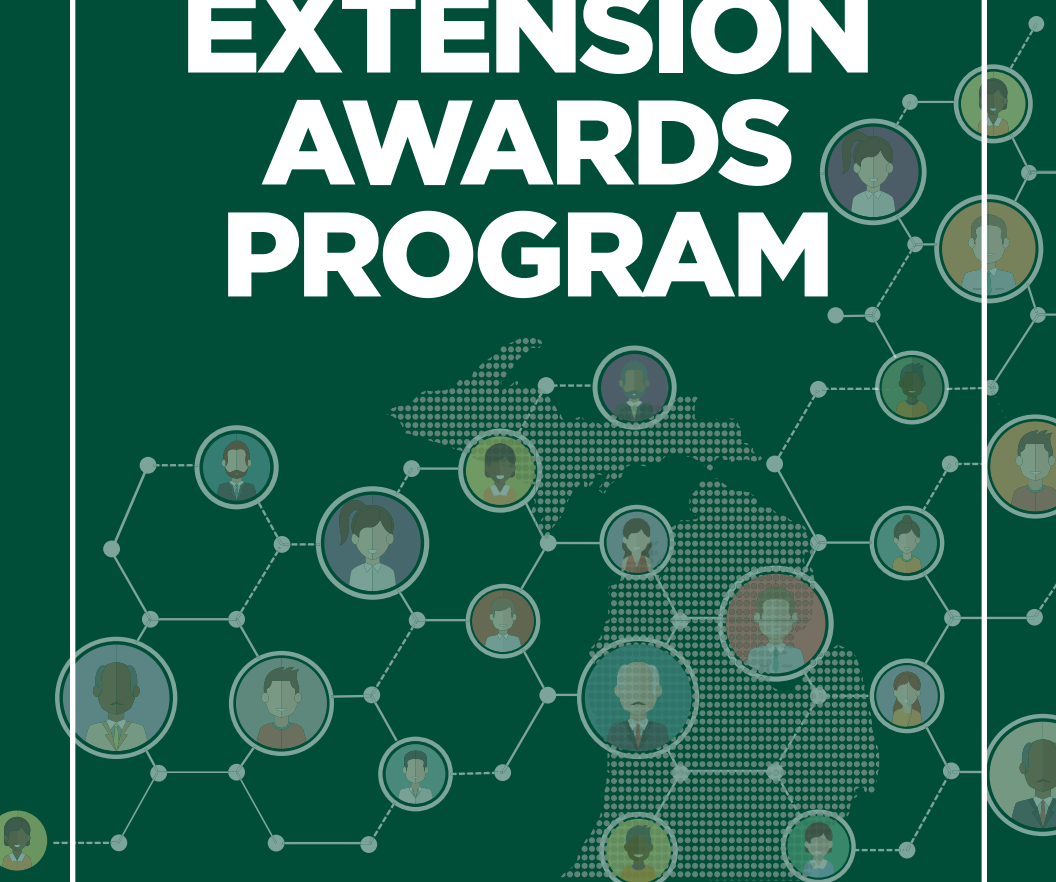


2020 FALL EXTENSION
CONFERENCE

MSU EXTENSION AWARDS PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER 28 - OCTOBER 2, 2020

MICHIGAN STATE | Extension
UNIVERSITY





CONTENTS

About the Awards Program	3
MSU Extension Administration Awards	4
Key Partner Awards.....	4
Epsilon Sigma Phi Friend of Extension Award	8
Emerging Issues/Rapid Response Award	9
Outstanding Service to MSU Extension Award.....	10
Gordon Guyer Collaborative Programming Award.....	11
Michigan Council of Extension Associations John A. Hannah Award for Program Excellence.....	12
Meritorious Service Awards.....	13
Diversity and Multiculturalism Award	19
Innovative Technology Award	20
Institute Team Awards	21
MSU Distinguished Academic Staff Awards.....	24
Milestone Years of Service	24
MSU Extension Association Awards	26
Community and Natural Resources Development Association Awards.....	26
Epsilon Sigma Phi Awards	28
Michigan Association of Extension 4-H Youth Staff Awards.....	30
Michigan Association of Extension Agents Awards	35
Michigan Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Awards.....	36
MSU Product Center Award.....	39



About the Awards Program

Michigan State University (MSU) Extension presents a variety of awards at its Fall Extension Conference each year. The awards honor outstanding MSU Extension staff members, programs, 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 the winners of the Friend of Extension Award and John A. Hannah Award for Program Excellence are presented as part of MSU Extension administration awards, they are chosen by Epsilon Sigma Phi and the Michigan Council of Extension Associations, respectively. Also listed in this program are MSU Extension personnel who have received awards through the MSU Product Center as well as the following professional associations:

- Community and Natural Resources Development Association (CNRDA)
- Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP), Alpha Psi Chapter
- Michigan Association of Extension 4-H Youth Staff (MAE4-HYS)
- Michigan Association of Extension Agents (MAEA)
- Michigan Council of Extension Associations (MCEA)
- Michigan Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (MEAFCS)

MSU EXTENSION ADMINISTRATION AWARDS

KEY PARTNER AWARDS

Barbara Byrum and Stephen Rajzer

Barbara (“Barb”) Byrum and Stephen Rajzer are each being honored with a Key Partner Award for their service acting as honorary governors of Michigan 4-H Capitol Experience.

Barb was a member of the Michigan House of Representatives for the 67th District from 2007 to 2012. She currently serves as Ingham County Clerk. As a 4-H member, Stephen attended 4-H Capitol Experience and Citizenship Washington Focus. These programs influenced him to give back. He currently works for Rep. Tim Walberg’s office in Jackson, Michigan.

Barb and Stephen represent different political parties, but they work in tandem to support 4-H Capitol Experience, a nonpartisan educational event that allows youth to explore real issues and political perspectives. The role of governor is rotated each year between the two. On alternate years, they interact with event participants in various ways. For at least 10 years, Barb has served in many roles during 4-H’s Capitol Experience event as both a guest speaker and a governor. Barb has also served as a guest speaker since 2017 for a 4-H Exploration Days session on local government. Stephen has served as the 4-H Capitol Experience event governor for two years. In addition, he has assisted the Michigan 4-H delegation attending Citizenship Washington Focus by scheduling the group’s federal legislative visits on Capitol Hill for four years.

As governors, both have given youth participants a realistic and empowering experience. Their participation makes the youth experience of bill writing more realistic as they relate the youth’s ideas for bills with actual policies and perspectives of elected officials. Most importantly, their participation allows youth to meet and interact with real people working in politics, demystifying policymaking and helping youth see careers in these fields as attainable.

The MSU Extension Key Partner award recognizes those who have made significant contributions to creating, improving, supporting, or promoting MSU Extension programs. Barb Byrum and Stephen Rajzer are true champions of youth and their involvement in the political process.

Song Lize

MSU Extension honors Song Lize for his longtime partnership with Michigan 4-H. Since 2003, Song has been the contact person for the partnership with 4-H Youth Development and the Binzhou City Education Bureau, Shandong Province, China, through the Michigan Children's Art Exchange with China. The exchange celebrates its 30th year.

The Michigan 4-H China Project began in 1988 between Michigan 4-H and Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China, as a global education-through-the-arts program that has reached close to 500,000 Michigan youth in grades K-12.

