



JANUARY 2026

4-H Family News

Washtenaw County



Happy New Year! Welcome to 2026!

We are excited to kick off another year in Washtenaw County 4-H!

As we begin the new year, we want to remind you that we will no longer be sending 4-H communications to folks who are not enrolled in 4-H online for 2025-26.

Not sure if you enrolled? You can log into your family account at [4-H Online](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS & MEETINGS:

Advisory Council Meeting

January 8th at 7 pm at the MSU Extension Office

Still Projects Committee Meeting

January 13th at 6:30 pm on Zoom

4-H Ambassadors Meeting

January 14th at 6:30 pm

Small Animal/L&D Crossover Committee Meeting

January 22nd at 6:30 pm at the Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds

Horse Board/Association Meeting

January 27th at 6:30/7 pm at the MSU Extension Office

Powering the Future: Exploring Energy Careers in Today's World Career Panel

February 4th from 6:30-8 pm at Pittsfield Library Branch of Ann Arbor District Library, 2359 Oak Valley Dr, Ann Arbor, MI

Livestock & Dairy Committee Meeting

February 12th at 7 pm at the MSU Extension Office

Washtenaw County 4-H Horse Association Tack Sale

Sunday February 22nd from 10 am – 2 pm at the Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds



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COUNTY 4-H NEWS

Save the Date Washtenaw County 4-H Horse Association Tack Sale Feb 22nd



Washtenaw County 4-H Horse Association is once again hosting their annual Tack Sale on Sunday, February 22nd from 10 am – 2 pm at the Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds, 5055 Ann Arbor-Saline Rd, Ann Arbor, MI. This is a great chance to get new & used tack and so much more! A 3\$ donation at the door along with vendor fees will be used to support the Washtenaw County 4-H Horse Association programs and events. [Check out the full flyer here.](#)

First table is \$25 and additional tables are \$15 each. 4-H members get a \$5 discount on tables. The deadline to register and send in payment is February 2nd and a late fee of \$10 per table will be charged for all registrations received after February 2nd. No registrations will be accepted after February 18th. If you are interested in selling, [please complete our online form](#).

If you need assistance completing the online form, please contact Aylssa Couch at aylssacouch@gmail.com or via text at 734-767-4470.

Making the Best Better: 4-H Volunteer Series Across Southeast Michigan

Washtenaw County 4-H is teaming up with our surrounding District 12 counties (Hillsdale, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston, and Monroe) to host a 4-H Volunteer Learning series in person or virtual January – March. Each of the 5 sessions will focus on a different theme and many sessions will include seasoned volunteers who can share their tips, tricks, and perspective.

- Join the Conversation: Tips for Engagement from Seasoned 4-H Leaders: January 29th at 6:30 pm in Monroe
- Cha-ching Making Cents of 4-H Finances: February 12th at 6:30 pm in Our Livingston County MSU Extension Office
- Join the Conversation: Engaging Parents & 4-H Alums in 4-H Experiences and Implementing Shared Leadership in 4-H Clubs: February 26th at 6:30 pm in Washtenaw
- Youth Engagement & Engaging Youth Voice: March 12th at 6:30 pm in Lenawee
- From Clash to Collaboration: Practicing the Art of Conflict Resolution: March 26th at 6:30 pm in Jackson



This series is for all volunteers, whether your brand new to 4-H or have been volunteering for decades. Learn alongside and with your fellow 4-H volunteers.

Register for one or more sessions here: <https://bit.ly/d12volunteer>



COUNTY 4-H NEWS

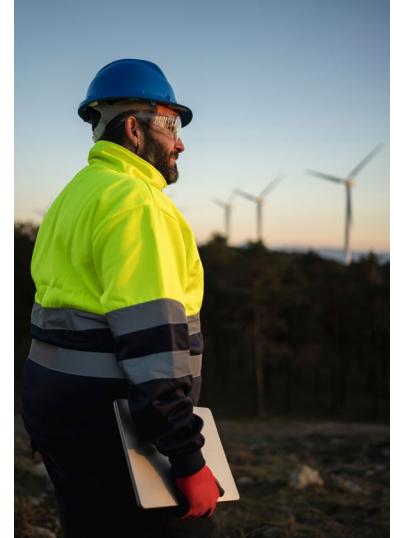
Powering the Future: Exploring Energy Careers in Today's World on Feb 4th

We are excited to partner with Invenergy to host a Washtenaw County 4-H Career Panel exploring current and future energy careers. Our world is changing—and so are the careers shaping its future. As teens begin exploring their career pathways, one exciting area to consider is the energy sector (and it's not just for those interested in STEM!). This interactive panel for teens will be on Wednesday February 4th from 6:15-7:45 pm at the Pittsfield Branch of the Ann Arbor District Library at 2359 Oak Valley Dr, Ann Arbor, MI 48103.

