



JANUARY 2026

4-H Family News

GRATIOT COUNTY



HAPPY NEW YEAR GRATIOT 4-H!!

As we begin a new year, January is the perfect time to set goals, build leadership skills, and prepare for another exciting season of 4-H learning and growth. Whether you are a longtime member, a volunteer, or just getting started, we are excited to kick off 2026 with opportunities that help our youth grow in confidence, communication, and teamwork.

One upcoming opportunity we are especially excited about is our **Parliamentary Procedure Training on January 20th at Emerson Township Hall**. This free training is open to all 4-H youth and volunteers and will focus on the basics of parliamentary procedure—how to run effective meetings, make motions, debate respectfully, and make group decisions. These skills are an important part of the 4-H experience and help youth develop leadership abilities they can use in their clubs, schools, and future careers. **Registration details and instructions can be found later in this newsletter.**

We look forward to a great year ahead filled with learning, leadership, and hands-on experiences. Be sure to read on for more upcoming events, deadlines, and opportunities to stay engaged with Gratiot County 4-H this January!

Till next time — head, heart, hands, and health!

Ashley Foster
4-H Program Coordinator

THANK YOU EVERYONE THAT HELPED US TO REACH AND SURPASS OUR GOAL
OF 500 ITEMS DONATED!! WE COLLECTED 634 ITEMS AND DONATED TO 5
DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONS TO HELP US DISTRIBUTE OUR ITEMS DONATED.

CLUB DONATION TOTALS:

• LUCKY STARS - 211 ITEMS	• CRITTERS AND CRAFTS - 22 ITEMS
• BEEBE BEEF - 160 ITEMS	• KOUNTRY KIDS - 14 ITEMS
• SOMETHIN SPECIAL - 84 ITEMS	• NON-CLUB DONATIONS - 93 ITEMS
• BARNYARD BUNCH - 50 ITEMS	

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<https://www.facebook.com/gratiot4hmsue>

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COUNTY 4-H NEWS

Parliamentary Procedure Training (Rescheduled Date)



Ever wondered how to run a smooth, fair, and efficient 4-H meeting? That's where parliamentary procedure comes in! It's the set of rules that helps groups make decisions together — teaching leadership, organization, and respect for everyone's voice.

📅 Date: January 20 ⌚ Time: 6:00 PM 📍 Location: Emerson Township Hall, 2976 N Baldwin Rd. Ithaca.

❤️ Who's Invited: All 4-H members and adult volunteers 💵 Cost: FREE!

Register Here: <https://bit.ly/ParliProTraining>

Come learn how to make motions, debate respectfully, and vote with confidence — skills that strengthen your 4-H club and build your leadership potential for life!

Don't miss this fun, hands-on training for youth and volunteers alike.

Gratiot 4-H Teen Fun Night!!

✨ CALLING ALL GRATIOT COUNTY 4-H TEENS....LET'S HAVE SOME FUN! ✨

Mark your calendars for January 30th, 6-9 PM—it's Gratiot County 4-H Teen Fun Night!

🎉 Get ready for an evening packed with energy, laughs, and all the good stuff:

- ➡️ FREE event
- ➡️ Open to all 4-H enrolled youth ages 12-19
- ➡️ Snacks, games, music, activities & more!
- ➡️ Location to be determined ASAP
- ➡️ Register HERE <https://bit.ly/4HFunNight>

A great chance to meet new friends and hang out with fellow 4-H'ers! Whether you're into board games, active challenges, or just chilling with friends and food, there's something for everyone. Come kick off the new year 4-H style—with fun, friendship, and plenty of excitement! ❤️ 🙌

We can't wait to see you there! Invite your 4-H friends and spread the word! 🎉





Gratiot County

Cookie Decorating Workshop Success!!



Gratiot County 4-H youth had a sweet opportunity to learn new skills at a recent cookie decorating class held over two separate nights. A total of 19 youth participated, giving everyone plenty of hands-on time to practice and ask questions.

During the class, youth learned how to work with royal icing and explored a variety of decorating techniques, including outlining, flooding, and adding decorative details. Participants practiced controlling icing consistency, using piping bags, and experimenting with designs to make each cookie their own.

