



MICHIGAN 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FAST FACTS

96,000

youth engaged in Michigan 4-H programming in 2021-2022

6,800

individuals volunteered with Michigan 4-H in 2021-2022

PRIORITY

A R E A S

4-H Youth Development is a program of Michigan State University Extension. Last year, more than 100,000 Michigan young people participate in 4-H through various activities, clubs, groups, programs and events. As they engage in these unique learning experiences, 4-H'ers explore their passions and interests while growing confidence, leadership skills and a sense of responsibility.

Michigan 4-H youth are supported by caring volunteers who give their time in a variety of ways – as club or group leaders, mentors, chaperones, professional skills trainers and more!

For more information about Michigan 4-H, visit our website or connect with your county 4-H program by visiting extension.msu.edu/county.

IMPACTS

In the 2021-2022 program year, 100,000 youth engaged in 4-H programming with:



75,500

experiences related to science, engineering and technology.



26,000

experiences related to citizenship, leadership, civic engagement, community service, communication and expressive arts.



66,000

experiences related to food, nutrition, health and personal safety.

From the farms to the towns, and from the suburbs to the cities, 4-H youth come from every corner of the state:



39%

are rural nonfarm residents or come from towns of less than 10,000 people.



35%

live in cities and suburbs of more than 50,000 people.



14%

live in towns and cities of 10,000 to 50,000 people.



12%

live on farms.

“ 4-H has given me so much. There are things that I have had the opportunity to experience and learn that I never would have if I was not in the program. Both leaders and members have helped to shape my life into what it is today and I am forever grateful. ”

-Michigan 4-H youth participant



LESSONS FOR A LIFETIME

As she wrapped up her senior year of high school in Alger County, 17-year-old Alexzandria reflected on her 4-H experience. After five years of 4-H, taking part in a variety of cooking, leadership, natural resource and special interest (SPIN) programs, Alexzandria shared her thoughts in her own words:

"I have had the privilege of being a member of Alger County 4-H for the past five years. This inspiring organization has changed my life in more ways than I could ever count. Most importantly it has helped me overcome my fears, taught me how to be myself, and helped me become prepared for life after graduation.

When I first joined 4-H, I was a shy, young teen who was scared of everything and anything new. Just the act of joining 4-H scared me, even though I had seen so many in my class affiliate themselves with its many clubs. However, when I finally mustered up the courage to join the small cooking SPIN club, I immediately knew I had to at least try to be more involved. At first, it was just a new SPIN club here and there, but by my third year in 4-H I was given the opportunity to try the Teen Leadership Wilderness Hike.

At first, I was adamant that I could not do it. But after some convincing, I agreed to go and had the time of my life. The hike was the first time in my young adult life that I had been independent and felt capable of doing anything. After I got home, I realized that if I could backpack through 40 miles of backwoods, then I had no right to be scared to try new things. Since the hike, I have conquered many fears including that of heights, meeting new people, and being different.

As I said, I have been in 4-H for five years. This means I joined at quite possibly the most awkward time of a young adult's life... also known as eighth grade. It was a time of life where all you wanted was to fit in and be "normal." However, I was a nerdy, book-reading, theater kid in a school that seemed full of athletic popular kids. At my 4-H clubs, I was able to be myself and not worry about being seen as lame or an outcast.



Slowly this attitude permeated everyday life too, instead of just when I was at club meetings. The friends I made at the clubs also made their way into everyday life. Suddenly, I had friends who liked the same things as me and made me feel less awkward for wanting to be the dorky girl I am.

This support that 4-H introduced me to is one of the main reasons that I am exactly who I want to be today.

As I take my next step into adulthood, I will use the lessons that 4-H has given me and utilize them to be more prepared. I will use the team-building seminars that I attended through National 4-H Congress to help guide my way through new groups of people at college. I will use the endurance and independence I discovered during the Teen Leadership Wilderness Hikes to help adjust to living alone. Finally, I will use the kindness and compassion that everyone in 4-H has shown me to remember what really matters at the end of the day.

4-H has affected my life in so many ways that any action I take in the future will be influenced in part by what I have learned. I am eternally grateful for 4-H teaching me how to overcome my fears, become my own unique person, and by giving me the skills and lessons I need in order to successfully transition into the next phase of my life."

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