Joining

How do you join 4-H?

It's a powerful thing, when kids team up with adults to learn new skills, improve their communities, explore the wonders of today's world, prepare for tomorrow's opportunities and have fun.

> 4-H brings people together for the fun of learning by doing, sharing and working toward common goals, and helping kids take leadership for their lives and the decisions they make.
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> 4-H is when boys and girls develop into responsible, caring citizens. It's where families can experience hands-on activities in many interest areas. It's where people can expand their horizons.
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> 4-H is where kids and adults come together and share and expand their talents and interests.

Contact the Kalamazoo Michigan State University Extension 4-H office at 269-383-8830 or msue.kalamazoo@county.msu.edu

The Extension staff can guide you to 4-H groups and 4-H opportunities in your community.

What types of activities can youth participate in through 4-H?

There are over 100 projects in 4-H to choose from. A few of these are
Animal Science, Archery, Beef, Bird Study, Fashion and Modeling, Cake Decorating, Candy Making, Ceramics, Calligraphy, Clothing Construction, Collections, Creative Writing, Crafts, Dairy, Dairy Feeder Calves, Public Speaking, Dogs, Drawing, Insects, Foods & Nutrition Food Preservation, Goats Guinea Pigs, Horses, Horticulture, Knitting, Models, Needlecraft, performing Arts, Photography, Poultry, Rabbits, Sheep, Sports, Swine, Tractor Safety, Welding, Wild Flowers, Woodworking and many Community Service projects.

What is a 4-H Community Club?

When joining 4-H a family joins a community club, which usually meets once a month. Youth are elected as officers and conduct the club meetings. Members vote on the activities that they would like to undertake as a Community Club. Meetings also include an educational and fun activity. Community clubs vary in size from 3 to five families up to 60 families. Once a family joins a community club then children sign up for individual projects like the ones listed above.
Community Club Meeting Schedule and locations are listed below. Please contact the MSU-E office for Club Leader names and phone numbers.

How old do youth have to be to join 4-H and how much does it cost?

4-H programs are open to everyone aged 5 to 19. Age is determined as of January 1st of the programming year. Programing runs from September to August. Individual groups may charge dues to cover expenses, and some project areas may require extra investments for supplies, equipment and travel.

Who teaches the projects to 4-H members?

Parents, Grandparents and adults that enjoy working with youth to teach areas that they have an interest in and like to share their interest with 4-H members. Volunteers with organizational skills are also greatly needed to work on event planning committees.
All volunteers are required to go through the MSU Extension Volunteer Selection Process.
4-H Depends on Volunteers!! Contact your local MSU Extension office for more details and how to sign up.

What benefits do youth receive by belonging to 4-H?

Choosing Healthy Lifestyles A survey was conducted of 1,851 public high school students in West Central Illinois. 4-H members report that they could voice opinion and be heard within the community more that non-members. They were also more frequently involved in meaningful activities such as helping someone in need, providing service to their community, and using skills or talents important to them. Overall, 4-H members were less likely to participate in risky behaviors that non 4-H members.

4-H'ers Gain Communication Skills "In a survey of 428 personnel directors in the U.S., oral communications skills were considered the most important skill in hiring job applicants. "Public Speaking (Jan. 1989) As members of 4-H, youth have the opportunity to strengthen their communication skills by giving speeches and demonstrations about their projects, as well as expressing their opinions by serving on committees and holding club offices.

Volunteering Benefits Youth and Communities All 4-H youth in Kalamazoo County have many opportunities to participate in Community Service activities. Benefits liked to community service include; increased feeling of self-esteem and self-worth, increased likelihood of contact with pro-social peers, higher value on personal status, rejecting potential legal and personal damage from alcohol and drug use, and increased chance of feeling "connected" and able to work within the system. (Volunteers in Prevention Summary of Findings, and ACTION Drug Alliance Grant to the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation)

Want more info on volunteering? Visit the Volunteering section of the website!
For more information on joining 4-H, contact msue.kalamazoo@county.msu.edu