

What is 4-H?

Many people think 4-H is just for kids who live on farms or those interested in raising and selling animals – but that's not true! Offering a diverse range of topics and interest areas, 4-H is the largest youth development organization in Michigan. In fact, each year more than 200,000 young people explore what interests and excites them through Michigan 4-H. From program areas ranging from science and technology to clothing and textiles, and so much more, 4-H provides fun, educational opportunities that become the foundation for a lifetime of success.

Based on the experiential learning model, youth in 4-H participate in specific program areas through the learn-by-doing approach. In addition to gaining valuable content knowledge, this model teaches 4H members critical life skills such as goal-setting, self-discipline, conflict resolution and teamwork that directly contributes to the communities they live in. The growth of these life skills is just one of the many positive youth development outcomes that occur from youth's participation in 4-H and result in a direct impact on not only themselves but others youth interact with as well.

Dream of inventing a robot to do your chores? Budding gardener but still a sprout? Wonder how to become president? Love horses but live in town? Wonder which mineral makes fireworks red? Aspire to be a fashionista? Curious how bees make a buzz? Wonder how tap dancers do the paradiddle?

Kids have a lot of questions. Through Michigan 4-H, young people are finding the answers to these little questions and more while learning practical life skills and important values. To meet the varied interests of youth across the state, 4H programming is offered in a variety of topics for kids ages 9 to 19. For Michigan's youngest 4Hers, ages 5 to 8, the Cloverbud program offers similar areas of interest with an emphasis on participation, learning and teamwork.

Your 4H youth can participate in projects organized by your club, but they can also participate individually in state or county-wide workshops that will give them a chance to follow their interests, whether that means riding a horse, planting a garden, creating their own art, or so much more.

To learn more about available programs, visit <http://4h.msue.msu.edu/programs>

And don't forget to think about the annual Washtenaw County 4H Youth Show!

Every summer, from the last weekend of July through the first weekend of August, kids from every 4H club gather to share their work from the previous year. For some this means showing horses, sheep, or swine, while for others it means submitting craft projects, writing samples, cooking concoctions, and more. The categories are numerous and flexible—almost anything your child creates can be entered. Kids who participate receive thoughtful and considerate feedback on their projects, and kids who are 9 and up can earn monetary rewards for a job well done. It's a fun way to share in fellowship around a feeling of accomplishment, and possibly an ice cream treat or two!

Have questions or want to become more involved? Ask your club leader today!

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