



Midland County 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



\$26,994,995

Total Economic Impact



\$4,050,424

Spending with Local Businesses



\$4,254,544

Financial Aid Disbursed



330

Enrolled Michigan Students



2,097

MSU Alumni in Midland County



2,139

Youth Participants in 4-H

Message from the District Director

MSU Extension offers a broad range of research-based education outreach to county residents.



Over this past year, we've continued to innovate and have empowered families and individuals to live healthier lives, supporting new and local businesses, creating opportunities for youth leadership development and career exploration, helping farmers with business management and mental health, and much more.

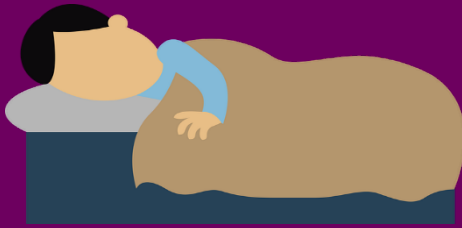
Our staff live and work alongside county residents, are rooted in community relationships and are responsive to community needs. Our partnership with you makes all this possible. Thank you for another great year on behalf of the MSU Extension team serving Midland County. We look forward to your continued support and hope you will be able to join us during one of our upcoming programs.

Mark J. Rankin, District 9 Director

Serving Bay, Genesee, Midland, Saginaw, and Shiawassee Counties



Program



SLEEP Program Success Story:

"Liz, I am so glad you mentioned the sleep class during the Tai Chi class. The sleep class was extremely helpful in both the information you provided and the tools we learned. The class helped me identify bad habits which were preventing me from getting restful sleep. I also learned knowledge and actions I can apply to create better sleep habits. Lastly, I learned not to get frustrated if I can't fall asleep or if I wake up during the night....instead I stay calm and pull out my "toolbox" and take action. I am getting better quality sleep and feeling more energized during the day. Thank you for having a passion in this subject and inspiring me to continue learning about sleep."



MiSUPER Reimagining Recovery Webinar Series Success Story:

"Several articles you mentioned in the training are ones I've referenced for this paper, so the whole training was very relevant and a great fit with some things I'm working on. And it was just very interesting in general, it broadened my perspective on what harm reduction is." - Participant

"This quote, "The opposite of addiction isn't recovery, it's connection." Powerful reminder to continue to engage and meaningfully connect with folks in my family and community who are dealing with substance use issues." - Participant

"The way concepts have been explained within the first two webinars have made me feel like I am strengthening my own understanding, so I can better serve the communities I work with." - Participant

Powerful Tools for Caregivers Success Story:

Our virtual Powerful Tools for Caregivers of Children with Special Health and Behavioral Needs program included a lot of childcare workers who often needed to attend to children while participating in class. This group not only benefitted from the information shared from the program's curriculum, but also bonded over shared struggles and successes that come from being a caregiver of children with special needs. One participant shared, "I've been sent to many seminars to learn how to communicate, and this has by far been the best one. I'm so glad I took this class!"

Highlights

Health Team

MSU Extension Health Team programming promotes health and well-being, including understanding important connections between physical, mental, social and emotional health. Extension Educators continue to provide evidence-based health programs such as Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention, Walk with Ease, Personal Action Towards Health (PATH), Sleep Education for Everyone Program (SLEEP), and Stress Less with Mindfulness throughout the community.

Program Highlights:

The Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention program continues to thrive at local senior centers, with over 200 older adults participating in an 18-session weekly program. Recognizing its success, a weekly class has been established at a nearby senior center to allow participants to continue their practice. People from across the county come together each week to focus on physical activity, balance improvement, and socializing.

The Michigan Substance Use Prevention, Education and Recovery (MiSUPER) team continues to evolve and expand its content, developing a 3-part educational webinar series titled "Reimagining Recovery: A Systems Approach to Addressing Substance Use Disorder." The series explores the research behind structural, social, and root determinants of addiction, limitations of the brain disease model of addiction, and how criminalizing and punitive approaches to substance use are both normalized and exacerbating the overdose crisis. This webinar series emphasized non-punitive strategies to support people who use drugs and/or are living in recovery, including harm reduction.

