



FEBRUARY 2026

4-H Family News

Grand Traverse County



Fall in Love with Learning at 4-H

Education has always been at the heart of 4-H. From the very beginning, 4-H has focused on learning by doing—hands-on experiences that help young people build skills, confidence, and a strong foundation for the future.

We're excited to offer **Future-Ready Fridays**, an expanded version of last year's scholarship event! Join us on the last two Fridays of this month and the first two Fridays of March. These evenings are designed for youth ages 14–19 who are exploring summer jobs, local scholarships, educational events like Exploration Days at MSU, or trade programs.

Future-Ready Fridays are **free**, dinner is provided, and you can attend one night or all four. Be sure to check out the flyer in this newsletter for details.

Everyone is also invited to the **2026 Education Expo**, hosted by the Northwest Michigan Livestock Council. This is a great chance to grow your knowledge, prepare for the 2026 fair, and reconnect with 4-H friends from across the region. Registration and schedule details are included in this newsletter.

We hope you'll join us as we continue learning, growing, and leading together—the 4-H way!

I look forward to seeing you at the Expo,

Sarah Bye

CONTACT US

Sarah Bye

4-H Program
Coordinator



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https://www.canr.msu.edu/grand_traverse/grand_traverse_county_4_h/index

IMPORTANT DATES

Leaders Association Meeting:
February 17th @ 6:30 — MSU Extension Office

Future-Ready Fridays:
2/20, 2/27, 3/6, 3/13 @ 6PM — Kingsley United Methodist Church

Education Expo: March 1st 9AM-4PM — Grand Traverse Resort & Spa

Livestock Council Membership Meeting:
March 2nd @ 6:30PM — Redeemer Lutheran Church

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COUNTY 4-H NEWS

Future-Ready Fridays 2/20-3/13 6-8PM



Kingsley United Methodist Church

Future-Ready Fridays are geared toward teens who would like help with resume writing, filling out job applications, applying for scholarships, and more!

Don't miss out on this FREE, 4-week series, beginning 2/20! You may attend any but we recommend them all, since you will be learning a new skill at each session.

Dinner will be provided! Please see attached flyer for more info!

NW MI 4-H Livestock Council Education Expo 3/1 9AM-4PM

Grand Traverse Resort & Spa

Sponsored by Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council. This is our annual Livestock Education Expo open to all 4-H livestock youth ages 5 to 19, where youth can earn the two (2) required education credits for Northwestern Michigan Fair participation as well as expand their knowledge into other areas of livestock interest.

Lunch provided for youth who are registered for free (pizza and drink). Pizza and drink available at an additional cost for all others.

Save time in line the day of the event and pre-register for your sessions! If you do not pre-register, please arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the session start time to complete your registration at the event.

Cost: FREE

Please see attached information including Schedule and Session Descriptions!





COUNTY 4-H NEWS

2026 4-H Outdoor Education Workshop for Volunteers 4/25-4/26

Camp Newaygo (Newaygo, MI)

Who: Adult 4-H Gold volunteers and MSU Extension staff (approval required)

What: Two-day professional development workshop with two learning tracks:

- *Head, Heart, Hands, Health... and HABITATS!*
- *Teaching the Basics of the Backcountry*

Cost: \$150 (includes dorm lodging, meals, and materials)
 Saturday: breakfast, lunch, dinner
 Sunday: breakfast
 Ends by noon Sunday



2026 Capitol Experience

Capitol Experience



Cost \$365

Scholarships may be available through your local 4-H office!

MARCH 15-17TH, 2026

Who: Youth in grades 9–12 (4-H and non-4-H welcome)

What: A 3-day experience exploring public policy—connect with peers, meet policy professionals, and see state government in action.

When/Where: March 15–17, 2026
Okemos Conference Center & Michigan State Capitol

Cost: \$365 (includes registration, lodging, and meals)

Register by March 1:
events.anr.msu.edu/CapitolExperience2026/

Optional extra hotel nights available; families are responsible for supervision, lodging, and transportation outside program dates.

