



SEPTEMBER 2026

4-H Family News

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY



Beyond Ready

Fresh Start to a New 4-H Year

Dear 4-H Friends,

One wild year of 4-H in Grand Traverse County has come to a close and now we must bravely step into the next, 4-H year 2026-27. For many of us this will mark shifts in expectations, leadership, club make up with lots of new information and hopes.

Consistently through it all, the 4-H community will remain working together to provide development and educational opportunities for our youth. They are also being brave and learning resiliency right along with us. Many of our clubs are livestock focused and wondering what it means for their clubs to have the fair board running shows and the auction for the week of fair 2027. Although we do not have all the answers yet, we are working together to find them. The first step will be a visioning meeting to share ideas that will best serve the youth. We will be looking to the membership at large as well as the Livestock Council Board to reprioritize time, resources and opportunities.

At the last Northwestern Michigan Livestock Council Board meeting, Treasurer, Randy Stockfisch invited everyone to stay on this journey of change together and my hope is that you will as well.

Our children are looking for us to lead the way.

Together,
Sarah Bye

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https://www.canr.msu.edu/grand_traverse/grand_traverse_county_4_h/index

IMPORTANT DATES

SEPTEMBER 3RD, 4-H ONLINE OPEN FOR ENROLLMENT
REGISTRATION: [HTTPS://4HONLINE.COM/#/USER/SIGN-IN](https://4honline.com/#/user/sign-in)

SEPTEMBER 13TH, 4-H FAMILY GATHERING, 4:30 – 6:00, BANCROFT FARM (SEE
FLYER, PAGE 2)

SEPTEMBER 14TH, LIVESTOCK COUNCIL MEETING, 6:30PM AT REDEEMER
LUTHERAN CHURCH, GRAWN

SEPTEMBER 16TH, LEADERS ASSOCIATION MEETING, 6:30PM AT MSU EXTENSION,
400 WEBSTER STREET, TRAVERSE CITY

SEPTEMBER 24TH, 5:30 – 7:30, FALL LEADER UPDATE MEETING OPTION 1, KINGSLEY
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 27TH, 2:30 – 4:30, FALL LEADER UPDATE MEETING OPTION 2, KINGSLEY
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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COUNTY 4-H NEWS



4-H Family Gathering BBQ Potluck Dinner

9/13/2026 from 4:30PM-6:30PM
5150 Miller Road, Buckley, MI

Save the Date for the Second Annual Potluck at the Bancroft Farm on **Sunday, September 13**. Everyone is invited, we just ask you bring a dish to pass. Meat will be provided, so bring your favorite side, dessert, drink, or anything else you can think of!

Grand Traverse Area Spartans and MSU Extension 4-H team up to support youth and foster lifelong Spartan connections

Michigan State University Extension 4-H Youth Development and Grand Traverse Area Spartans (GTAS) are excited to announce a renewed partnership that will create more opportunities for local youth to participate in transformational 4-H experiences. Through this partnership, GTAS has pledged \$5,000 annually through 2031 to provide scholarships for youth from the region, including Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, and Leelanau counties, to attend 4-H Exploration Days, one of Michigan 4-H's premier statewide events.

Held each summer on the MSU campus, 4-H Exploration Days gives thousands of youth the opportunity to experience college life while exploring career pathways, developing leadership skills, and building friendships through hands-on learning and educational sessions. Learn more about the event at https://www.canr.msu.edu/4_h_exploration_days/.

The partnership reflects a shared commitment to investing in young people and creating meaningful educational opportunities for the next generation. In addition to supporting youth scholarships, MSU Extension 4-H and GTAS look forward to exploring future events, volunteer opportunities, and other ways to collaborate in support of youth and communities across the region.

4-H families with Spartan connections are encouraged to learn more about Grand Traverse Area Spartans, sign up for their newsletter, and stay connected with upcoming opportunities. Membership in the alumni group is free and open to anyone interested in supporting the Spartan community. Learn more at [https://www.grandtraverseareaspartans.orghttps://urldefense.com/v3/https://www.grandtraverseareaspartans.org/s/1393/18/home.aspx?gid=82&pgid=7756_!HXcXUKc!3xMZWYw9yN4nhvyLvpKz_imCcrXZ96vmmILN_41VjqQtjKFuko_wz3cqOvdfAHm3iz3l0NTBniCoxk7ROrY\\$](https://www.grandtraverseareaspartans.orghttps://urldefense.com/v3/https://www.grandtraverseareaspartans.org/s/1393/18/home.aspx?gid=82&pgid=7756_!HXcXUKc!3xMZWYw9yN4nhvyLvpKz_imCcrXZ96vmmILN_41VjqQtjKFuko_wz3cqOvdfAHm3iz3l0NTBniCoxk7ROrY$).

