



FEBRUARY 2026

4-H Family News

HILLSDALE COUNTY



Hillsdale County
Award Packet is now
available!

[CLICK HERE TO APPLY!](#)

Applications are
due: February 19th!

CONTACT US

Kayela Gimenez
4-H Program Coordinator
gimenezk@msu.edu

Laura Miller
Administrative Assistant
lmiller@msu.edu

20 Care Drive
Suite B
Hillsdale, MI 49242

PHONE & EMAIL:

(517) 439-9301

msue.hillsdale@campusad.msu.edu

WEBSITE:

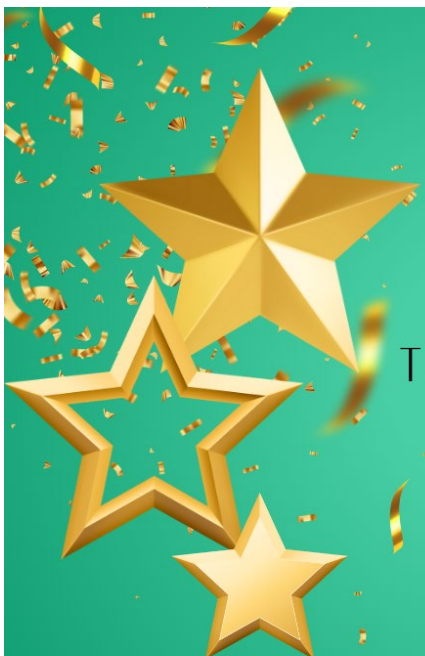
[Hillsdale County Extension](#)

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SAVE
THE
DATE

THURSDAY, MARCH
12TH

HILLSDALE
COUNTY
AWARD
CEREMONY





4-H Alumni Spotlight

Shelly Oates



What years were you involved in 4-H, and what age were you? **8-20 years old 1997-2010**

How did you first get involved? **My older brother and sister were involved in 4H so it just came naturally for me to be involved too. My family also showed open class cattle.**

What was your favorite project or activity, and why? **Showing Cattle, hands down! I just enjoyed fitting and getting cattle ready to show and the competitive aspect of the show.**

What is one skill you gained from 4-H that you still use today? **I think it's taught me responsibility. Caring for livestock, making sure they're fed and watered daily, and cared for. My dad would always make sure we had our chores done before coming in for dinner.**

What was the most meaningful award you received from 4-H? **Outstanding Exhibitor, my Senior year & not really sure it's an award, but participating in Super Showmanship was very memorable for me.**

How has 4-H prepared you to be a good citizen? **Taught me responsibilities, helping and caring for others, to keep showing up even if the odds aren't in your favor, & hard work.**

What is your current occupation or field of study? **Accounting Manager and Home Baker**

What advice would you give to a young 4-H'er just starting out? **Not so much for young 4-H members, but I saw a sign at a different fair that said, "Somewhere in this barn, there is a little kid that wants to be just like you someday. You owe it to them to be the best you can be." That really stuck with me. I think about when I was little and looking up to the kids older than me. I always look for and appreciate the older kids who help the younger kids without being asked or without giving an attitude. I think that says a lot about the kid and their parents. Not all kids are privileged to have the best animals or the best supplies, but they do deserve to have the best experience. That's really my goal when it comes to our county fair. I want the kids to have the best experience, whether they're winning the class or dead last. I just want kids to love showing and our county fair as much as I did growing up. But also some advice I'd give to all 4-H exhibitors: thank your parents/adults in our lives! Whether you show one animal or show them all. Thank your parents! As a kid, I don't think we realize how much our parents sacrifice and the time that they dedicate to help us succeed. As a superintendent now, alongside my dad, I really see all the behind-the-scenes work that goes into the short amount of time that exhibitors are in the show ring, the hours and hours that are spent preparing your animals, supplies, feed plans, etc. Just take some time to thank your parents or the adults in your life who help you!**



HILLSDALE COUNTY 4-H

WINTER READING CHALLENGE



**January 15th –
March 19th**

If you have any questions
please call the Extension
Office or email
gimenezk@msu.edu

Fill out the Reading
Challenge form and
turn into the Extension
Office (in person or via
email). For every book
read you will be
entered in the drawing
for a prize! The youth &
volunteer with the
most books read will
also receive a prize!!!

