

You have joined _____ 4-H Club!

Your Club Administrative Leader is: _____

Contact numbers: _____

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I pledge...

**My HEAD to clearer thinking,
My HEART to greater loyalty,
My HANDS to better service,
My HEART to better living,
For my club, my community,
my country and my world.**



Welcome to Lapeer County 4-H!

We are very pleased that you and your family have joined 4-H. We hope that you have fun, make new friends, and gain knowledge in many areas. There are many opportunities that you can take advantage of at the club, county, state, national and even international level. This packet will give you an overview of 4-H.

If you have questions, please call your club administrative leader, your project leader, other experienced families or 4-H staff. We all understand that there is much to learn the first year and would like to help in any way we can.

It is great to have you as part of the Michigan State University Extension Youth Development Program known as 4-H!

Where are the Extension (and 4-H) Offices?

They are at 1800 Imlay City Road, Lapeer, sharing the building with the Health Department. Phone: (810) 667-0343. Office hours are M-F, 8 AM to 12 noon and 1 PM to 5 PM. Voice mail messages may be left after hours or you may email us msue.lapeer@county.msu.edu.

What is 4-H?

The 4-H Program is a volunteer driven organization open to all youth that promotes youth development. It is intended to develop responsibility, cooperation, and teamwork in each of its members. To do this, 4-H works with volunteers to create opportunities for young people to learn life skills, knowledge, and good character. Key words for 4-H are learning, having fun, and making friends. Residence in Lapeer County is not required to be a 4-H member, but 4-H'ers may not enroll in the same project area in more than one county.

What Is Your 4-H Age?

Lapeer County 4-H has programs for youth ages 5 to 19. The 4-H age is determined by what your age is on January 1st of the current 4-H program year. Since the 4-H year goes from September 1st to August 31st, figure your age on the January 1st within that time span.

What Does a 4-H Member Do?

“Learn by doing!” Members attend and participate at club meetings. They can volunteer to help with set up and clean up or bring snacks to meetings. With the help of adult leaders and parents, each member sets the goals for the projects they want to do in their club, and attends educational meetings to learn about and work on their projects. The adult club leaders work with the members to plan meetings and project activities that will help them reach their goals. 4-H'ers can also participate in county, state, and national programs.

Cloverbuds (Ages 5-8)

The Cloverbud program is designed for youth ages 5 to 8. This age group needs to be involved in activities and learning experiences that are appropriate for their age. Children in this age group are full of energy and willing to learn, and need learning situations and materials geared toward their specific abilities, needs and interests.

Research indicates that competition at this age is not developmentally appropriate. It is important that 5- to 8-year-olds be involved in activities where the risk of failure is minimized and the opportunity to experience success is maximized. Participation and learning of the child should be the ultimate goal. When Clover Buds participate in a class at Fair or any educational event, they all receive participation ribbons. They are not ranked or placed in competition.

It is important that a parent or adult or older teen volunteer be with Cloverbud members while they participate in 4-H activities at all levels. When working with animals, 5- and 6-year-olds must be directly assisted, one-on-one, by a parent, guardian or adult volunteer. Seven- and 8-year-olds also require one-on-one assistance with animals, but may be assisted by an older youth volunteer or a parent, guardian, or adult volunteer. Your leader will give you the requirements for your animal species.

Parents, Grandparents, Guardians

You are very important to the 4-H program. You will be providing transportation, funds, time, and encouragement to your children during their 4-H participation. If you are involved right from the beginning, chances are high for a successful 4-H experience. Research shows that children who participate in youth organizations like 4-H are more likely to do well in school and less likely to be involved in negative activities. We encourage you to also share your talents and interests with us so that the best possible programs can be developed for your child.