Song, researcher of the Education Science Institution on English Teaching in Elementary Schools, provides teaching and learning guidance for the teachers of English students, and tests the learning results in Binzhou, China. In Binzhou, there are 259,000 students in primary schools, 124,000 in junior high and 66,000 in common senior high with half of the students in junior high entering vocational schools. He is responsible for 600 English teachers working in senior high schools, giving advice and helping the students in learning. The exchange program involves all the primary schools and kindergarten in every county and district in Binzhou.

Each year, Shandong, People's Republic of China, sends as gifts 100 translated pieces of Chinese children's artwork to Michigan. Song does the translation work, and enjoys and distributes the 100 pieces exchanged of Michigan children's artwork. An annual evaluation summary is conducted each year from the participating counties in the exchange with overwhelmingly positive results. The exchange allows youth participants to become more confident in their art abilities, communication skills, and understanding of the world we live in. It is a teaching tool that introduces another culture to the youth in both countries. Song, a compatible, supportive, and positive partner, understood the child development and global connections goals of the project from the beginning.

The MSU Extension Key Partner award recognizes those who have made significant contributions to creating, improving, supporting, or promoting MSU Extension programs. Song Lize and the Binzhou City Education Bureau, Shandong Province, China, truly demonstrate the name "key partner."

Sparrow Health System

Jon Baker, Bill Degg, Alan Vierling

Sparrow Health System's Alan Vierling, president; Jon Baker, director of laboratories; and Bill Degg, director of clinical engineering; are MSU Extension Key Partners.

When the coronavirus pandemic came to Michigan in March 2020, health care leaders quickly became concerned about a shortage of personal protection equipment (PPE). Sparrow Health System administrators were very open about addressing the lack of adequate PPE and their need to find solutions to protect their staff and patients.

Almost immediately, the Sparrow team and MSU Extension leaders put their heads together to discuss decontaminating N95 respirators for reuse by medical professionals. Working with the MSU Product Center's Food Processing and Innovation Center (FPIC), the two organizations leaned on each other for technical expertise and practical application.

Alan championed the cause and empowered his team to work closely with Extension. Bill immediately invited MSU Extension specialists to the main hospital to learn about their staff's processes for fitting, using, and removing PPE, and coordinated the pickup and return of N95 respirators. Jon continues to orchestrate the microbial validation work and helped bring the teams together to find solutions as obstacles were identified.

The result was the MSU Extension Dry Heat Decontamination System for N95 Respirators. By retooling the commercial spiral oven at FPIC, MSU Extension staff are able to steadily heat the respirators long enough to kill viruses and bacteria. The respirators are then sealed in individual bags and transported to a Sparrow warehouse where they are left to further decontaminate for three days before being returned to health care workers.

This unique process fundamentally benefitted from the expertise and openness of both organizations. Their cooperation moved a tedious development process that would normally take months to a successful model in a matter of weeks. Sparrow's willingness to share their knowledge and be the test subject for this process led to a protocol now available to professionals around the world.

A hearty congratulations to the Sparrow Health System for receiving the MSU Extension Key Partner Award.

Kim and Carl Graham and Wayne County Farm Bureau

MSU Extension recognizes Kim and Carl Graham as well as Wayne County Farm Bureau with the Key Partner Award.

Kim and Carl are long-time supporters of Wayne County 4-H. They are members of the Wayne County Farm Bureau Board of Directors. As the lead of Project RED (Rural Education Days) in Wayne County, Kim invites 4-H teen leaders to guide groups of third grade students through a series of agricultural learning booths. Her Ag in the Classroom materials are used by the Wayne County 4-H AmeriCorps member to teach agricultural science to youth via 4-H SPIN (special interest) clubs.

In fall 2018, Wayne County Farm Bureau gave a gift of \$10,000 to Wayne County 4-H to host an AmeriCorps member to establish 4-H SPIN clubs focusing on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math). Since joining the MSU Extension 4-H STEAM Corps, Bershar Chapman has served 11 schools and community centers. To continue this successful program, Wayne County Farm Bureau donated another \$16,000 in February 2020 for the continued teaching of agricultural science to youth for another 18 months. This funding provides a stipend for the AmeriCorps member and also pays for 4-H Participation Fees for the youth.

Farm Bureau supports Extension in a variety of endeavors. Kim and Carl invite youth to speak at board meetings, sponsor 4-H youth at the local youth auction, and share space with MSU Extension and 4-H in the Miracle of Life Barn at the Annual Wayne County Fair. Recently, Farm Bureau started partnering with local Master Gardeners and urban farmers in Detroit. Wayne County Farm Bureau's financial support and connections have provided pathways for diverse populations to engage with the agriculture industry through Extension as well as provided resources to increase food security in Detroit. The Wayne County Farm Bureau sponsored Fall Extension Conference 2017 in Detroit with a \$2,500 contribution.

Wayne County Farm Bureau, 4-H, and the Grahams share the same vision of educating youth about agriculture, citizenship, and leadership.

ESP FRIEND OF EXTENSION AWARD

Tricia Blicharski

Friends of the Detroit River

Tricia Blicharski is director of operations of Friends of the Detroit River, which envisions an ever-improving quality of life for people, plants, and animals in southeastern Michigan and southwestern Ontario. The organization developed a balance of grassroots advocacy and staffed programs, forming an environmental group that watches and protects the Detroit River.

Friends of the Detroit River has worked closely with MSU Extension for over a decade. Together, more than \$25 million in habitat restoration and trail projects have been completed at multiple locations along the Detroit River. They partnered with MSU Extension Michigan Sea Grant Program on a variety of projects including the annual Detroit River Festival, annual Shiver on the River, and numerous others.

In 2015, Tricia became an advisor to the MSU Extension Water School Program, which provides education to local officials on water resource issues. She provided valuable feedback on curriculum development and now serves on the MSU Extension Water School State Advisory Council where she continues to help shape the future of the program. Also, with Tricia's leadership, over 3,000 students, teachers, and parents have participated in the Detroit Water Festival, a day-long educational event designed to help middle school students learn about our most precious natural resource—water. Because of the partnership with Friends of the Detroit River, MSU Extension has been able to reach over 1,000 people and restore an average of 75 acres of critical Great Lakes coastal habitat annually. Tricia participated in preparing a successful 2019 grant application to the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation that will bring over \$400,000 to Wayne County for a Hines Park Connector Framework Plan. This funding can be used to demonstrate the value that MSU Extension brings to the county.

The Friend of Extension Award recognizes individuals who have been true friends of MSU Extension and supported their programs. Epsilon Sigma Phi honors Tricia Blicharski with this award for her leadership, service, and expertise.

EMERGING ISSUES/RAPID RESPONSE AWARD

N95 Decontamination Team

Patricia Adams, Tina Conklin, Jeff Dwyer, Laryssa Green, Jason Hofman, Rebecca Hulbert, James Klausner, Jeannine Schweihofer, Megghan Honke Seidel, Srinand Sreevatsan, Mindy Tape, Madison Walz

A multi-functional team composed of MSU Extension educators, Food Processing and Innovation Center (FPIC) professionals, communicators, project managers, and educational material designers and editors receive the Emerging Issues/Rapid Response Team Award for their work on MSU Extension Dry Heat Decontamination System for N95 Respirators.