In addition to building decorating skills, youth also developed patience, creativity, and confidence as they worked through each step of the process. The class provided a fun and supportive environment where youth could learn from one another and celebrate their finished creations.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this class a success and to the youth who brought their enthusiasm and creativity. Events like this continue to show how 4-H helps youth learn valuable skills while having fun together!

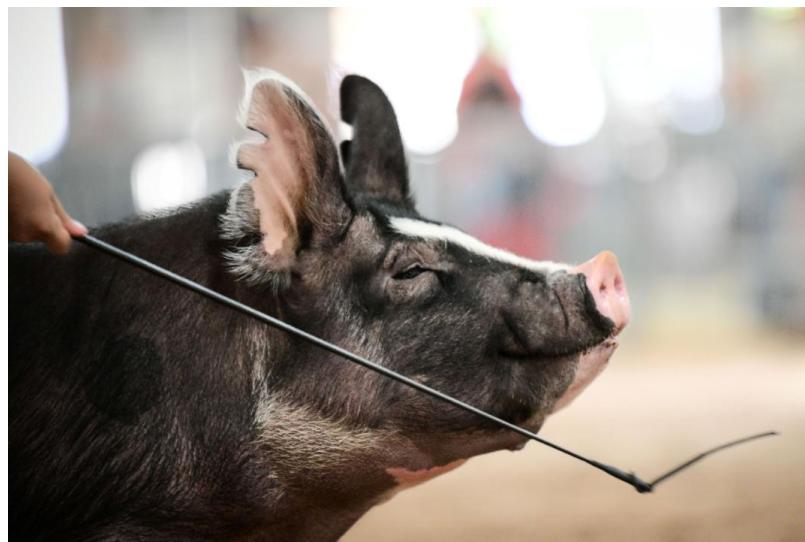
Swine Day Registration is OPEN

Join us for **Swine Day** on **February 22** from **1–4 PM** at the **Pine River Township Hall in Alma**! This event is open to all youth interested in swine projects—whether you're just getting started or have years of experience.

Participants will learn valuable information about raising swine, including care, management, and tips for success.

- ➡ **Pre-registration is required**
- ➡ **\$10 registration fee paid at the Gratiot County MSU Extension Office**

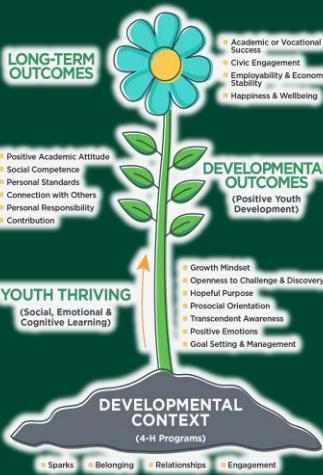
Whether you are just getting started or looking to build on your experience, Swine Day has something for everyone. Make sure to register by February 13 at <https://bit.ly/4pwfJ8R>





STATEWIDE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

4-H Thriving Model of Positive Youth Development



Relationships are the foundation of a successful 4-H program! These relationships include building friendships with other members and leaders, building great working relationships and trust between program leaders and members, and adult leaders working together to organize great opportunities for youth.

We hope you can find others in the 4-H program in which you can build positive friendships and/or mentorships. Join us for any events and meetings to get to know everyone in the program.

Youth thriving is the first step in building youth who are #BeyondReady! Contact your local 4-H staff for more information.

January 13: Wild Spartans

Online

This month's session is "Nature's Detectives: How Insects Help Solve Crimes Against People, Animals and the Environment through Forensic Entomology." Tiny creatures can tell BIG stories about the world around us: explore creepy-crawly clues and learn how science and nature work together to solve puzzles. Ask questions through a live Q&A. This free virtual series is for youth ages 12-19.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/4-h-wild-spartans-january

January 13: Avoiding Money Mishaps

Online

In today's digital world, young people are increasingly targeted by fraudsters, scammers and predatory lenders. This interactive webinar will empower youth with the knowledge and tools to protect themselves and their personal information.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/avoiding-money-mishaps-jan13

January 21: Adulting 101 – Fraud Fighters: How to Stay Scam-Free

Online

From fake jobs offers to phishing texts, scammers are everywhere. This workshop breaks down the latest tricks and shows you how to guard your info, your credit, and your peace of mind.

