



## Leadership & Civic Engagement

# DEVELOPING CIVICALLY ENGAGED LEADERS

In 2015, the state's \$56.6 million investment in MSU AgBioResearch and MSU Extension generated more than \$1 billion for Michigan residents. Every dollar the state invested in AgBioResearch and MSU Extension leveraged an additional \$2.59 in federal funds and external contracts, grants and other revenues, including nearly \$1.3 million leveraged by MSU Extension children and youth programs alone. As a result, MSU Extension and MSU AgBioResearch are able to serve Michigan residents with a benefit/cost ratio of 18:1.

These cost benefits are huge, but they are not the only benefits that MSU Extension brings to the state. Through MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development, more than 200,000 youth learn lifelong skills, develop leadership abilities and discover the value of community service. In addition, MSU Extension early childhood education programs prepare thousands of Michigan's youngest children for school success.

**"We are the future so [let's] make it a good one!"**

- Youth participant in 4-H National Congress



## THE ISSUE

In today's globally connected world, youth face a number of challenges that will affect their families, communities and future careers. Unfortunately, too many of these young people are not engaged in addressing these critical issues, nor are they prepared with the skills needed to make a difference. We must do more to build active and informed residents who have the ability and desire to make an impact in today's multicultural world. These individuals should not only be prepared to respond to emerging issues through civic engagement and volunteerism, but also be ready to step up as leaders as well as understand and respect the culture of others.

## MSU EXTENSION ACTION

Michigan State University (MSU) Extension is helping to develop youth as current and future leaders by providing youth programs that instill young people with the knowledge and skills to become positive agents of change. These programs focus on leadership development, civic education and engagement, global citizenship and cultural competencies that help youth build a commitment to civic service and responsibility while cultivating their capacity to lead as members of a multicultural world. In 2015, nearly 68,000 Michigan youth participated in 4-H activities related to civic engagement, community service and leadership development. In addition, more than 10,000 individuals were engaged in trainings, workshops and events specifically designed to increase leadership, civic engagement and cultural competencies.

## THE IMPACT

Through experiences and trainings that teach youth how to run a meeting, deal with conflict, understand the public policy process, understand new cultures, work collaboratively with people of various leadership styles and personalities, and more, MSU Extension 4-H is building current and future leaders who contribute to Michigan at state, county and local levels. Of those youth surveyed:



- 98 percent felt prepared to work toward change in their communities: a 39 percent increase from before their 4-H experience.
- 94 percent indicated they had learned things that would help them make a difference in their communities: a 38 percent increase from before their 4-H experience.
- 92 percent reported they could stand up for things that were important to them: a 13 percent increase from before their 4-H experience.
- 88 percent agreed they could work things out when others didn't agree with them: a 24 percent increase from before their 4-H experience.
- 86 percent indicated they could run a meeting: a 34 percent increase from before their 4-H experience.
- 76 percent reported they had communication skills to address conflict effectively: a 29 percent increase from before their 4-H experience.

In addition to helping youth develop these important civic engagement and leadership competencies, MSU Extension also provided 4-H'ers with the opportunity to explore new cultures through innovative programs such as the 4-H China Art Exchange and International Exchange programs. Of program participants reporting:

- 100 percent of China Art Exchange youth knew and appreciated their own culture, as well as the culture of others.
- 94 percent of exchange program participants knew how to work through differences with someone from another culture: an increase of 13 percent from before their 4-H experience.

**“[This program] helped me to better understand that all it takes is one small voice to impact others and make a difference.”**

- 4-H leadership and civic engagement participant



### 4-H Youth Inspired to Address World Hunger

In 2015, Michigan 4-H and MSU Extension hosted the first World Food Prize Michigan Youth Institute. This innovative program seeks to inspire and prepare the next generation of global leaders to end world hunger by bringing youth together to discuss their ideas about poverty and global food security while interacting with leading researchers and experts in the field. Top participants in the event were asked to represent Michigan at the World Food Prize Global Youth Institute.

Francine Barchett of Berrien County, who attended both events, found the experiences life changing.

"It's amazing how such important and powerful people of different backgrounds come together to discuss food security and honor those who embrace it to the fullest. How humble they are, and how much they see eye to eye! I will never forget such an experience. I can't wait to see what I can do to empower my community with the tools I've learned," Barchett said.