Soon after the coronavirus pandemic came to Michigan in March 2020, MSU Extension director Jeff Dwyer and Tina Conklin began looking at alternative uses for the large spiral oven in the FPIC that was normally used to test production lines for baked goods. Thanks to Tina's expertise, they quickly determined that the same equipment could be used to decontaminate much needed personal protection equipment (PPE) for health care professionals. Tina joined forces with Jeannine Schweihofer to test models and create protocols with support from Jason Hofman and Madison Walz. James Klausner, chair of mechanical engineering, and Srinand Sreevatsan, associate dean in the College of Veterinary Medicine, dedicated their time, talent, and lab teams to test various parts of the process and create the risk analysis necessary for approval by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which is pending. By retooling the commercial spiral oven at FPIC, MSU Extension staff are able to steadily heat the respirators long enough to kill viruses and bacteria.

Hours of intensive work, often in evenings and on weekends, led to the creation of the MSU Extension Dry Heat Decontamination System for N95 Respirators.

Patricia Adams, Laryssa Green, Rebecca Hulbert, Megghan Honke Seidel, and Mindy Tape ensured that protocols were edited, designed, delivered on time, and accessible on the internet. The entire team contributed their unique skills to a process that resulted in a package of data and protocols delivered to the FDA so the system can be replicated worldwide.

OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO MSU EXTENSION AWARD

Roger Betz

Roger Betz, MSU Extension farm business management senior educator, plans, promotes, and teaches business succession and estate planning workshops, and has worked individually with more than 430 families throughout his 38 years of service. Through individual consultations, he helps farmers learn to keep accurate financial records using MSU's Tel-Farm system and to use this information to manage their businesses.

His relationships with families, knowledge of the farm business, and understanding of the role of stress laid the foundation for MSU Extension's Farm Stress program. He led the Farm Stress team's development of the workshop "Communicating With Farmers Under Stress," conducted throughout Michigan and Indiana. He helped GreenStone Farm Credit Services, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, and members of the dairy industry train staff to recognize and respond to signs of stress in their clients.

He has developed decision-making aids for producers. One is the financial foundation of the "U2U Irrigation Investment DST" web tool for the Corn Belt States. Under Roger's leadership, the members of the Dairy and Farm Management teams built a budgeting framework to help dairy farms during the financial crisis. He was instrumental in bringing Annie's Project, a workshop designed for farm women, to Michigan and worked with the National Annie's group to develop a new curriculum. His understanding of the 2002 farm bill enabled him to identify an error in the nationally supported decision-making program developed at Texas A&M. His discovery led to a congressional amendment to the legislation. Roger expands his ability to influence producers' financial management decisions by training Extension educators.

Some of his most significant educational impacts result from his individual consultations with farm families that involve sensitive and emotionally charged issues of money, land, relationships, and death. While the financial impacts of his work are impressive and unparalleled, his intimate working relationships with farm families is his legacy. His technical expertise, dedication, empathy, and sincere desire to improve the lives of farm families across Michigan have been a tremendous asset to Michigan agriculture and MSU Extension. Roger Betz truly deserves this highest honor given to MSU Extension professional staff members.

GORDON GUYER COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMMING AWARD

Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Team

Andrew Hayes, Katherine Jamieson, Parker B. Jones, Diane Longanbach, C. Andrew Northrop, Mary Reilly, David S. Rowley

The Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities (CEC) team facilitates the strengthening of entrepreneurial ecosystems via an annual statewide conference. Launched in response to the 2008 Great Recession, the CEC Conference has been spearheaded by a multi-institute collaboration including MSU Extension career exploration and workforce preparation educators, MSU Extension government and community vitality educators, and MSU Product Center counselors, as well as a direct partnership with each host community. This collaborative approach helps mobilize MSU Extension's evidence-based programming to strengthen entrepreneurship targeted at diverse stakeholders. To highlight local host community successes, CEC is held in thriving downtowns where participants learn firsthand from business owners, guest speakers, and MSU Extension presenters. After the noon-to-noon conference, participants depart with an actionable toolkit to strengthen their own entrepreneurial ecosystem. To date, 10 Michigan communities have hosted the CEC Conference.

In 2019, 100% of the 100 attendees agreed the content presented was replicable and that new connections made at CEC could help them bring these practices to their home community.

As an example of a community replicating a program, the City of Alma attended CEC 2019 and learned how a Michigan community's library created a hot spot rental program to increase student internet access. In December 2019, Alma implemented a similar program. Within months, their program would become the solution to keeping students connected during the pandemic that forced education into home-school environments. Alma credits this success to the collaborative environment cultivated at the CEC Conference.

The success of CEC has spawned additional synergies. For example, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation sponsored the 2019 conference by pledging \$5,000 and delivering educational programs to support entrepreneurship. Additionally, beginning in 2014, the CEC Conference model has been adopted by Extension services in seven states via multi-state Rural Development Center grants.

The Gordon Guyer Award honors cross-institute teams that conduct high-quality, collaborative programming. The CEC Conference, as delivered by the CEC Team, is a scholarly example of evidence-based programming rooted in multi-institute collaboration.

MCEA JOHN A. HANNAH AWARD FOR PROGRAM EXCELLENCE

MSU Extension Home Garden Soil Testing Services

Bindu Bhakta, Bert Cregg, Jon Dahl, Irene Donne, Rebecca Finneran, Kevin Frank, Lori Imboden, Allen Krizek, Mark Longstroth, Jeremy Lounds, Laura Probyn, Heather Rouse, Mary Wilson

Serving Michigan gardeners through high-quality soil testing has long been a hallmark for Michigan State University. Testing soil leads to more accurate application of fertilizers that, if misapplied, have a negative effect on water quality and the environment. Soil testing was at first a labor-intensive process of handling the soil samples, transporting to the MSU Soil and Plant Nutrient (SPN) Lab, and hand interpreting. The process not only consumed staff time but also, in some cases, delayed clients' results. The development of the MSU soil test website in 2008 and the soil test self-mailer in 2011 allowed greater accessibility of soil-testing services, greatly improving the process.

In 2017, an effort began to elevate the soil testing services to bring it to a new level. In addition, there was interest from other states to purchase the software. The MSU team began the process of redesigning and upgrading the MSU soil test website to increase program stability, security, and accessibility; meet stakeholder demand for soil testing services; continue bringing value-added services to counties across the state; and increase the market potential to generate revenue through software sales to other universities. The MSU SPN Lab is also experiencing an increasing number of soil test mailer sales to out-of-state clientele with clientele currently from 33 states. With the demand, steady income will be generated that can enhance infrastructure and maintenance, making the product sustainable for future growth.

The soil test mailer was also updated. The team has provided advanced soils and testing training for MSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers who provide customer support through the toll-free hotline or 24/7 online Ask an Expert.

The John A. Hannah Award recognizes superior Extension programs that are developed and carried out by MSU Extension professional staff members who are appointed by the MSU Board of Trustees. Through these products and services, the MSU Extension Home Garden Soil Testing Services Team serves all Michigan communities, as well as some out of state, in a cost-effective, user-friendly, environmentally sound way.

MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARDS

4-H Program Coordinator

Sara Lewis

As 4-H program coordinator in Monroe County, Sara Lewis oversees one of the largest 4-H programs in the state. For a period, the Monroe County Extension office was significantly short-staffed. Because of this shortage, Sara took on additional duties including handling office operations and carrying out the duties of a second 4-H program coordinator during a three-month vacancy. One of the biggest matters Sara undertook was the Volunteer Selection Process, which included completing the spreadsheet, interviewing potential volunteers, and completing background checks.

She was appointed to serve on the Michigan 4-H Foundation Finance Committee while also serving as the treasurer for the Michigan Association of Extension 4-H Youth Staff.

She secured Directions Credit Union as a collaborative partner on financial literacy training and as a sponsor for the end-of-the-year awards and recognition banquet. She served as a chaperone for the week-long Citizenship Washington Focus leadership program in Washington D.C. She led multiple activities and events with large participation numbers such as the Fitting and Showing Clinic, Superintendent Orientation, the Vintage Market Petting Zoo, and many more.

Sara demonstrates an excellent work ethic and quiet manner in getting things done. She is cooperative, willing to help with any team needs, and has the behind-the-scenes skills to aptly manage paperwork and ensure that the entire office is running smoothly. A natural problem solver, she easily identifies and proposes solutions to any challenges her team faces.

The Meritorious Service Award honors individuals who have supported the mission, program, and professional staff of MSU Extension in an outstanding manner. Nominees must possess the highest standards of integrity and character to positively reflect and enhance the reputation of MSU Extension. This defines Sara Lewis.

Administrative Leadership

Shari Spoelman

Shari Spoelman, MSU Extension District 6 director, began her leadership role in 2008 as a county Extension director while also serving as a regional Extension educator. In 2010, she became district coordinator, a title which changed to district director in 2018. She is responsible for administrative oversight of seven counties.

The epitome of a leader, Shari is always willing to take on new opportunities. Her creativity in leadership has led to new and innovative relationships. Her strong ties with Mid-Michigan Community College has become a model partnership across the state.

She served on the committee that developed the Strategic Connections program for staff, which produced the “Expect to Connect” toolkit. She provided statewide and regional conference presentations to stress the importance of strategic connections and engage participants to tell their Extension stories.

As an experienced district director, Shari is a trusted counselor and creative problem-solver. These traits came into play when she chaired the successful North Central Leadership Conference in 2018 at MSU. Though the conference had funding issues, it stayed in budget under her guidance, making a profit to pass on to the next state to host. In 2017, she took leadership of the team created to assist district directors facing a local millage vote for funding of Extension offices. She provided the education that covered guidelines to move forward with legal and strategic initiatives as well as technical assistance to local leaders. She set the standard for creating successful Friends of Extension groups and helped staff members draw clear lines between advocating and educating. Recently, she shepherded Clare and Wexford counties through a successful millage vote.

For her outstanding leadership and excellence in administrative organizational planning, Shari Spoelman is deserving of the Meritorious Service Award.

Extension Specialist, Supervising Educator

Tina Conklin and Jeannine Schwehofer

Tina Conklin is the food processing specialist for the MSU Product Center. She is associate director of the MSU Product Center and director of the MSU Product Center's Food Processing and Innovation Center (FPIC). Jeannine Schwehofer is the MSU Extension senior meat quality educator and an adjunct professor in the MSU Department of Animal Science.

Tina and Jeannine were the key leaders and contributors to the development of the MSU Extension Dry Heat Decontamination System for Decontaminating N95 Respirators in response to the need to provide reuse options for personal protection equipment (PPE) during the coronavirus pandemic.

As director of the FPIC, Tina initiated the idea of using the center to facilitate the acquisition, distribution, and decontamination of PPE. Subsequently, while walking through the FPIC and considering the possibilities, she mused about whether heat (and the commercial spiral oven) could be used to decontaminate N95 respirators as is sometimes done in the food industry. The idea took root and Jeannine joined the team as the science lead.

The pair tackled issues in developing the system by establishing a process for collecting N95 respirators from users and returning them to the same individual; establishing time and temperature controls to ensure decontamination; ensuring protocols and training to avoid cross-contamination; and testing for biological kill, temperature variability, and fit of the respirator on users after multiple trials. The protocol for the system remains under Food and Drug Administration (FDA) review. According to the FDA, the protocol has been a prototype against which other heat treatments are compared in the review process. The two partnered with Sparrow Health Center and MSU College of Engineering professor James Klausner to develop and test the system.

Through their quick thinking, leadership, and ability to jump in quickly on a difficult task, Tina and Jeannine met an important, immediate, and critical need in a unique and creative fashion. Their actions show continued leadership and excellence in program planning and delivery and makes them both worthy recipients of the Meritorious Service Award.

Supervising Educator

Lindsey Pung-Terry

Lindsey Pung-Terry is health and nutrition supervising educator in MSU Extension District 12. She co-created the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program–Education Cooking for One curriculum and has led instructor trainings statewide. She led the content development of a new lesson in Detroit Public Television’s Pre-School U curriculum called “Eating Well and Being Active.” She completed the Great Lakes Leadership Academy Emerging Leaders Program to further enhance her leadership skills. She served on the Work-Life Wellness Committee and her leadership within this group resulted in MSU Extension receiving a Michigan Healthy Worksite Honorable Mention Award from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

She assists with relationships between community nutrition instructors and the South Michigan Food Bank as well as Michigan Fitness Foundation partners to discuss programming efforts. She helps manage the AT&T Cooking Matters grant across several counties and re-established Cooking Matters grocery money with the Livingston Hunger Council. She represented MSU Extension on the Michigan Health & Wellness 4x4 Partnership and served as secretary for the evaluation task group.

She proposed, implemented, and led action committees to address gaps in programming support.

Lindsey implements peer-led discussions and activities into team meetings, in addition to team field trips and trainings, which have helped foster relationships and teamwork. She is supportive of the team’s mental health, incorporating Psychological Flexibility modules and discussion. She fuels the growth of her team by encouraging discussion, creativity, and professional development. She appreciates peer-to-peer teaching methods. This approach to staff management empowers people in their abilities to deliver programming effectively, report results and challenges, and to seek opportunities.

Lindsey Pung-Terry’s ability to foster an efficient and collaborative environment, improving the morale of the team and ultimately benefitting the organization as well as clientele is one of the attributes that led to her receiving the Meritorious Service Award.

Support Staff Off-Campus

Toni Van Bergen

As the 4-H secretary/county support, Toni Van Bergen has been the anchoring force in the MSU Extension Oceana County office for the past 15 years. Toni primarily supports the 4-H program but also provides support to the agricultural programs as well.

She volunteers outside of her office hours as an administrator for all three of the Oceana County Fair auctions.

Toni has been tasked with some unique situations related to staff transitions, learning new database systems and managing media websites while keeping the 4-H program moving forward. During a recent three-year period, the 4-H program coordinator position had three different staff members serving in that role. Toni stepped in when needed to host meetings and provide required materials for all programs as well as handle day-to-day requests. Once the new 4-H program coordinator was in place, she provided the guidance they needed to be successful.

She serves clients seeking answers to gardening or pest-related issues. She has assisted with establishing partners through her personal connections and has helped connect MSU Extension with local school personnel, nonprofit groups, and additional volunteers. Toni promotes new 4-H programs and events through various social media platforms. She also keeps the MSU Extension Oceana County webpage updated. She maintains many resources the local farming community relies on. From an agribusiness perspective, she helps to keep local businesses involved in the community. She also works with MSU Extension agriculture and agribusiness educators and is an integral part of agricultural education programs in the county and statewide.