The Arthritis Foundation Walk with Ease exercise program is now being offered in the community. This self-paced program is designed to alleviate pain and enhance overall health for individuals with arthritis. Participants gradually increase their walking duration to 30 minutes at least three days a week. The program focuses on improving balance, boosting confidence in walking ability, and reducing limitations associated with arthritis.

Mindfulness Lunch and Learn Programs

MSU Extension health educators provided 40 virtual mindfulness lunch and learn sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays throughout the year, reaching around 2,000 audience members. These sessions cycled through our mindfulness menu of programs, with topics ranging from mindful walking and eating to building resilience to avoid burnout. Participants that registered for these programs through MiRegistry were able to receive continuing education credits by attending these sessions.

Program Highlights



Earn ServSafe certification with help from MSU Extension.

MSU Extension offers 8-hour ServSafe training, which is a national certification program.

This class is designed for anyone working in the foodservice industry, including non-profit organizations.

MSU Extension will be offering proctoring of the ServSafe Manager Certification Exam by appointment.



Contact your local MSU Extension Food Safety Educator for more information.
<https://www.canr.msu.edu/servsafe/events>

Follow our [Think Food Safety Facebook](#) page.

View upcoming events, food safety tips, and recordings of our *Food Safety Q & A* and *Investigating Food with Science* Programs.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension
FOOD SAFETY HOTLINE
Operating Monday through Friday,
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Call 877-643-9882

Ask Extension <https://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/ask-an-expert>

Food Safety in Midland County

MSU Extension Food Safety Team programming works to provide educational programs for food workers, cottage food entrepreneurs, childcare providers, food pantry volunteers, and consumers, providing information about the five risk factors that contribute most to foodborne illness – personal hygiene and health, cooking temperatures, holding temperatures and cleaning of food contact surfaces. In 2022 the Food Safety team continued to reach multi-counties in Michigan and out of state with virtual programming and the return to live programming as well.

Food safety for childcare providers provides food safety education for staff who care for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. The curriculum used is Safe Food = Healthy Kids, developed by MSU Extension educators. Learn what the best practices are for food safety to help keep kids safe.

Cooking for Crowds is a three-hour food safety training for volunteers working in a non-profit venue. Cooking for Crowds classes educate volunteers who offer fundraisers and events such as dinners and bake sales. This program aligns with the 2009 Michigan Food Code.

Michigan Cottage Food Law workshop classes offer an unique feature with a combination of presentations offered in this program with the Food Safety Team, teaching safe food handling concepts and the MSU Product Center sharing tips on building a solid business and marketing plan to sell the Cottage Food items. The program ends with a Q & A session featuring an inspector from Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) to answer questions pertaining to food products.

Pantry Food Safety – It's Your Job! is another three-hour training offered for volunteers working in food pantries and food banks. After completing the Pantry Food Safety training, participants will receive a certificate of completion.

Preserving MI Harvest

[Learn the latest methods and research for preserving foods at home. Let us help you fill your pantry and freezer by preserving food safely at home.](#)

To learn more and to register, visit: [Preserving MI Harvest](#)

Several other online programs are offered statewide, Emergency Preparedness Series, Food Safety for Food Service Workers (a D2L self-study course).

Program Highlights



MSU Extension aims to improve the knowledge, skills, and behavior of how individuals view nutrition. Through promotion, planning and delivery our staff works with audiences at the local, county and state levels to make changes to increase nutritional well-being



The program had 125 participants, with over 43% of participants reporting eating more fruits and vegetables, and 38% of participants reporting more confidence using their SNAP benefits at the farmer's mar-



Family meals help create strong family bonds and healthy habits.

Health and Nutrition

MSU Extension Midland County Health and Nutrition provides nutrition education to children, youth, adults, and families with limited financial resources and are eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP), Senior Project Fresh, WIC Project Fresh.

Discover Michigan Fresh farmers' market program helps SNAP-Ed eligible residents get to know their local farmers' markets and explore Michigan-grown produce. This six-week program encourages participants to shop at their farmer's market for nutritious and affordable foods that keep their dollars local. Michigan State University Extension's Community Nutrition Instructors join participants at the Midland Farmers Market or an off-site location each week where they meet local farmers, learn the nutritional benefits of eating a featured fruit or vegetable, engage in live food demonstrations, and sample an easy-to-prepare and nutrient-dense seasonal-based recipe.