Your responsibilities are:

- ❖ Attend 4-H meetings with your children.
- ❖ Provide transportation.
- ❖ Show interest in what your children are doing and give them encouragement. Provide any materials and equipment your child may need.
- ❖ Volunteer! Bring snacks, help with cleanup, and you are welcome to help with kids at club activities as long as a leader is present.
- ❖ See that your child not only starts a project, but also completes it. Let your children do their own work; serve only as a guide.
- ❖ Encourage your 4-H'er when he or she succeeds and even more when he or she fails. Help him or her to see progress, not just the end result. Help your 4-H'er display good sportsmanship conduct and appreciate the success of others. In 4-H, a quality, finished project is not the ultimate goal, it is what they learn in the process of working on the project that is most important. The 4-H'ers are the real projects!
- ❖ Support your 4-H leaders. Get to know them. Let them know you appreciate their efforts. Ask them how you can help.
- ❖ Make 4-H a family affair. Get the whole family involved in 4-H events.
- ❖ Remember, the objective of 4-H is to build our children into caring, contributing, citizens and community leaders who have rewarding lives. The way they do their work, complete projects, conduct meetings, and participate in competitive events, etc., will help set work and character patterns and standards for the rest of their lives.

4-H News and Announcements

In keeping up with all the new technology, we have a variety of ways to communicate 4-H news and announcements to all volunteers and families. These include postings on our county webpage at msue.msu.edu/lapeer, "Lapeer County 4-H" Facebook page, email, U.S. mail, and, of course, phone calls. As budgets continue to shrink and new technology improves, our methods of communication may change and we will keep you updated. Please remember we are here to help and welcome your questions and ideas. Call or email us. If you want to talk with us face to face, it's best to make an appointment to be sure that we will be in the office and have time available to meet with you.

Animals

Youth do not have to own an animal to join a 4-H animal project club. They can be a member, take part in meetings and field trips, and learn about the animal. Animal projects may not be done independently. Members must be enrolled in a club or clubs with designated volunteer leaders for each animal specie they raise.

4-H animal projects are either livestock or companion animals. Market livestock animals like cows, goats, poultry, rabbits, steers, sheep, and swine, can be sold at the 4-H Livestock Auction

during the fair (subject to certain restrictions; see the 4-H fair book). Breeding stock are animals that may be kept for breeding and showing year round. Companion animals include horses, dogs, cats, and pocket pets. Pet rabbits may be considered pocket pets.

Recognition

4-H members receive year pins annually for each year of 4-H membership. Pins for the previous year are handed out by club leaders, usually after reenrollment.

4-H members can be nominated by a leader or parent or themselves for County Medals and Awards. Medals recognize accomplishment within a project area. Members are eligible when they have 2 years experience in the area and are between 11-19, 4-H age. There is no limit on the number of medals a member may be nominated for, and there is no limit on the number of medals they may receive in the current 4-H year. A member may receive a County Medal only two times per project area (with at least 3 years in between medal awards) during their 4-H career.

County Awards are: 4-H Ambassador Court, 4-H Key Club, Citizenship Washington Focus (CWF, an educational trip to Washington, D.C.), and National 4-H Congress. Medals for Achievement, Agriculture, Citizenship, and Leadership are treated as Awards. The awards have differing age and achievement requirements which are explained on the nomination forms.

Nominations for County Medals and Awards are due the first Monday in November. The fall newsletter contains a link to our website to download nomination forms. Those receiving County Medals and Awards are honored at the 4-H Spring Achievement evening program, usually held in March.

4-H members may also take part in the State 4-H Awards. Members, age 13-19, with 3 or more years of experience in the project area, complete an on-line application and create a portfolio of their 4-H career, highlighting their achievements in their primary project area. They are due around Feb. 1st each year. Award portfolios are evaluated at the County and Regional levels and, if selected, go on to the State level. The interviews for State Awards take place at MSU in June during Exploration Days and award recipients are announced at the State Awards ceremony.

Younger 4-H'ers (age 11 to 12) may participate in the State 4-H Mark of Excellence Award program by writing an essay on a particular topic related to 4-H. The essay topic changes each year.

Members will have an opportunity to apply for 4-H scholarships at the County and State levels for education beyond high school.

Most importantly, please remember that participation and learning are their own best rewards. Winning ribbons and receiving awards can be fun and exciting, but what really matters is the kind of persons our children become. Cooperation, good character, responsibility, caring, knowing how to learn, leadership, and contributing citizenship are some of the qualities 4-H programs are designed to develop.