Toni Van Bergen is a major contributor to a positive office environment and effective 4-H and agriculture programming in Oceana County. We salute her with the Meritorious Service Award.

Support Staff On-Campus

Cindy Hudson

Cindy Hudson is the communications manager for the Michigan Sea Grant Extension Program and part of a Michigan Sea Grant Communications team, which has three members at the University of Michigan. She has set the tone for the joint institution communications team to be collaborative and collegial. As a result, the communications team was highly rated during Michigan Sea Grant's most recent federal review.

When chairing the planning committee for the 2019 Great Lakes Sea Grant Network Meeting, she launched innovative programming, shared best practices for communication, and implemented a zero-waste conference. She helps the team keep up with programming and shares stories with the University of Michigan's Sea Grant office as part of federal reporting.

Cindy's communications leadership within MSU Extension has been a major factor in raising the visibility and integration of Michigan Sea Grant.

The team benefits from her productive approach when confronting a challenging situation. She has led Power of Positive Confrontation workshops, sharing this resource and facilitating discussion with district teams. Her demonstration of constructive communication skills and ability to tactfully address conflict have promoted healthy communication practices across the team.

Cindy brings a wealth of media industry knowledge and norms that help the team apply best practices when developing communications, outreach, and education products. She assists Extension educators in helping create customer-oriented and engaging products. Most recently, she has taken leadership in assembling Extension educators to develop an informal community of practice where they can increase their knowledge and understanding of communications work. This includes working with websites, design of printed material, and other topics that support virtual programming during the pandemic.

As an invaluable member of the Michigan Sea Grant Extension program and team, Cindy Hudson deserves the Meritorious Service Award.

DIVERSITY AND MULTICULTURALISM AWARD

Michigan Inter-Tribal Land-Grant Extension System Team

Patrick Cudney, Cheryl Eschbach, Lupe Gonzalez, Brianna Gunka, DeAnna Hadden, Kathleen Hart, Kathryn Jacques, Kit Laux, Dionardo Pizaña, Christie Poitra, Emily Proctor, Beth Stuever, Stephen Yann

The Michigan Inter-Tribal Land-Grant Extension System (MILES) Team works to strengthen relationships between partners Michigan State University Extension, MSU Native American Institute, Bay Mills Community College, Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College, Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College, and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

The team hosted the inaugural Michigan Tribal Land-Grant Summit in February 2019 and initiated tribal topic sessions at the 2018 and 2019 MSU Extension Fall Extension Conference (FEC). In 2019, for the first time, FEC had representation from Michigan Tribal Nations and 1994 Tribal Colleges in attendance and on the conference planning committee. Members of the MILES Team have facilitated in-person and now virtual meetings with tribal governments and organizations. A tribal webinar series was created to provide education and highlight the work of partners regarding key tribal topics to bring all interested staff into discussions around serving and connecting with tribal communities.

During the February 2019 Tribal Leaders Collaboration Kick-Off meeting at the Kellogg Center, the MILES Team captured discussions that occurred between MSU Extension and 1994 Tribal College leadership. These discussions demonstrated the past success and potential of working together. Summary reports provided to tribal partners informed ways the land-grant systems could collaborate.

In fall 2019, survey data were collected from MSU Extension staff about their current programming efforts with tribal communities. Results have been shared with the MILES Team and with MSU Extension district directors.

The MILES Team remains committed to continuous learning together and continues to build trust, engage in candid conversations, and challenge the status quo. In addition, the team strives for transparency and inclusiveness across the land-grant system to best serve Michigan Tribal Nations. These exceptional efforts are worthy of the Diversity and Multiculturalism Award.

INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY AWARD

Joshua G. Cohen

Joshua G. Cohen is a conservation scientist in the Community, Food, and Environment Institute and Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI).

The control of invasive plant species is critical to maintaining native biodiversity and ecosystem functioning. However, these control activities are labor intensive and costly and require an accurate understanding of where the invasive species occur, which is often in remote locations and difficult terrain.

Joshua worked with Matthew Lewis of Michigan Aerospace Corporation (MAC) to develop an automated monitoring platform to identify invasive plant species in coastal ecosystems. The project combined cutting-edge technologies, including uncrewed aircraft systems (drones) and neural networks (machine learning software), with ecological knowledge about coastal ecosystems and native and invasive species.

He obtained funding to complete the project from the Office of the Great Lakes, a program within the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). The funding was provided through the Coastal Zone Management Program through a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The project involved partners from EGLE, multiple divisions of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), MAC, and MNFI, among others.

This project represents a significant advancement in conservation and the first application of this technique anywhere in the state. It is especially significant from the standpoint that it effectively demonstrated the efficacy of the approach to the MDNR and the USFWS, who have now added a significant new tool to their conservation toolbox.

The technology that Josh has spearheaded will allow scientists to conduct ecological surveys on scales that were not before possible. This platform simply could not exist without his knowledge, determination, and enthusiasm. Intellectually flexible, meticulous, and hardworking, Joshua Cohen well deserves the Innovative Technology Award.

INSTITUTE TEAM AWARDS

4-H Home Alone Safely Virtual Programming Team

Geep Charlebois, Jill Connin, Angela Cook, Karie Saxton, Liz Wiener

In spring 2019, Karie Saxton first developed this program in an in-person format, meeting a need locally to develop youth home-alone skills during the summer months. When the COVID-19 crisis closed Michigan schools on March 16, 2020, an even greater number of children were left home alone under a “Stay Home, Stay Safe” order. Angela Cook inquired about turning Karie’s idea into a virtual program. Geep Charlebois, Jill Connin, and Liz Wiener joined the committee, and the group launched a revamped program less than a week later. 4-H Home Alone Safely quickly became a virtual program that reached 422 youth: 334 from 63 Michigan counties, and 88 from 19 other states and Ontario. This was the first MSU Extension program many of these youth had experienced.

The themes covered by the group reflected critical issues facing youth who may be alone or caring for younger siblings while their parents or guardians work. Topics covered during the series included time budgeting, first-aid, home safety, 911, nutrition and food safety, physical activity, managing feelings through mindfulness, at-home science experiments, and care of younger siblings. Each meeting involved two topics with a physical fitness component allowing youth to move and, perhaps more importantly, to take breaks from screen-learning. A webpage was created for resources and recorded presentations, and surveys were sent out after the program to families to gain insight into the program’s effectiveness and potential improvements.

The team partnered with local 911 operators in Crawford and Antrim counties. During each series, a 911 dispatcher joined the Zoom meeting to explain to youth the importance of 911, the procedures that take place when a call to 911 is placed, and what to do if 911 is dialed accidentally.

Staff from other state’s Extension programs joined to gain insights to run similar programs in their states and to adapt their curricula to address current needs.

The Institute Team Award recognizes an outstanding team contribution to MSU Extension. The 4-H Home Alone Safely Virtual Programming Team’s effort exemplifies the beauty of MSU Extension programming and its program delivery model.

