



Michigan State University Extension Children & Youth Programs

PREPARING THE FUTURE GENERATION FOR SUCCESS

In 2015, the state's \$56.6 million investment in MSU AgBioResearch and MSU Extension generated more than \$1 billion for Michigan residents. Every dollar the state invested in AgBioResearch and MSU Extension leveraged an additional \$2.59 in federal funds and external contracts, grants and other revenues, including nearly \$1.3 million leveraged by MSU Extension children and youth programs alone. As a result, MSU Extension and MSU AgBioResearch are able to serve Michigan residents with a benefit/cost ratio of 18:1.

These cost benefits are huge, but they are not the only benefits that MSU Extension brings to the state. Through MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development, more than 200,000 youth learn lifelong skills, develop leadership abilities and discover the value of community service. In addition, MSU Extension early childhood education programs prepare thousands of Michigan's youngest children for school success.

Of the 63 MSU pre-college scholarships awarded in 2015-2016, 73 percent were awarded to 4-H youth who participated in one of six Michigan 4-H pre-college programs.



INTRODUCTION

With a goal of ensuring every Michigan child has the necessary knowledge, tools and skills to lead a healthy and productive life, Michigan State University (MSU) Extension's children and youth programming prepares the state's youth for the future. By providing children with a continuum of learning opportunities, resources and support from birth through age 19, these programs have a vital impact on Michigan communities. The programs develop a capacity for academic success in youth, create workforce-ready young adults, reduce high-risk behaviors, engage and develop youth as current and future leaders, and so much more. This brings great value to the Great Lakes State, as more successful young people in communities results in greater tax revenues and consumer spending and increases the likelihood that young people will stay in, or return to, their communities.

MSU Extension's focus on child development starts during a child's most formative years: birth to age 8. Through early childhood programming, parents and caregivers of the youngest Michiganders can receive resources and support to ensure they have the tools and knowledge to become their children's best resource and advocate early in life. As youth become older, MSU Extension supports them through the largest youth development organization in the state: Michigan 4-H. This youth development program helps young people aged 5 to 19 learn the critical life skills they need to contribute to their communities as both children and adults while exploring their interests and passions. By coupling positive adult mentorship with structured and instructional out-of-school time, real-world learning experiences and leadership opportunities, Michigan 4-H allows youth to explore new worlds and gain new knowledge while growing their confidence, civic engagement and leadership skills, and sense of responsibility.



Children and youth programming offered by MSU Extension focuses on five core areas: early childhood development, science literacy, leadership and civic engagement, career exploration and workforce development, and capacity building for youth development programs. The development of life skills is an overarching priority weaved into all aspects of MSU Extension children and youth programming.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

MSU Extension's early childhood development programs support families with young children by helping parents and caregivers increase early childhood science, math and pre-literacy skills, and enhance children's social and emotional development. As a result, Michigan's families are stronger and young children are better prepared to enter and excel in school.

In 2015, MSU Extension early childhood education programs were delivered to more than 3,000 parents and caregivers who influence nearly 45,000 children and youth on a daily basis. Of those surveyed:

- 90 percent said they increased their knowledge of techniques that help young children learn and promote school readiness.
- 85 percent indicated an increase in knowledge regarding basic concepts of early childhood development.
- 80 percent reported an increase in knowledge of how to keep children safe physically, emotionally and socially.

LEADERSHIP AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

MSU Extension leadership and civic engagement programs prepare youth to become leaders in a globally connected and multicultural world. As a result, Michigan youth understand and respect the culture of others and are prepared to respond to local and global issues through leadership, civic engagement and volunteerism.

In 2015, nearly 68,000 Michigan youth participated in 4-H activities related to civic engagement, community service and leadership development. In addition, more than 10,000 individuals were engaged in trainings, workshops and events specifically designed to increase leadership, civic engagement and cultural competencies. Of those surveyed:

- 94 percent indicated they had learned things that would help them make a difference in their communities: a 38 percent increase from before their 4-H experience.
- 88 percent agreed they could work things out when others didn't agree with them: a 24 percent increase from before their 4-H experience.
- 86 percent indicated they could run a meeting: a 34 percent increase from before their 4-H experience.
- 76 percent reported they had communication skills to address conflict effectively: a 29 percent increase from before their 4-H experience.



In partnership with the Molina Foundation, MSU Extension distributed 50,000 books to children living in low-income situations in 55 Michigan counties, making learning to read more accessible for all Michigan youth.



“What I learned will help me in the future by being positive towards others.”

- 4-H Youth Leadership & Global Citizenship Spectacular participant

SCIENCE LITERACY

Science literacy programs cultivate an understanding of the scientific process and increase knowledge of both general and specific science topics. As a result, youth are not only excited to pursue science careers, but also better equipped with important problem-solving, critical-thinking and decision-making life skills necessary for academic and personal success.