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!
 Register by March 1st @<https://events.anr.msu.edu/CapitolExperience2026/>




Michigan 4-H Day with the Detroit Tigers

Sunday, April 12 | 1:40 p.m.
Tigers vs. Texas Rangers at Comerica Park

Celebrate Michigan 4-H as the **Group Charity of the Game!** Enjoy discounted tickets, a **pre-game on-field experience**, and a **warning-track lap for 4-H youth**. A portion of each ticket supports Michigan 4-H.

Tickets: <https://www.gofevo.com/event/Michigan4H26>

Michigan 4-H Day with the Detroit Tigers

Beyond Ready

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

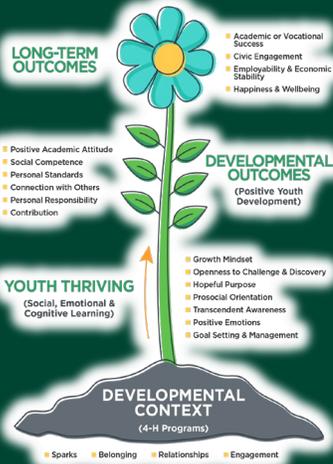
April 12





STATEWIDE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

4-H Thriving Model of Positive Youth Development



Building a sense of belonging in our 4-H program has been a long-standing tradition. What does this look like?

It may be a project leader, club leader, or event organizer welcoming you to each meeting or event. It may look like a “roll call” or “ice breaker” at the beginning of a meeting.

The initial welcome allows people to know that they have been seen in the room. So, the next time someone asks you a roll call question of “What’s your favorite cheese?”, know that there is a reason.

We want to get to know you. We want to hear your voice. We want the ability to start building relationships by finding likenesses among us.

Contact your local 4-H staff for more information.
#BeyondReady

February 10: 4-H Wild Spartans

Online

In this month’s session, take a walk through the woods on the wild side with “Walking a Path of Conservation.” Ask questions through a live Q&A. This free virtual series is for youth ages 12-19.

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

February 11: Michigan 4-H Volunteer Webinar Series: Building Belonging – Teambuilding Strategies for Stronger 4-H Experiences

Online

Teambuilding isn’t just an activity—it’s a pathway to deeper belonging and higher engagement in 4-H. This webinar will show volunteers how simple team-building practices can help youth feel included, communicate effectively, work together, and grow their leadership skills.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/michigan-4-h-volunteer-webinar-building-belonging-teambuilding-strategies-for-stronger-4-h-experiences

February 11: Avoiding Money Mishaps

Online

This webinar will focus on how youth can protect themselves from fraud, scams, identity theft and predatory lending.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/avoiding-money-mishaps-feb11

February 11: 4-H Chef Tasty Dog Treats

Lenawee MSU Extension Demo Kitchen, Adrian

Youth ages 5-11 will prepare delicious treats to bake at home for your dog. Ages 5-7 need adult helper. Registration deadline is February 7.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/4-h-chef-tasty-dog-treats

February 19 –March 26: Online Guiding Principles for Highly Successful Parenting Webinar Series

Online

Guiding Principles is a FREE online course for parents of toddlers to teens to learn strategies for helping children, parents and families be successful.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/guiding-principles-for-highly-successful-parenting-webinar-series-february-2026

February 19: Ace the Interview: Skill Building and Practice for Teens

Washtenaw County MSU Extension Office, Ann Arbor

This free workshop will help youth (ages 12-19) confidently handle interview experiences with tips and hands-on practice. Any teen is welcome to attend! Registration deadline is February 17.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/ace-the-interview-skill-building-and-practice-for-teens





STATEWIDE 4-H NEWS



Participate in the World Food Prize Michigan Youth Institute

As millions across the globe deal with food insecurity, the World Food Prize Michigan Youth Institute (WFP MIYI) offers young people an opportunity to be part of the solution. Held May 7 in East Lansing, or by participating from anywhere else using Zoom video/web conference technology, the event seeks to inspire and prepare the next generation of global leaders to end world hunger.