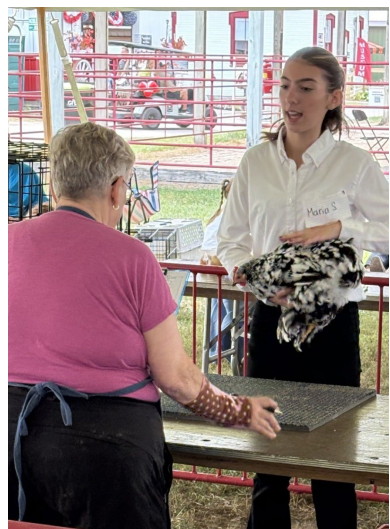
Community members who would like to help even more local youth attend 4-H Exploration Days can also make a gift to their county's 4-H Exploration Days scholarship fund through the Michigan 4-H Foundation at <https://mi4hfdtn.org/?bbFormId=1ccf972b-c4ab-4efe-bc12-73a6767c1170>

Grand Traverse Area Spartans who are interested in learning more about 4-H can visit their county's MSU Extension page at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/county/> and reach out to the 4-H Program Coordinator in their county.



COUNTY 4-H NEWS

Summer 2026 Photos





COUNTY 4-H NEWS

Targeting Life Skills Model

The Targeting Life Skills Model is a simple way to look at youth development. Starting in the center of the diagram is the 4-H clover showing head, heart, hands, and health. The next ring moving out from the center are the eight categories as listed above. For example, under the health section the categories are living and being. The next level moving out from the center identifies the specific life skills that youth will learn related to the 4-H element and subcategories. Some of the life skills youth can learn and develop include stress management, managing feelings and self-responsibility. These life skills can each be further defined; for example, self-responsibility means youth can learn to be personally accountable, capable of making moral and rational decisions, and learn to use good judgement.





STATEWIDE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Starting the new 4-H year with a focus on being Beyond Ready



Beyond Ready

A new 4-H year is the perfect time for volunteers and youth to set the tone for growth, learning and readiness. Beginning the year with intentional activities helps young people build confidence, explore their interests, and understand how their 4-H experiences prepare them for life beyond the club.

Early goal setting, reflection and hands-on project work encourage youth to practice important skills such as communication, decision making and responsibility. Volunteers play a key role by helping youth make connections between what they do in 4-H and the skills they will need in future school, work and community settings.

By starting strong and reinforcing these ideas all year long, clubs can help ensure youth are truly Beyond Ready for whatever comes next.

#BeyondReady

September 9: Welcome Back MSU 4-H Alumni Reception

Michigan 4-H Children's Gardens, East Lansing

If you are a current or former 4-H'er attending MSU this fall, stop by the Michigan 4-H Children's Gardens from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. for networking and free dinner! Plan to stay after for the first meeting of the fall semester for MSU Collegiate 4-H!

www.canr.msu.edu/events/msu-welcome-week-4-h-alumni-reception

September 20: Saginaw 4-H Fall Festival

Schomaker Farms, Saginaw

Join the Saginaw 4-H Fall Festival for a fun-filled afternoon at Schomaker Farms! Bring your family and friends for an afternoon of fun, learning, and community. The public is welcome!

www.canr.msu.edu/events/saginaw-4-h-fall-festival

September 23: Adulting 101 – Are You Ready?

Online

Get ready for anything! This workshop will teach youth how to stay calm, make a plan and handle emergencies with confidence and safety.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/adulting-101-2026

October 2: Michigan 4-H Foundation Annual Membership Meeting

University Club of MSU, Lansing

4-H donors and staff with 4-H responsibilities are encouraged to attend and vote on all items at the meeting. Register by September 18.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/michigan-4-h-foundation-annual-membership-meeting

October 3: Michigan 4-H Legacy Awards Celebration

University Club of MSU, Lansing

Join us to celebrate and recognize Michigan's outstanding 4-H youth, alumni, volunteers, partners and staff. Register by September 18.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/michigan-4-h-legacy-celebration

October 4-10: National 4-H Week

For more than 100 years, 4-H has inspired families, shaped careers, and impacted communities.

Celebrate the impact of 4-H during National 4-H Week! Learn more and find ideas of how to celebrate in your community online.

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/events/national-4-h-week>

October 5: Go Green for 4-H!

On Monday of National 4-H Week, Go GREEN and show your 4-H spirit! Wear a green hat, clothing, face paint— anything green goes. Let's paint the nation GREEN in support of 4-H!

www.canr.msu.edu/events/national-4-h-week





STATEWIDE 4-H NEWS

Re-enroll for the 2026-2027 program year!

Welcome to September and the new 4-H program year! Beginning Thursday, September 3, you may login to your family's 4-H Online (mi.4honline.com/) account and enroll your 4-H members for the 2026-2027 program year. All returning families should utilize the same email address to access their account as they have in the past.

If you do not remember your login email, do not create a new account, simply contact your county staff member (www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/county/) for assistance. Thanks for being a part of the 4-H community!



How to Register with 4-H: Returning Family

1. Visit **mi.4honline.com**.
2. Log in to your account.*
3. Click "Enroll Now" for the returning member(s).
4. Update information.
5. Continue until you click the final SUBMIT button.
6. Add members if needed.

*If you need assistance accessing your account, contact your local 4-H staff; do not create a new account.

