

GRATIOT COUNTY

Medical student builds book garden

By James McKinnie

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Third-year medical student Lauren Buhr is making a difference in the Gratiot County community.

Buhr, who is from Fowler, completed her undergraduate education at Alma College. She is studying to be a family medicine doctor at Michigan State University.

Buhr also interned at the Gratiot County public health department while in college.

"She decided to be a part of the rural community health program and re-adopt Gratiot County as

her clinical training community," said Julia Terhune, assistant director of Rural Community Health at MSU. "She has completed more than 50 percent of clinical and medical education. That includes rotations in specific work in community care."

The rural community health program brings in students that want to practice medicine in rural communities.

"Gratiot County is a medically underserved community," she said. "So our efforts are to help alleviate that underserved status."

As part of the program she was at the public health department and she

noticed what they needed was a better book garden.

"She saw the need and collected over 1,000 books through her book drive," Terhune said. "People voluntarily provided these books to her."

The books were for the children to look at to increase literacy and encourage reading because the people who typically go into the health department are underserved.

"She actually held them in my office for a while," Terhune said. "So for some time I just had stacks and stacks of books. Her father actually constructed and built the book garden."

Buhr collected so many books that she will to be

able to place some of them in Dr. Lossio's pediatrician office, which is also in Gratiot County.

"She did this completely on her own accord," Terhune said. "This was something that she was passionate about, so she decided to do it."

The program is making an effort to recruit students to specific communities they're from to go back to training. These are the greatest indicators of need.

"We're really proud of Lauren," Terhune said. "She has taken the mission of our program by storm and done far more than any other student has. She's done a fantastic job of serving her community."