

MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

December 19, 2007

City of Ann Arbor  
City Clerk  
Yvonne Carl, City Clerk  
100 N. Fifth, PO 8647  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Dear City and Village officials,

Enclosed is the November 2007 issue of "Bringing Knowledge to Life in Washtenaw County". This quarterly report highlights several local Extension activities in Washtenaw County. We hope this summary will help to better familiarize you with the educational programs and services provided by your local Extension staff.

Please share this with your City or Village Administrator and Mayor. If you have any questions, or would like any further information, feel free to contact me.

Best wishes for a happy and safe holiday season.

Sincerely,

*Nancy D. Thelen*

Nancy Thelen  
County Extension Director

Enc.



**WASHTENAW COUNTY**

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U.S. Department of Agriculture and  
Washtenaw County cooperating*

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ANN ARBOR

*Bringing Knowledge to Life in*

# Washtenaw County

## Washtenaw County

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November 2007

### Increasing home ownership, improving communities

The Washtenaw Housing Education Partners (WHEP), includes local non-profit housing agencies, local government departments, the Washtenaw County MSU Extension office and private housing professionals. WHEP provides education, training and resources to individuals and families who want to become homeowners, attain economic stability and begin to build wealth.

Research has shown that homebuyer education can have a direct impact on the stability of families and communities. According to a study of 40,000 Freddie Mac mortgages, homebuyer education mitigates delinquency risk and homeowners who have completed it are 19 percent less likely to become 90-day delinquent than those who do not.

This same study also found that individual counseling is shown to reduce 90-day delinquency by 34 percent, classroom study by 26 percent and home-study at 21 percent.

In an effort to provide the best homebuyer education to future Washtenaw County home owners, WHEP combines classroom and individual study in its homebuyer education program. In the last six months alone, more than 100 households participated in WHEP Homebuyer Education classes. The goal for 2008 is to reach a minimum of 250 households.

WHEP also targets low- to moderate-income families by connecting eligible homebuyers to local, state and federal down payment and other assistance options.

From 2004 to 2006, WHEP has leveraged more than \$1.1 million in subsidies for homeowners and used those funds to transform 70 Washtenaw County families into homeowners.

Though many more families go through homebuyer education than actually purchase homes, all participants address financial and credit issues and become more informed consumers.

As Osteen & Auberle (2002) note, "Homebuyer Education often leads to a process of intervention and restoration rather than just teaching terminology and consumer awareness."

The WHEP Homebuyer Education Program is changing individuals, families, neighborhoods and communities—one class at a time.

Contact: Andrea Plevak, 734-222-3906

### MSU Extension Breastfeeding Instructor receives certification

Washtenaw County MSU Extension Breastfeeding Initiative instructor Lisa Hartmann recently earned certification as a registered lactation consultant from the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE).

The primary purpose of the IBLCE is to set standards for the lactation consultant profession.

Hartmann has worked for MSU Extension since November of 2003.

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**MICHIGAN STATE  
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Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities. Offices in counties across the state link the research of the land-grant university, MSU, to challenges facing communities. Citizens serving on county Extension councils regularly help select focus areas for programming. MSU Extension is funded jointly by county boards of commissioners, the state through Michigan State University and federally through the US Department of Agriculture.



## Hartmann--continued

Obtaining the IBLCE credential certifies attainment of the "Gold Standard" of competence set by experts in the lactation field.

As Hartmann reflected on the rigorous certification she said, "This has helped to increase respect for our program and I'm already receiving more referrals from several sources. I'm also hopeful that this will help in maintaining program funding and I am excited about this personal accomplishment and what it holds for the future."

Contact: Lisa Hartmann, 734-222-3966

## 4-H social justice program makes a difference in Ypsilanti

Through 4-H PASJ (Partnerships for Activism and Social Justice) program, adults in Ypsilanti are discovering talents in local youngsters that they hadn't previously noticed and the youths are discovering their own strengths.

This summer, 17 youths and adults canvassed Ypsilanti while participating in a 4-H PASJ Photovoice project to capture images of issues they identified as important: boarded homes, family/teen pregnancy, school attendance and success, caution tape-laced park playground structures with children playing.

Photovoice is a photographic technique that enables people to assess the strengths and concerns of their community and communicate their views to policy makers. It is grounded in the fundamental principles of respect for autonomy, promotion of social justice, active promotion of good and avoidance of harm.

The Photovoice team worked in partnership while gaining personal/community knowledge, increasing civic engagement skills, documenting issues through photography techniques and then sharing their voice with the community through photo image and essay writing.

4-H PASJ (pronounced "passage") is a community youth development process that is allowing Ypsilanti youths and adults to contribute their time toward developing skills, and learning to use their collective voice to address community issues .

"We had a great time with the PhotoVoice project," said adult partner Jamil, age 23, of Ypsilanti. "It was due to everyone's willingness to contribute his or her time and energy.

"The last thing I learned is definitely patience, among other things," he said. "I believe the girls have also learned the same and they are growing every day."

*"From this project I learned about what PASJ meant and how it relates to things in our community and deals with many issues...The best thing I enjoyed during this project was going out into the community and taking pictures." – Alicia, Ypsilanti, age 13*

*"I also learned how to be a lady. And by that I mean I learned that when you are out in public to present yourself in a positive way. I also learned about film development and how to do it myself. I also learned not to only stick to people you know but also get to know others. Go outside your box." –Tontaneesha, Willow Run, age 16*

*"I learned that you can capture the spirit of a community through the lens of a camera, if you're willing to believe what you are forced to see. Working with the girls in these last two sessions I've found that the young people/women in our community are unaware of how important their role is as a voice for themselves, their families and their communities."—Imá , Ypsilanti, age 25*

The 4-H PASJ Photovoice team each week through the end of August, created a public exhibit for invited guests, and had their photos with essays and biographical information published in the Ypsilanti Community Edition of the Ann Arbor News.

Contact: Chana Hawkins, 734-222-3936