



MARCH 2026

4-H Family News

Mecosta County



Spring Break SPIN Clubs are in the works!

Hanging out at home for spring break and looking for something to do? Come join us for some arts, crafts, baking, science fun.

Each afternoon at the MSU Extension 4-H office we will host 2 activity sessions. One geared for ages 9 and under and one for ages 10 and up.

More info & schedule to come!

Text or email Karen Ripke to register.



CONTACT US

Karen Ripke

4-H Program Coordinator

Mecosta County Services Building
14485 Northland Dr.
Big Rapids, MI 49307

PHONE & EMAIL:

(231) 592-0792

(231) 598-1036 (text)

rinkekar@msu.edu
WEBSITE:

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/mecosta/>

General email:

MSUE.Mecosta@msu.edu

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Quentin Tyler, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned.



Crafty Clovers had a great turnout for our first 2 sessions. We made string art Valentine's cards and started on our wing mural for the fair. Join us this month on Monday, March 30th. All ages are welcome including non-4-H members.

Please RSVP to Karen so we have enough supplies!

Mecosta County 4-H webpage

Since the Mecosta County Fair website is getting a remodel, we have added a fair landing page on the Mecosta County 4-H website. This page will have forms you may need for the 2026 Fair.

Currently available:

- Youth livestock schedule
- Horse handbook
- Horse project books
- Livestock record books
- Community Service/Ed logs

Coming soon:

- Swine/goat/sheep Registrations
- Exhibit building info

Check it out at: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/mecosta/4-h/4-h-council>



STATEWIDE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

*Preparing youth
to be
Beyond Ready*



**Beyond
Ready**

4-H's approach to readiness begins with participation in high-quality positive youth development programs.

4-H has historically helped young people prepare for work and life through the development of competencies, skills and tangible assets, resulting in youth who are healthy, productive and engaged.

The complex landscape youth face today calls us to go a step further in preparing them to navigate their readiness pathway during and after their 4-H experience.

Is your club intentionally preparing youth to be Beyond Ready for the changing world? Watch here for tips to use with your club.

#BeyondReady

March 4: Adulting 101- Sleep Wellness *(Online)*

Join us to learn quick, practical tips to boost your energy, adjust to daylight savings change and focus better for exam season. Better sleep starts here — don't miss it!

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/events/adulting-101-sleep-wellness>

March 10: 4-H Give Green Day *(Online)*

Help us reach our goal of raising \$5,000 in a 24-hour period on Give Green Day to support learning experiences for Michigan 4-H youth. www.canr.msu.edu/events/4h-give-green-day

March 10: 4-H Wild Spartans *(Online)*

The Lands Has a Story to Tell – But Are We Listening? Explore the stories that nature and humans weave with Zach Wilson, forest ecologist for the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission. Learn about his career & education and ask questions via a live Q&A. Suited for youth ages 12-19.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/4-h-wild-spartans-march

March 14: 4-H Innovating the Future of Farming: Seed to Store (Mt. Pleasant)

Isabella County 4-H Agriculture Learning Series presents: Seed to Store. Learn about seed varieties and how they differ, nutrient management, improving crop performance & long-term soil sustainability with Riley Turner. Free program, register by March 11th.

<https://forms.office.com/r/d7tFw9RaLp>

March 14: 4-H Youth Equine Communications Contest *(Anthony Hall, MSU)*

Interested in Horses and love talking about them? Build and strengthen youth skills in presentation and public speaking at the Equine Communications contest

https://www.canr.msu.edu/horses_ponies/registration-information

April 1: Smart Money Missions Goosechase Game *(Everywhere)*

This fun money management scavenger hunt game is played on the Goosechase app and is open to youth 13-19 years old residing in Michigan.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/smart-money-missions

April 12: Michigan 4-H State Hippology Contest *(Farm Bureau Pavilion at MSU)*

The annual Michigan 4-H Hippology Contest allows youth in horse and pony projects to test their equine knowledge. <https://www.canr.msu.edu/events/2026-michigan-4-h-state-hippology-contest>





STATEWIDE 4-H NEWS

Open your home to a student with the 4-H International Exchange Program!

