decision to join as partners made the difference!

The DGST program attracted 476 customers in Oakland County. They accounted for 73% of the total for the entire year. The DGST program increased public awareness of the importance of testing soil before deciding to add fertilizers.



Mary Ann Chupa, staff at the Plant and Pest Diagnostic Center and Hotline at the MSUE office in Pontiac.

Lillian Dean, Coordinator for Southeast Oakland County Water Authority (SOCWA) Healthy Lawns and Gardens Program, stresses another important benefit of the program: partnership among the involved agencies and retailers.

"The garden centers we have worked with are very appreciative of the program" explains Lillian. They feel the program helps their customers who later return to the store with the soil test interpretation in hand. The program also brings the retailer into an environmental project- a role which they embrace and appreciate. Finally the program depends on communication and partnership between organizations such as SOCWA, MSUE Oakland County, and the MSU Soil Testing Laboratory."

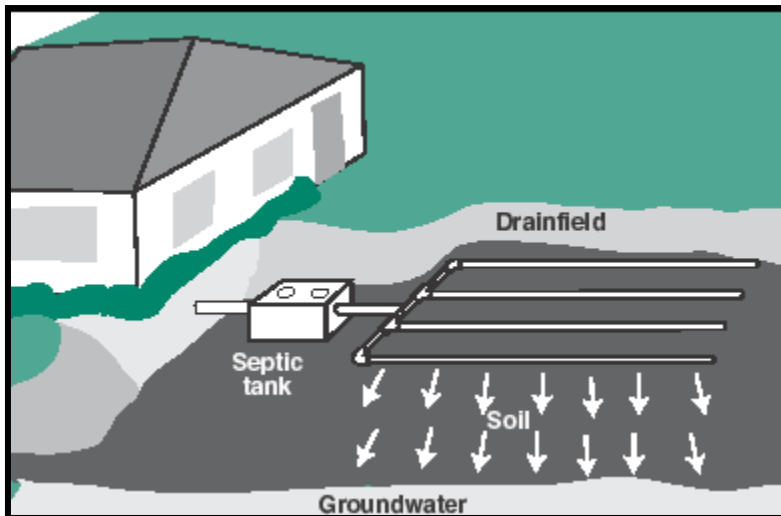
"We shouldn't forget the benefit for water quality in the Rouge and Clinton River watersheds," Lillian stresses. "Municipal representatives as well as professionals and citizen gardeners now understand that soil test results should be in hand before fertilizer options are considered. The program has had a great impact on home gardener practices- all for the better."

Environmental Stewardship

SEPTIC MAINTENANCE EDUCATION

Water is central to the health and well being of everyone and each person shares in the responsibility of protecting its quality. With the abundance of water resources in Oakland County, it would be easy to assume that residents understand both the importance of protecting water quality and the role they each play in ensuring the safety of their families. However, while most people acknowledge concern about the continued necessity to ensure that our water is safe and in abundant supply, a full understanding of what individuals can do to help is not clear.

In 2008, MSU Extension in Oakland County worked on a number of fronts to educate and continue to inform residents of actions they can take and practices that can be immediately employed to do their part.



MSU Professor Emeritus Ted Loudon gives participants up-close view of septic systems at the Tollgate Education Center

Two examples included a workshop called Septic System Maintenance and another called Shoreline Management to Protect Water Quality.

Oakland County Environmental Health Services reports that between 80,000- 85,000 private septic systems are in operation in the county and hundreds of new ones are installed each year. Most serve homeowners and their families who also obtain their drinking water from private drinking water wells on their property.

Environmental Stewardship

Many of those families, new to systems outside of municipal water and sewage systems, lack the knowledge and understanding of how on-site septic systems function and the potential impacts on their drinking water supply if they don't properly maintain their system. To help address the need for information MSU Extension held a workshop on May 29th. Staff from Michigan State University, the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program and Oakland County Environmental Health Services provided expertise.

Thirty-five people, including homeowners and several wastewater professionals, gathered at Tollgate Education Center in Novi to learn how to properly maintain their septic systems to protect their family's health and help ensure water quality. Tollgate has a life-sized outdoor septic demonstration area which served as the ideal learning lab. Participants got an up-close view of a septic system that normally is not visible since components are "hidden" underground. This unique perspective allowed participants to gain a greater understanding of various types of septic systems available, how they should be properly installed, and the permitting and inspection process. They also learned the do's and don'ts of daily operation needed to avoid damage to the system and the environment and appropriate landscaping practices on septic fields. Several special areas of concerns were also covered, including the impacts of pharmaceuticals and home dialysis on septic systems, as well as considerations for septic systems located near surface water.