To participate, youth should be in grades 7-12 and register by the March 15 deadline. As part of the registration process, youth are required to prepare a three- to five-page research paper about a developing country and one of 22 key factors that affect food security. At the event, youth present and discuss their papers with other attendees and research and industry experts.

The top performing students at the WFP MIYI will be selected to attend the World Food Prize Global Youth Institute in Des Moines, Iowa, in October. For more information, visit <https://www.canr.msu.edu/wfpmiyi/>. Registration opens February 1 and closes March 15.

Tickets now available for Michigan 4-H Day at the Breslin

Join MSU Extension and Michigan 4-H on March 1 for the 20th celebration of Michigan 4-H Day at the Breslin! This fun family event will be held at the Jack Breslin Student Events Center as the MSU Women's Basketball team takes on the Ohio State Buckeyes!

Those interested in attending can purchase tickets at a price of \$7.50 plus fees. This is a discounted rate available to the Michigan 4-H and MSU Extension communities; complimentary tickets are no longer available due to the rising popularity of college sports. MSU Extension and Michigan 4-H youth, volunteers, partners, stakeholders, alumni, staff and their families are all encouraged to attend.

Tickets can be purchased through a two-step process. First, guests should register at <https://events.anr.msu.edu/4HBreslin2026/>. Within one week, registrants will receive a custom purchase link to the email provided in registration. Attendees must then use this custom link to purchase tickets for the event. Additional ticketing information is available on the registration website. Registration will close on February 17.

Tip-off for the game is scheduled for 12 p.m. Gates to the Breslin will open at 10:30 a.m., with a variety of pre-game activities hosted by MSU Extension professionals around the concourse. Participants are encouraged to show their pride and wear green and white 4-H or MSU Extension apparel. Families for whom cost is a barrier should contact their local 4-H program coordinator.



Show your 4-H pride wherever you go!

Did you know you can make a difference for 4-H every time you hit the road? By purchasing the Michigan 4-H specialty license plate, you're not only showing your 4-H spirit—you're helping fund programs that empower young people across the state. A portion of each plate sale and renewal benefits Michigan 4-H, supporting hands-on learning experiences that help Michigan youth become beyond ready for the future.

Whether you're a current member, alumni, volunteer, or simply a proud supporter, this is an easy way to give back and keep 4-H growing strong. Ordering is simple through the Michigan Secretary of State.



Drive your support forward—get your 4-H plate today and help create opportunities for the next generation of Michigan 4-H youth! Learn more at extension.msu.edu/4-HPlate.



**SESSIONS
HELD AT:**

**Kingsley United
Methodist Church**
113 Blair St,
Kingsley, MI

Future-Ready Fridays

FOR YOUTH AGES 14-19
FOUR FRIDAYS — ATTEND AS MANY AS YOU CAN
6-8PM
FREE DINNER INCLUDED*

**IF YOU HAVE A FOOD ALLERGY, PLEASE CONTACT GRETCHEN SAUVAGE (231) 883-3378*

IDENTIFYING YOUR SKILL SETS 2.20

- Activities to help you discern the right summer job or career for you
- Help with filling out a job application
- Applications from local employers will be provided
- Identifying your skill sets

4-H HAS MADE YOU BEYOND READY 3.6

- Understand your soft and hard skills
- Get to know yourself assessment
- Learn how your life experiences can build a strong resume or scholarship essay

RESUMES THAT ROCK 2.27

- Volunteering with 4-H translated into job experience
- Meet local business owners seeking employees
- Use a template to complete a resume

FILLING OUT YOUR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION 3.13

- Learn from experts on local scholarship boards what they have seen and appreciate in winning applications
- Make connections between 4-H and skills you've learned to earn a scholarship
- Get hands-on assistance with filling out scholarship for 4-H statewide events such as Exploration Days, as well as post-secondary education.

