

# Using Research and Knowledge to Help Michigan Youth Explore, Experience and Achieve

## Who We Are

Michigan 4-H Youth Development is the youth education program of Michigan State University Extension. With state government, counties and Michigan State University working cooperatively, MSU Extension 4-H staff work in Michigan's 83 counties to create nonformal educational opportunities to help youth thrive in a complex and changing world.

## What We Do

Local adult and older teen volunteers provide learning opportunities through 4-H clubs, camps and in partnership with schools and other community groups during nonschool hours. As a nonformal youth education program, 4-H's primary purpose is to use research-based methods to help communities, families and youth work together to improve the quality of young

people's lives. We provide positive youth development experiences designed to help young people gain the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. Our primary method is to recruit and continuously train community volunteers to deliver fun, practical and proven youth development activities and programs.

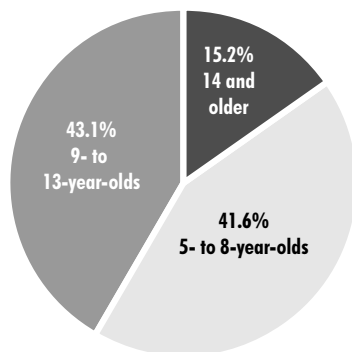
## Who We Involve

### 4-H YOUTH MEMBERSHIP

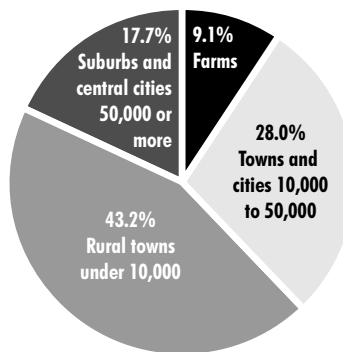
In 2002-03, Michigan 4-H Youth Development involved 276,377 young people aged 5 to 19 in youth development activities throughout Michigan. Youth aged 9 to 13 continue to represent the largest age group involved in 4-H programs at 43 percent, with 5- to 8-year-olds a close second at 42 percent. Youth aged 14 to 19 represent 15 percent of the 4-H youth population.

*A 1998 pilot of the Michigan 4-H youth asset survey showed 4-H'ers scoring higher than non4-H youth in liking school, planning to graduate from college, being comfortable talking in front of groups, having friends, having the ability to solve problems and the ability to resolve conflict. A 2002-03, revised youth asset survey completed by 4-H'ers in nine counties showed 4-H continues to provide caring and safe environments for youth to learn new skills.*

**4-H Youth Participants By Age**



**Geographic Location of 4-H Youth**



4-H youth participants represent diverse Michigan cultures and geographic regions. Twenty-six percent of 4-H youth members represent five diverse or nonwhite cultures. Youth living in rural towns with populations less than 10,000 make up 43 percent of 4-H members; 28 percent are from towns and cities with populations of 10,000 to 50,000; 18 percent from suburbs and central cities of 50,000 or more people; and 9 percent of 4-H members live on farms.



## 4-H VOLUNTEERS

In 2002–03, Michigan 4-H recruited, trained and supported 23,906 adult and 4,632 older teen volunteers. Seventy-seven percent of these volunteers work directly with Michigan young people, 21 percent work to support 4-H administration in local communities and 2 percent work as volunteer middle managers. Michigan 4-H Youth Development estimates that adult 4-H volunteers average about 36 hours a year in service to youth. Independent Sector, a national coalition for research on volunteerism and philanthropy in the United States, estimates that the value of this volunteer time in 2003 was \$17.19 an hour, for a total contribution of \$14.8 million.

## Our Impact

In 1998 the pilot administration of a youth asset survey developed by Michigan 4-H with 100 4-H'ers and non4-H members showed noted differences in how the young people responded to 36 questions about assets and life skills. In that initial survey, 4-H'ers consistently scored higher than young people not in 4-H in liking school, planning to graduate from college, being comfortable talking in front of groups, having friends, having the ability to solve problems and the ability to resolve conflict.

