



4-H Family News

January
2026

Kalamazoo County



**Beyond
Ready**

All Species Meeting

We are looking forward to seeing you all at the **All-Species meeting** at the Expo Center South on **January 21st starting at 6:30pm**. This is for youth showing any livestock, but anyone is welcome to attend. Youth will rotate between educational stations and will have the opportunity to ask questions!

Please reach out to your species superintendent if you have any questions.



CONTACT US

Veronica Bolhuis
4-H Program Coordinator
(269) 383-8867
bolhuisv@msu.edu

Will Barnwell
4-H Program Instructor
(269) 383-8878
barnwe18@msu.edu

MSU Extension Office Phone & Email-

201 W. Kalamazoo Ave.
Suite 306
Kalamazoo, MI. 49007
269-383-8830
msue.kalamazoo@campusad.msu.edu

WEBSITE-

<http://canr.msu.edu/kalamazoo4H>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057507535294#>

Program-122047197873078

MSU is committed to achieving excellence through a diverse workforce and inclusive culture that encourages all people to reach their full potential. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Quentin Tyler, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned.

Show your 4-H pride wherever you go!

The Michigan 4-H license plate is a simple way to support youth programs while celebrating your connection to 4-H. A portion of every plate purchase benefits Michigan 4-H for young people to learn, lead, and grow through 4-H. Learn more at

https://www.canr.msu.edu/4h/Support_Michigan_4_H/michigan-4-h-license-plate





Kalamazoo 4-H Leaders Council

is having a **3rd annual Bowl-a-Rama !**

Sunday Feb. 22nd

2:30-4:00 pm

Come a little early to get your shoes

Revel & Roll West

4500 Stadium drive, Kalamazoo

The Council will cover lanes fee and shoe rental for our 4-H members. Additional family and friends who would like to join the cost is \$10.

Sign up here! <https://forms.gle/RtXYy5i4w2Y18AuFA>



Spread The Word!

Tack sale registration is now open!

Volunteers are needed and adults must be at least a Silver Level Volunteer.

https://www.canr.msu.edu/becoming_a_4_h_volunteer/

The sale will be :

Monday March 23, 2025

5-9 pm

Kalamazoo County Expo Center

2900 Lake Street, Kalamazoo, MI

Email inquiries to

kalamazoo4horse@yahoo.com

KALAMAZOO COUNTY 4-H TACK SALE

Monday, March 23 2026
5pm - 9pm





SHOPPERS

Come shop private sellers and vendors in a 24,000 square foot indoor venue!

Concessions available for purchase

\$2/person donation to the Kalamazoo County 4-H Horse Project at entry

SELLERS

Reserve by March 1st:

Table space (table included) \$20 (\$25 if received after March 1)

Vendor cube (table included) \$35 (\$40 if received after March 1)

Contact kalamazoo4horse@yahoo.com to reserve your space today!

Kalamazoo County Expo Center 2900 Lake Street Kalamazoo, MI 49048



There will be 5 in person YQCA (Youth for the Quality Care of Animals) sessions and during the 1 online version in 2025-2026. This is a requirement for all youth, ages 8-18, who will bring livestock to the Kalamazoo County Youth Fair 2026. There are two options- take 1 of the 5 face-to-face sessions or take the online session. The face-to-face sessions will be a minimum of 1 hour and the cost is \$3.00 per youth. The face-to-face version is meant to include all youth 8 – 18 years old. 19 yr old and above will need to take the online version. The online version is \$12.00 and the curriculum is *age specific*. This certification is good for one year. There need to be a minimum of 5 youth signed up to hold a face-to-face class. The face-to-face sessions will be held on the following dates and times:

Jan 22 – 6:30 pm
Feb 26 - 6:30 pm
March 4 - 6:30 pm
April 18 - 10 am
June 4 - 6:30 pm

All certificates are due to the 4-H office no later than noon on July 1, 2026

Youth who would like to take **the face-to-face session** will need to do the following:

- Parents will need to create a **family** profile on <https://yqcaprogram.org/>
- Parents will need to assure each child showing at fair is added and chose the face-to-face training option.
- Pay the \$3.00 registration fee.
- Youth will need to complete the pre-test.
- Once the youth has taken the face-to-face session, staff will mark your session as complete.
- **Youth will need to log back in and take the post test** (found under the child's name and a drop down that says Enrolled ILT trainings).
- Once the post test is complete the youth's certificate will be sent.