MSU Professor Emeritus Ted Loudon showing participants the underground infrastructure of a septic system.

Everyone left the workshop with the assurance that when a septic system is properly installed and managed, it provides a waste disposal system that is simple, economical, effective, safe and long-lasting. They also went home knowing how their personal practices affect the water quality of not only their home but also neighboring properties. One important but often overlooked message that participants heard was that regular septic tank pumpings help protect the safety of groundwater, the source of drinking water for 47% of Michigan residents—or 100,000 homes in Oakland County.

Environmental Stewardship

SHORELINE MANAGEMENT TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY

When a county is home to over 1400 lakes and streams and headwaters of five major rivers it takes plenty of heavy lifting to protect the quality of all that water. It's no secret that regulatory agencies alone cannot manage each individual lake and its entire watershed. The bulk of the management is simply in the hands of individuals. That means people need the best information possible to do the optimal job of being stewards of the water under their control. That's where MSU Extension comes in.

In October 2008, MSU Extension partnered with Oakland County Commissioner Marcia Gershenson to develop a program called Shoreline Management to Protect Water Quality. Nearly 80 people gathered at the Bloomfield Township Public Library to learn how they could act as good stewards by implementing lakescaping practices that protect water and create or preserve wildlife habitat, eliminate runoff to decrease erosion, incorporate vegetative plant buffers and utilize Go Green Lawn Care.

Participants were eager to share their plans for using what they learned during the program. Some said they would install native plantings along their shoreline rather than mow all the way to the water's edge, others said they would establish a "no mow zone" buffer and still others indicated that as a Master Gardener Volunteer they would teach others about how to be a good steward of the water.



An example of a shoreline vegetative plant buffer to protect lake water and decrease erosion.

Joining in the cooperative effort to deliver this program were the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program, Michigan State University's Kellogg Biological Station, Oakland County Planning & Economic Development Services – Environmental Stewardship Program and the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner's Office.

Addressing Obesity and Its Threat to Health

EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

“You saved my life!” That celebratory statement was expressed by a young homemaker who had recently made substantial lifestyle changes, and improved her overall health as a result. “My cholesterol was very high, and then you came and taught me how to watch portion sizes, how to use less fat and salt, and how to make better food choices. My cholesterol dropped significantly. Even my doctor was amazed.”

It’s not every day that an educational institution is credited with preventing the untimely demise of local citizens. However, Michigan State University Extension – Oakland County is a unique organization that brings about real impact. The strength of MSU Extension is in its commitment to ensure that the research and knowledge of the university is made accessible to communities. That often means converting the results of complex research into practical educational programs that address significant issues. Meaningful educational programs change the lives of families in Oakland County.

Sometimes they even save them.

Several MSU Extension initiatives are designed to combat one of the state’s most pervasive health challenges: obesity. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) demonstrate that in the past ten years, the prevalence of obesity in the state of Michigan has nearly doubled. In 2007, 27.7% of Michigan citizens had a body mass index of 30 or greater.

The National Institutes of Health cite numerous research studies linking obesity to increased risk of health conditions such as:

- coronary heart disease
- type 2 diabetes
- high blood pressure
- colon, breast and endometrial cancers
- osteoarthritis

One of the innovative, community-based approaches to address this problem is the Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). In Oakland County, MSU Extension’s Nutrition Educators help their neighbors learn about healthy food choices. It’s a fun, hands-on process that includes activities to explore nutrition, food budgeting and buying, food preparation, preservation, food safety, sanitation and meal management. Because the Nutrition Educators live in the communities in which they work, and gained expertise from participating in the program themselves, they are able to make real-world connections within the lessons they teach. In many cases, the lessons are provided one-to-one within the participant’s home, though group lessons are also available.

The teaching curriculum used in EFNEP is Eating Right is Basic, a research-based set of lessons that help low-income families with young children acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior necessary to improve their diet and health. EFNEP is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture, with supporting funds from Oakland County. MSU Extension’s EFNEP staff work in cooperation with other state and community agencies to meet the needs of Michigan families without duplicating efforts. While other agencies provide food and other services, EFNEP helps homemakers gain practical skills such as stretching their food dollars to enhance their family’s nutrition and teaches children the benefits of healthy eating and how to be physically fit.