Join Washtenaw County 4-H and Invenergy for an interactive career panel where you'll discover the wide range of roles in the energy industry and learn how cleaner energy is transforming businesses and communities.

Get ready for an engaging discussion where you can:

- Ask questions directly to industry professionals
- Explore diverse career paths in energy
- Find out how to turn your interests into a meaningful profession



Don't miss this chance to learn, connect, and imagine your future in a field that powers the world!

[Sign up for this panel here.](#) Questions? Please contact Jenny Speyer at speyerje@msu.edu.

Meeting Change: Small Animal/L&D Crossover Meeting January 22nd at 6:30 pm



The Small Animal Committee Meeting scheduled for January 22nd will now be a Small Animal and Livestock & Dairy Crossover Meeting rescheduled to 6:30 pm at the Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds to discuss auction related items. All members of these committees and youth who participate in the Washtenaw County 4-H Livestock Auction, showing either Small Animals or Livestock & Dairy animals, are encouraged to attend.
Please note the time change and location change.

Join the Washtenaw County 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl Team!

Do you know a 4-H'er interested in dairy science, dairy production, or veterinary science? Encourage them to join the Dairy Quiz Bowl Team! The group meets the 3rd Monday of each month January through July. They discuss dairy science and dairy production topics. The material is also very relevant to youth interested in vet science. Meetings are at Horning Farms in Manchester and the first meeting is Monday, January 19th. Interested in participating? Please contact Katelyn Packard at klhorning14@gmail.com.





COUNTY 4-H NEWS

Washtenaw County 4-H Ambassadors is Back!



4-H Ambassadors represent and promote 4-H, as well as assist with county-wide activities. A 4-H Ambassador is a motivated individual who seeks to become a leader, mentor and teacher, inspiring positive change in their community.

If you or someone you know between the ages of 12-19 years old would like to participate, please encourage them to come to **our next meeting on Wednesday January 14th at 6:30 pm at the MSU Extension Office**.

This is open to all 4-H members no matter your project, previous experiences, or leadership roles. If you have questions, please contact Jessica Kipfmiller by email or phone at thekipfmillers@aol.com or 734-323-6217.

Washtenaw County 4-H'er Harper Jane Adkins Represents Washtenaw County 4-H at the Michigan Farm Bureau State High School Discussion Meet

Congrats to Harper Jane Adkins of Saline 4-H Farmers Club and Washtenaw County Discussion Team who advanced from the Region II Farm Bureau High School Discussion Meet with two other youth winners to the Michigan State Farm Bureau High School Discussion Meet State competition. This competition was held in Grand Rapids on December 3rd. Harper Jane was proud to represent Washtenaw County 4-H at the State competition, which consisted of FFA, Farm Bureau, and 4-H representatives. This is her second year participating but her first year making it to the state competition. Thank you to 4-H Leader Mandy Rogers who coached the Washtenaw County 4-H team.



Practice Your Skills at Our Interview Workshop on February 19th from 6-8 pm



This workshop, led by MSU Extension Educator Laurie Rivetto, equips teens with the tools to confidently navigate job, internship, or college interviews. Participants will learn key strategies for answering common questions, showcasing their strengths, and making a great first impression. The session includes a hands-on practice opportunity with peer and instructor feedback. We will have mock interviews for practice. This workshop will be held at the MSU Extension Office at 705 N. Zeeb Rd, Ann Arbor, MI. All youth ages 12-19 years old are welcome. You do not need to be a previous 4-H member, but must sign up in 4-H before attending.



COUNTY 4-H NEWS

Register for Spark and Share Summit in Frankenmuth on Saturday March 7th



The Southeast Region of Michigan Association of Extension 4-H Youth Staff invites you to the **2026 Spark and Share Summit** March 7th at Bavarian Inn Lodge and Conference Center.

This 1-day workshop that brings together volunteers and teen leaders to learn new projects and information that they can take back to teach and share in their local 4-H program. Participants can network with other 4-H members and volunteers throughout the day to gain new ideas and reenergize their passion for 4-H. The conference will include selection of up to 4 breakout sessions, lunch, and an opening and closing session.

The conference is scheduled for 1-day, but participants have the option to individually make reservations to spend the weekend.

Registration is \$75 and includes lunch. Washtenaw County 4-H has funds for scholarships, so if you are interested in attending and want a scholarship, please contact Jenny Speyer at speyerje@msu.edu before you register. To find out more or register here: <https://events.anr.msu.edu/SparkShare2026/>

Interested in Joining our Washtenaw County 4-H Hippology and/or Horse Judging Teams?