MSUE Community Nutrition Instructors and educators continually worked together to create a variety of engaging and impactful activities and materials to increase participation. Classes such as Eat Healthy, Be Active (adults), Healthy Foods, Healthy Families (adults), Show Me Nutrition (youth), Today's Mom (adults), Peak Health Performance (youth athletes), Teen Cuisine (youth 6th grade to 12th grade), Cooking for One and Cooking Matters (adults) are offered. MSU Extension also offered a variety of one-time presentations such as Cooking Matters at the Store, Healthy Holidays, Hydration, Physical Activity, and Healthy Snacks to name a few. MSU Extension continues to offer online, face-to-face, and hybrid classes to meet the needs of our participants.



Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) partners with Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to provide Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), a free nutrition education program to reduce hunger and food insecurity and promote healthy eating habits.

MSU Extension SNAP-Ed nutrition instructors teach youth, teens, adults and seniors how to make health a priority through an instructional series. The goal of the SNAP-Ed program is to increase the likelihood that those eligible for SNAP benefits will establish healthy eating habits and increase their time spent involved in physical activity, while staying within their limited food budget.

Program



Free Rural Resilience Online Course

Recognizing the high levels of stress affecting America's farmers and ranchers, Michigan State University Extension has partnered with others from the USDA's Cooperative Extension System, Farm Credit, American Farm Bureau Federation, and National Farmers Union to create a [free online course](#) that is now available and open to the public. This Rural Resilience: Farm Stress Training course covers topics such as managing stress, communicating with distressed farmers, and suicide awareness. You can register for this course on our website:

canr.msu.edu/managing_farm_stress



Saltanat Mambetova - Vegetable Educator for Eastern Michigan

I am honored and excited to join Michigan State University Extension (MSU Extension) as a Vegetable Extension Educator. My assigned area covers eastern Michigan (Thumb area). I will be based at the Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center in Frankenmuth, Michigan.

Highlights

Managing Farm Stress

MSU Extension Managing Farm Stress Team

Collectively, the MSU Extension Farm Stress team conducted a record number of programs, reaching a record number of participants in 2023. Across all staff reporting program activities in PEARS on behalf of the MSUE Farm Stress team, there were 68 unique direct program activities in 2023, which spanned 169 distinct sessions with 5,657 participants. We also had 103 individuals enroll in the Rural Resilience online D2L training course. Furthermore, 33 farmers and farm family members were referred through our teletherapy partnership to Pine Rest for behavioral health support, with another 2 farmers to Easterseals for counseling; this is a 52.17% increase compared to 2022.

Saltanat Mambetova Vegetable Extension Educator

I am originally from Kyrgyzstan and grew up in a post-Soviet time when every citizen who had land became a farmer.

During my graduate and postdoctoral studies at MSU, I had the opportunity to participate in and organize field days, grower meetings, and conferences as well as collaborate with potato and vegetable growers. Along with my Ph.D. advisor Noah Rosenzweig, MSU Extension Educators, and the ANR Communication team we published a series of YouTube videos about the [importance](#) and management of soft rot diseases during [planting, growing, harvest, and storage](#).

I am excited to return to Michigan for the opportunity to serve vegetable growers in the eastern region of the state. I aim to develop an Extension program based on the needs of the industry and continue the legacy of a strong partnership between growers and stakeholders and MSU.

My office is located at the Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center in Frankenmuth, Michigan. I encourage you to stop by, call, or send an [email](#) if you want to talk about your production challenges, invite me to your operation, or discuss how MSU Extension can best assist you.

I visited the Midland MSU Extension office to introduce myself and about my role and left my business cards. The same day when I visited the Midland office a worm grower came into the office and asked about the MSU Extension soil test and had other questions regarding MSU Extension publications. I was able to visit in person the facility and able to provide the information that the person was looking for.

Program



A [homeownership seminar](#) from MSU Extension will equip you with valuable information about the home-buying process that will help you navigate the technicalities and avoid costly mistakes.