During the 2014-15 program year, more than 187,000 youth explored science programs with Michigan 4-H, and 36,000 people participated in more than 600 science literacy workshops, trainings, series and outreach activities specifically designed to improve science knowledge. Of those surveyed:

- 96 percent had increased their science knowledge and 93 percent had the ability to apply science knowledge after participating in a 4-H science program.
- 81 percent had positive attitudes about science, recognizing the relevance of science to the world and seeing it as a part of their future.
- 79 percent believed they had positive decision-making skills, and 72 percent said they had strong problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

CAREER EXPLORATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Career exploration and workforce development programs through MSU Extension allow youth to explore future careers and entrepreneurship while enhancing their financial literacy and developing important skills for the workforce. As a result, Michigan youth are better prepared to make important decisions about their professional future, ready to contribute to the workforce and able to take fiscal responsibility in their personal lives.

In 2015, this programming reached 18,500 participants in 78 Michigan counties through more than 300 educational events, programs and workshops. Of those surveyed:

- 92 percent of workforce preparation attendees reported they are prepared for a job interview.
- 86 percent of workforce preparation participants indicated they could identify the options available for funding their post-secondary education.
- 92 percent of entrepreneurship workshop attendees said they learned how entrepreneurial skills could be used in any career.
- 60 percent of entrepreneurship session participants reported they plan to start their own business.
- 55 percent of financial literacy programming attendees indicated an increase in their understanding of how to track the money they earn and spend.
- 53 percent of career exploration participants indicated they were more aware of the various careers available in fields connected to their interests, skills and experiences.

“I loved going out and doing activities with the foresters. Especially finding insects. I loved to learn all the new things about forestry.”

- 4-H Forestry Fun Camp youth from Ogemaw Co.

Young Entrepreneurs
Profit and Give Back

Michigan 4-H Youth Development delivered Generation E, an intensive youth entrepreneurship education program, to 50 Michigan youth in 2015. As a result, the young people created 18 businesses. Among the participants, nine youth from Delta County profited more than \$250 from their business and donated a portion of their sales back to their school so they could continue to provide entrepreneurship programs in partnership with 4-H in 2016.

More than 61 percent of Michigan 4-H'ers who graduated high school from 2009 to 2015 are attending college, compared with just 44.8 percent of their peers, and 4-H alumni are more likely to go to college than their same-age peers in 93 percent of Michigan counties.



CAPACITY BUILDING

MSU Extension youth development capacity-building programs provide tools and services to 4-H and other youth development programs across the state. As a result, the people and organizations that support Michigan's youth are better equipped to prepare young people for future educational, career and life success.

In 2015, MSU Extension reached more than 4,200 youth and adult participants through various capacity-building programs. This included providing more than 2,000 adults with professional development training, more than 2,100 individuals with volunteer training and nearly 480 youth with mentoring programs. As a result of this programming:

- 100 percent of surveyed participants reported an increased knowledge of quality standards for positive youth development.
- 92 percent of youth matched with caring adult mentors are confident they will finish high school, and 86 percent believe they will go to college.
- 93 percent of youth in mentoring programs felt their mentor helps them to make better decisions, and 79 percent feel they are doing better in school because of their mentor's help.

LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Life skill development is a critical aspect of all MSU Extension children and youth programs, which is why all youth projects and experiences use the experiential learning model through which children learn best. By employing the learn-by-doing approach and engaging young people in hands-on activities, MSU Extension is helping to develop life skills such as goal setting, recordkeeping and critical thinking, as well as personal and interpersonal skills like leadership, teamwork, communication, self-esteem and responsibility. As a result, Michigan youth are prepared with the necessary skills to contribute to their communities now and in the future.

Although life skill development is at the forefront of all children and youth programs, MSU Extension also engages adults and youth in intentional life skills development training and activities. In 2015, this programming was delivered to more than 800 adult and teen volunteers as well as 11,250 youth. Of those surveyed:

- 99 percent of adults reported they could identify the connection between 4-H participation, life skills development and academic success.
- 98 percent of youth said they were aware of the life skills they were learning in 4-H, and 93 percent could identify those life skills.

“I’m realizing the science and what they learn are secondary to the relationship we are building. It’s more important to the kids that we are here and care about them.”

- 4-H Tech Wizards
volunteer from Bay County

Reflections from a 4-H'er

Renee Souva is a high school senior and 12-year participant of Michigan 4-H in Branch County. She has participated in county, state and national programs for animal science, leadership and civic engagement. In addition, she has taken an active role in her home community, serving in several leadership roles and supporting younger 4-H'ers. Upon reflecting on her time in 4-H, Renee shared:

“To me, 4-H is not about winning, traveling or even being involved. 4-H is about leaving a positive impact on our future youth in the field of leadership, agriculture and education. As I approach my last years in 4-H, I will continue my journey in this amazing organization because of the youth. I love to help youth and educate them about my experiences because I hope to be a positive role model and influence them like so many have impacted me through 4-H. 4-H has taught me so much, including skills that have impacted my life. I have learned that being responsible, outgoing, and very personable teaches you so much about leadership and meeting new people.”