

**MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION**

September 15, 2008

Jacqueline Beaudry  
City Clerk  
100 N. Fifth, PO 8647  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Dear City and Village officials,

Enclosed is the Summer 2008 issue of "Bringing Knowledge to Life in Washtenaw County". This quarterly report highlights several local Extension activities in Washtenaw County.

I am also enclosing information on an upcoming National Issues Forum series which we are helping to co-sponsor. Call the number on the flier if you are interested in attending,

Please contact our office if you have any questions or would like any further information.

Sincerely,

*Nancy D. Thelen*

Nancy Thelen  
County Extension Director

Enc.



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

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*Bringing Knowledge to Life in*

# Washtenaw County

## Washtenaw County

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July 2008

### “Step Into My Shoes” celebrates youth diversity in Washtenaw County

Recognizing the need to increase the appreciation of rich diversity among Washtenaw County young people, 4-H Extension educators Chana Hawkins and Jackie Martin teamed up with State Rep. Pam Byrnes to implement the 4-H Partnerships for Activism & Social Justice (PASJ) program in Ypsilanti.

As part of PASJ, teens and adults took part in an event called the “Step Into My Shoes” Youth Exchange. The exchange offered an opportunity for youths from areas like Saline, Manchester and Dexter to come together with their peers in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti to find out what they have in common, as well as their differences as individuals and the differences between their communities.

The exchange included an overnight team building retreat at a local camp, where 17 teens took part in games and exercises to build trust and understanding. To help the youths understand each other on a deeper level, they participated in an exercise designed to help them explore their values. This helped the participants realize that their communities do not necessarily affect their individual values and that many youths share the same values across all communities.

The participants also faced physical challenges that tested their ability to work as a team to complete various obstacles. During an evening campfire discussion the youngsters talked more about their respective communities. Some heard about Manchester for the first time, others were surprised that Washtenaw County extends into Ypsilanti.

Since the exchange concluded, the participants have taken part in several community service projects. They have prepared a meal for the Good Samaritan feeding program, stocked the shelves at Hope Clinic, and prepared a mailing for the Ypsilanti Senior Citizens Recreation Center, all in Ypsilanti.

The youths will be visiting the Kohler dairy farm in Saline and will engage in a service project in that community.

This enriching opportunity helps youth understand each other and appreciate their differences, while working to bridge the gap that divides them, providing a unique and powerful summer activity for Washtenaw County youth.

Contact: Chana Hawkins, 734-222-3936  
or Jackie Martin, 734-222-3877



The teens who attended “Step Into My Shoes” get to know each other during the exchange experience.

**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.



## Eastern Market, entrepreneurs enjoy mutual support with help from MSU

Detroit's Eastern Market is the hub of the regional food system. A new market management team has called on several partners to help Eastern Market reach new levels of excellence.

MSU Extension is one of the key resource providers, contributing to market revitalization. MSUE, in partnership with the Food System Economic Partnership (FSEP) and the MSU Product Center, has established a marketing initiative to allow food entrepreneurs to strengthen their marketing skills and to gauge consumer interest in new products.

Each Saturday from June through December, ten Product Center clients are marketing their products at an Eastern Market stall coordinated by MSU. These entrepreneurs, along with an MSU intern who is serving as stall manager, take turns working, interacting with consumers and collecting feedback about product appearance, packaging, pricing and taste. The feedback is used to improve products and to increase overall sales.

Participating entrepreneurs also learn through this pilot project about the costs and benefits of leasing stall space through Eastern Market.

Sales at the MSU stall have averaged \$350 per week. Over the 34-week period scheduled for this pilot effort, sales are projected to reach more than \$12,000. Entrepreneurs participating in this initiative will be better positioned to make informed decisions about the potential for becoming year round participants as market vendors.

MSUE has also been invited to meet with Eastern Market vendors and merchants to highlight educational services which would strengthen performance of existing businesses. Many businesses in and around Eastern Market were started without written business plans. The hope is that the August presentation will increase the number of participants in MSUE business planning educational activities.

This fall Eastern Market management will work with MSUE to invite several top speakers to meet with merchants and vendors. These speakers will discuss marketplace trends, and help regional food businesses develop strategies that will strengthen business performance within the marketplace which centers around the Eastern Market.

Contact: Michael Score, 734-222-3905

## "Farming a Few Acres" in Washtenaw County

A five-week educational program called "Farming a Few Acres," offered through Washtenaw County MSU Extension, is offered to help small-scale farmers improve production and farm management practices. It provides information to aid those who are trying to determine possible agricultural/ horticultural uses for their land.

The fall 2007 course gave 16 individuals the chance to learn about production of livestock, fruit, vegetables, ornamental plants, marketing agricultural goods and small farm financial management. Tours of farms and nurseries provided participants with a hands-on experience and the chance to interact with local farmers.

A survey conducted four months after the program ended offered insight into the learning experience. All participants felt that the tour of growers' facilities and meeting with the growers was a beneficial learning experience. One participant noted, "Seeing the work in action made it more possible."

When asked about knowledge they gained through the program, 50 percent focused on the need for a business plan. Others pointed to the value in learning about production practices for specific types of agriculture/ horticulture.

Seventy five percent of the participants plan to put what they learned to use. Two people stated they planned to use the knowledge gained in developing a business plan. One attendee decided to start a cut flower garden this summer on a small scale to give her son some spending money.

Participants were asked if the program helped to change any of their current practices. One responded that he was more conscious of costs and income, while another stated that the course, "reinforced my desires to buy local and encourage others to."

"One of the best things that I learned was how many resources are available to get help for your farming endeavors," another said. This statement was reinforced by the participant who sought more help after the class to develop a business plan.

Contact: Robert Bricault, Jr., 734-222-3826

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