Invite an international youth (ages 12-17 years) or adult chaperone into your home and share an American experience! Michigan 4-H is looking for host families interested in opening their homes and hearts this summer. Consider sharing the clover and giving a lucky Japanese youth and your family the experience of a lifetime!

The Japanese delegation will arrive in Grand Rapids mid-July and depart mid-August, meeting their hosts for a 3.5-week stay. A host family must complete the States' 4-H International Exchange Programs online application, have a youth to match as a host brother/sister (within three years of age) be Michigan 4-H adult Gold volunteers, and participate in an interview and home visit process.



Online applications to host can be found at: <https://www.states4hexchange.org/apply/host/>. For more information, contact Michigan 4-H International Exchange Program Coordinator Jan Brinn brinn@msu.edu.

Michigan 4-H Day with the Detroit Tigers



Get your tickets for Michigan 4-H Day with the Detroit Tigers

Join Michigan 4-H and MSU Extension for a fun day at Comerica Park to watch the Detroit Tigers take on the Miami Marlins on Sunday, April 12. Michigan 4-H will be honored as the Group Charity of the Game. To celebrate, 4-H youth, volunteers, staff and their families will enjoy a discounted ticket to the game, as well as:

- Access to a pre-game, on-field opportunity. Michigan 4-H youth are invited to take a lap around the warning track of Comerica Park before the game.
- A portion of each ticket sold donated to Michigan 4-H.

There are several ticketing options available this year, in three main locations, ranging in price from \$33-54. In addition, each ticket purchased through the Michigan 4-H link will have the opportunity to purchase an exclusive co-branded Michigan 4-H and Detroit

Tigers bucket hat (while supplies last). Hats can only be purchased by purchasing a ticket through the Michigan 4-H link; however, there is an option to buy tickets without the purchase of a hat.

Learn more at www.canr.msu.edu/events/michigan-4-h-day-with-the-detroit-tigers.

4-H Youth in Action Program applications open

Apply now for the 2027 4-H Youth in Action Awards! This program recognizes four confident young leaders with diverse backgrounds and unique perspectives who are making a difference in their communities. Winners will have the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to share their stories along with unforgettable experiences, celebration on the national stage, recognition in the media and a \$5,000 college scholarship.

This opportunity is open to youth ages 14-19. The deadline to apply is April 13. Learn more and apply at <https://4-h.org/programs/4-h-youth-in-action-program/>.



COUNTY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Roping & Obstacle Course R.O.C Practice (Morley Stanwood High café) ..	3-15-26
Jr. Fair board educational session 6pm MSU Extension office	3-16-2026
Jr. Fair board Meeting 7pm MSU Extension office	3-16-2026
Paws and Pals Dog club meeting (6:30 MSU office No dogs)	3-18-26
Craft SPIN Club (part of Spring Break program).....	3-30-2026
Spring Break Program	Week of 3-30
Fair Entry deadline: swine, feeders, sheep & goats.....	4 -1-2026
Feeder, Sheep and Goat Weigh-in (Fairgrounds).....	4-11-2026
Swine registration deadline.....	4-13-2026
Craft SPIN Club	4-20-2026
Ducks and broilers: you should have by.....	May 18 th
Horse Record books deadline.....	6-1-2026
4-H Exploration Days (MSU).....	June 24-26
Pre-Fair Meeting 7pm (Fairgrounds).....	6-29-2026
Record books, Community service/educational forms due	
Last day for Fair Entry registration for showing animals	
Jr. Fair board educational session (6pm MSU Extension office).....	5-18-2026
Jr. Fair board Meeting 7pm MSU Extension office)	5-18-2026
Conservation program (more info coming soon)	5-26-2026
Mecosta County Fair.....	July 12-19, 2026

Isabella County 4-H

4-H AGRICULTURE LEARNING SERIES

INNOVATING THE FUTURE OF FARMING

What You'll Learn

- Learn the basics of ruminant nutrition, anatomy, common diseases, and explore stomach compartments through hands-on activities.
- Discover the journey of agriculture from Seed to Store—how plants grow, are harvested, and become the products we use every day.
- Understand the importance of pollination in food production and how bees and other pollinators support agriculture.
- Explore AI in Livestock and how technology is improving animal health, feeding management, and modern farming practices.