Field Crops Team

Eric Anderson, Jeff Andresen, Dean Baas, Scott Bales, Robert Battel, Daniel Bublitz, Erin Burns, Kim Cassida, Martin Chilvers, Ricardo Costa, Christina Curell, Chris DiFonzo, Sarah Fronczak, Ehsan Ghane, Paul Gross, Tim Harrigan, James Isleib, Monica Jean, Philip Kaatz, Eric Karbowski, Lyndon Kelley, Bruce MacKellar, Mallory Marienfeld, Vicki Morrone, Dennis Pennington, Erica Rogers, Aleks Schaefer, Maninder Singh, Christy Sprague, Michael Staton, Kurt Steinke, Kurt Thelen, Christian Tollini

The MSU Extension Field Crops Team is composed of campus-based or research station-based specialists and Extension educators housed in counties across Michigan. The team conducted an issues identification process in 2017, which included farmer and agribusiness surveys and face-to-face meetings. The results suggested strong interest in virtual delivery of Extension programs. This hatched the Virtual Breakfast Series in which the team successfully uses Zoom to reach a changing agriculture audience. Started in 2018, the weekly series takes place during the growing season. The format begins with an MSU specialist presenting research and information on timely topics. Next, MSU climatologist Jeff Andresen presents a comprehensive report of current and long-term weather conditions. A question-and-answer session follows each section. The session pairs an MSU specialist with a field educator serving as host. The breakfast is recorded and posted on the Field Crops Team webpage and social media. In 2019, over 11,000 reaches were recorded from either live, social media, or podcast views. The topics are set at the beginning of the season but provide flexibility to change during the growing season as issues change. The 2019 growing season is an example. Excessive rains created a number of challenges for farmers and the breakfast menu was changed to provide the necessary information weekly for farmers and agribusinesses.

The pandemic in 2020 revealed the further need for quality virtual programming. Educators from other states are viewing this delivery method. The breakfasts have strengthened the MSU Extension field crops team performance, collaboration, and working relationships. In addition, Virtual Breakfast has become a model for information delivery for other teams. The Institute Team Award recognizes an outstanding team contribution to MSU Extension. The Field Crops Team collaborated to bring timely evidence-based information to its audience with the Virtual Breakfast Series.

Opportunity Zones Training Team

John Amrhein, Lindsey Gardner, David Ivan, Yusri Jamaluddin, Holly Madill, Brad Neumann, David Rowley, Eric Walcott

The Opportunity Zone (OZ) Training Team organized to develop a program to educate Michigan local government leaders on a new federal program for community reinvestment. Created by federal statute, opportunity zones are economically distressed census tracts where certain new investments in existing businesses or new construction are eligible for preferential tax treatment. MSU Extension educators, in partnership with MSU's National Charrette Institute, developed a statewide training series "Opportunity Zones (OZ): There's No Place Like Home!" to teach local officials strategies to use this new economic development tool. The multi-disciplinary team came together at the request of a key state agency partner in late 2018 and worked remotely over a few short months to develop and launch a new program in spring 2019.

The team developed a half-day workshop with interactive group exercises for participants to start formulating plans to leverage opportunity zones in their communities. The team offered five in-person trainings statewide in April-May 2019 ending with a two-hour webinar in June. In total, 304 community leaders participated in the initial training series. Additionally, the team trained 44 State of Michigan employees in related departments and agencies with the program materials.

The team secured a service agreement with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority to prepare and deliver the program at no cost to Michigan residents. State agencies partnered with the team to promote the program to communities, and department staff attended all programs allowing the agencies to make connections with local government leaders and share additional agency resources.

The OZ Training Team's partnership with key state agencies, expertise, and capacity to develop meaningful educational content in a timely response to a demonstrated need is exemplary of MSU Extension's broader resourcefulness, responsiveness, and relevance to Michigan residents and is deserving of the 2020 Institute Team Award.

MSU DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC STAFF AWARD WINNERS

The following MSU Extension staff members have been awarded the MSU Distinguished Academic Staff Award during the calendar year noted. We thank each of them for their significant contributions to MSU Extension.

2019 – Jo Latimore, Kendra Moyses, Mary Wilson

2020 – Brandon Schroeder

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.

35 or More Years of Service

**Bruce MacKellar, Lori Martin, Rebecca McKee,
Beth Waitrovich, Mary Wilson**

30 Years of Service

**Connie DeMars, Terry Gibb, Diane Longanbach,
Vanessa Pollok, Laura Sears**

25 Years of Service

Mark Breederland, Carol Bublitz, M. Charles Gould, Linda Kline, Nora Lee, Kathy Pennington, Sienna Samp, Nancy Toben

20 Years of Service

Peter Badra, Robert Battel, Lisa Bottomley, Joshua Cohen, David Cuthrell, LuAnn Doriot, Helen Enander, Phyllis Higman, Amanda Hulet, Adam Koivisto, Kraig Korroch, Yu Man Lee, Shannon Lindquist, Jane Love, Laurie Messing, Dianne Novak, John Paskus Jr., Rebecca Rogers, Les Thomas

15 Years of Service

Bindu Bhakta, Ryan Coffey Hoag, Elizabeth Ferry, Betty Jo Krosnicki, Sheila Mead, Bradley Neumann, Katherine Ockert, Renee Sanders, Beth Stuever, Richard Wooten

10 Years of Service

Taylor Fabus, Leah LaVanway, Sabrina McGee, EvaRuth Napier-Beeker, Alan Pilkenton, Amy Prins, Melissa Prohaska, Erin Ross, Edward Scott III, Renee Stacer

5 Years of Service

Ashley Adkins, Eric Anderson, Gwen Apper, Amy Attwell, Krystal Avila, Karen Barbash, Marianne Buza, Anita Carter, Erin Carter, Jacalenne Christian, Debra Divoky, Heather Dyer, Joshua Dykstra, Jessica Eberhard, Iteria Finley, Erika Garner, Kendra Gibson, Nichole Hersch, Jason Hofman, Emily Hoover, Cynthia Hudson, Amber Joseph, Teagen LeFere, Sara Lewis, Patricia Marris, Elizabeth Martinez, Cody McLaren, Sheryl Moll, Aaron Myers, Ashly Nelson, Stephanie Ostrenga Sprague, Vickie Pfeifer, Sarah Rautio, D'Ann Rohrer, Christopher Thompson, Martina Valdez, Colleen Wallace, Crystal White

MSU EXTENSION 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 again in this program.

COMMUNITY AND NATURAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION AWARDS

Community Partnership

OPPORTUNITY ZONE TRAINING TEAM

**John Amrhein, Lindsey Gardner, David Ivan,
Yusri Jamaluddin, Holly Madill, Brad Neumann,
David Rowley, Eric Walcott**

The Opportunity Zone (OZ) Training Team organized to develop a program to educate Michigan local government leaders on a new federal program for community reinvestment. Created by federal statute, opportunity zones are economically distressed census tracts where certain new investments in existing businesses or new construction are eligible for preferential tax treatment. MSU Extension educators, in partnership with MSU's National Charrette Institute, developed a statewide training series "Opportunity Zones (OZ): There's No Place Like Home!" to teach local officials strategies to use this new economic development tool. The OZ Training Team includes Extension faculty with expertise in municipal finance, governance, planning, community engagement and facilitation, and data management and visualization. The multi-disciplinary team came together at the request of a key state agency partner in late 2018 and worked remotely over a few short months to develop and launch a new program in spring 2019. The rapid program response reflected the urgency that Michigan local governments faced in preparing their communities to capitalize on the narrow window afforded investors through the OZ legislation.