WINTER READING CHALLENGE



Title:

Author:

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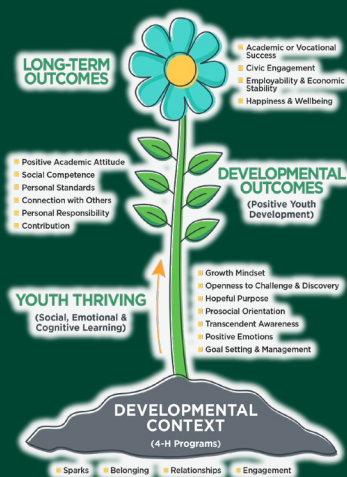
Author:

Dates Read:



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 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

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.**

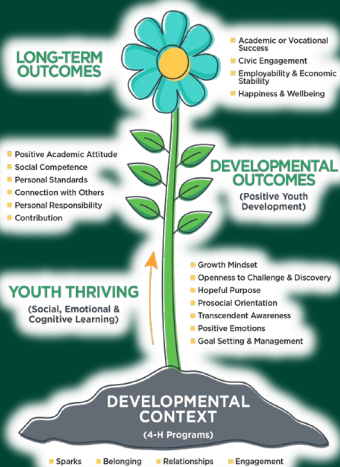
www.canr.msu.edu/events/2026-winterfest





STATEWIDE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

4-H Thriving Model of Positive Youth Development



Building a sense of belonging in our 4-H program has been a long-standing tradition. What does this look like?

It may be a project leader, club leader, or event organizer welcoming you to each meeting or event. It may look like a “roll call” or “ice breaker” at the beginning of a meeting.

The initial welcome allows people to know that they have been seen in the room. So, the next time someone asks you a roll call question of “What’s your favorite cheese?”, know that there is a reason.

We want to get to know you. We want to hear your voice. We want the ability to start building relationships by finding likenesses among us.

Contact your local 4-H staff for more information.
#BeyondReady

February 10: 4-H Wild Spartans

Online

In this month’s session, take a walk through the woods on the wild side with “Walking a Path of Conservation.” 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-february

February 11: Michigan 4-H Volunteer Webinar Series: Building Belonging – Teambuilding Strategies for Stronger 4-H Experiences

Online

Teambuilding isn’t just an activity—it’s a pathway to deeper belonging and higher engagement in 4-H. This webinar will show volunteers how simple team-building practices can help youth feel included, communicate effectively, work together, and grow their leadership skills.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/michigan-4-h-volunteer-webinar-building-belonging-teambuilding-strategies-for-stronger-4-h-experiences

February 11: Avoiding Money Mishaps

Online

This webinar will focus on how youth can protect themselves from fraud, scams, identity theft and predatory lending.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/avoiding-money-mishaps-feb11

February 11: 4-H Chef Tasty Dog Treats

Lenawee MSU Extension Demo Kitchen, Adrian

Youth ages 5-11 will prepare delicious treats to bake at home for your dog. Ages 5-7 need adult helper. Registration deadline is February 7.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/4-h-chef-tasty-dog-treats

February 19 –March 26: Online Guiding Principles for Highly Successful Parenting Webinar Series

Online

Guiding Principles is a FREE online course for parents of toddlers to teens to learn strategies for helping children, parents and families be successful.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/guiding-principles-for-highly-successful-parenting-webinar-series-february-2026

February 19: Ace the Interview: Skill Building and Practice for Teens

Washtenaw County MSU Extension Office, Ann Arbor

This free workshop will help youth (ages 12-19) confidently handle interview experiences with tips and hands-on practice. Any teen is welcome to attend! Registration deadline is February 17.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/ace-the-interview-skill-building-and-practice-for-teens





STATEWIDE 4-H NEWS

Capitol Experience

COMING
SOONMARCH 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.



STATEWIDE 4-H NEWS



Participate in the World Food Prize Michigan Youth Institute

As millions across the globe deal with food insecurity, the World Food Prize Michigan Youth Institute (WFP MIYI) offers young people an opportunity to be part of the solution. Held May 7 in East Lansing, or by participating from anywhere else using Zoom video/web conference technology, the event seeks to inspire and prepare the next generation of global leaders to end world hunger.