Our county recognizes our adult and teen volunteer leaders and clubs at Spring Achievement, usually held in March. Club awards for Best Community Service Project, Educational Program, Group Fun & Social Program are given then, as well as Leader awards and Friend of 4-H awards.

Service and Citizenship

Community service projects are great learning experiences. 4-H clubs are strongly encouraged to do at least one community service project annually. Call 4-H staff for ideas.

Spring Achievement/Style Revue (SA/SR)

Every year in mid-March, Lapeer County 4-H holds an all-day event called Spring Achievement/Style Revue. Members register at no cost in February to bring projects they have completed since fall (no animals) for evaluation by personal interviews with volunteer judges. An A or B ribbon is given for each project based on the member's effort and learning. The A or B ribbons are based on a Danish model, and the ribbons are awarded based on a standard, not competition against other members. Everyone can receive an A or B ribbon if they do a good job based on their age, ability and experience. Clover Buds receive participation ribbons. Projects are displayed with their club member's projects, and the club can decorate their area according to the year's theme. During the evening program, county Medals and Awards are announced, new leadership roles announced, and outfits sewn by members or purchased for a Buymanship project can be modeled.

Fair

The Lapeer County Agricultural Society, a private, non-profit organization, owns the fairgrounds and puts on the fair. The Society cooperates with Lapeer County 4-H in providing 4-H and FFA (Future of Farming in America) classes at the Eastern Michigan State Fair in Imlay City every summer (now July but subject to change). Membership in 4-H or FFA is required to enter projects in the 4-H/FFA classes. There are also open classes that do not require 4-H/FFA membership.

4-H and FFA members must meet membership deadlines for all 4-H entries (now May 31, but subject to change) and ownership deadlines for animal entries. Ownership dates vary by animal. Please check with your leader to make sure you have the correct information. There is a small registration fee for 4-H and FFA members to enter projects in the fair (currently \$10, but could change). In return, they may enter as many projects as the 4-H classes allow. They receive a bracelet that gives them entrance to the fair every day (no rides). 4-H and FFA market animal entries may also be sold in the 4-H/FFA Livestock Auction that takes place on the fairgrounds during fair week, provided they meet weight and health requirements.

The Agriculture Society has invited 4-H to participate, and we are there as partners and guests. The members of the Agriculture Society elect a Board of Directors at the annual meeting in October. The Board of Directors is referred to as the fair board. The fair board hires a fair manager and together they manage the day-to-day business and organize the fair and other events. Membership in the Society is open to any interested adult age 18 and older. The membership fee is \$25.00 annually. Parents are encouraged to join and help support the fair. Please visit www.easternmichiganstatefair.com for entry fees and other important fair information.

Participation in the Fair is not required; it is one of many opportunities available in 4-H. Although there are 4-H classes, it is not a 4-H fair. 4-H'ers may enter projects that were shown in Spring Achievement as well as new projects and livestock. Projects receive A, B or C ribbons which are not competitive against other members but each member's personal best. In addition, higher honors are awarded for Best of Show and Honorable Mention and in animal classes, Grand & Reserve Champions and placings 1-5. All exhibits must remain on display for

the week of fair. Cloverbuds are not ranked nor do they compete. They are individually recognized for participation as is developmentally appropriate for 5 to 8 year olds.

4-H members are expected to create or raise and care for their 4-H projects themselves, with some help and guidance. They must be at the fair to feed, water and clean animal pens during the fair if they have entered animal projects. The volunteer 4-H fair superintendents are not responsible for caring for the animals while at the fair. These are the members' learning projects. They will also be assigned other tasks such as barn duty. The fair requires a lot of work and help from everyone is needed to make it a good learning experience. Please support your child and make sure they take care of their responsibilities. They need you to be with them at the fair for safety, supervision, and encouragement. And while you're there, please jump in and help. Ask the superintendents and club leaders what help they need.