Washtenaw County 4-H is looking for registered 4-H members (ages 5-19) to join our Hippology Team and/or Horse Judging Team! The Michigan 4-H/FFA State Horse Judging Contest will be on April 11th and the Michigan 4-H State Hippology Contest will be on April 12th in 2026.

Hippology is the study of all horse-related knowledge, including judging, anatomy, breeds, colors, care, equipment, tack, health and welfare, and riding disciplines. Horse Judging is your opportunity to become the judge and place horses based on conformation (halter) and performance (riding).



Both teams compete against other Michigan counties and senior divisions can qualify for the national contest. Cost is roughly \$23 per member, per team. Optional study sessions will start in early February.

If you are interested in participating on both/either teams, please contact Angela Oakman by January 31, 2026 - email: angela_oakman@yahoo.com cell: 734-395-9714 (call or text).

The Practice Horse Judging Workshop (TBD on the date of this event but it is usually in early February) is highly recommend for anyone participating on the Horse Judging team. [Check out the MSUE website for more information.](#)



COUNTY 4-H NEWS

4-H Leader Spotlight: Valisa Bristle, 4-H Leader of the Year 2025

We are lucky to have many tremendous leaders in Washtenaw County 4-H. One of these leaders, Valisa Bristle of Townline Workers 4-H Club, was honored as the Leader of the Year for 2025.

Valisa is ever present in Washtenaw County 4-H as she helps with not only her own club, Townline Workers 4-H Club, but also the 4-H Livestock Auction, Buyers Buffett Committee, Project RED Committee, Livestock and Dairy Committee, the Washtenaw County 4-H Dairy Team, and so much more.

Valisa started volunteering with 4-H in 2017 when her own kids started getting involved in the program. Valisa restarted Townline Workers 8 years ago, after it had been inactive for many years. She has been very devoted to leading and growing the club, which is the second oldest in Washtenaw County.



Members of the club now participate in many livestock species including beef steers, feeder calves, dairy and lambs, and small animal species including goats, rabbits, poultry, cats and dogs, as well as still projects. Valisa has also been a great promoter of 4-H attending our 4-H Open house and helping with Junior Livestock when they had floats in parades and participated in Trunk or Treat events. She has also been a great support for the Washtenaw County 4-H Dairy Team helping chaperone youth at dairy conferences and chaperoning youth at the North American 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl in November 2025. Valisa is also very involved in the Washtenaw County Farm Bureau P&E committee and encourages many youth from 4-H to help at Washtenaw County Farm Bureau events.



As one of her club members, Lydia Avery said, "Mrs. Bristle works hard to Make the Best Better in Washtenaw County 4-H and beyond, and I believe she deserves to be the Leader of the Year."

Thank you so much Valisa for all the work you do for the Washtenaw County 4-H program!

If you have a 4-H leader or volunteers you would like to spotlight, please send in your information to Jenny Speyer, speyerje@msu.edu for the next newsletter.



COUNTY 4-H NEWS

Junior Livestock Promotes 4-H in the Chelsea Hometown Holidays Parade

Member of Junior Livestock participated in the Chelsea Hometown Holiday Parade on December 6th.



Lily LeBlanc of Saline 4-H Farmers Participates in the Michigan State Rabbit Breeders Association Fall Triple Show



Lily LeBlanc of Saline 4-H Farmers, qualified and participated in the Michigan State Rabbit Breeders Association (MSRBA) Fall Triple Show due to her Senior Showmanship win at the Washtenaw County 4-H Youth Show in 2025. She had a great time and brought a number of rabbits to show. Great job Lily!

If you have a 4-H'er passionate about showing rabbits, they can check out attending the [2026 State 4-H Rabbit and Cavy Show and Expo](#) on January 24th in Lansing, Michigan or attend other [MSRBA](#) shows.

Check your 4-H Online Enrollment for the 2025-26 Program Year!

Is your 4-H member enrolled in 4-H Online? After this January newsletter, we will no longer be sending messages to families who were enrolled last year. Not sure if you re-enrolled? You can double check your family account at [4-H Online](#). Enrollment is important not only to get communications but to be an active 4-H member covered by insurance.

If you need help enrolling, contact Amy or Jenny.





COUNTY 4-H NEWS

Science, Animals, and Arts 4-H Club Community Service Project



On December 15th, 2025, 4-H Club: Science, Animals, and Arts went to Brookdale Memory Care Center in Ann Arbor, MI. The kids took part in singing carols to the residents and making Christmas Tree ornaments with them. Some songs they sang were Jingle Bells, Frosty the Snowman, Rudolph the Rednose Reindeer, Little Drummer Boy, and We Wish You a Merry Christmas. For the Christmas Tree ornaments they assisted residents, as well as made some of their own.