2026 EDUCATION EXPO SCHEDULE

MARCH 1, 2026

GRAND TRAVERSE RESORT AND SPA

Time	Room 1	Room 2	Room 3	Room 4
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Rabbit - Selecting Your Rabbit/Cavy Project <i>Jennifer Colvin</i>	Goat – Goat Milk Lotion Workshop <i>Robin Gildner</i>	Cattle – Animal Care & Welfare <i>Melissa Elischer</i>	Lamb - Industry Cuts of Meat <i>Jason Rutters</i>
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Rabbit – Wool Breeds & Rabbitry Management <i>Jen Richardson</i>	Goat – Goat Bingo <i>Robin Gildner</i>	Cattle – Animal Senses & Low Stress Handling <i>Melissa Elisher</i>	Helping New Families Navigate 4-H <i>Amanda Wilkins & Sarah Bye</i>
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Getting Rid of Showmanship Jitters <i>Greg Bancroft & Rick Tallieu</i>	Horse – Understanding Your Pattern Scoresheet <i>Terri Delbridge</i>	Cattle – Cattle Health <i>Auburn Moyer</i>	Swine – Vaccines, Antibiotics, Withdrawal Times <i>Casey Zangaro</i>
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Marketing Yourself & Your Project <i>Rick Tallieu & Greg Bancroft</i>	Horse – Pleasure vs Stock Breeds <i>Terri Delbridge</i>	MagnaWave <i>Liv Rice</i>	Swine - Picking the right Swine Project <i>Casey Zangaro</i>
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Llama/Alpaca – Fiber Fun Facts <i>Jason Gill</i>	Navigating 4-H During Fair Week <i>Ashley Folkersma</i>	Lamb – Picking a Show Lamb Vs a Market Lamb <i>Carmen Beemer</i>	Poultry 101 <i>Lynn Henning</i>
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	The Reach of 4H <i>Ashley Folkersma</i>	Dog – Taking Your Dog to the Next Level <i>Lisa Meleski</i>	Helping New Families Navigate 4-H <i>Amanda Wilkins & Sarah Bye</i>	Poultry – Crazy Chicken Lady Talks Again <i>Lynn Henning</i>

2026 Education Expo Session Descriptions

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Selecting Your Rabbit/Cavy Project (*Rabbit*)

Jennifer Colvin

Picking the right rabbit and cavy breed(s) for you, and selecting your market roaster or market pen.

Goat Milk Lotion Workshop (*Goat*)

Robin Gildner

Goats are the most versatile species. Come learn all about goats and what they can do, all while learning how to create your own luxurious goat milk lotion

Animal Care and Welfare - Providing Excellent Animal Care (*Cattle*)

Melissa Elischer

Learn the basics of animal welfare science and practical application of these concepts. How does ensuring positive welfare provide excellent care for animals? What do animals need the most and how can we meet these needs? Why should we care about promoting positive experiences instead of just minimizing bad ones to help our animals thrive?

Lamb Industry Cuts of Meat (*Lamb*)

Justin Rutters Little Cluckers

Justin is going to go over cuts you get from a lamb and some products that you can have made from lamb meat. Our goal with this session is for the youth (and adults) to learn more about lamb meat and in turn help educate potential buyers how they could enjoy these market projects. It is no secret that most people don't consume lamb meat as part of their daily diet. While some may enjoy a lamb chop or rack of lamb, there is so much more to this animal!

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Wool Breeds & Rabbitry Management (*Rabbit*)

Jen Richardson

Discussing the differences between the wool breeds, uses of the wool, and managing a Rabbitry with wool.

Goat Bingo (*Goat*)

Robin Gildner

Bingo with a twist. It's bingo with the challenge of a trivia quiz, all centered around the theme of goats!