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/events/adulting-101-2026>

January 24: 2026 State 4-H Rabbit and Cavy Show and Expo

Farm Bureau Pavilion, Lansing

4-H'ers exhibit rabbit and cavy projects and participate in educational knowledge contests: showmanship, skillathon, breed identification and rabbit hopping. **Register by January 14.**

www.canr.msu.edu/events/2026-state-4-h-rabbit-and-cavy-show-and-expo

January 26: Michigan 4-H Volunteer Webinar Series: Beyond Ready Basics

Every great 4-H experience has a few powerful ingredients—and volunteers play the biggest role in making them happen. Explore the four vital elements that help youth thrive: discovering sparks, feeling a sense of belonging, building developmental relationships, and staying meaningfully engaged.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/michigan-4-h-volunteer-webinar-beyond-ready-basics-bringing-the-vital-elements-to-life-in-your-4-h-club

February 7: 4-H Winterfest

Eagle Village Retreat Center, Hersey

4-H Winterfest is a hand-on learning camp for youth ages 8-12. Youth pick workshops and participate in team building activities. Come and have fun this winter! **Register by January 23.**

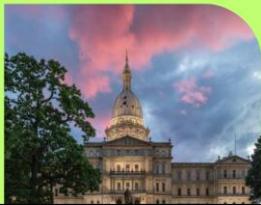
www.canr.msu.edu/events/2026-winterfest





STATEWIDE 4-H NEWS

Capitol Experience



COMING SOON

MARCH 15-17TH, 2026Cost \$365
Scholarships may be available
through your local 4-H office!

Register for Michigan 4-H Capitol Experience!

At Michigan 4-H Capitol Experience, teens learn how to change the world for the better through engagement in Michigan's state government and public policy process. The program is scheduled for March 15-17, in Lansing.

The three-day event, open to high-school-aged youth, includes tours of the Michigan Capitol, interactions with state legislators, meetings with state agency staff, lobbyists and state-level experts and learning how policy is made. During the program, youth work in small teams to draft legislation on: agriculture; civil rights and youth advocacy; crime and law enforcement; education and teacher retention; environment and natural resources; health; and jobs, the economy and infrastructure.

The cost to attend is \$365, which includes lodging at the Okemos Conference Center. Please contact your local 4-H program coordinator to inquire about local funding opportunities. To learn more and/or find the link to register, visit www.canr.msu.edu/4_h_capitol_experience/.

Earn prizes with the Michigan 4-H Cash Composition Contest

Did you know youth are being targeted by scams too? That's this year's theme for the 2026 Michigan 4-H Cash Composition Contest! Michigan youth aged 9-19 are invited to participate through writing an essay on this year's question.

Top entries receive a \$100 gift card, thanks to contest sponsor, Extra Credit Union. MSU Extension will host two webinars to help with fraud awareness and essay writing. Essays are due by March 1. For contest details and essay submission information, visit: www.canr.msu.edu/4-h-money-smarts/money-smart-kids-contest.

Extra Credit UNION

2026 Michigan 4-H Cash Composition Contest

Write a brief 300 word essay addressing fraud and scams, and have the chance to earn a \$100 gift card!

Essays Due: March 1st, 2026
Winners Announced: April 1st, 2026

See website for contest details and requirements!

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY | Extension

Apply for the Michigan 4-H State Awards!

Michigan 4-H true leaders ages 10 and older have an opportunity to be recognized for the great work they do in 4-H and develop their career skills by completing a state award application. A Michigan 4-H State Award is the highest honor bestowed on a Michigan 4-H member and provides an opportunity to receive recognition for their engagement in rich learning experiences that result in outstanding knowledge and life-skill development.

State award applications are divided into four categories: Mark of Excellence contest (10-11 years), junior state award (12-15 years), senior state award (16-19 years) and group awards (13-19 years). An Achievement Award was added last year for 18-19-year-olds. Each application and selection process varies, dependent on the applicant's age.

More information about the Michigan 4-H State Award process and Mark of Excellence Contest can be found online at bit.ly/stateaward. Applications are due April 1. For more information, contact your 4-H program coordinator or email Betty Jo Krosnicki at nashbett@msu.edu or Janice Zerbe at rajzerj@msu.edu.