Youth who would like to take **the online session** will need to do the following:

- Parents will need to create a **family** profile on <https://yqcaprogram.org/>
- Parents will need to assure each child showing in the fair is added and chose the online training session.
- Pay the \$12.00 registration fee.
- Youth will then need to complete the course.

Once the youth have completed either the online session or the face-to-face session and have received their certificate, the certificate will need to be emailed to msue.kalamazoo@msu.edu by July 1, 2025.

You can find helpful registration videos and documents here:
https://yqcaprogram.org/local/resources_for_youth_parents.php



HAPPY
BIRTHDAY

to Our Amazing Volunteers!

Roberta Y
Michelle W
Ashleigh W
Pam W
Carol W
Sheryl V
Rebecca V
Lisa V
Maren U
Melanie R
Amy P
Kathleen M
Addullah M
Caitlin M
Paige M
Kristi L



Rebecca L
Karen K
Kim K
Brandi J
Cora H
Donna H
Seth H
Colleen H
John G
Cherie G
Grace G
Diane F
Emma F
Christina C
Kaitlyn B



NEW PROJECT GUIDELINES

We are working hard to add some new projects to our guidelines and the 4-H fair book. When we add new guidelines, we will post them both in the newsletter and on the Kalamazoo County 4-H Facebook page.

This month we will be updating or adding the following guidelines:

- Social recreation guidelines
- Languages/passport
- Beekeeping

In January we will be adding the following guidelines:

- Backyard BBQ/Grilling



Help Us Tell the 4-H Story

Are you a current or former 4-H member? We want to hear from YOU! 4-H youth and alumni — help us share the amazing impact of 4-H by telling your story:

- **Who are you?**
- **What kinds of projects** have you done or are you working on now?
- **Where** has the 4-H program taken you — or where is it leading you?
- **Why** was 4-H important in shaping your goals, your life, or who you are today?
- **When** were you (or are you) part of the program?

We're still collecting and sharing the incredible stories of Kalamazoo County 4-H youth and alumni! Your story helps show how 4-H builds skills, confidence, and leadership — helping you be **Beyond Ready** for anything.

Share your 4-H story here:

https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6DsEDclMZ3PZ3IY



Mini Horses

Miniature horses can be coined mischievous or "naughty" due to their intelligence, big personalities packed into small bodies, and "toddler energy" with behaviors like nipping, being pushy, or acting dominant. They are generally very gentle, eager to please, and affectionate when properly trained and handled like a full-sized horse, not just a cute pet.

Why they can seem naughty?

Big personality: They have big attitudes in tiny bodies, often displaying strong emotions and playful antics, sometimes compared to toddlers.:

Intelligence & instinct: Their smarts can lead them to test boundaries or take advantage of situations, like a strong self-preservation instinct.

Social dynamics: They can be pushy or assertive with other horses, sometimes showing dominance. I mean, it's hard to look tough otherwise when you are up to your pasture mates knee size.

Misguided kindness: Hand-feeding treats can teach them to nip or bite hands. This can also be said of full size horses. Be careful of hand feeding and other HUMAN taught rude behaviors. Just because they are pint sized, it's still not acceptable.

How to manage those tiny equine behaviors:

Train them like big horses!!! : Don't let their small size fool you. They need consistent handling, discipline, and training to respect personal space.

Avoid hand-feeding: This prevents them from associating hands with food and learning to nip.

Provide structure: Working them regularly with grooming, in-hand leading, or driving helps channel their energy and keeps them focused.

Just like their larger counterparts, purpose is important. Lack of use/attention/short cuts= naughty behavior.

Just like your full size horse when you were wondering why they behave a certain way, give it a second thought. Who allowed the behavior? It doesn't take many times to turn it into a pattern.

Set goals this New year for consistency and accountability on both sides of the pasture fence!

Happy 2026 Year of the horse! We are looking so forward to increasing our numbers and offering some fun outings this year. Please contact Julie Sheppard if you are also interested in hosting a meeting or clinic for us. Share your pictures and stories with us too.



We will be updating our food booth in this year!



