



BUILDING HEALTHY HABITS FOR A HEALTHIER GENERATION

23,874

Michigan 4-H youth experiences related to healthy living in 2020-2021

133

MSU Extension healthy living educational sessions offered in 2021

PRIORITY

A R E A S

Michigan State University Extension 4-H Youth Development provides healthy living education that empowers Michigan youth to make proactive and healthy choices and helps to generate a healthier future generation. These programs focus on:

- **Nutrition and healthy eating.**
- **Mental and emotional wellness.**
- **Physical well-being.**

In 2021, this programming was made possible in part by a grant from the Walmart Healthy Habits initiative.

For more information about MSU Extension's healthy living programs and resources, visit us online.

IMPACTS

As a result of Michigan 4-H healthy living programming, youth improve their knowledge about healthy lifestyles and choices they could make to improve their overall health. In addition, youth develop positive attitudes about healthy lifestyle choices and begin making important healthy living decisions. Armed with these tools and information, youth are better equipped to make healthy living decisions for a lifetime. A 10-year longitudinal study conducted by Tufts University found that 4-H youth are:



2X

Nearly 2 times more likely to make healthier choices.

“The students have a lot of conversation in the classroom, and many have had real positive comments about better nutrition choices.”

— Teacher of students who attended a 4-H healthy living program.





SEEDING HEALTHY HABITS

In collaboration with a local dietitian and Michigan 4-H volunteer, MSU Extension professionals offered the 4-H Planting Seeds for Healthy Habits program in 2021. The 8-week program met virtually and offered sessions on nutrition, cooking, yoga, mindfulness, physical activity and gardening. In total, 15 youth ages 9 to 13 from throughout the Lansing area took part, receiving a kit each week that contained supplies for the weekly activity. In addition to the much-anticipated hands-on lesson, youth also received a weekly healthy snack.

“This was by far the most engaged group of youth I’ve had,” said the Ingham County 4-H program coordinator who led the program. The program coordinator also stated:

“Not only were the registrants consistently showing up each week, but they were very engaged, speaking up and sharing consistently. We continually heard from both parents and youth how much they [the youth] enjoyed and appreciated the program.”

The successful program was funded as a result of a sponsorship from Sparrow Healthy System and the Walmart Healthy Habits grant.



MENTAL HEALTH & MINDFULNESS FOR MICHIGAN YOUTH



As schools faced closures, reopenings, hybrid operations and quarantines in 2021, mindfulness education became a critical method of helping youth navigate their emotions and constant change. To assist local youth in this area, Schoolcraft County’s MSU Extension 4-H program coordinator partnered with local elementary school teachers to offer 4-H Mindful Me. Connecting virtually, the class covered important lessons such as the gift of presence, descriptions of feelings, mood management, quiet listening and mindful eating. Through interactive activities such as yoga, affirmations and breathing, youth began to understand and practice mindfulness.

After finishing the final lesson, the 4-H professional asked students to share some of the things they had learned and were starting to use. One brave student raised their hand and stated, “I’m using words to tell my mom my emotion.”

The teacher said:

“We have started using some of the breathing techniques. They really do help the students calm and find their center.”