March: Seed to Store

April: Pollination Presentation

MARCH 14TH

11:30AM-1:30PM

Free Registration
Open to all

Isabella County Commission on Aging
2200 S Lincoln Rd Mt Pleasant MI 48858

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, or veteran status.

2026 Calendar of Statewide MI 4-H Livestock & Veterinary Science Events

March 7	4-H Spring Livestock Workshop
May 13	4-H & FFA Meats Judging State Contest
June 16-17	Michigan Youth Livestock Judging Camp
July 1	4-H & FFA Livestock Judging State Contest
July 6-7 & 8-9	4-H Animal & Veterinary Science Camp

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension



Join Us Online

WILD SPARTANS

SCIENCE • RESEARCH • CAREERS • CONSERVATION

"THE LAND HAS A STORY TO TELL - BUT ARE WE LISTENING?"

WITH ZACH WILSON
FOREST ECOLOGIST, GREAT LAKES INDIAN FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

March 10 | 6:30 PM EST
Registration required:
<https://events.anr.msu.edu/WildSpartansSeriesFall2025Spring2026/>

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension



COUNTY 4-H NEWS

Scholarship Opportunities (click on the links for more info)

- **MDARD Michigan Youth Livestock Scholarship Fund:** Scholarships for HS seniors and recent grads. <https://www.michigan.gov/mdard/animals/exhibitions/mylsf>
- **Michigan Pork Producers:** Scholarships to HS seniors and those already attending college pursuing a career in agriculture. Check it them out for more information! <https://www.mipork.org/scholarships/>
- **GreenStone Scholarship Program,** Supporting students with a passion for agriculture, natural resources or timber-related fields. <https://www.greenstonefcs.com/community/scholarships>
- **Michigan 4-H Foundation Scholarships:** <https://mi4hfdtn.org/grants-scholarships/4-h-scholarships/>
- **Mecosta County Foundation Scholarships:** Fill out one application for over 15 scholarship opportunities https://facommunityfoundation.org/home/scholarships/our-scholarships-awards/scholarships-available/?fwp_scholarships=mecosta-county
- **District 4-H Scholarship** (multi-county, it is listed under Osceola County info): https://facommunityfoundation.org/home/scholarships/our-scholarships-awards/scholarships-available/?fwp_scholarships=osceola-county
- **Michigan Soybean Association:** <https://www.misoy.org/scholarship.html>
- **Agro business scholarships:** <https://www.westmiworks.org/atcscholarship/>
- **MFB 4-H Excellence In Agriculture Award:** <https://mi4hfdtn.org/grants-scholarships/mfb-4-h-excellence-in-agriculture-award/>



Proud Equestrian Program (PEP): Volunteers needed

Mecosta Osceola PEP is a therapeutic horseback riding program for people with special needs helping to improve balance, coordination, posture and muscle tone.

PEP volunteers are young people and adults who assist riders as needed while they develop skills. You do not need to know anything about horses to be a volunteer.

PEP meets Tuesday evenings April 28-June 9th.

For info or to volunteer contact Karen ripkekar@msu.edu or text 231-598-1036.



Hey 10 & 11 year olds!! Apply for the 4-H Mark of Excellence Award

Contestants create either a video or a journal reflection focusing around the theme of “4-H Beyond Ready...”

Open to 4-H youth ages 10-11.

Two winners will be selected to represent Mecosta County.