[Foreclosure](#) - Michigan has been one of the hardest-hit states during the housing crisis and many homeowners still face foreclosure in the wake of the economic recession. To save your home, you must prepare yourself with the most reliable and accurate information. The more you know about the foreclosure process and your options, the more likely you'll be able to save your home. Refer to our [mortgage foreclosure fact sheet](#) or our [tax foreclosure fact sheet](#) to get started. For additional resources click [here](#).

Money Management

MSU Extension's goal is that every Michigan resident has the opportunity to participate in personal finance and home ownership education. We educate a diverse audience regardless of their financial status. MSU Extension has certified housing and money management counselors that deliver trusted, unbiased education that is easy to understand and can demystify common money and home ownership best practices. Our university programs and resources help Michigan residents navigate the financial life of themselves and their families.

More Information - [MSU Extension MI Money Health](#)

Highlights

Community Food Systems Team Goal and Program Areas

The **MSU Extension Community Food Systems** team works to make the Michigan food system accessible, equitable, fair, healthy, diverse, and sustainable by focusing on the people who shape food systems through education, connection, networking, research, assistance, and consultations. The Community Food Systems team leads programming that: supports community food value chains, supports food and farming business sustainability, enhances land and ecosystem quality, cultivates networks, and increases community engagement in agrifood systems.

Statewide Programs:

Michigan CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) Network - The goal of the Michigan CSA network is to help farms increase overall participation in Michigan CSAs by connecting CSA growers with one another to facilitate collaboration, educating consumers about the benefits of CSA membership, and expanding access to CSAs through alternative payment methods. The Michigan CSA Network convenes statewide network meetings and distributes marketing and education materials that benefit both CSA farmers and consumers.

[Michigan Farm to Institution Network](#)- The Michigan Farm to Institution Network helps people across the farm-to-institution supply chain learn, connect, and collaborate. Since 2014, the network has provided a space for learning, sharing, and working together to help farm to institution programs grow in Michigan.

[Michigan Apple Crunch](#)

The Michigan Apple Crunch is an annual event to promote National Farm to School Month and celebrate the iconic Michigan Apple.

Thousands of participants from K-12 schools, Early Care and Education sites and other institutions and organizations across the state and Great Lakes Region register to crunch into a local Michigan apple on Crunch Day. Apples provide a great way to get local schools and institutions excited about supporting local farmers and they are a nutritious snack that is available in Michigan eleven months of the year.

In 2023, 2,007 sites in Michigan participated, with a total of 255,834 crunchers!



Program Highlights



Professional development webinar's were held for Midland childcare providers in partnership with the Great Start to Quality Eastern Resource Center. Five webinars were held with 60 providers attending to receive credit for professional development hours. Presentations included topics such as "What Children Need to Know to Start School" and "Finding Balance: Technology and Early Childhood." Nearly 60 parents and caregivers attended these virtual events. Child and Family Development team staff presented 2 sessions at the NEMCSA Annual Meetings on "The Importance of Fathers to Early Childhood Development" and "The Mindful Father" serving nearly 200 early childhood professionals.



As of December 2023, Teresa Crook is one of the newest members of the Michigan State University Extension team. She will serve as a Field Crops Agronomy Educator serving the Saginaw Valley and Thumb region. Crook's office is located at the Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center in Frankenmuth, Michigan.



Originally from southern Illinois, Crook attended the University of Illinois: Champaign-Urbana for her bachelor's degree in agricultural economics with additional classes in agronomy. Her formal education was completed by her master's degree from Michigan State University in weed science under the direction of Karen Renner. As a result of her research, her love of plants became firmly cemented.

If you have any questions concerning field crops or nutrient management or have ideas for how MSU Extension can better serve you, please feel free to contact Crook at 989-652-3552. Crook said, "I'm looking forward to this next career chapter and helping to serve producers in my new role."

Child and Family Development

Early Childhood

The MSU Extension Child and Family Development Team offers programs and services that support families in a variety of ways. From helping parents and caregivers increase early childhood science, math, preliteracy, and social and emotional skills in young children to developing critical life skills and healthy behaviors in youth of all ages, MSU Extension works to ensure Michigan's families are stronger and children are prepared to excel in school and life.

