



UCOM  
**Communicator**  
Summer 2021

Ms. Jeni built a curriculum around gardening for her daycare. You provided the box and soil.

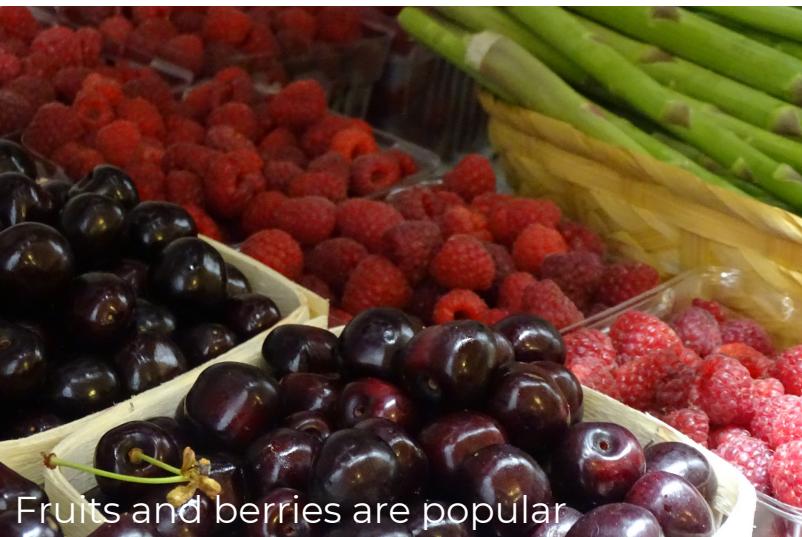
# More than just a Farm Stand

UCOM's Farm Stand offers a wide range of locally sourced, Michigan grown fruits and vegetables to our neighbors at a reduced price. As our community still reels from the effects of the COVID 19 shutdown, this program meets a critical need.

The UCOM Farm Stand features staples like eggs, dried beans and local honey. Also available are seasonal options like broccoli, cherry tomatoes, fresh greens, blueberries and much more.

Families who earn less than 300% of the federal poverty guidelines may purchase produce at reduced prices. Neighbors with income above this level may purchase from the Farm Stand at full price, supporting the long term viability of the program.

"We recognize that good nutrition is vital to local families in cultivating a healthy life," said Executive Director Bruce Roller. "By caring for a person's nutrition, we're caring for their whole being."



Fruits and berries are popular



*We don't want to take ourselves too seriously.*

Even more than providing UCOM's neighbors with nutritious, affordable produce, the Farm Stand seeks to help our community understand their connection to the local food system. By purchasing locally, the Farm Stand supports MI agriculture and in particular, local farmers.

The UCOM Farm Stand accepts cash, Bridge Cards/EBT, Project Fresh, and offers Double Up Food Bucks for SNAP recipients.

Farm Stand hours are: Monday-Wednesday 9:30am-4:30pm, Thursday 10:00am-6:00pm

Other programs at UCOM include: wellness and physical activity classes, a healthy choice food pantry, community garden, clothing pantry, job coaching, free income tax preparation, and financial literacy programs. These are currently being offered virtually.

# You gave your neighbors over \$1/2 Million this tax season

"Being a senior, I don't have the resources to have a paid tax service prepare my return. This year I had to sell my car because it had so many problems. I used my income tax refund to purchase a used van and some much-needed clothing. Things were really hard this year due to the pandemic," according to Robert.

UCOM's Volunteer IRS-trained Tax Preparers processed 316 returns this year putting a total of \$569,511 into the hands of our neighbors like Robert.

UCOM has prepared tax returns at no cost for more than 20 years. This is a collaborative effort through the Kent County Tax Credit Coalition. This year \$4,642,620 was returned to low to moderate-income individuals in our community. Most of the refunds were used to pay bills, buy food and purchase necessities that our

neighbors would otherwise have had to do without.

Brenda Brame, Program Manager of the Kent County Tax Credit Coalition said, "If I could say anything to our community it would be a quote from Amanda Gorman's inaugural poem.

"If we merge mercy with might and might with right, then love becomes our legacy."



Brenda Brame, KCTCC Program Manager



## Join UCOM's Walking Club!

Wednesdays at 11:00 am  
Everyone is welcome!

# 20 New Gardeners are growing their own food



**5 things you can do to make a difference**

1. Join our recurring donors in supporting UCOM each month!
2. Help underwrite our new box truck that costs \$3,500.
3. Volunteer once a month to deliver food boxes to seniors.
4. Drive UCOM's box truck for occasional pickups.
5. Donate cleaning supplies (sponges, cleanser, etc.)

# UCOM

**resources for living | hope for life**

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