To participate, youth should be in grades 7-12 and register by the March 15 deadline. As part of the registration process, youth are required to prepare a three- to five-page research paper about a developing country and one of 22 key factors that affect food security. At the event, youth present and discuss their papers with other attendees and research and industry experts.

The top performing students at the WFP MIYI will be selected to attend the World Food Prize Global Youth Institute in Des Moines, Iowa, in October. For more information, visit <https://www.canr.msu.edu/wfpmyi/>. Registration opens February 1 and closes March 15.

Tickets now available for Michigan 4-H Day at the Breslin

Join MSU Extension and Michigan 4-H on March 1 for the 20th celebration of Michigan 4-H Day at the Breslin! This fun family event will be held at the Jack Breslin Student Events Center as the MSU Women's Basketball team takes on the Ohio State Buckeyes!

Those interested in attending can purchase tickets at a price of \$7.50 plus fees. This is a discounted rate available to the Michigan 4-H and MSU Extension communities; complimentary tickets are no longer available due to the rising popularity of college sports. MSU Extension and Michigan 4-H youth, volunteers, partners, stakeholders, alumni, staff and their families are all encouraged to attend.

Tickets can be purchased through a two-step process. First, guests should register at <https://events.anr.msu.edu/4HBreslin2026/>. Within one week, registrants will receive a custom purchase link to the email provided in registration. Attendees must then use this custom link to purchase tickets for the event. Additional ticketing information is available on the registration website. Registration will close on February 17.

Tip-off for the game is scheduled for 12 p.m. Gates to the Breslin will open at 10:30 a.m., with a variety of pre-game activities hosted by MSU Extension professionals around the concourse. Participants are encouraged to show their pride and wear green and white 4-H or MSU Extension apparel. Families for whom cost is a barrier should contact their local 4-H program coordinator.



Show your 4-H pride wherever you go!

Did you know you can make a difference for 4-H every time you hit the road? By purchasing the Michigan 4-H specialty license plate, you're not only showing your 4-H spirit—you're helping fund programs that empower young people across the state. A portion of each plate sale and renewal benefits Michigan 4-H, supporting hands-on learning experiences that help Michigan youth become beyond ready for the future.

Whether you're a current member, alumni, volunteer, or simply a proud supporter, this is an easy way to give back and keep 4-H growing strong. Ordering is simple through the Michigan Secretary of State.



Drive your support forward—get your 4-H plate today and help create opportunities for the next generation of Michigan 4-H youth! Learn more at extension.msu.edu/4-HPlate.



MI 4-H DAIRY CONFERENCE

COWS ON CAMPUS

Session Topics Include:

- Tour of the new MSU Dairy Cattle Teaching & Research Center
- Tour of the MSU Meat Lab
- Nutrition Workshop
- Dairy Judging
- Dissections
- & More!

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

FEBRUARY 27TH-MARCH 1ST, 2026

OPEN TO ANY MI 4-H YOUTH AGES 12-19

Registration is now OPEN!



**Beyond
Ready**



2026 ADULTING 101



- FRAUD FIGHTERS - JANUARY 21 AT 6:30 PM
- INFORMED RENTER - FEBRUARY 19 AT 5:00 PM
- SLEEP WELLNESS - MARCH 4 AT 5:30 PM
- EAT SMART: HEALTHY MEALS ON A BUDGET - APRIL 13 AT 5:00 PM
- COOKING WITH CONFIDENCE - MAY 18 AT 6:30 PM
- AI AND YOU: SMART, SAFE & SAVVY - JUNE 11 AT 6:00 PM
- THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK - JULY 8 AT 6:00 PM
- ROADMAP TO A SMART USED CAR PURCHASE - AUGUST 12 AT 5:00 PM
- ARE YOU READY? - SEPTEMBER 23 AT 5:00 PM
- MENTAL HEALTH TOOLKIT - OCTOBER 7 AT 6:00 PM
- REALITIES OF ANIMAL CARE - NOVEMBER 12 AT 7:00 PM

***ALL TIMES LISTED ARE EASTERN STANDARD TIME**



FREE ON ZOOM