Addressing Obesity and Its Threat to Health

In 2008 , more than 600 families in Oakland County benefited from the educational opportunities provided by MSU Extension's EFNEP staff. In total, 1,955 individual family members were impacted, and participation reflected the diversity of the county's demographics. African American, Hispanic, Chinese, Caucasian, Hmong and Laotian families experienced the curriculum.

With the links between obesity and related health issues, and the escalating cost of health care, teaching and promoting better eating habits is critical, especially for nutritionally- at-risk families in our communities. EFNEP graduates gain the resources and educational information to feed their families better for a healthier life. As an added benefit, they often gain an increased sense of accomplishment, self-respect and the opportunity to become more self-sufficient.



As a result of their participation, these positive changes in behavior and knowledge were cited on pre- and post-surveys:

- 73% showed improvements in nutrition practices such as preparing food with out salt, using less fat and feeding children breakfast.

- Dietary data collected at the beginning of the series of lessons and at the end indicated that 96% of the adult program graduates made positive changes in eating, such as increasing the number of servings of fruits and vegetables, low-fat or non-fat dairy products.

- 75% showed improvements in food resource management such as meal planning and using a grocery list.

- 87% demonstrated acceptable food safety practices such as thawing and storing food properly.

- 88% now check “sell by” date on food packages.

Promoting healthy lifestyles

Addressing Obesity and Its Threat to Health



Project F.R.E.S.H. participants receive nutrition education from Mary Brooks, a nutrition instructor with MSU Extension-Oakland County.



Project F.R.E.S.H.

While the “local food” movement is expanding among communities with higher incomes, it’s not always easy to find a fresh salad in urban low-income neighborhoods. Fast food restaurants and party stores stocked with chips and soda are often the most accessible options for these families.

MSU Extension’s Project F.R.E.S.H. (Farm Resources Encouraging and Supporting Health) has successfully expanded the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables for pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum mothers with low incomes.

Eligible families participate in educational activities to learn how to select, store and prepare fresh produce. They then receive coupons that may be redeemed for Michigan-grown products at the local farmer’s market. In 2008, a total of \$20,000 worth of coupons were distributed to Oakland County participants, and the program enjoyed its highest coupon-redemption rate in history --- 82%.

Project F.R.E.S.H. enhanced the earnings of participating farmers by increasing the number of shoppers at the markets. It’s a win-win project that couples economic benefits with the promotion of healthy eating for many families.

Addressing Obesity and Its Threat to Health



Lauretta Christy, 4-H volunteer at Walton Park Manor working with young people in the Community Youth Garden.

FAMILY NUTRITION PROGRAM (FNP)

The qualifying factor for participation in the Family Nutrition Program (FNP) is food stamp eligibility. In 2008 participants included senior citizens, youth, childcare providers and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers. MSU Extension worked collaboratively with other agencies in the county to reach these audiences. Agencies referred their clientele to us and encouraged them to access the nutrition education programs we provided.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Nutrition programs specifically accommodated a senior lifestyle and helped address health concerns specifically related to older people. Food, nutrition and health programs were held at senior citizens nutrition sites, community centers and in subsidized senior housing complexes. Curricula included nutrition, food safety, food security, purchasing, and preparation. Over 2000 seniors participated.

The Senior Health Line, a monthly newsletter containing nutrition and wellness information, was published. Approximately 16,000 senior citizens received this publication through senior community centers, senior housing and senior congregate meal sites. Over 3,000 senior citizens also participated in community health fairs where they were provided food, nutrition and wellness information.

“Since attending these classes I made a real effort to include more fruits and vegetables in my meals. I am also using more herbs and spices instead of salt which is better for my high blood pressure.”

“I guess Old Dogs can learn new tricks. After attending the classes I made many changes in my cooking and eating habits and I feel so much better.”

-Senior Family Nutrition Program participants

YOUTH

From school classrooms to community centers around Oakland County nearly 750 youth gathered to experience how being physically active contributes to their long-term health and how eating nutritious food ensures having the energy to be active.