When finished they gave the extra ornaments to a nurse and they were hung on the residents' doors. They enjoyed doing this, had lots of fun, and they plan to do something like this again in the future.

Thank you to club reporter, Lillian Harteg, for submitting this article!

Townline Workers 4-H Club made 50 “Lunches of Love”

Townline Workers 4-H Club made 50 “Lunches of Love” for Food Gatherers. This program provides children, families, and individuals in need with ready-to-grab bags with a variety of lunch choices. You can assemble five bags or 50. Townline Workers did the most, purchasing items and then decorating and packing them in bags.

Lunches with Love are a helpful resource for our partner food pantries. If you are interested in donating or participating in this program, find out more information at <http://www.foodgatherers.org/givefood>.



Did your club do a community service project or other fun activity? Send your photos and information to Jenny Speyer speyerje@msu.edu or 734-436-1362 for the next 4-H newsletter.



2026 Calendar of Statewide Animal Science Events

4-H Animal Science Staff

Autumn Converse

4-H Livestock and Veterinary
Science Educator
conver20@msu.edu

David Lindsay

4-H Equine Educator
lindsa75@msu.edu

Kendra Van Order

4-H Dairy Educator
vanorde4@msu.edu

Jermo Reese

4-H Animal Science Program
Instructor
reesejer@msu.edu

Jacob Stieg

4-H Poultry Point of Contact
stieg@msu.edu

Kat VanDouser

4-H Dog Point of Contact
krollkat@msu.edu

Glenda Weiss

4-H Rabbit & Cavy Point of Contact
weissgle@msu.edu

January 24	4-H State Rabbit Show
Feb. 27- March 1	4-H Dairy Conference
March 7	4-H Spring Livestock Workshop
March 14	4-H Horse Communications Contest
March 21-22	Norma Agnew 4-H Hairy Horse Show
March 21	4-H Rabbit and Cavy Workshop
March 22	4-H Rabbit and Cavy Quiz Bowl
April 11	4-H & FFA Horse Judging State Contest
April 12	4-H Hippology State Contest
May 6	4-H & FFA Meats Judging State Contest
June 10-11	Michigan Youth Livestock Judging Camp
June 27	4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl
July 1	4-H & FFA Livestock Judging State Contest
July 6-7 & 8-9	4-H Animal and Veterinary Science Camp
July 13-16	4-H Youth Dairy Days
August 13-16	4-H State Horse Show
September 19	4-H State Dog Show



Scan me for more
information about these
programs!

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January 2026



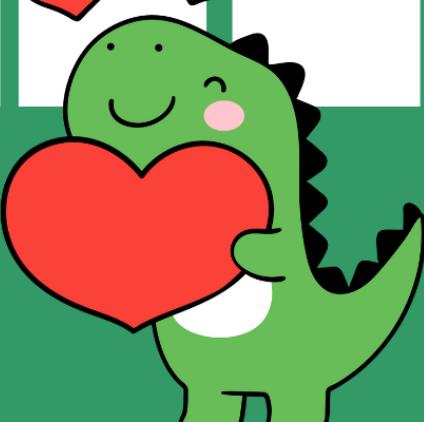
Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thur	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
<h2>Happy New Year!</h2> 						
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
				 7pm - 4-H Advisory Council Meeting		
11	12	13  6:30pm - Still Projects Committee Meeting	14  6:30pm - 4-H Ambassadors Meeting	15	16	17
18	19  First Dairy Quiz Bowl Team Meeting	20	21	22  6:30pm - Small Animal/L&D Crossover Meeting	23	24
25	26	27  6:30/7pm - Horse Association Meeting	28	29	30	31  Last Day to Sign Up for Hippology/ Horse Judging

We will be announcing the dates and times for our 4-H Small Engine SPIN Club soon!



February 2026

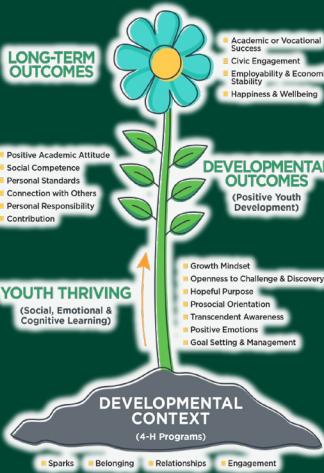


Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thur	Fri	Sat
1	2 	3	4 6:15 pm - Powering the Future Panel at Pittsfield Branch of AADL	5 	6	7
8	9	10	11	12  7pm - Livestock & Dairy Committee Meeting	13	14 
15	16 	17	18	19  6-8pm - Interview Skills Workshop	20	21
22  10 am - 2pm: Horse Asst'n Tack Sale at Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds	23	24 6:30/7pm - Horse Association Meeting 	25	26	27	28 



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
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



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!

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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.