With the Family Enrichment Program (FES), Extension Staff from the Children and Youth Institute and the Healthy Nutrition Institute come together to offer a six-week parent and family series combining "Guiding Principles for Highly Successful Parenting" with "Healthy Foods, Healthy Families". The "Guiding Principles for Highly Successful Parenting" curriculum focuses on key parenting strategies such as: creating family routines, developing emotional control in children, becoming calm and assertive parents, establishing consistent rules and relationships, helping children learn from their mistakes, and developing empathy. The "Healthy Foods, Healthy Families" curriculum teaches parents how to prepare and shop sensibly for healthy meals on a budget, how to identify different food groups and why our bodies need a variety of foods, and discuss the importance of proper nutrition on a young child's development, body, and mind. A major aspect of the FES program is emphasizing habits, routines, and traditions by helping parents and caregivers create a secure and safe foundation for their children in this ever-changing world.

Music and movement playgroups are part of a child's healthy appreciation for sound identification, physical coordination, and social/emotional development. Skills gained during a structured class help with later math, reading, and overall learning success. Families attend weekly sessions consisting of hour-long learning to listen to culturally interesting music while dancing and playing a variety of child-sized instruments. Participation in experiences like this helps young children gain exposure to, and knowledge of, basic principles in rhythm/rhyme, patterns, and gross motor coordination which all contribute to healthy development and foundational building blocks to reading and math.

Parents, caregivers, and early childcare professionals have access to virtual series/classes and one-time presentations on topics such as parent communication, building early emotional skills, positive discipline, developing early literacy skills, math and early childhood, promoting social-emotional health, building tools for the resilient child, and preparing young children to start school. The virtual classes are held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings with professional development classes held on Friday afternoons. Virtual series are held no less than twice a month rotating evenings, afternoons, and mornings throughout the year.



Highlights

Michigan Sea Grant Extension

Michigan Sea Grant (MISG) Extension promotes research, education, and outreach to enhance the responsible and sustainable use of our diverse Great Lakes resources. Through MSU Extension, MISG works with Michigan residents, industries, and coastal communities to encourage their use, benefits, and enjoyment of Great Lakes resources that positively influences our state's economy, environment, and quality of life.



Over 170 people helped release +230 juvenile Lake Sturgeon into the Tittabawassee River. These release events take place each year in August and September at the Bob G. Caldwell Municipal Boat in Midland.



Lake Huron Regional Fisheries Workshops

In the spring of 2023, MISG Extension hosted three hybrid Lake Huron Regional Fisheries Workshops –focused on the open water fisheries and nearshore fisheries, including Saginaw Bay. These workshops engaged over 150 anglers, charter captains, and others with fisheries researchers and managers from across Michigan – close to **60 participants** learned about the Saginaw Bay fishery. Participants gained better understanding of Lake Huron fisheries ecosystem changes, and these stakeholders learned about research and management activities relating to Lake Huron and local communities

Saginaw Bay Sturgeon Restoration - MISG Extension works with local, state, and federal partners to facilitate Lake Sturgeon release events throughout the Saginaw River system. At these events, community members learn about and help restore this iconic native fish species. This year's release events marked an important milestone – **over 5,000 Lake Sturgeon released into the Saginaw River system**. Learn more at www.saginawbaysturgeon.org

Center for Great Lakes Literacy - MISG Extension provides leadership for the Center for Great Lakes Literacy (CGLL), a collaborative effort led by Sea Grant educators throughout the Great Lakes watershed. CGLL engages and inspires teachers, scientists, and students to promote improved stewardship of our shared freshwater treasure. A Great Lakes literate person is someone who understands, appreciates, shares about and helps to protect the Great Lakes resources and the watersheds that feed them.

Twenty educators from across Michigan participated in the 2023 Lake Huron Place-Based Education Summer Teacher Institute hosted in Au Gres. The 2023 institute focused on climate change and green infrastructure in the Great Lakes as both an issue and a student stewardship opportunity.

To support their implementation of a place-based education project, each educator – including one from Midland County – received a \$500 project stipend with support from CGLL and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Northeast Michigan Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative network and its leadership partners also supported the Summer Institute.

www.michiganseagrant.org



Program Highlights



[Foundations of Gardening](#) is a ten-week online certificate course that covers the fundamentals of gardening. It includes weekly webinars delivered by MSU Extension horticulture experts and learning modules with readings, videos and interactive activities. This course is the prerequisite for applying to become an MSU Extension Master Gardener but is open to anyone regardless of interest. Scholarships are available for those that wish to apply.



