

# MARQUETTE COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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- Erin Tigue, Tribal Health and Supervising Educator
- Liana Pepin 4-H Extension Educator
- Brad Neumann, Senior Educator
- Biidaaban Reinhardt, FRTEP Coordinator



## Message from the District Director



MSU Extension continues to make a lasting impact across Alger, Chippewa, Luce, Mackinac, Marquette and Schoolcraft Counties. In 2024, we provided critical support to farmers, engaged over 1,500 youth in 4-H and delivered nutrition education to more than 1,000 residents. We expanded leadership training for local officials, helped small businesses thrive and partnered on conservation efforts to protect our natural resources.

This year, we also secured new office space in Mackinac County, strengthening our ability to serve the region. Our success is made possible through dedicated staff, volunteers, and community partnerships. Thank you for your support—we look forward to another year of growth and impact!

**Erin Daines**  
District 2 Director, MSU Extension



8 community coalitions within the county that MSU Extension employees are members



3,542 participants from the county attending programs.



36 answered Ask Extension questions



75 volunteers serving in the county



151 youth enrolled in 4-H

## Overall Impact



300 programs (across the state) attended by participants from this county.



29,264,562 contacts through social media, web activity, e-newsletters, and handouts. (STATEWIDE)



2 sites receiving Policy, System or Environmental education within the county.



122 client consultations



5 policy, systems, and environmental changes with those PSE sites affecting 48 people.

## Economic Development, Environmental Conservation, and Agricultural Productivity



67,320 participants in community, food, and environment programs from across Michigan



470 virtual programs related to Financial Education, Food Systems, Water and Environmental Quality, Government and Businesses.



138 participants in county agriculture programs.



\$246.5 billion annual impact of food and agriculture on Michigan's economy



MSU Product Center  
19 Customers, 44 Counseling Hours

\$17,583,000 annual sum sales from businesses counseled  
14 jobs created, 10 jobs retained

# Overall Community Impact



31 community partnerships within the county that MSU Extension employees are members of



254 participants in agriculture and agribusiness programs from the county.



58 programs hosted in the county



1,332 participants in children and youth programs from the county



2,935 participants attending programs hosted in the county



374 participants in health and nutrition programs from the county



1,617 participants in community, food and environment programs from the county



42,524 e-newsletters and handouts in the county



1,292 youth participants in programs from the county



Anna Ellis, MSU Extension's Forest and Natural Resources Educator brought the Michigan Conservation Stewards Program (CSP) to Marquette County.

The Michigan Conservation Stewards Program is a unique 8-week opportunity to learn about Marquette County’s natural communities from local experts and people committed to conservation. This program includes field trips, online material, and indoor classes held in unique places throughout Marquette County. Participants also put their learning into action by working on a capstone project directly with local conservation groups. Become part of a social network that will empower you to make on-the-ground change in your local community.

- # of students who began program: **18**
- # capstone projects completed: **16**
- # of students who earned certificate of completion: **16**
- Course completion rate:
- # of students who received scholarship: **7**
- Total value of scholarships: **\$700**
- # of partners: **11**



**Brad Neumann, Senior Extension Educator** teaches land use planning and zoning, community and economic development, and general governance topics including effective meetings and civic engagement.

Brad offered the Citizen Planner Program in Marquette County in fall 2024. Citizen Planner is a six-session series that teaches local officials about planning and zoning roles, responsibilities and best practices. Each of the three-hour sessions in the series includes lecture, hands-on learning exercises, and networking and interaction among participants.

MSU Extension worked with the Central Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Regional Commission (CUPPAD) to secure a sponsorship and reduce the per person registration cost. The program was also supported by the Lake Superior Community Partnership, which offered scholarships to three area local officials. In total, 17 individuals from Marquette, Delta and Alger counties completed the program series.