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National 4-H Week: October 4-10

For more than 115 years, 4-H has inspired families, shaped careers, and impacted communities. From October 4-10, we will celebrate the impact of 4-H during National 4-H Week. The theme of this year's National 4-H Week is "Beyond Ready." This theme celebrates how 4-H is building a ready generation in a world of change, equipping youth with skills for the future while meeting them where they are today.

Join with 4-H'ers around the country in activating on two important initiatives:

Monday, October 5: Go Green!

On Monday of National 4-H Week, Go GREEN and show your 4-H spirit! Wear a green hat, clothing, face paint— anything green goes. Let's paint the nation GREEN in support of 4-H! Share your 'Go Green' moment on social and tag National 4-H, Michigan 4-H program, and use: #4HBeyondReady #National4HWeek.

Thursday, October 8: Thankful Thursday

On Thursday of National 4-H Week, help us shine a light on all the mentors, educators and volunteers who are making positive impact on your people's lives in 4-H. Share who you're thankful for and celebrate how they are making a difference on Thursday, October 8! Share your 'Thankful' story on social, tag others in your 4-H community, tag National 4-H and use: #4HBeyondReady #National4HWeek.

Learn more about more ways you can celebrate during National 4-H Week at www.canr.msu.edu/events/national-4-h-week.

Wild Spartans returns!

Starting in October, the Wild Spartans Series is back! Join 4-H staff as they take a look into life working with fisheries and wildlife! Follow along to climb through bogs, peer into bear dens, mist net songbirds, snorkel for fish, or perhaps even tag deer. Meet natural resources professionals, learn about their field work, and the education and career path they've followed to get there.

Monthly sessions will be held on the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. EST. Each 30-minute session will feature 1-2 guest speakers. Youth will be encouraged to ask questions to learn more through a live Q&A with scientists. This free virtual series is open to 4-H and non-4-H youth ages 12-19 years. Pre-registration required:

www.canr.msu.edu/environmental_outdoor_education/wild-spartans-series



Join Us Online

WILD SPARTANS

MONTHLY WILDLIFE & FISHERIES WEBINAR SERIES
FOR FAMILIES INTERESTED IN EXPLORING
SCIENCE, RESEARCH, CAREERS, CONSERVATION

October-March, 2nd Tuesday of each month | 6:30 PM EST

Registration required:
www.canr.msu.edu/environmental_outdoor_education/wild-spartans-series

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From clover to confidence: Your 4-H club's path to beyond ready youth

Kathy Fischer<fisch226@msu.edu>, [Michigan State University Extension](#) - September 18, 2025

Empowering youth leaders through hands-on learning, belonging and growth.



Through 4-H, these youth are thriving and already making a difference in our world.

When youth participate in 4-H, they don't just learn; they grow into confident, capable individuals who are beyond ready for whatever comes next. That's the power of a 4-H club rooted in Positive Youth Development (PYD) practices.

In previous articles, we explored how to ignite sparks—those passions and interests that motivate youth—and how you can be a spark champion. We also highlighted how building strong relationships within your club is essential to youth thriving. Now, let's bring it all together to see how a thriving 4-H atmosphere helps youth stay on a path of growth and success.

The 4-H Thriving Model outlines six key developmental outcomes that help youth become beyond ready to make a difference in their clubs, their communities and the world:

- Positive academic attitude
- Social competence
- Personal standards
- Connection with others
- Personal responsibility
- Contribution

Youth who develop these outcomes are more likely to achieve long-term success academically, professionally and personally. They're prepared to lead, collaborate and thrive in school, work and life.

Your club already provides the perfect setting for these outcomes to grow:

- **Positive academic attitude.** Project-based learning teaches goal setting, time management and critical thinking.
- **Social competence.** Participating in group activities builds teamwork, communication and conflict resolution skills.
- **Personal standards.** The 4-H pledge reinforces values such as respect, integrity and responsibility.
- **Connection to others.** A welcoming 4-H club environment fosters belonging and connections with peers, mentors and volunteers.
- **Personal responsibility.** When youth are engaged in their own learning and take ownership of projects, it creates accountability and follow-through.
- **Contribution.** When your 4-H club participates in community service, youth see firsthand how their actions can make a real impact.

As a 4-H leader, volunteer or mentor, you play a vital role in creating this thriving environment. Every activity you plan, every project you guide, and every conversation you have helps shape the experiences that lead to these powerful outcomes. By intentionally supporting sparks, building strong relationships and modeling positive values, you help ensure that youth don't just participate in 4-H—they truly thrive in it.

When your 4-H club weaves together sparks, relationships and these developmental outcomes, it becomes more than a place to learn, it becomes the setting for lifelong success. You're not just preparing youth for the future. You're helping them thrive in it and make a difference along the way.

For more information about joining 4-H, visit the [Michigan 4-H website](#). For additional helpful volunteer training content, check out the [Michigan 4-H Volunteer Webinar Series webpage](#).

[Michigan State University Extension](#) and [Michigan 4-H](#) Youth Development help to prepare young people for successful futures. To find out how to get involved as a youth participant or an adult volunteer, contact your [county MSU Extension](#) office.

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