Details can be found on page 4 of the link below

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/.../4-h.../Youth-Recognition/index>

Questions? Contact Karen

DEADLINE MAY 1st





Volunteer Corner



Know an outstanding Michigan 4-H ag volunteer? Nominate them for the Michigan Farm Bureau 4-H Excellence in Ag Award. Honorees will designate a \$1,000 grant to a 4-H agricultural program of their choice and are recognized by both Michigan 4-H and Michigan Farm Bureau.

More info: <https://mi4hfdtn.org/.../mfb-4-h-excellence-in-.../>

Michigan 4-H Volunteer Upcoming Webinars

March 25: Michigan 4-H Volunteer Webinar – Using AI Responsibly in 4-H Online

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming the way we learn, work and interact. Learn what AI is, how it impacts youth development, and how to use it responsibly within 4-H. Explore MSU Extension guidance, discuss ethical considerations, and share tips for supporting youth navigating technology. www.canr.msu.edu/events/michigan-4-h-volunteer-webinar-from-sparks-to-skills-using-ai-responsibly-in-4-h

Outdoor Education Workshop for Volunteers

Calling all 4-H volunteers!

Join us for an unforgettable weekend at Camp Newaygo, April 25–26, 2026, for the 4-H Outdoor Education Workshop.

Choose your adventure:

- Project Wild Certification – Become certified to teach using Michigan DNR’s Project Wild curriculum.
- Outdoor Skills – Learn hands-on techniques for hiking, outdoor cooking, fire-building, shelter-making, and more!



Optional early arrival: Friday, April 24

Register today: <https://events.anr.msu.edu/4HOutdoorEd2026/>

Welcome New Volunteers!

Erica Cramer
Morley Stanwood Critter Club

Heather Salas
MSU Extension support to 4-H

We are looking for new and current volunteers to share skills and knowledge with Mecosta 4-H youth!

- Showmanship clinics
- Great conversations with buyers
- Leatherworking
- Robotics
- Photography
- CPR and First Aid
- And more!



All Things Horses & Roping

Roping and Obstacle Course Program (R.O.C)

Try your hand at roping!! The Mecosta 4-H R.O.C is starting up their season. Next meeting is March 15th 3pm at the Morley Stanwood High School Cafeteria. Weather you want to improve your skills or try something new!

- R.O.C is open to all ages.
- You don't need to know anything about roping we will teach you.
- No horse, no problem! Join for ground roping and tying

Questions? Contact: Amy barbwireranch@yahoo.com or Laura lauracole2@yahoo.com

**MECOSTA COUNTY 4-H
ROPING AND OBSTACLE
COURSE PROGRAM**

R.O.C.

FIRST PRACTICE
3pm
Sunday,
February 22,
2026

SIGN UP BY
3pm
Sunday,
March 15,
2026

First two practices will be at the Morley Stanwood High School Cafeteria.

If you're enrolled in a Michigan 4-H horse project, you can participate by logging your trail rides between August 1 and July 31.

Whether you enjoy quiet wooded paths or group trail adventures, every mile counts. The top 5 Junior and top 5 Senior riders will be recognized at the Michigan 4-H State Horse Show.

Start logging your rides today and be part of this statewide celebration of trail riding:

https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bOyn5zWORdTsYfY

MICHIGAN STATEWIDE 4-H TRAIL RIDING PROGRAM

Questions and Answers

- What is this program:**
 - o Recognize youth who participate in trail riding as part of their 4-H horse project.
- Who Can Participate:**
 - o Any youth enrolled in a 4-H horse project member in Michigan.
- What are the requirements to log my hours:**
 - o Trail location, date, hours ridden, miles, type of ride
 - o Trail type classes or arena riding do not count towards these hours
 - o Miles will accrue from August 1st thru the following July 31st.
- Recognition:**
 - o Top five Junior and Senior participants awarded at the Michigan 4-H State Horse Show.
- How do I Record my Rides:**
 - o Use this link to record your rides: https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bOyn5zWORdTsYfY

QUESTIONS?
CONTACT JORDAN AT HEWITTJ8@MSU.EDU
OR DAVID AT LINDSA75@MSU.EDU

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, marital origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, or veteran status.