At one low-income housing unit parents and kids planted, maintained and harvested a garden. Through workshops and demonstrations they learned how to prepare the garden produce, how to store it properly and how growing your own food can save money for the family.

“Wow, I didn’t know it was so much fun to plant a garden and eat fresh vegetables right out of the ground.”

“I learned that I have to wash my hands more so I don’t spread germs.”

- Youth Family Nutrition Program participants

Addressing Obesity and Its Threat to Health

CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

In 2008, MSUE staff emphasized nutrition in workshops and classes for childcare providers. A child's brain development and ability to learn are linked to good nutrition and eating a healthy diet helps ensure kids enter school ready to learn. The workshops on nutrition and safe food handling were opened to parents. A total of 79 parents and childcare providers participated. The curriculum included healthy meal and snack ideas, portions appropriate to a child's age and safe food handling practices for health and safety.

Oakland County Impacts

Seniors –

- 75% increased food safety practices such as proper food storage
- 75% increased understanding of how to read food labels
- 80% increased knowledge of healthy levels of salt, sugar and fat in their meals

Youth –

- 85% participated in physical activities
- 92% increased hand washing before handling food
- 75% shared what they learned with their families.

Childcare Providers –

- 95% increased understanding of proper serving sizes for young children
- 85% enhanced understanding of benefits of disinfecting food areas
- 98% increased understanding of the importance of hand washing

Breastfeeding Mothers -

- Mothers enrolled breastfed an average of 5 ½ months
- Each family saved an average of \$1500 on infant formula

BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS

Through collaboration with the Oakland County Health Department's WIC program, 184 pregnant women were enrolled in the Mother-to-Mother program. Following delivery of their babies 115 initiated breastfeeding.

MSU Extension staff who worked with the mothers and babies had breastfeeding experience themselves and were trained to mentor the mothers to help them be successful. Staff also provided prenatal nutrition information and infant nutrition information following birth of the babies.

The cost of infant formula alone is approximately \$3000 a year and there are significant additional costs for bottles, nipples and cleaning supplies. Breastfeeding provides the most complete nutrition for babies and helps decrease the mother's risk of breast cancer.



"The program helped me a lot. When I breastfed my older daughter I struggled with it. So, I breastfed just a few weeks. When I got pregnant again someone told me about Maria and I went to the WIC office to talk to her...As soon as I started talking to her I felt confident about what I was doing. Later on she came to my house to teach me prenatal classes...My husband and I are very happy because our baby has been so healthy and has not had even a cold since he was born. We believe this is because I am full-time breastfeeding him. We are saving a lot of money because we didn't have to buy nipples, baby formula and other things like we did with our first baby...I am very thankful. This program encouraged me to breastfeed."

- Sanjuana Juarez, a participant in the Mother-to-Mother program.

Addressing Obesity and Its Threat to Health



Extension Home Economist, Robin Danto, captivating a young audience.

FOOD SAFETY

The Food Safety Hotline telephone was answered nearly 3500 times in 2008. Residents asked questions ranging from how long they could safely keep leftovers in the refrigerator to what temperature poultry must be cooked to ensure it was safe to serve the family. When there was an outbreak of food borne illness in June from E. Coli in ground hamburger, calls to the Hotline increased by 50%. Prior to holidays calls increased significantly. Prior to the Easter holiday over 70 calls were answered related to the safety of hard boiled eggs. Calls concerning how to safely preserve food at home began to increase in 2008. This contributed to a tripling of enrollment in MSU Extension's 7-part Food Preservation Correspondence Course.

One gentleman called just to find out who "Robin" was. He had come home to Oakland County because his elderly mother had passed away and to take care of her belongings.

While looking through her personal phone directory he found the entry "Robin." Thinking it must be a personal friend of his mother's he didn't know, he called the number. He reached the Hotline and learned that his mother first called the Hotline to get information on food assistance. Since then she had called the Hotline with questions about food safety and to just hear a friendly and helpful voice.

Through a partnership with Easter Seals, a series of programs on food safety, nutrition, food shopping and meal planning were done with 37 emotionally impaired youth adults age 19 to 22. Since those programs were completed the Food Safety Hotline has become a resource for these young people who are trying to make it on their own.

These young people receive very limited services and would never get this type of training if it wasn't for MSU Extension.

- John Cleavenger, Program Manager

The purpose of the Hotline is to help reduce the incidence of food borne illness caused by unsafe food handling practices by individual residents, particularly at home.