Innovative Program Award

TOURISM TEAM

**Will Cronin, Dan McCole, C. Andrew Northrop,
Gail Vander Stoep, Diane Wilson, Garrett Ziegler**

Composed of campus and field faculty, the MSU Extension Tourism Team applied their signature program, First Impressions Tourism Assessments (FIT), to six communities in 2019. FIT is a comprehensive assessment conducted by a team of first-time visitors to a host community. Adopted three years earlier through land-grant university partnerships and rural development grants, FIT has been administered to more than a dozen communities. After three years of continuous programmatic growth and successes, capturing first-time visitor perspectives has proven to be the catalyst needed to spawn local leadership, strengthen community vitality, and form the basis for future tourism development in rural Michigan.

EPSILON SIGMA PHI AWARDS

Distinguished Service

Bev Przystas

Bev Przystas has served MSU Extension for 41 years. Her proven dedication to youth development work as well as her commitment to helping people of Gladwin County makes her a qualified winner of this award. Over the years, she took on many titles within MSU Extension, always believing in the mission and vision of the organization. In addition, Bev was actively involved in Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP) and was the membership chair for many years. She was also a member of the Michigan Association of Extension 4-H Youth, National Association of Extension 4-H Agents (NAE4-HA), and Michigan Chapter Extension Associations. She received numerous state awards and received the National Meritorious Service Award from NAE4-HA in 2016. Her commitment to help colleagues experience leadership opportunities as well as encourage involvement in professional development organizations is a great testament to her belief in education and professional development. As a reliable, creative, hardworking team player, she has shown enthusiasm for MSU Extension's work with youth programs as well as community development. She spent the last part of her career serving on the Career and Workforce Development Team, helping youth gain hands-on skills that would empower them to become successful adults. Because of her dedication to MSU Extension and ESP, Bev Przystas is deserving of the Distinguished Service Award.

Visionary Leadership

Mary Wilson

Over her span of 35 years with MSU Extension, Mary Wilson has earned many professional accomplishments for her work with the MSU Extension Consumer Horticulture Team and the MSU Extension Master Gardener (EMG) Program as demonstrated through leadership roles, awards, grants, and national and international presentations. She has served on many committees at a national and state level, and was the United States delegate to the Korean Master Gardener International Conference in South Korea in 2014. In 2019, she was presented with the prestigious MSU Distinguished Academic Staff Award. In addition to this, she has received many awards from MSU, MSU Extension, and national associations. She has authored numerous articles in horticulture publications and was the recipient of many grants, including a significant grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2004 to develop emerald ash borer outreach programs. In addition to this, she is a lifelong learner who is continuously embracing new ideas and ways of using technology to increase reach and expand MSU Extension programs.

Mary has been instrumental in implementing successful programs through her work with the MSU Extension Consumer Horticulture Team and the MSU EMG Program. Her vision and leadership resulted in the MSU EMG Program being known nationally, as both innovative and sustainable. She developed an array of professional development opportunities for the MSU EMG program including webinars, a website, and a manual to ensure consistency of the program at a local level. Her vision has improved curriculum, increased reach, and resulted in new and successful programs.



MSU EXTENSION ASSOCIATION AWARDS

Diversity & Multiculturalism – Individual

Kylie Rymanowicz

Meritorious Program Support

Holly Lacina

Mid-Career Service

Deanna East

Early Career Service

Kara Lynch

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF EXTENSION 4-H YOUTH STAFF AWARDS

National Achievement in Service Award

Jill Connin

Jill Connin began her career with MSU Extension Schoolcraft County in 2016. During her four years on staff, more than 215 youth have held 4-H memberships. Through her split role of 4-H and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program–Education, she has reached all Manistique Area School students in first through ninth grades with at least six hours of programming. Jill and three other staff reimagined a 4-H camp into a program that serves 80 youth each year. She is always willing to learn something new and grow in her role. She has served on numerous committees and has mentored three new staff members. After a partnership was formed between National 4-H, Michigan 4-H, and the U.S. Soccer Foundation (USFF), Jill was selected to attend the train-the-trainer event and was then invited by USSF to return as a session presenter the following year. Jill has attended the National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals national conference three times. In December 2019, Jill completed her master’s degree in family and community services from MSU. The high level of professional development gained through her role in Extension has afforded her the opportunity to share cutting-edge developments and best practices in youth development with other youth-serving organizations in Schoolcraft County, especially advocating for grandparents raising grandchildren, families who are food insecure, and families living in low socioeconomic situations.

National Achievement in Service Award

Glenda Weiss

Glenda Weiss's passion for 4-H has been demonstrated by her long history of involvement in the 4-H program. During her time with MSU Extension, she has served as a 4-H program coordinator in Wayne County and currently serves in Ingham County. She has risen to the challenges involved with 4-H programming in the urban setting, thinking outside of the box while having competition from many organizations. She has worked to develop new partnerships to strengthen the 4-H program throughout the counties and offered opportunities to build life skills with her innovative science, technology, engineering, and math programs as well as livestock programs. Some of her accomplishments include coordinating and facilitating three week-long summer camps with two new partner organizations, engaging 43 new 4-H youth; bringing 4-H animal science programs into the classroom through a new Wayne County partnership between Pingree Farms, the Education Achievement Authority, and 4-H; organizing a new statewide event, Day at the MSU Observatory, through a partnership with the MSU Department of Physics and Astronomy; organizing 11 livestock workshops engaging 380 youth; organizing and facilitating 11 virtual rabbit sessions with 377 youth registered from 29 states and Canada; and supporting a volunteer committee to host the State 4-H Rabbit and Cavy Show engaging 294 youth.

National Meritorious Service Award

Jennifer Weichel

Jennifer Weichel has been a member of the Michigan Association of Extension 4-H Youth Staff (MAE4-HYS) for 25 years and the National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Staff for 24 years. She has served as MAE4-HYS regional chair, co-chair, and president and as Michigan Council of Extension Associations president. She has been a member of Epsilon Sigma Phi for 13 years. She has presented at numerous state and national conferences including the National Extension Conference on Volunteerism and National Association of Extension 4-H Agents (NAE4-HA) conferences and has served as the NAE4-HA Volunteerism Taskforce chair. Jennifer received the NAE4-HA Distinguished Service Award in 2010.

She began her career with MSU Extension in 1994 as a 4-H program assistant in Hillsdale County and went on to become the 4-H agent. In 2002, she became the Shiawassee County 4-H Extension educator. She later served as a 4-H supervisor and then in 2014, volunteer specialist. Throughout her career, she has been passionate about volunteerism, serving on the Area of Expertise team writing curriculum. She continues today as a member of the Volunteer Excellence Support Team. She enjoys coaching staff and volunteers to achieve the Extension mission.

She is a respected member of the North Central Regional Volunteer Specialist Team and has facilitated the Achieving the Extension Mission Through Volunteers online course offered by the North Central Region. She received the National Team Award for Volunteerism and Technology with her colleagues for their work on the course and the Volunteer E-Forums.