**When asked to compare their confidence on related topics before vs. after taking the Citizen Planner Program:**

- 100% reported they are 'More confident' or 'Much more confident' to speak up during meetings by asking questions and making comments, as a result of the program


**Asked 'How do you plan to use the knowledge you gained during the Citizen Planner Program in the next six months or so?' respondents detailed:**

- *I will use the knowledge gained to help the structure of our planning and zoning meetings and how they can run more effectively.*
- *This program has solidified the foundation of planning and zoning that I've been adjacent to, but not directly involved with, for the past couple of years. Some of my day-to-day duties have begun to overlap into the planning realm, and I expect this to continue, given master plan and ordinance revisions on the near horizon. As part of succession planning, I am registered for the ZAC program this winter.*


**Other comments about the Marquette County Citizen Planner Program, include:**

- *"This program is incredibly well-organized and implemented. Brad is, by far, one of the most effective educators I have learned from."*
- *"I found this program incredibly valuable and cannot understand why it is not a strict requirement for any local official to go through it in their first six months in their respective positions. Much of this information would be difficult to "learn on the fly", and considering legal judgements could arise from improper decisions, mandating this class, to me, is a no-brainer."*


Public Health, Nutrition, and Youth Programming




151 4-H youth enrollments




69 Commercial soil test kits processed  
10 Residential soil test kits processed




\$1,516.32, 4-H volunteer hour value




217 nutrition and physical activity participants hosted in-county.




133,306 total youth participants



374 county residents who participated in health and nutrition programs.



12,861 of total volunteers statewide



9,808 of people participating in Food Safety programs including ServSafe® statewide



Abbey Palmer  
Community Food Systems Educator

Lift UP- Locally Integrated Food Teams

LIFT-UP assessed Negaunee High School’s current farm to school practices illuminating challenges to local food purchasing. Centering student leadership is a unique and integral component of the LIFT-UP project. After analyzing the results of the farm to school assessment, students developed and pitched strategies to increase local food purchasing and consumption within their schools. Students from two Marquette County schools presented their work to one another at a Celebration of Student Work hosted at Belsolda Farm. The event was catered with local food and included a farm tour at Seeds and Spores Family farm.

Let's Grow KI Community Garden Chats

KI Sawyer was a once-bustling military base, located 16 miles south of Marquette. Let’s Grow KI (LGKI) began as an initiative, led by Jordan Russell, when her role in event production management was drastically changed by the pandemic in 2020. She had a desire to invest in her community, which led her to address food insecurity, a personal issue she had experienced at a young age. Jordan, who had minimal gardening experience, sought to learn more. While interning at Partridge Creek Farm in Ishpeming, Jordan was introduced to various community resources, including MSU Extension. In 2024, Abbey Palmer, an Extension educator, partnered with LGKI to offer a series of community garden chats. Sessions were held in June, July, August and September. Topics included planting seeds, garden upkeep, harvesting food safely and seed saving. Six participants were able to explore these topics in each 90-minute session.





Erin Tigie, Extension Tribal Outreach Educator, SNAP-Ed Supervisor

### Growing Healthy Eaters in Marquette County

MSU Extension's Nutrition and Physical Activity team helped Central UP community organizations find ways to change local policies, systems, and environments to improve access to healthy food and physical activity. For example, MSU Extension's Vicki Ballas connected a local home-based daycare provider with local farms through the Growing Healthy Eaters program. Funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Allen Foundation, Vicki helped the daycare provider sign up for a CSA (community supported agriculture) seasonal produce box from a local farm to include in kids' meals and assessed and improved the nutritional quality of the daycare's menu. Through this program, the provider was also able to purchase kid-friendly gardening tools to grow its own fresh produce and offer kids an opportunity to learn and practice gardening. As Vicki shared at the end of the program,

***"I think this is a wonderful opportunity for our community and cannot thank you enough for all the hard work and dedication to put this on." - participant***

***"The children were excited to help choose what they grow. They have had many opportunities to talk and learn about food, where it comes from, how it grows, and healthy choices...The child-sized garden tools made a big difference in the children being able to actually garden."***

The FRTEP Spring "Gitigaan/Gtegan/Kitigaan (Garden) Kit Distribution" program was the culmination of six months of planning meetings, weekly virtual meetings, monthly inperson meetings, seed and garden research, material development, data collection and analysis, six event days, follow up with participants and partners across the four FRTEP tribal partners: Bay Mills Indian Community, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, and Hannahville Indian Community.

This program distributed 673 kits across the Upper Peninsula and northern Lower Peninsula to tribal communities. Overall the program was extremely successful, and the results of the survey showed that participants have excellent feedback for how to adapt the program to growing hunger (in multiple senses of the word) for food sovereignty, but also appreciation for the program itself as it stands.