Other Opportunities to Participate or Volunteer

The Proud Equestrian Program therapeutic horseback riding for children with disabilities usually has two 7-week sessions, one in the spring and one in the fall. Youth may join the Helping Hooves 4-H Club to volunteer with the sessions and participate in other activities during the year. Volunteer youths, age 14 and older, adults and horses are needed to help during the riding sessions.

4-H Capitol Experience, a state program on leadership, citizenship and community service, is open to any 4-H member in grades 9-12.

Lapeer County 4-H Council - Members in grades 9-12 may run for a one-year term on the Council by contacting 4-H staff and submitting a brief biography/statement of reasons for running for Council.

Great Lakes Michigan Natural Resources Camp - 4-H Council offers support for members, ages 13-15, who attend the July camp.

Michigan 4-H Youth Conservation Council is a statewide group for youth ages 13-19 who research environmental issues and report to a joint House/Senate Legislative Committee.

4-H Summer Camps - Teens, ages 13 to 19, may apply to be volunteer counselors at the camps: 13 & 14 year olds for day camp and 15 to 19 year olds for overnight camp. Training is required and begins in February. Other leadership opportunities may be available. Call 4-H staff for more information.

International Exchange – 4-H families may be part of hosting a foreign exchange student from Japan and other countries for a short summer term or year-long school term. If interested, contact the 4-H office for more details, or for additional information visit 4h.msue.msu.edu/programs/global_cultural

Opportunities Outside the County

Clubs may arrange to do exchanges with 4-H clubs in other counties or states. Exchange guidelines are available at the Extension office. There are opportunities to host 4-H youth/adult visitors from Japan, Poland, Jamaica, and Belize. Opportunities are also available for older youth to travel in international exchanges. Please contact 4-H staff for more information.

4-H Structure

4-H is the Youth Development Program of Michigan State University Extension (MSUE). MSUE is part of the National Cooperative Extension System. At the National level, Cooperative Extension and 4-H Youth Development are under the oversight of the United States Department of Agriculture. In every state a university houses an Extension department and staffs an office in each county. The Cooperative Extension System was created in 1914; 4-H began even earlier, in 1902. Informal education and information related to agriculture, home horticulture, food and nutrition, small home-based business, parenting, home foreclosure and community and economic development are also available through the Lapeer MSU Extension office.

Extension is a partnership of federal, state, and local government. Lapeer County provides office space, secretarial staff, and supplies. However, **all** funds for 4-H programming must be raised locally.

The 4-H Program in Lapeer County is managed by a 4-H Program Coordinator and one part-time Program Aide. The Lapeer County 4-H Council, an advisory board of adults and teens elected by 4-H volunteers, assists in making decisions that affect 4-H and helps to promote and raise funds for the 4-H Program. County Program Committees bring together volunteers in specific project areas to help plan educational activities at the County level and coordinate participation in County and State events. In Lapeer County, a Livestock Committee meets monthly to provide leadership for all 4-H livestock projects. A Horse Leaders Committee also meets monthly to plan activities and develop guidelines for County Horse Projects. Beef, Dairy, Dogs, Goats, Poultry, Rabbits, Sheep, Swine, Shooting Sports, and Indoor Committees also meet as needed to provide leadership for those project areas. Fair Superintendents are chosen by the Committees to oversee the 4-H Classes at fair. Volunteer Committees also help to plan and coordinate county activities such as Spring Achievement. Parents and teens are welcome to attend these meetings. Program committees at the state level help plan state activities and develop new programs. 4-H leaders, teens, and parents may apply for membership on State Program Committees. Please ask your club leader or call the Extension office for meeting times and locations.

The administrative leader of each club is responsible for ensuring that the club is open to all youth, for enrolling the club and members annually, collecting participation fees, passing on information to club members, seeing that the club follows all 4-H policies, setting limits on the number of members accepted and whether to include Cloverbuds, and working with other leaders and members to make sure the club offers a safe, fun, learning environment. They are volunteers with big hearts who care about kids. Without them 4-H wouldn't exist. They are also human beings and the clubs reflect their personalities. Some are very relaxed; some are very structured. There is a lot of flexibility in 4-H and there are many good ways to do things. If one club doesn't fit your personality, check others. If you have hobbies/interests to share and you'd like to start a new club, contact 4-H staff.