Food Safety Hotline follow-up survey results:

- 93% of callers said they would call the Hotline again
- 88% of callers said they received a satisfactory response
- 90% of callers said they followed the recommendations given
- 55% of callers said they had called the Hotline more than once

Increasing Capacity for Economic Development

CITIZEN PLANNER

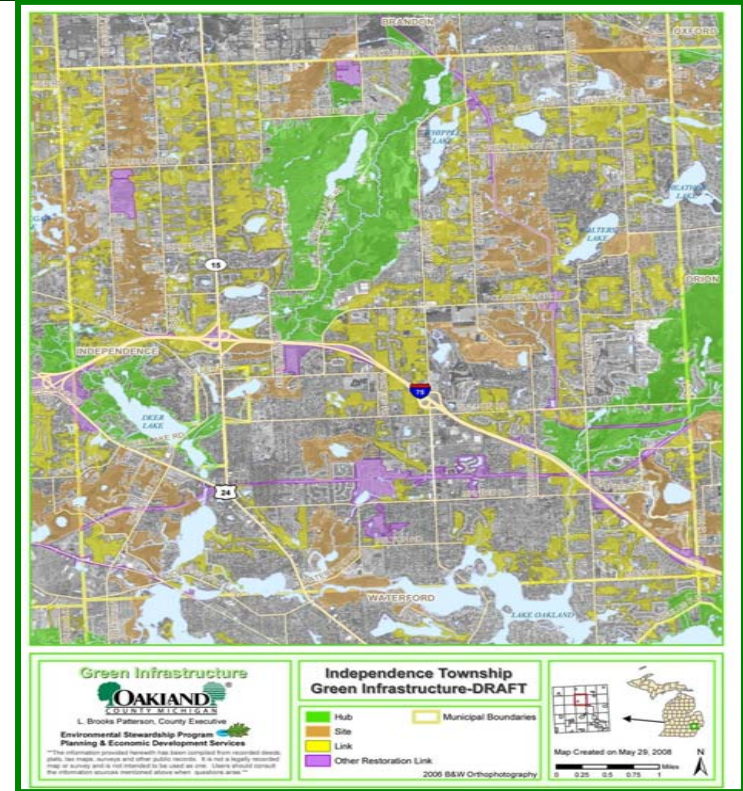
Perhaps the dawn of a new century catalyzed the “green infrastructure” movement in Oakland County. The county’s Planning and Economic Development Services (PEDS), Environmental Stewardship unit, has been at the forefront of this work and Michigan State University Extension’s (MSUE) Citizen Planner Program added a practical educational component to the complex effort. Green Infrastructure and water are critical components of the tax base in Oakland County since the impact of lakes on residential property value in Oakland County is estimated at \$1,017,500,000.

April 14 and 21, 2008, MSUE Oakland County partnered with PEDS Environmental Stewardship unit, Extension’s Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI), and the MSUE Citizen Planner Program to offer a two-part workshop, “Green Infrastructure: Linking Communities and the Environment.” During this hands-on workshop, twenty-three participants learned about the green infrastructure planning process and how it is used to connect environmental, social, and economic health across urban, suburban, and rural settings.

“Land use decisions affect every aspect of our lives. Our visionary Citizen Planner program is tangible evidence of how serious we are about fulfilling our responsibilities.

It empowers us all.”

*--Lou Anna K. Simon
MSU President*



*Community Green Infrastructure Vision Map for
Independence Township*

Throughout the workshop, instructors Jon Paskus (MNFI), Glenn Pape (MSUE Citizen Planner), and Jim Keglovitz and Kristen Wiltfang (PEDS) gave participants information that resulted in a strong ecological foundation upon which green infrastructure planning is based, and an understanding of how green infrastructure planning serves as a tool to make informed land use decisions and build consensus among people having highly diverse interests.

Increasing Capacity for Economic Development



During the Citizen Planner sessions, participants worked in small groups to develop green infrastructure maps for various areas around Oakland County. Participant Gina Joy Roemer from Clarkston, at the time a volunteer for Oakland County Parks and Recreation (OCPR), worked with a group developing a green infrastructure plan for Independence Township.

Following the workshops Joy enlisted the help of Keglovitz and Wiltfang who worked with the Independence Township Planning Committee and other members of the community to develop a draft green infrastructure map for Independence Township.