A revised version of the Michigan 4-H youth asset survey administered in 2003 to 200 4-H youth members involved in clubs in Allegan, Cheboygan, Clinton, Grand Traverse, Ingham, Isabella, Kalamazoo, Leelanau and Wexford counties shows 4-H continues to provide caring and safe environments for youth to learn new skills. Of the youth completing the survey, 95 percent were highly satisfied with their clubs, 90 percent felt their adult club leaders cared about them, 88 percent felt their 4-H club was a caring environment, 87 percent felt safe in their 4-H club, 90 percent said they learned new things and 83 percent said they learned new skills.

This data supports the value of 4-H youth programs to the positive development of young people, and further studies show the

impact of 4-H programming on critical issues affecting Michigan young people. Highlights of a few of these studies follow.

### Anti-Bullying

More than 19,000 Michigan young people have been involved in character education programs offered by county MSU Extension 4-H programs. After implementing extensive training and learning materials provided by MSU Extension's CHARACTER COUNTS! initiative, one Tuscola County elementary school reported that negative behaviors such as bullying decreased by 70 percent.

### Childhood Obesity

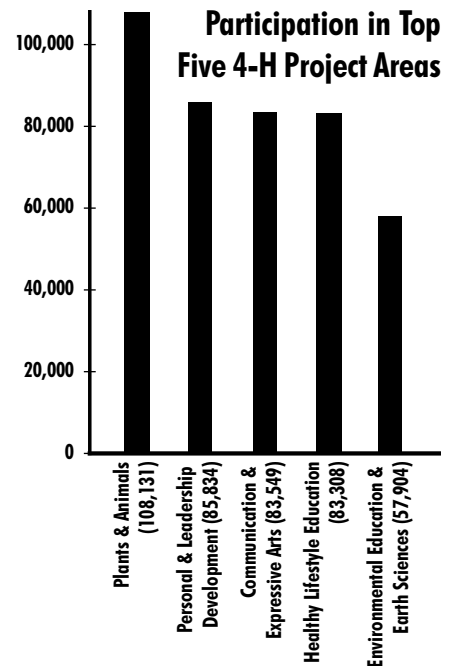
A pilot impact evaluation was done with 4-H youth participants in programs using the new MSU Extension *Jump Into Foods and Fitness* curriculum. The 8- to 11-year-old program participants were from Wayne, Calhoun, Mackinac, Marquette and Muskegon counties. The study indicated that youth who completed a series of lessons showed significant change in eating more healthy foods, increasing physical exercise, correctly identifying muscle groups and correctly identifying what the Food Guide Pyramid tells us.

### Youth Civic Engagement

The 2003 4-H Youth Experiencing Action Recognition Program showcased the community service achievements of 1550 Michigan 4-H members. Michigan 4-H volunteer leaders of these 4-H club members reported that 92 percent of the 4-H'ers gained skills in communication, 74 percent gained skills in decision-making, 74 percent gained leadership skills and 92 percent learned they have the ability to make a difference in their community.

### Youth Mentoring

Ninety-two percent of the participants in Macomb County's 4-H youth mentor program were successful at maintaining home placement while working with a 4-H mentor instead of residential placement, resulting in \$4.6 million in savings for Michigan taxpayers (based on the annual cost of state-paid residential placement).



## Youth Technology Literacy

Youth involved in the 4-H DOUBLE-KLICK! after-school technology literacy program in Chippewa, Lake and Wayne counties showed positive changes in attitudes and behavior toward schoolwork and technology. Results from the evaluation used to document student change among 60 participants showed positive change in 9 out of 9 *attitude* measures regarding schoolwork and technology use and 17 out of 19 *behavior* measures regarding schoolwork and technology use.

## For More Information

For more information on these and other Michigan 4-H Youth Development Programs, contact your county MSU Extension office, listed in the county government section of your telephone directory or found online at <http://www.msue.msu.edu/msue/ctyentpg/>, or:

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