Helping on the food booth committee would be a great resume builder for teens who are interested in culinary arts.

Help us compare cost, choose the menu items, plan an inventory for this year's fair. Meet with adults who currently run concessions and cafeterias.

Meetings will be via zoom.....Learn by being involved.....

Reach out to Chris Chase Myrichland4h@gmail.com if Interested.



Adulthood 101 Fraud Fighters

Join MSU Extension 4-H's **Adulthood 101** webinar:
Fraud Fighters: How to Stay Scam Free

Jan 21, 2026 | 6:30 PM EST

Learn the latest tricks scammers use & how to protect yourself.

Sign up today: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/events/fraud-fighters>

The poster features a dark blue background with a circuit-like pattern. On the left, a black silhouette of a person in a fighting stance is shown. In the top right corner is a green four-leaf clover logo with the letters 'H' on each leaf. The main title 'FRAUD FIGHTERS: HOW TO STAY SCAM-FREE' is written in large, bold, light blue capital letters. Below the title, a light blue rounded rectangle contains the text 'MICHIGAN 4-H ADULTING 101 WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21ST 6:30-7:30 EST FREE ON ZOOM' in black. At the bottom, there is a collection of icons: a red padlock with a lightning bolt, a laptop with a skull and crossbones, a person in a black hoodie with a white mask using a laptop, a credit card, a green laptop with a user icon, a magnifying glass over a document, and a red triangular warning sign with an exclamation mark and the words 'FRAUD ALERT'.

**FRAUD FIGHTERS:
HOW TO STAY SCAM-FREE**

**MICHIGAN 4-H ADULTING 101
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21ST
6:30-7:30 EST
FREE ON ZOOM**

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension



Spring *International* Pen Pal Program

We are happy to announce that this spring States' 4-H are offering another round of the **Spring Pen Pal Program!** They are currently working to recruit international youth, but please mark your calendar for the below dates.

- **Program Dates**
 - **March 1:** US registration opens
 - **April 1 - June 1:** Pen pal program runs with weekly emails
- **Age:** Participants must be between the ages of 9 – 18 as of April 1, 2026.
- **Frequency:** participants will be expected to send one email/letter weekly for the duration (approximately 10 emails/letters). There will be weekly discussion topics to help get the conversation going, but these are only suggestions.
- **Regular Email Schedule Between Participants:** For example, international students send emails to their U.S. partners every Monday, and U.S. students reply every Friday.
- **Cost:** \$10 USD that can be paid online only.
- **Registration deadline:** Friday, March 20, 2026, or when all spots are filled.

**Don't miss this
informative Speaker on
the negative impact of
Fast Fashion**

**Sunday February 8th
3:00 pm
Richland Presbyterian
Church**

ARDEA GUEST SPEAKERS - FAST FASHION AND ACTION AGAINST IT

What is fast fashion, Why is it bad, What
can you do about it? Activity - Upcycling
clothing - patches



SUNDAY, 8, FEBRUARY
RICHLAND PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
3:00 PM

4H
MEETING



Poultry Project News



It's time to start thinking about market birds for 2026!

The market project is making a big change this year. The Feed Bag in Richland is closing and will no longer be handling our bird ordering and distribution. This will change how you order and pick up birds. The biggest change is that you will now pay for your birds when you order them. Birds will still be picked up in Richland but at Cherie's house, instead of a store.

Things to know:

Birds typically arrive on **Tuesdays**. Occasionally they don't arrive until **Wednesday**. You must be available the date of pickup to get your birds. The exception to this is the roaster chickens. The earliest they will arrive is Wednesday, May 27 due to the holiday weekend. If you order **roasters**, you may need to be available on **Thursday, May 28** as well in case the shipment is delayed.