Animal Senses & Low Stress Handling: Putting it All Together (*Cattle*)

Melissa Elischer

Learn about how 4-H project animals perceive the world through their senses and how this impacts their interactions with the environment and humans. Do animals and humans have the same senses or sensory perception? How do senses and sensory perception impact how animals

2026 Education Expo Session Descriptions

engage with humans? How can understanding animal perception and senses help make us better partners with our project animals?

Helping New Families Navigate 4-H

Amanda Wilkins / Sarah Bye

If you are new to 4-H and find the registration process overwhelming, this is the session for you. We will provide a number of supportive resources making each step of the way to success easier for your family.

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Getting Rid of Showmanship Jitters

Greg & Rick

Jitters is defined as, "a state of extreme nervousness, anxiety, or an uneasy feeling, often causing slight, rapid physical trembling or quick, jumpy movements." If you want help processing these real feelings, we will give you pro tips to success.

Understanding Your Pattern Scoresheet (Horse)

Terri Delbridge

This session will teach how to interpret your manuever score and penalties.

Cattle Health (Cattle)

Auburn Moyer

Vaccines, Antibiotics, and Withdrawal Times (Swine)

Casey Zangaro

This session breaks down swine vaccines and antibiotics in a simple, easy-to-understand way, focusing on why they're used and when they're needed. We'll also talk about withdrawal times and why following them is important for keeping pigs healthy and ensuring pork products are safe for consumers.

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Marketing Yourself and Your Project

Greg & Rick

Youth Business Guide to Success - Make the Most of Your 4-H Market Animal Project

Pleasure vs Stock Breeds(Horse)

Terri Delbridge

In this session we will discuss the differences of pleasure and stock breeds and what each excels in.

2026 Education Expo Session Descriptions

Magna Wave

Liv Rice

Picking the right Swine Project (Swine)

Casey Zangaro

This session will cover the basics of swine nutrition, housing, and safe needle use in a fun, easy-to-understand way. Participants will learn how to feed pigs for healthy growth, provide a safe and comfortable living environment, and handle injections properly to keep pigs happy and healthy.

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Fiber Fun Facts (Llama / Alpaca)

Jason Gill

Join us to learn what you've always wanted to know about Llama and Alpaca fiber, otherwise known as wool, and how to clean it, shear it, grade it, store it, and use it.

Navigating 4-H During Fair Week

Ashley Folkersma

Fair week is often the highlight of the 4-H year, but it can also be the most demanding. This session will focus on practical strategies for managing stress, setting priorities, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance during the busiest week of the season. Participants will learn how to stay organized, protect their well-being, and still fully enjoy everything the fair has to offer while working toward their personal goals.

Picking a Show Lamb vs a Market Lamb (Lamb)

Carmen Beemer

While both play key roles in the lamb industry this will help the youth make their decisions for their 4-H project and work towards their goal.

Poultry 101 (Poultry)

Lynn Henning

Interested in city or backyard poultry raising? Come learn what you need to get started.

3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

The Reach of 4-H

Ashley Folkersma

This session explores the wide range of opportunities available through 4-H and how members can make the most of them. From leadership and travel to career exploration and personal growth,

2026 Education Expo Session Descriptions

participants will learn how 4-H can open doors far beyond their local community, and even beyond their state.

Taking Your Dog to the Next Level (*Dog*)

Lisa Meleski

A brief introduction to beyond foundational dog projects. Learn about advanced (off leash) agility, scentwork, tracking, Barn Hunt, and FastCat and learn about the importance of foundational skills required to advance to higher level dog project areas.

Helping New Families Navigate 4-H

Amanda Wilkins / Sarah Bye

If you are new to 4-H and find the registration process overwhelming, this is the session for you. We will provide a number of supportive resources making each step of the way to success easier for your family.

Crazy Chicken Lady Talks Again (*Poultry*)

Lynn Henning

This session will consist of a little talking before hosting a round table discussion. Please bring your questions.