Volunteer Selection Process

Every new volunteer coming into our program must go through our Volunteer Selection Process before they are given clearance to work in an unsupervised situation with our children. They complete an on-line application and background check indicating why they wish to become a part of our organization, as well as personal references. We conduct interviews and do a criminal history check. Parents who wish to volunteer as Indoor Fair Superintendents, club project leaders, or chaperones, must complete the Volunteer Selection Process, which is required if a parent has worked with youth at 4 or more meetings/events. Volunteers are also required to participate in an on-line orientation and training to prepare them for their roles. Ongoing staff support is provided and educational programs are offered at the county and state levels.

Finances

The participation fee is \$20/youth (maximum of \$60 per family). Scholarships are available for financial need if you qualify for free/reduced lunches at school. Please talk to your club leader about this. The money is needed to support the development of new educational programs and curriculum. A portion of the membership fee will be kept in the County to support educational projects and materials at the local level, and the balance will be sent to the State 4-H Director for creating new curriculum and programs so that members will have more opportunities to learn.

There are many costs involved in creating 4-H programs that must be covered locally. To help raise the money needed, the 4-H Program has two annual fundraising auctions. They are usually held in April at the Lapeer Center Building. There is a Friday night auction of celebrity items ranging from autographed pictures of athletes and movie stars to signed books, scripts and other unique items. On Saturday, there is a general merchandise auction where items and certificates donated by individuals and local, state, national and even international businesses and organizations are sold. Clubs are encouraged to donate and to attend. All donations to 4-H are tax deductible. Clubs are also encouraged to donate a club basket to be auctioned. Awards are given for the top baskets.

Clubs and County Committees may also fundraise to support the cost of projects and activities. Permission requests for each fundraiser must be submitted to the 4-H Program Coordinator. Clubs may also decide to collect dues to use for club expenses. Financial accountability is an important part of the process. Each club and committee is required to submit an annual financial report. Clubs are encouraged to make this an opportunity for their members to learn more about managing money.

Educational Materials

There are a variety of low cost educational materials specifically designed for hands-on learning with kids available through 4-H. Visit the Extension office for a catalogue.



The Lapeer County 4-H Year
September 1 through August 31

September/October:

- Fall leader updates
- Annual Fair board meeting
- Club flyers are sent to all elementary schools in Lapeer County to recruit new members

October:

- Annual meeting of the 4-H Council and elections of adult directors. (Teen members are elected at the fair). All volunteers are invited.

November:

- Nominations of teens for county awards
- Nominations of adults for Leader of the Year, Friend of 4-H, Meritorious Service Award and Outstanding Lifetime Award
- Nominations of clubs for best educational, community service, or fun program

January:

- Member award/medal applications due to County office
- County award interviews for members

February:

- Steer ownership date and weigh-in for fair: 1st Saturday
- Training begins for teen camp counselors
- State award applications and Mark of Excellence due Feb. 1.

March:

- Capitol Experience: 4-day 4-H workshop in Lansing on state government
- Spring Achievement/Style Revue

April:

- 4-H Spring and Celebrity Auctions; 1st or 2nd weekend

May:

- Feeder steer ownership date: May 1st
- Market goat ownership date: May 1st. Breeding stock by May 31st.
- Horse members to be enrolled by May 1st if showing in local shows & State show.
- Poultry owned by May 1st.
- Meat rabbits: May 1st. All other rabbits: May 15th.
- Swine ownership date: 1st Fri. or Sat. in May, and weigh-in for fair: 1st Fri. or Sat.
- Sheep ownership date and weigh-in for fair: 3rd Saturday
- General members must be enrolled by May 31st in order to enter 4-H classes in the fair

June:

- 4-H Exploration Days: 3 days at MSU for teens age 11 to 19
- Fair registration

July:

- 4-H overnight, in county, 3-night camp for grades 2 to 6
- 4-H day camp for grades K-1

July/August:

- Eastern Michigan State Fair, usually the last week of July

August:

- Great Lakes Natural Resources Camp