Order forms will be available at poultry meetings, on the poultry Facebook page, and will be emailed out to those in the project. It is also available here :

https://www.canr.msu.edu/kalamazoo/kalamazoo_county_4_h_1/Project-Guidelines/Small-Livestock

There will also be a table at the all-species meeting in January

where you can order your birds. **February 16 will be the last day that you can order your birds for the 2026 fair.**

Please reach out to Cherie if you have any questions!

cheriegilfillan@gmail.com

Bird type	How birds are sold	Recommended number of birds to order	Estimated pick up date	Cost per bird
Turkey - white broad breasted	1 male and 1 female	At least 6 if you want one of each gender to sell	March 24	\$9.98
Turkey - bronze broad breasted	1 male and 1 female	At least 6 if you want one of each gender to sell	March 24	\$10.68
Cornish Cross Chicken	Pen of 3	5-6	Roasters: May 27 Broilers: June 16 Cornish: June 23	Male: \$4.78 Female: \$4.63
Duck - Rouen	Pen of 3	4-5	May 12	\$8.15
Duck - Pekin	Pen of 3	4-5	June 9	\$8.15



4-H WINTERFEST FEBRUARY 7-8 2026



LOCATION: EAGLE VILLAGE - HERSEY, MI

COST: \$120 FOR 4-H MEMBERS

REGISTER TODAY: [HTTPS://4HWINTERFEST2026.4HONLINE.COM](https://4hwinterfest2026.4honline.com)

WHO SHOULD ATTEND:

Youth who attend 4-H Winterfest will spend two days learning about team building and different project areas while meeting youth from around the state. 4-H Winterfest offers participants and chaperones an opportunity to experience Eagle Village in an overnight camp setting. Youth participate in hands-on sessions.

Workshop 1 - Saturday

Amaze Your Friends With Magic

Launch into Science

Broom Ball

Art Explorers: Fun and Easy Crafts

Crafts Around the World: North America

Ice Dyeing

Workshops- Sunday

Workshop #2

Workshop #3

Cat Curiosity

Cat Curiosity

Lego Science

Lego Science

Paper to Pulp

Paper to Pulp

Stop Motion Animation

Stop Motion Animation

It's a Wrap! Jewelry wire wrapping

It's a Wrap! Jewelry wire wrapping

WORKSHOP 1 DESCRIPTION:

Amaze Your Friends With Magic- Come and learn several easy magic tricks that will amaze your friends and family.

Launch into Science- Get ready to build, launch & learn! Participants will dive into hands-on STEM challenges – including designing & testing their very own marshmallow catapult. From creative problem solving to engineering fun, this session will spark curiosity & teamwork while showing how science & innovation come to life!

Broom Ball- Learn the skill and techniques to broom ball. Have fun outdoors on the ice challenge your coordination and teamwork to score the most goals!

Crafts Around the World: North America -Enjoy and be introduced to a simple cultural traditional craft from North America. We will learn how to make the simple craft of “Guatemalan Worry Dolls” and having fun creating as we learn about the culture and the country.

Art Explorers: Fun and Easy Crafts- A hands-on session using basic tools to create and personalize leather goods like bracelets, book markers, and coasters and craft a dazzling suncatcher using pony beads and crystals for an instant touch of sparkle wherever it hangs.

Ice Dyeing- Discover the science behind stunning, and surprising, designs when colors split. You'll explore how melting ice and dye interact, creating vibrant patterns while learning about chemistry and color theory in action. This session blends art and science for a colorful experiment you can wear or share!

WORKSHOP 2& 3 DESCRIPTION:

Cat Curiosity- Ever wanted to learn about cat showmanship? Fun facts about our fancy furry friends? Want to pet one up close and personal? Well, here's your chance! Join us for 4-H related activities and information regarding cat showmanship at the county fair level. We will have hands-on demonstrations and even have a live cat to examine. Please be allergy aware!!

Lego Science- Use Legos to answer science questions such as: Can you building a hurricane-proof building? How do wrecking balls work? and How many Lego can you balance off one brick?

Paper to Pulp- Get creative from start to finish! In this session you will make your own paper, design a custom journal & learn simple journaling techniques. Have fun, reflect, create & express yourself one page at a time!

Stop Motion Animation- Bring your ideas to life by transforming everyday objects into exciting stories. You'll design, snap, and edit your own stop motion mini movies using creativity and digital tools. This session combines science, technology, and creativity to show how innovation moves—literally—frame by frame!

It's a Wrap! Jewelry wire wrapping- Enjoy and be introduced to the art of jewelry wire wrapping. You will learn the basics and wrap special stones of Michigan, creating necklaces, keychains, or whatever your creative minds discover and make.



Reignite your passion for 4-H at the
2026 Spark and Share Summit !