Michigan 4-H Youth Equine Communications Contest
Saturday, March 14, 2026

Interested in horses and love talking about them? Join us! All Equine related topics are welcome!

- Public Speaking
- Individual Presentations
- Team Presentations

Registration is open now!
https://www.canr.msu.edu/horses_ponies/registration-information

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension **Beyond Ready**

The Michigan 4-H Equine Communications Contest is back for 2026! Historically, this contest used to be a part of the 4-H Horse Jamboree Weekend. Thanks to a few volunteers this contest is back in full form!

Who: Youths aged 5-19 who have an interest in horses!

What: Opportunities for public speaking, individual presentations, and team presentations

When: Saturday, March 14, 2026, at 10am and check-in starts at 9:30am

Where: Anthony Hall on campus at Michigan State University (474 S. Shaw Lane East Lansing, MI 48824)

How: Register at

https://www.canr.msu.edu/horses_ponies/registration-information

Registration closes on March 11, 2026



Make the Most of Your Market Animal Project

Program Summary

Designed for youth ages 8-19, this engaging webinar series covers everything you need to succeed at livestock auctions. From marketing and communication to record keeping, goal setting, and understanding break-even points, each session equips participants with the skills to maximize their market potential.

Webinar Dates and Titles

Tuesdays, 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm

- April 21: Goal Getters
- April 28: Talk the Talk
- May 5: Marketing Mastery
- May 12: Records to Riches
- May 19: From Pitch to Payment



SCAN ME

Registration Information

FREE on Zoom

<https://pears.io/events/msuext/4293/>

Contact

Dave Radloff -
radloff@msu.edu

Janice Zerbe -
rajzerj@msu.edu

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Quentin Tyler, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned.

Follow us on Social Media @ 4HCareers





April 11, 2026 4-H and FFA State Horse Judging Contest

In the state horse judging contest, participants can demonstrate their equine evaluation and selection skills, as well as improve their communication and decision-making skills. This contest will include both individual and team competition for 4-H and FFA members. There are opportunities for the top three senior horse judging teams to go on to compete at the National 4-H level.

More info: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/events/4-h-and-ffa-state-horse-judging-contest>

Michigan Youth Livestock Judging Camp (June 16-17, 2026)

This overnight camp experience is for **ages 12-19 (as of 1-1-26)** who are interested in taking a deep dive into livestock judging and sharpening their judging skills!

Co-hosted by Michigan 4-H and the MSU Collegiate Livestock Judging Team. Activities will include reasons training, numerous practice classes, one-on-one coaching in swine, small ruminants, and cattle, and a mock contest.

During the mock contest, coaches of county 4-H and FFA teams are welcome to join for a coaches training session. Space is limited, and pre-registration is required.

More info: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/events/michigan-youth-livestock-judging-camp-2026>



GALS Girls on outdoor Adventure for Leadership and Science



Are you interested in exploring and learning science in the outdoors?

Where:
Starting and ending at Kellogg Biological Station Hickory Corners, MI

When:
July 25th- August 8th, 2026

Cost:
FREE

Apply here:
galsmi.weebly.com
(or scan QR code)

Apply to GALS!
GALS is a **free** summer science program for high school students to learn science hands-on while overnight camping and backpacking through the Michigan wilderness.

Through this journey, you will learn about the ecology, biology, and geology of your surroundings while honing leadership and scientific research skills.

GALS was created to increase opportunities for students who identify as female or gender nonconforming, students of color, students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, and other groups historically excluded in fields of science, technology, engineering, and math.

All are welcome to apply!



Registration is now OPEN for 4-H Great Lakes and Natural Resources Camp! Spend the week at Camp Chickagami on beautiful Lake Esau. Learn about the Great Lakes and Michigan's natural resources through experiential learning opportunities, enjoy recreational sessions including swimming, kayaking, archery, outdoor skills, campfires, and more! Camp is open to youth ages 13-15. Learn more and register at https://www.canr.msu.edu/4_h_great_lake_s_natural.../