Shortly after participating in the Citizen Planner workshop and developing the green infrastructure map, Roemer joined the staff at Independence Oaks County Park. With a passion to use the knowledge she gained through her participation in the Citizen Planner workshops, Roemer convinced her supervisor to allow her to develop a family program entitled “Independence Green.” The program was planned for Saturday, March 21, 2009. While the young “backyard managers” are engaged in a hands-on project to help attract and support wildlife to their yards, their parents see the green infrastructure map developed for Independence Township, and learn how their backyard integrates into the overall plan. Roemer sees the workshop at the park as one of many fun learning opportunities for those who live and work in Independence Township.

Green Infrastructure Definition- Our nation’s natural life support system— an interconnected network of protected land and water that supports native species, maintains natural ecological processes, sustains air and water resources and contributes to the health and quality of life for America’s communities and people.

Increasing Capacity for Economic Development

Financial stability became a challenge for many families in 2008, as economic pressures mounted and jobs were lost. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, an unemployment rate of 10.2% at the close of 2008 gave the state of Michigan the unfortunate distinction of leading the nation in joblessness.

Still, there was a silver lining in those clouds of economic uncertainty --- entrepreneurship.

Michigan State University Extension – Oakland County has long supported start-up businesses by forging links to needed resources. Entrepreneurs in a variety of sectors, from child care to new product development, have benefitted from educational and counseling opportunities provided by MSUE. Workshops that help business owners understand state regulations help build knowledge and confidence. Sometimes, they even nudge would-be entrepreneurs to actually start a new venture. MSUE Innovation Counselors, through the MSU Product Center, worked with residents to develop and market new food or natural resource-based products.

Anita Holt of Pontiac is one example of new knowledge resulting in a successful business venture. After completing the thirty-six hour Better Kid Care training program through MSUE, Holt transformed her home into Giggles & Grins, a state-of-the-art child care facility. She obtained a license from the State of Michigan, and operates her business as a safe and healthy environment for young children. The principles of positive child development are consistently applied, through active play, nutritious meals, reading time, and positive discipline. Holt is pursuing an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Development to deepen her knowledge and expertise.



Children at Babes in Toyland engage in a hands-on activity, one of the hallmarks of the play-based center.

She is also helping to expand the local economy, as her business expanded and generated two part-time jobs.

Can entrepreneurship really thrive in today's economic climate? Absolutely. According to *The Economic Future Just Happened*, a report that reviews the historical trends in American entrepreneurship, there may be some advantages to launching a new business venture in tough times. For example, higher unemployment rates mean that entrepreneurs generally have a more experienced workforce to choose from when hiring. The report was released by the Kauffman Foundation, whose CEO, Carl Schramm notes that “on more than one occasion, new businesses and the new jobs that they create, have pulled the U.S. out of economic slump.” Among the most encouraging data is the fact that “57% of Fortune 500 companies were founded during a recession or bear market.”

Not only does the Better Kid Care program promote entrepreneurship, it also provides needed professional development for child care center staff. Sue Graf, owner of Babes in Toyland daycare in Rochester Hills, explains, “Having my staff participate in the Better Kid Care program keeps our center in compliance, as well as directly impacting their work performance. Self-confidence and a sense of pride can be felt throughout the center.”

Oakland County MSU Extension Educator Staff



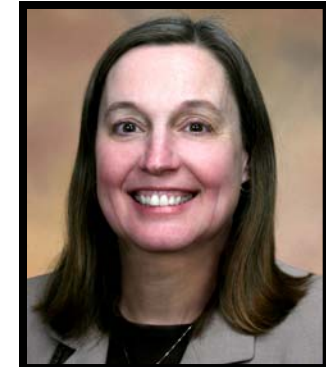
Name: *Bindu Bhakta*
Title: *Extension Educator*
Program Areas: *Water Quality*



Name: *Robin Danto*
Title: *Extension Home Economist*
Program Areas: *Food Safety & Nutrition*



Name: *Saneya Hamler*
Title: *Extension Educator*
Program Areas: *Infant & maternal health and Financial Literacy*



Name: *Mary Wilson*
Title: *Extension Educator*
Program Areas: *Consumer and Commercial Horticulture*



