



## DEVELOPING CIVICALLY ENGAGED LEADERS

**32,400**

Michigan 4-H youth experiences related to citizenship, leadership, civic engagement, community service communication and arts in 2019-2020

**217**

Michigan 4-H citizenship, leadership, cultural education and communication programs offered through more than 460 sessions in 2020

## PRIORITY

### A R E A S

Michigan State University Extension's 4-H Youth Development is helping to develop youth as current and future leaders by providing 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.**
- **Cultural competency.**

These experiences and trainings teach youth how to run a meeting, deal with conflict, understand the public policy process, understand other cultures, work collaboratively with people of various leadership styles and personalities, and much more.

For more information about MSU Extension's leadership and civic engagement programs and resources, contact [4Hleadership@msu.edu](mailto:4Hleadership@msu.edu) or visit us online.

## IMPACTS

As a result of Michigan 4-H leadership and civic engagement activities, thousands of Michigan youth build a commitment to civic service, cultivate the capacity to lead in a multicultural world and develop skills to positively contribute to their communities, country and world. A 10-year longitudinal study conducted by Tufts University found that compared to their non-4-H peers, 4-H youth are:



**4X**

4 times more likely to make contributions to their communities.



**2X**

2 times more likely to be civically active.



**2X**

2 times more likely to make healthier choices.

**“ I have always known that young people can make an important difference, but I never really had the chance to do so myself until I joined the Youth Commission [a 4-H program]. I have learned that while each of us is a powerful individual, our greatest power lies in our ability to unite for the good of our community. ”**

—Youth participant in Michigan 4-H leadership and civic engagement programs



## TEEN LEADERS BRING HOLIDAY CHEER TO HOUGHTON COUNTY SENIORS



Service is a significant component of many 4-H experiences and every 4-H'er commits their hands to larger service each time they recite the 4-H pledge. But for one club in Houghton County, service is the central mission. The Houghton County 4-H Service Club consists of teen leaders from across the county who seek out, support and lead service projects in the community.

Despite the many challenges that 2020 brought, the teen leaders in the Houghton County 4-H Service Club did not let the pandemic stop their desire to serve. The group got together virtually to brainstorm community service projects that could be done remotely or online. Collectively, the group decided to support elderly in the community who had become increasingly isolated due to COVID-19 concerns. The result was a countywide service project that individual clubs were encouraged to take part in to make a difference during the holidays.

As part of the challenge, the group created an online record of what each club was doing to reduce duplicate projects. The youth also presented to the local 4-H council and secured funds that could be used locally to support service efforts. As a result of their leadership and hard work from 4-H'ers across the county:

- 54 wreaths were created for the Portage Point nursing home in Hancock.
- 150 cards were made and mailed to the Jacobetti Home for Veterans in Marquette.
- 41 holiday magnets were made and distributed to two senior centers in Lake Linden.
- Door hangings were created for Toivola seniors.
- Ornaments were made for The Bluffs retirement community in Houghton.

## ADDRESSING NEW CHALLENGES IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

As the COVID-19 pandemic gripped the world, adults were not the only ones struggling to adjust to the new and ever-changing normal. Michigan youth found themselves wondering about the long- and short-term impacts of the global pandemic while facing a new set of challenges without their normal in-person supports. To help teens process their thoughts and build an online support network, MSU Extension launched "Capturing our New Normal: A Michigan Teen Photo Project."



Photo credit: Addison Ryan.

This online program hosted in May 2020 brought youth ages 13-19 together to build new friendships and talk about the ways the novel coronavirus had and was impacting their daily lives with other teens

and supportive adults. As they shared their experiences, perspectives, opinions and ideas, the youth also learned photography skills and actively took photos to document the "new normal" in their communities.

"This program gave me the opportunity to see what others were going through during this time," said one participant. "It gave me something to look forward to each week."

At the end of the month-long program, youth were given the choice of having their photos included in an online photo gallery as a means of educating others and advocating for positive changes in communities. In addition, participants reported:

- 88% were able to build new relationships and friendships with youth across the state.
- 100% agreed they were supported by teens and adults.