***"I think your program is doing a great job. It has helped me introduce gardening to my kids. If anything, more information for kids on the importance of fresh vegetables would be appreciated or growing tips to really get them engaged." - participant***

***"This is my 2nd year with a garden kit and I have improved so much from the first year! My cherry tomatoes, green peppers, lettuce and carrots did amazing! I had some trouble with growing my cucumbers but I learned from my mistakes and will use that info for next season!" - participant***



Biidaaban Reinhardt, Extension Educator, Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program (FRTEP)



Liana Pepin, 4-H Educator

### Apple Community Education Initiative

Marquette County 4-H staff went to Powell Township School on March 19 to participate in their annual Technology Day for grades 1-8 grades. Working in groups of two, the students learned how to link their iPads to Spheros (robots), and use block coding to command the Spheros to do a variety of tasks. Some students also created a "dance" for their robots and synced two Spheros to "dance" together.

Of the 39 youth who participated, 100% reported learning something new and that they want to work with iPads and Spheros again to learn new ways to code and more.

***"Thank you for letting us drive the Spheros. I had so much fun driving them and controlling them. I also am grateful for you bringing all the stuff and helping out." ~Malone (Powell Township School student)***

### Embryology with Sawyer and Gilbert Elementary Schools

Liana Pepin, in partnership with Sawyer and Gilbert Elementary Schools, taught grades 1-2 about hatching chickens. The students had incubators in their classrooms. Each day, the teachers revealed what the chicken embryos looked like and shared what parts of their bodies were developing. Liana came to class once a week to provide new information (utilizing the Embryology D2L course and YouTube videos) and answer questions. The students learned about the importance of temperature and humidity in the incubator, and they were able to see chickens inside their shells by using a flashlight, an ovascope, and egg candler.

This program stirred up a great sense of wonder in the students- with so many questions about how babies (in general) develop. There were many questions each week from asking about where the parents are to where did the first chicken come from, the students wanted to know it all.

Through reflection questions, the 81 students revealed what they learned through the incubation and hatching processes. The 2nd grade students reported learning at least three parts of an egg, that a developing chick is called an embryo, that adding water to the incubator adds humidity to help the hatching process. They also learned that a brooder is a house for chicks, that chicks need heat, food, and water in their brooder, and it takes 21 days for chicks to hatch. The 1st grade students reported learning that eggs have to be incubated to hatch, store bought eggs can't hatch, eggs need humidity, 21 days is a "long time" for chickens to hatch and chicks can be all different colors.

***"Thank you for helping us learn about chicks. I learned that when a chick comes out of its shell it has a egg tooth on its beak." ~Ella***

***"I learned that chickens can remember faces." ~Zor-El***



Brian Wibby  
Extension Educator focusing on youth  
leadership for social change within  
leadership, civil and cultural  
engagement

### World Food Prize engages Michigan youth

Working towards the goal to provide a sustainable and secure global food supply, the World Food Prize Michigan Youth Institute (WFPMIYI) bridges interests across English language arts, social studies, culture, economics, sciences, health and nutrition, agriculture, natural resources and conservation.

Held annually in May, the WFPMIYI provides learning opportunities and interactions that are interdisciplinary and foster both life and employability skills. In an inclusive, positive environment, students in grades 7-12 research and write papers, engage with local leaders and experts on critical global challenges, participate in hands-on experiences, and explore exciting ways to make a difference in Michigan and around the world while building their network for the future. Participants that did well may be invited to represent Michigan as a delegate for the annual Global Youth Institute.

Understanding one's place in the world and having an appreciation for diverse perspectives and cultures are both important 21st century skills for youth to develop in today's globally connected planet. By engaging youth with diverse people, places and things, MSU Extension provides many opportunities through 4-H Youth Development for them to build their cultural competencies, develop their character, enhance their creativity, increase their communication skills, and become more respectful and empathetic citizens.



- A record 120 youth participants registered for the event.
- 19 teachers/mentors.
- 14 roundtable discussions took place thanks to 60 experts.
- 3 MSU administrators and one World Food Prize staff member delivered welcomes and important messages.
- 75 countries were researched exploring 19 Challenge Paper topics.

***"Because of my participation in the World Food Prize Michigan Youth Institute, I learned that we can have an impact in all corners of the world." -participant***

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