March 7th

Bavarian Inn Lodge and Conference Center in Frankenmuth

4-H Volunteers and teens can register for this 1-day conference where they can learn new projects and information that they can take back to teach and share in their local 4-H program at:

<https://events.anr.msu.edu/SparkShare2026/>

Registration is \$75 and includes lunch and selection of up to 4 breakout sessions.

A link to session descriptions is available through the registration page.

The deadline for registration is February 9th.



*Looking for the perfect
gift for the 4-H member,
teen leader, or volunteer
in your life?*

Give the gift of a great experience!!

4-H Spark & Share Summit

March 7, 2026

Frankenmuth

<https://events.anr.msu.edu/SparkShare2026>

Make it a weekend get away for the family; enjoy
Michigan's largest indoor waterpark at Bavarian Inn!!





The registration for the **Equine Connection Weekend** is now open

Created in partnership with the Michigan Quarter Horse Association, Department of Animal Science at Michigan State University, and Michigan 4-H Horse Program, join us for a weekend of fun and learning about everything horses!

Participate in the riding clinic or audit from the stands, join the educational seminars, or participate in the Horse Judging and Hippology Clinic.

Register here: <https://pci.jotform.com/form/253146086083053>



2026 EQUINE CONNECTION WEEKEND

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2026 THROUGH
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2026
AT THE FARM BUREAU PAVILION AT
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

- HORSE JUDGING
- HIPPOLOGY
- SHOWMANSHIP
- HORSEMANSHIP
- TRAIL

JOIN US FOR A WEEKEND OF FUN AND LEARNING!

CLINIC SESSIONS WITH AQHA PROFESSIONAL RYAN COTTINGIM AND OTHERS!

****HORSES ONLY NEEDED FOR COTTINGIM CLINICS. LIMITED TO 12 PARTICIPANTS****



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension



[HTTPS://PCI.JOTFORM.COM/FORM/253146086083053](https://pci.jotform.com/form/253146086083053)



Ready to Join?

Scan the QR code below to view the 4-H Future Squad Website and Interest Form



For program support, questions, or assistance with registration, please contact Laurie Rivetto at rivettoL@msu.edu

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Quentin Tyler, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned.

4-H Future Squad

A Virtual 4-H Club to Grow YOUR Future

Youth aged 12-19 are invited to join 4-H Future Squad, designed for youth to build skills, confidence, and connections for a successful future.

The club will meet virtually October 2025 – May 2026.

Topics for education include financial literacy, college and career readiness, stress management, building healthy relationships, studying abroad, goal setting, nutrition, and much more... based on the topics you share that will help you be beyond ready for your future!

Current meeting dates and times will be communicated via e-mail and on the Upcoming Programs webpage.

Why Join 4-H Future Squad?

- **Adulthood is a big job — we'll help you get ready!**
Learn essential skills alongside new friends and mentors who can guide you toward your goals.
- **Gain access to all 4-H benefits and statewide events**
A variety of events will be shared with the group often, and youth are encouraged to participate!
- **Attend as you can!**
Join 4-H Future Squad as your primary or secondary club – attend as many sessions as you wish.



Beyond Ready





Michigan 4-H Youth Code of Conduct



The opportunity to participate in or attend 4-H activities is a privilege. All 4-H participants – youth, families, volunteers, and Extension staff who participate in or attend any activity or event sponsored by the Michigan State University Extension 4-H Youth Development Program are expected to uphold the values of the Michigan 4-H program.

All 4-H youth participants must conduct themselves according to the following standards that apply to all Michigan 4-H programs, including virtual programs, and interactions such as social media and internet engagement-