MSU EXTENSION ASSOCIATION AWARDS

National Achievement Award

Kelly Stelter

MAE4-HYS Team Effort Award

Angela Cook, John Wurm

MAE4-HYS Scholarship for Personal and Professional Development Award

Lisa Kelley

Michigan Colleagues Award

Jane Love

Michigan Communicator Award

Jill Connin

Michigan Distinguished Service Award

Christine Heverly, Laurie Rivetto

Michigan Excellence in Camping Award

Katie Cooper, Patti Errer, Colleen Wallace, Lori Warchuck

Michigan Excellence in Global Programming Award

D'Ann Rohrer

Michigan Partnership Award

**Domaci Gallery with Tim Pritchard and Barb Weisenberg/
Kaelie Fessler State's 4-H International Exchange
Program/D'Ann Rohrer**

Michigan Presidential Citation

Emily Hoover, Liz Wiener

Michigan Programming Expertise: Excellence in

Communication and Expressive Arts Programming Award

Patti Errer

**Michigan Programming Expertise: Youth Leadership
Development Award**

Liz Wiener

**Michigan Programming Expertise: Excellence in Animal
Science Programming Award**

Glenda Weiss



MSU EXTENSION ASSOCIATION AWARDS

**Michigan Programming Expertise: 4-H Military
Partnership Award**

Katelyn Burns

Michigan Technology Award

Laurie Rivetto

National Achievement in Service Award

Jill Connin, Glenda Weiss

National Communicator Award

Christine Heverly

National 25 Years of Service

Jennifer Weichel

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF EXTENSION AGENTS AWARDS

National Achievement Award (NACAA)

Emily Pochubay

Emily Pochubay provides integrated pest management (IPM) leadership to help commercial tree fruit growers minimize production risks. Based at the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Center, she develops and delivers timely programs such as the weekly IPM Update seminars that annually attract over 400 growers. Additionally, she has secured over \$390,000 in grants to support IPM and invasive species research since 2013. Emily served five years for the state's association and serves in leadership roles within MSU Extension.

National Distinguished Service Award (NACAA)

Ronald Goldy

Ronald Goldy is an originator, cooperater, and leader for Michigan agriculture and MSU Extension. He initiated the cranberry schools, started and maintains an irrigation monitoring service, pioneered work on new crops and production technologies, and services Michigan's vegetable industry through field trials and development and coordination of educational activities. He supports Michigan's agritourism industry through educational event development and leadership. Recent efforts include producing educational videos to help consumers understand modern agricultural practices.

National Communications Finalist – Personal Column Category

Phillip Durst

MICHIGAN EXTENSION ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES AWARDS

Early Childhood Child Care Training Award

3rd National, 2nd Central Region & Michigan

Courtney Aldrich, Danielle Melching, Michelle Neff, Kylie Rymanowicz, Carrie Shrier, Vivian Washington, Kevin Zorowski

MSU Extension's Child and Family Development Team uses a cohesive, planned menu of 27 evidence-based presentations for early childhood educators with a single evaluation tool and compiled data. These trainings are approved in the State of Michigan's quality child care rating system (MiRegistry), are consistently sought out by providers, and are known to be of high quality. They feature research-based information and hands-on activities in an engaged learner style appropriate for adult education. New topics are developed annually with feedback from participants and in response to data trends and analysis of current issues facing Michigan providers. These one-time presentations for early childhood educators are delivered across the state in both urban and in rural settings, as well as online. They are delivered on-site as a part of professional development events, at conferences, at Extension offices, and through community partners, such as the State of Michigan's Great Start to Quality Regional Resource Centers.

Findings from an analysis of 2019 outcome data indicate positive knowledge change in understanding the importance of actively supporting a child's learning, understanding how the topic presented connects to healthy development, being prepared to support learning and growth in the area of the topic presented, and having techniques to help young children.

In 2019, over 3,300 participants were engaged in early childhood programming. Workshops took place in 31 counties and online and reached participants in 72 of Michigan's 83 counties.

Extension Housing Outreach Award

3rd National, 2nd Region & Michigan

Robert Weber

MSU Extension educator Robert (“Rob”) Weber has implemented a program over a seven-year period to educate and counsel tax delinquent homeowners in Macomb County, Michigan, to help them avoid foreclosure and regain housing stability. The program incorporates national industry standards for housing counseling in the program design, marketing, cross-agency collaboration, and evaluation, which has resulted in highly successful impacts. Rob has collaborated with the Macomb County Treasurer’s Office (MCTO) to deliver the program to homeowners at risk of foreclosure for delinquent taxes owed. As a result, hundreds of homeowners have been successful in preventing foreclosure through repayment plans and accessing millions of dollars in resources to support financial recovery.

This program was highly successful because it leveraged a key community partner, the MCTO, with its capabilities in marketing and outreach, to support the program by referring large numbers of participants year after year. The continuity of the support the MCTO gave was because Rob put a major emphasis on the evaluation of the program and continuously reported on its effectiveness. Having impact data in terms of dollars and homes saved to report regularly encouraged the MCTO to continue its requirements of homeowners to participate in the MSU Extension program. This program has the potential to be replicated anywhere that Extension professionals who deliver financial education can make the connection with their local city or county treasurer and empower them to support programs that will improve their community.

Food Safety Award

3rd National, 1st Central Region, Michigan

Eileen Haraminac, Kara Lynch, Laurie Messing, Lisa Treiber

MSU Extension educators developed the *Safe Food = Healthy Kids* curriculum in 2016 to reduce the incidence of foodborne illness in children and the possible accompanying health disparities that could result from these infections. Child care providers prepare, serve, and oversee the bulk of children's meals and snacks with no mandated food safety education or training. This curriculum is delivered to the child care providers using a PowerPoint presentation with supporting activities, resource sharing, relevant handouts, and an optional text messaging program.

Curriculum objectives for the participants include learning the sources of foodborne illness and the reasons children are at a high risk, understanding the basic principles for safe food handling, identifying incorrect practices, demonstrating proper sanitizing procedures throughout their facility, and recognizing reputable food safety resources.

The curriculum is delivered via a face-to-face two- or three-hour session, spending more time with interactive learning when more time is allowed. By partnering with many organizations that work with child care providers, educators are able to maximize the impact on this population. MSU Extension has partnered with child care centers, Great Start to Quality, Headstart, the Association for Child Development, and local educational institutions at both rural and urban settings.



MSU EXTENSION ASSOCIATION AWARDS

Florence Hall Award

2nd Central Region, Michigan

Eileen Haraminac, Kara Lynch, Laurie Messing, Lisa Treiber

Past Presidents' New Professional Award

2nd Central Region, Michigan

Courtney Aldrich

MICHIGAN PRODUCT CENTER AWARD

Innovation Counselor of the Year 2019

Tina Conklin

Tina Conklin is the food processing specialist for the MSU Product Center. She is associate director of the MSU Product Center and director of the MSU Product Center's Food Processing and Innovation Center. She works with facilities on a variety of food processing needs.

Prior to working for the Product Center, she spent 25 years in the food industry in operations management as well as in quality and food safety. She has worked both as a plant manager and a director of technical services. She has assisted with large-scale plant start-ups in the United States and other countries.

The MSU Product Center recognized her with the Innovation Counselor of the Year award at the Making It in Michigan Conference in 2019. The center wanted to honor her not only among her peers but also among the many clients she has helped through the years. She was commended for her leadership and excellence in client development and her exceptional commitment to the mission and programs of MSU Extension and the people we serve.

LEADING FROM WHERE YOU ARE



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