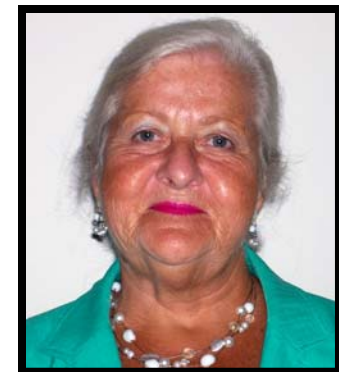
Name: *Carol Lenchek*
Title: *Environmental Programs Coordinator*
Program Areas: *Natural Sciences, Master Gardener Volunteer Program, Gypsy Moth Suppression Program*



Name: *Eva Poole*
Title: *Extension Educator*
Program Areas: *Childcare provider training and business development*



Name: *Tom Schneider*
Title: *Extension Educator*
Program Areas: *4-H Youth Development*



Name: *Lois Thieleke*
Title: *Extension Educator*
Program Areas: *Food, Nutrition & Health*

EXCELLENCE
in educational programming and in our faculty and staff members.

2008 Oakland County MSU Extension Funding

Funding for MSU Extension is a mix of local, state, and federal government allocations and grants from various sources.

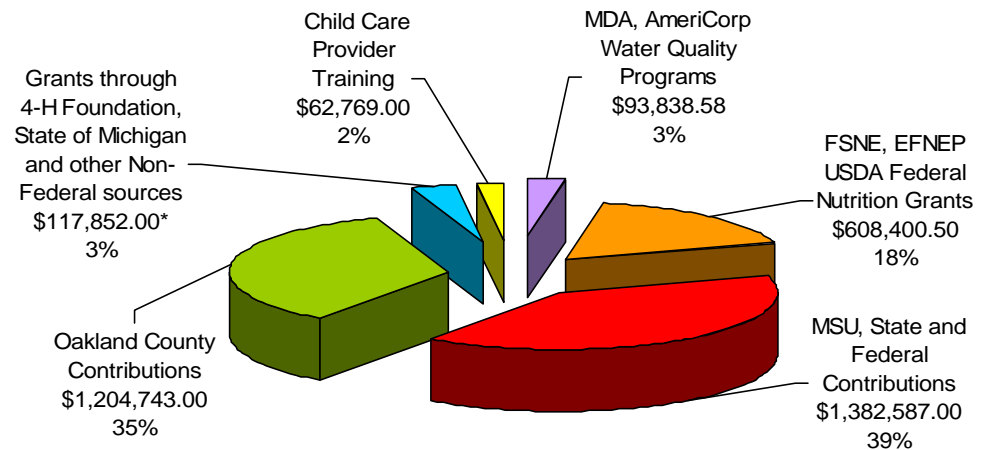
- State (Michigan Legislature) and Federal (U.S. Congress) allocations flow through Michigan State University (Michigan’s Land Grand University). These funds are primarily for staff that develop and deliver educational programs in Oakland County.

- Oakland County allocations come from the general fund and are administered through MSU Extension as a division within the Department of Public Services. These funds primarily provide the necessary infrastructure (support staff, space, operating) that makes it possible for Extension to deliver services and programs. Two professional educator positions are also supported by the county.

- Federal grants are received through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the Food Stamp Nutrition Program (FSNE) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

MSU Extension - Oakland County Staff by Funding Source December 2008			
Funding Source	Full-time eligible staff	Part-time non-eligible staff	Totals
Michigan State University or grant funded	15	10	25
Oakland County	9	7	16
Total number of staff			41

MSUE – Oakland County Funding by Source FY 2008 Total Funding \$3,470,190.08



*Does not include local grant funding received in the fourth quarter of FY2008.

- MSUE – Oakland County also receives grants from various sources that support special programming in 4-H Youth Development.
- A Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Grant from the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) supports a professional water quality educator position. The primary work done in Oakland County is residential, with/for residents who live on a waterfront and/or have wells and septic systems.

Oakland County MSU Extension

Located in the North Office Building
1200 N. Telegraph Road, Bldg. 26E
Pontiac, MI 48341-0416

Telephone: (248) 858-0880

Fax: (248) 858-1477

e-mail: msue.oakland@county.msu.edu

Web address: www.msue.msu.edu/oakland

Hours: Mon. Tues. Wed. & Friday
8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Thursday
8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.



A helpful and friendly place with knowledgeable staff members and research-based educational materials connecting you to MSU.

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal opportunity employer, Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status.