1. **Create a Welcoming Environment for All.** Encourage everyone to fully participate in 4-H. Recognize that all people have skills and talents that can help others and improve the community. Though we will not always agree, we must disagree respectfully. When we disagree, try to understand why. Our first priority is to create a safe, inclusive space for learning, sharing and collaboration that is welcoming to people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives. Diversity includes, but is not limited to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status.
2. **Bring Your Best Self.** Conduct yourself in a manner that reflects honesty, integrity, self-control, and self-direction. Accept the results and outcomes of 4-H activities and programs with grace and empathy for other participants. Accept the final opinions of judges and evaluators. Be open to new ideas, suggestions, and opinions of others.
3. **Obey the Law.** Obey the laws of the locality, state and nation and Michigan State University and Extension policies and guidelines. Commit no illegal acts. Do not possess, offer to others, or use alcohol, illegal drugs, marijuana, or tobacco products, which include e-pens, e-pipes, e-hookah, e-cigars, JUULs, vapes, vape pens or other electronic nicotine delivery systems. Do not attend 4-H activities under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances. Do not possess or use weapons or firearms except as expressly permitted as part of supervised 4-H shooting sports programming. This includes dangerous or unauthorized materials such as explosives or similar items.
4. **Honor Diversity – Yours and Others’.** Respect and uphold the rights and dignity of all persons with whom you interact as part of Michigan 4-H.
5. **Create a Safe Environment.** Be kind and compassionate toward others. Be considerate and courteous of all persons and their property. Do not carelessly or intentionally harm or intimidate anyone in any way (verbally, mentally, physically, or emotionally). Do not insult, harass, or bully others or engage in other hostile behaviors, including sexual harassment, sexual assault or sexual abuse. Abstain from sexual behavior and intimate physical/sexual contact in either public or private situations at an MSU Extension youth 4-H activity or event.
6. **Be a Team Player.** Work cooperatively with all individuals involved in 4-H programs and activities. Be responsive to the reasonable requests of the person in charge such as volunteers and staff. Respect the integrity of the group and the group’s decisions.
7. **Humane Treatment of Animals.** Treat animals humanely and provide appropriate animal care.
8. **Participate Fully.** Participate in and contribute to planned programs, be on time and follow through on assigned tasks/responsibilities in a manner that fosters the safety, well-being, and quality of the educational experience for self and others.

Have fun!



We are excited to share that we have a new look for our project guidelines!

Finding the guidelines on a mobile device has some extra steps.

Below are some screenshots and directions:

1 – Search MSU Extension Kalamazoo County

2 – Click on website <https://www.canr.msu.edu/kalamazoo/index>

3 – Click on Kalamazoo County 4-H

https://www.canr.msu.edu/kalamazoo/kalamazoo_county_4_h_1/index

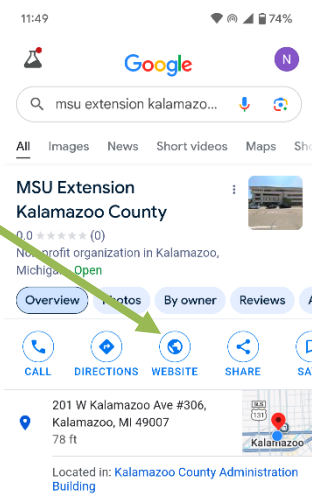
4 – Click on menu at the bottom of your screen which will bring up the next screen

5 – Click on project guidelines

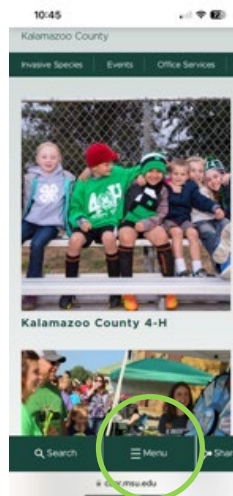
6 – Search for the project that you are looking for. Each set of guidelines is labeled to match the fair book.

For example, the member record book in the fair book is under Department 82. Educational projects.

1 & 2



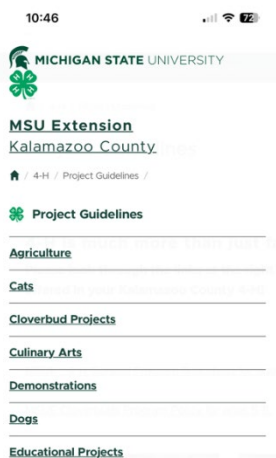
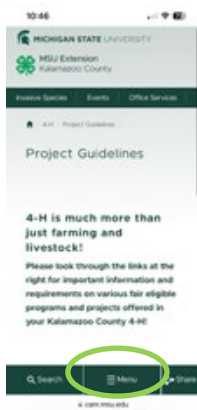
3 & 4



5



6



We are still working on updating some of the guidelines. If they don't have a green border at the top with a list of the project objectives and life skills, they will be updated soon!



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, 2026



Cost \$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.