The [MSU Extension Master Gardener Program](#) is an adult horticulture education and volunteer leader training program committed to improving science based horticulture information in communities throughout the state of Michigan.



Consumer Horticulture/ Master Gardener Program

The **Consumer Horticulture team** serves Michigan through its educational lawn and garden programming. We provide research-based information and training to our communities. In addition, we answer questions from the public through [Ask Extension](#) and our MSUE Lawn and Garden Hotline. Ask Extension is an online tool that allows Michigan State University Extension experts to answer questions submitted by the public. In 2023, 6,471 Ask Extension questions were responded to statewide, along with 1,652 hotline questions. Alongside these tools, our [“Gardening in Michigan” Facebook](#) page and [website](#) house ornamental and vegetable gardening resources and hosts free educational videos.

In 2023, Midland County residents participated in MSUE Consumer Horticulture programs such as home vegetable gardening, indoor plant propagation, native plant selection for pollinators, and tree pruning. This included virtual programs such as Dig In!, a continuing education program for Extension Master Gardener Volunteers that prepares them to work with and educate the public. Midland County residents also participated in the ten-week Foundations of Gardening course. The Consumer Horticulture team works with local organizations such as libraries, and local schools to improve access to horticultural education in the community.

The **Consumer Horticulture team** trains and supervises Extension Master Gardener Volunteers. These passionate volunteers work with community partners across the state, focusing on public education and helping maintain educational gardens such as [Dow Gardens](#), [Dahlia Hill](#) and [Phoenix Community Farm](#). They also work with organizations that provide fresh vegetables to those in need through food donation gardens.



Being in the Extension Master Gardener Program requires only an enthusiasm for gardening and a willingness and commitment to volunteer, sharing science-based education.

Extension Providing 4-H Youth Development



Michigan 4-H is growing current and future leaders. The largest youth development organization in Michigan, 4-H provides more than 200,000 young people with experiential learning opportunities to explore new interests and discover their passion.

The opportunity for the 4-H Program Coordinator to be housed at the MSU STEM Building has provided several additional opportunities for Midland County youth. Increased support of school STEM programs through the loans of 3D printers, afterschool 3D and coding programs, and numerous STEM classroom kit loans increased programming throughout the county.



Meanwhile, a popular class for 2nd graders, Mindful Me, expanded into Midland Public Schools to bring the total youth impacted by this program to over 1,200 this year. This program consists of five books and projects that help youth learn the importance of managing their emotions while reaching out to support others.

Another popular program, MSU China Art Exchange, reached over 300 youth in 13 classrooms. This program focuses on cultural similarities and differences, through a piece of artwork, or “visual letter”, designed by each youth in art classes. At least 10 from each school are chosen to go on to MSU to compete with visual letters from other countries, with the top 100 being sent to China in exchange for 100 visual letters from Chinese youth.

Overnight Camp at Camp Neyati had over 180 youth and volunteers in attendance. Other summer programming included outreach to SPARKS programs in Coleman and Meridian and various day camps throughout the summer focusing on Monarch Butterflies: Rescue and Release, sewing classes, and various STEAM themes.

We ended 2023 with 850 youth and 250 volunteers active in 45 organized year-round clubs. We look forward to continuing to grow our numbers through the STEAM Saturday through Thursday planned for all youth in Midland County. These classes will include such topics as 3D Printing, VEX Robotics, Mindstorm Building, and Stained Glass projects.

Those interested in the above activities may contact Dr. Dee Howe, 4-H & STEM Program Coordinator for Midland County at howedolo@msu.edu or 989-928-1773.



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“Michigan State University occupies the ancestral, traditional and contemporary lands of the Anishinaabeg – Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi peoples. In particular, the university resides on land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw. We recognize Michigan’s 12 federally recognized Native Nations, historic Indigenous communities in Michigan, Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and those who were forcibly removed from their homelands. In offering this land acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty, history and experiences.”